

January 2012

# A Comparison of the Perceptions of School Work Culture by Administrators and Faculty in the Public Charter and Non-Charter Elementary Schools of a Central Florida County

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A Comparison of the Perceptions of School Work Culture by Administrators and Faculty  
in the Public Charter and Non-Charter Elementary Schools of a Central Florida County

by

Wayne Anthony Quin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Adult, Career, and Higher Education  
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Date of Approval:  
November 1, 2012

Keywords: Educational Leadership, School Culture, School Improvement, School  
Reform, Urban Schools

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Dianna—my best friend, my partner, the love of my life—who remained by my side, at times behind me when I needed a push, other times in front of me when I needed a pull, but always in stride with me throughout this endeavor. To my children, Wayne Anthony, II and Brianna Nevaeh, who make me want to be a better person and who are the joy of my life. To my late, beloved mother Alyene Quin for never having given up the fight or on me and my second mother, my sister Carolyn Muhammad-Bostick, who taught me so much and inspired me to teach, both of whom I miss each and every day and wish that they could be here to physically witness the manifestation of the energy and love they poured into me. And last but not least my in-laws, Ann Porter, Paul and Debra Sheehy, Ulysses Grady, Karen Porter, and Uncle Stan for those Sunday after dinner discussions that everyone thought I was ignoring, but provided the impetus for me to go back to school. Thank you all and your love means the world to me.

## **Acknowledgments**

First and foremost, all honor, praise, glory, and thanks to God and my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ through whom all things are possible.

There are no ways that this dissertation could have been completed without the love, sacrifices, and support of my family who gave so much and continue to give to see me through all of the journeys that I pursue. They, my friends, academic and professional colleagues kept me grounded and focused throughout the completion of this study.

I have not the commands of the English vocabulary to find the ways or words that adequately express my gratitude for the members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Wayne James, the absolute best at getting students through the process and at getting through to students. Your generous sacrificing of your time speaks to the caliber of person you are. I am forever grateful. To Dr. William Young for always having an inspiring and motivating word at just the right moment, Dr. Arthur Shapiro for the right advice to make sense of the writing so that the writing makes sense, and Dr. Jeffrey Kromrey for giving meaning to the numbers and getting me through Statistics.

To my special friend Brenda Kears for an unyielding and uncompromising belief in me and the things we have yet to accomplish. To B. J. Bryant for never saying no when I needed your expertise. And, my friend Ben Osongo for helping me to see the things I could not see.

Dr. Brenda (Townsend) Walker, had it not been for you taking a chance on me in Project P.I.L.O.T, I may never have developed wings to fly with. Your infamous red pen made me take academia seriously. Thank you for the brotherhood established with my cohort in Project P.I.L.O.T., some of the bravest brothers in the world.

I have been so fortunate to have the world's greatest cheerleaders in my life, Dr. Karolyn Snyder and the late Dr. Robert Anderson. Thank you for opening the world up to me. We are moving at warp speed! I have finally earned that autographed copy you gave me on the night of Quals.

A special thanks to all of the USF faculty and staff members that always said yes to whatever request I made. Thank you for making a way when there seemed to be none.

To my pastor, the Rev. Dr. W. James Favorite and my Beulah Baptist Institutional Church family for never wavering in your belief that I would finish this dissertation. Your constant and insistent proclivity to call me Doctor has been fulfilled.

Finally, to the principals and faculty members who participated in this study, I thank you for your unselfish donation of time to help me when I needed you.

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated perceptions of school work culture of instructional staff members (administrators and faculty) in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida by assessing differences in perceptions of administrators and faculty related to school work culture, perceptions between school administrators and faculty, and the interaction between type of school.

The School Work Culture Profile (SWCP), a paper-and-pencil survey, was designed in 1988 by Snyder to obtain a measure of a school's work culture. The SWCP uses a Likert scale to assess the overall perception and four sub-domains of planning, development, program development, school assessment, and staff development.

One hundred sixty-one teachers and administrators from public charter and public non-charter elementary schools participated. Results of ANOVA tests indicated differences by job category: administrators scored significantly higher than faculty on the overall perception and three sub-domains of school work culture: planning development, program development, and school assessment. There was no difference on the staff development sub-domain. Administrators and faculty members do perceive certain aspects of school work culture differently. Program Development, Planning Development, and School Assessment are administrative functions, whereas Staff Development may be perceived to be more of a personal function. There was no difference between perceptions of instructional staff by type of school (public charter and

public non-charter). In addition, there was no interaction between job category and school type. The perceptions of administrators and faculty members of both types of schools do not appear to be dependent upon whether or not they work in charter or non-charter public schools.

Public charter and public non-charter school instructional staff responded to SWCP sub-domains similarly; therefore, the type of school the respondents worked in, albeit public charter or public non-charter, did not impact their perceptions. Differences existed in perceptions between school administrators and faculty members, regardless of type of school, with the exception of the sub-domain of staff development. The mean perception for administrators in both types of schools was higher in the other three domains. No interaction occurred between type of school and type of job category for any sub-domain or the overall perception.

The conclusions from this study included (a) schools are equal regardless of the type of school, (b) the culture of administrators and faculty members remains the same regardless of the type of school, (c) the perceptions of administrators and faculty members are not determined by the type of school in which they work—administrators and faculty members do perceive certain aspects of school work culture differently.

Implications derived from the study include (a) efforts to mainstream and encourage cross-institutional (public charter schools and public non-charter schools) collaboration might be helpful to improve the educational conditions for all students, (b) efforts need to be focused on increasing the collaborative conversations and involvement that connect the individuals in a school setting as related to planning development, program development, school assessment, and the overall perception of school work

culture as well as developing inclusionary practices that increase faculty members' input in meeting schools' stated goals, (c) placing emphasis on the charter school movement as an alternative for the innovative ideas needed to address the state of the national education system could be increased in colleges of education and educational leadership programs, and (d) program development, planning development, and school assessment are administrative functions, whereas staff development may be perceived to be more of a personal function.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

According to Van Houtte (2005), interest in school effectiveness shifted from the 1970s with the input-output models to the understanding of what was happening inside the school, behind the scenes, or the school climate, to competition experienced by the “concept of school culture” beginning around the end of the 1980s (p. 71). But during the early 1980s, the concept of school climate was predominantly viewed as a function of school safety and discipline and efforts to increase school effectiveness centered on improving faculty, staff, and administrative cooperation (Chance, Cummins, & Wood, 1996). School climate and school culture are factors that have typically provided the foundation for, or in many cases, encouraged and/or reinforced students’ efforts to believe in their abilities to achieve and succeed academically at high levels (Baxter, 2004). The school climate and school culture factors, however, have not provided a complete picture of the disparity between schools regarding student achievement and school quality.

School climate is a concept that has been used in a variety of ways including to describe school composition. Socio-economic status (SES), race/ethnicity, gender, and/or numerous other variables of school composition have been used quite frequently as a measure for school climate (Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood, & Wisenbaker, 1978). School climate is often examined as a single *global construct* that incorporates numerous variables including those previously mentioned as well as school

and learning environment, community and parental involvement, and leadership style (Taylor, 2008) of the site administrator or district administration, and as a factor or function of school effectiveness (2010; Doyal; Ginder, 2005; Robinson, 2009; Shaw, B., 2009; Shaw, F., 2009;). Taylor (2008), on the other hand, conducted an analysis of secondary data that studied the varying elements of school climate and the effects on different student populations. Gangi (2010) investigated effective assessment measures to identify the most reliable instruments in districts' attempt to gauge the relationship between school climate and faculty relationships. In contrast, it is the school's culture, the observable behaviors, shared values, norms, mores, and celebrated traditions and practices that transmit the way things happened, that is "the mythic side of a school that is the story behind the story" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 3).

However, as parents increasingly formulate ideas about which type of school, albeit charter, non-charter public, or private, and the standard of education preferred (Burnett, 2006), parents in urban areas are focusing more often than not, on schools that have shown progress while emphasizing school climate and culture rather than what is or may be measured by performance on standardized tests (Baxter, 2004), the current standard of school accountability for public schools. One explanation of why parents choose schools emphasizing school climate, which "explains much of the difference between school variance in school achievement" (Brookover et al., 1978, p. 302), and school culture over the current and understated trend in public schooling of test preparation may be gleaned from Deal and Peterson's (1999) rationale of why schools should more closely resemble businesses. They argue that in top businesses, the company's leader(s) know that "when people are committed, believe in the organization,

and take pride in their work,” success flourishes. Success is cultivated through the development of a “shared culture” that “pumps meaning, passion, and purpose into the enterprise” and that “these places of work become beloved institutions where people pour their heart and soul into everyday ritual and routine” (p. 11). They further maintained that the nation’s schools must be held to the same standards because “in education, the risk of not doing things right is even higher. While a poor-quality product can be recycled, a young person who drops out is hard to salvage—a lost treasure” (p. 11). More importantly, “top-drawer teaching can never flourish in a sterile or toxic environment” (p. 11).

Wurtzel (2008) declared that the norm in high performing organizations is the value placed on human resources and their impact on and contribution to the overall success of the organization which in turn provides “dependable systems to attract, develop, and retain productive employees . . . [and] ensure employee satisfaction by creating a collegial work environment, recognizing performance, and providing career opportunities, quality managers, and decent compensation” (§ 2). She further recognized differences in *best-practice* regarding the support, treatment, and career advancement paths between private-sector organizations and schools and expressed employees in the private sector understand their career paths and how to advance in the organization. They receive frequent evaluations and are given *frank feedback*. However, a *stark contrast* is offered to the typical new teacher through the human resource practices of urban school districts where “few principals are trained and skilled in hiring and developing great teachers” and “offer only minimal support and feedback.” These new teachers have

“little sense of his or her career trajectory or how to advance,” and receives little or “nonmonetary recognition for a job well done” (¶ 3-5).

Similarly, Kamras and Rotherham (2008) argued that in spite of the importance of “people to education, current strategies for teacher recruitment, training, evaluation, and compensation are largely divorced from the goals of effectiveness and equity and are misaligned with what we know works (and does not work)” (¶1). Moreover, as “politicians repeatedly profess their respect for teachers” (¶ 2), they continually develop public policies that “fundamentally disrespect them and the work they do. No enterprise, public or private, can thrive over time without paying close attention to how it recruits, trains, and retains the very best people (¶ 2).

Understanding that these seemingly *rational systems* are often required to produce optimal results all the while dealing with the organization’s *irrational human aspects*, in which many cases, the systems are all too often found to be *ill-equipped* to do so, Colia (2001) explored the relationship between school culture and school climate to determine the relationship between the elements of positive school cultures and climates and effectiveness and maintaining positive and productive school learning environments for students in schools that share many of the challenges our business leaders face in today’s *rapidly changing society* with frequently hostile and competing elements.

Twenty-five years ago Deal (1987) pointed out the impact of school culture on school improvement and distinguished between cohesive and fragmented cultures stating that rallying “around shared values . . . [would] give meaning to work” (p. 9) as well as people’s lives. He believed that this increased people’s efforts and contributed “toward a common destiny” (p. 9) in cohesive cultures, whereas power struggles, dismay over

salaries, and minimal efforts contributed are present in the fragmented culture. Similarly, Bancroft (2003, p. 365) argued that schools with a “commitment to shared values,” and small, safe, caring environments, like those in charter schools, provide an appealing opportunity to parents.

Knowing that school-level administrators as well as faculty perspectives regarding school culture are “vital for moving schools forward as responsive social agencies” (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 2000, p. 271), the School Work Culture Profile (SWCP) provides the type of information useful to assist in sorting out schools “according to their involvement patterns” (p. 272). Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, and Johnson (1993a) stated,

The SWCP is a staff perceptions survey [in which] . . . . School work culture is operationalized on the SWCP with 60 statements pertaining to existing work practices in a school organization. A five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, with a midpoint of Undecided, was used to rate each item. (p. 3)

In schools, it is the culture that provides the foundation of meaning, “internally as well as externally,” while “the same cultural elements that anchor meaning inside a school simultaneously conveys a positive image” (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 130) outwardly.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Limited research related to the perception of school-work culture of faculty and administrators exists in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in urban areas. In contrast, as discussed in more depth later in this study, a wealth of research exists on school culture as well as findings that indicate the importance and role of school administrators in the development of school culture, an influential factor on school faculties, the practices, norms, and traditions celebrated in



schools and the ways those practices are passed down through generations, as well as the effect of culture on the stability evidenced across classrooms in typically high achieving schools (Barnes, 1995; Center, 2002; Chan, 2004; Grace, 2009; Polk, 2006; Reames, 1997; Tantillo, 2001; Vazquez, 2001). The School Work Culture Profile, an instrument designed to measure the perceptions of the work culture in a school and its performance regarding organizational planning, staff development, program development, and assessment developed by Snyder (1988b), has been used extensively in studies on school reform efforts regarding the effects of changing school culture through the 1990s. Yet, with the constantly changing focus of school reform initiatives, the turn of the century ushered in an era of increased accountability, high-stakes standardized testing, school choice and discussions of the privatization of public education, all contributing to an under-utilization of the instrument in present research, with little to no research utilizing the SWCP to examine the perceptions of administrators and faculty members in comparisons of public non-charter and public charter elementary schools.

Consequently, the School Work Culture Profile may offer an attractive and inexpensive means to gather the necessary data about a school's work culture to provide the impetus for meaningful reform at the school level. As schools are able to reform individually, the achievement landscape of schools may then be able to show progress in improving the status of the public school, particularly in urban areas. Additionally, the database of research across the two types of public elementary schools, public non-charter and public charter schools, regarding the perceptions of faculty and administrators of school work culture are inadequate.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida.

The body of research related to the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in urban areas, has been, at best, limited. In schools, it is the culture that provides the foundation of meaning (Deal & Peterson, 1999). School culture has been said to effect, influence, and shape all aspects of what occurs in schools (Deal, 1987; Deal & Peterson, 1999) and defined as “the social and psychological integration of the skills, beliefs, and performance patterns of a given school at a given time” (Krajewski & Snyder, 1996, p. i). Also, the continual change in the focus of school reform efforts has contributed to a decrease in the utilization of the School Work Culture Profile, an economical data-gathering tool that provides “descriptive information on a school’s collective work patterns” (Bruner, 1997, p. 77) and offers insight into achieving school reform at the individual school level.

## **Research Questions**

In order to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of administrators and faculty in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Is there a difference in the perception of the instructional staff members (both administrators and faculty) of public charter elementary schools and public non-

charter elementary schools related to school work culture in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida?

2. Is there a difference in perception between school administrators and faculty in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools of school work culture?
3. Is there an interaction between type of school (public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools) and job category (administration and faculty) of the perception of school work culture?

### **Significance of the Study**

A wealth of research exists on school culture (Barnes, 1995; Grace, 2009; Polk, 2006; Reames, 1997; Vazquez, 2001). Several researchers have found administrators to be especially crucial to the development of culture in schools including Tantillo (2001) who found that the role of the school leader and other stakeholders occupying leadership roles is essential in shaping school culture; Center (2002) who discovered that the behaviors and attributes of principals have an effect on the perceptions of their stakeholders; and Chan (2004) who examined the effects that leadership practices have on promoting a positive school culture and enhancing student performance. Bruner (1997) reported that the SWCP had been used in more than 14 doctoral dissertations as well as in over 30 research studies reported in the national and international database on the effects of changing school work culture including studies by Cornell (1991), Bursheim (1993), Gossard (1993), and Bishop (1995) which are discussed more fully later in this study. Nevertheless, the utility of the SWCP in recent years has been scarcely reported. More importantly, little if any research has been found that explores

the perceptions of teachers and administrators at public non-charter elementary schools and public charter elementary schools, and even less that have employed the SWCP as a means of gathering data.

Although the database of research studies on school choice (Castanza, 1998; Chapman, 1999; Mirikitani, 2004; Smith, 2000; Vassallo, 1999) and charter schools (Akbar, 2002; Bagwell, 2005; Bancroft, 2003; Burnett, 2006; Curphey, 1998; Ervin, 1999; Fox, 2000; Gaylor, 1998; Lund, 2004; Malloy, 2003; McClure, 2003; Page, 2004; Powers, 2002; Redeker, 2005) has grown in recent years, a vacuum remains in the area of school work culture in any form related to the school choice movement. The study by Bagwell (2005) examined whether the difference in achievement and the perception of school quality between students of charter schools and public schools in Connecticut middle schools was significant and whether a correlation existed between achievement and student perception of school quality. Although she found that no gains were evidenced as a result of the charter school experience for middle school students, she did find that there were significant differences between public and charter school students related to their perceptions of school quality which tended to be higher for charter school students.

Balcerek (1999) conducted a study investigating leadership practices utilizing ex post facto research from the ABC Accountability Model in public elementary schools in North Carolina to investigate whether the leadership practices of principals in high and low performing schools existed and found that there were no differences between high and low performing schools. Therefore, *this* study did not investigate the impact of high and low performing schools, rather it investigated perceptions of faculty and

administrators of public non-charter elementary schools and public charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida. Similarly, Chan (2004) examined how overall student achievement and learning was impacted and enhanced by the relationship between effective school leadership practices by studying a school's programs, leadership practices, and school culture that exceeded academic expectations. Chan found that the three factors played a pivotal role in improving student achievement and learning and suggested that student performance increases when positive school cultures are cultivated. And as previously mentioned, "the dearth of research on private schools is rather remarkable . . . given the size and scope of the private sector" according to Seftor (2001, p. 9), especially pertaining to the perceptions of teachers and administrators on school work culture. Gilbert (2005) did, however, conduct a study of private, parochial, chartered public, and public schools that focused on teacher efficacy and autonomy. Consequently, the importance of this research is that it contributes to the information on the merits of examining school-work culture in school improvement efforts in a market-driven era, especially as it relates to the two types of schools under consideration.

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions associated with this study were that respondents answered conscientiously and honestly.

### **Limitations**

Questions on the SWCP may be outdated since the instrument has not been revised since it was written in 1988.

## **Delimitations**

The delimitations of this study were that school work culture is examined only at the elementary level in public non-charter and public charter schools and strictly for the purposes of determining the utility of perceptions of school work culture as a tool to improve the overall quality of schools. Perceptions of students, parents, and other stakeholders were not examined for the purpose of this study. Additionally, school work culture was not examined as a function of school performance and student achievement, areas that have been previously investigated. Other factors impacting the study were that the sample size and types of schools employed in the study may not be generalized across all school and/or district settings, school composition types, and geographic boundaries.

## **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of providing clarity and a common, more thorough understanding of their usage, the following operational definitions and relevant concepts are included and used in this study.

**Administrators**—The body of persons assigned the task of performing the administrative/leadership duties of a school (e.g., principals and assistant principals).

**Culture**—The observable behaviors, shared values, norms, mores, and celebrated traditions and practices that transmit the way things happened.

**Elementary School**—A school that has one or more grades K-6 and does not have any grade higher than grade 6; for example, schools with grades K-6, 1-3, or 4-6 are classified as elementary schools.

**Faculty**—The body of certified teachers, counselors, department heads, teacher coaches/mentors, etc. that make up the team of instructors of a school.

Instructional Staff—The collective of administrators and faculty for a school site.

Public Charter Elementary School—An independent public school of choice that provides educational services for at least one of grades K-6 (or comparable ungraded levels), has one or more teachers to provide instruction, has an assigned administrator, is located in one or more buildings, receives public funds as primary support, that is given a contract or a charter for a specified period of time (typically three to five years) that is funded in accordance with a state statute that grants a special status that exempts the school from bureaucratic oversight, selected local or state rules and regulations—specific design, curriculum, budgetary, and governance administrivia. A public charter school may be a newly created school or it may previously have been a public or private school. In return for funding and autonomy, the charter school must meet accountability standards and is held accountable to the terms of its charter.

Public Non-Charter Elementary School—An institution that provides educational services for at least one of grades K-6 (or comparable ungraded levels), has one or more teachers to provide instruction, has an assigned administrator, is located in one or more buildings, receives public funds as primary support, and is operated by a district, metropolitan, local, state, or regional educational agency.

School Climate—The concept used to describe school composition demographics including socio-economic status (SES), race/ethnicity, gender, and other variables of school composition used as measures for school climate.

School Culture—The shared behavior patterns, beliefs, customs, norms, traditions, and values that shape the core identity and influence the behaviors and interactions of the parents, staff, and students of a school—“the way things are done around here”.

School-Work Culture—The collective work patterns of a school’s staff that encompass the shared acceptable behavior patterns, beliefs, customs, norms, traditions, and values of the subgroup that influences school direction, productivity, and quality.

School Work Culture Profile (SWCP)—An instrument designed to measure the perceptions of the work culture in a school and its performance regarding organizational planning, staff development, program development, and assessment.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 of this study provided a foundation for understanding the framework of the concepts of school climate and school culture and the differences between the concepts and how they relate to and impact school improvement. Also, a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, assumptions, limitations delimitations, a definition of the terms, and the organization of the study are presented.

A comprehensive review of the literature related to the study is presented in Chapter 2. Included in this chapter are the literature on school culture, school work-culture, the School Work Culture Profile, the state of the nation’s educational system, and school. The Setting provides an overview of the state of education and varying reform initiatives that have been enacted in the hopes of improving the performance of the nation’s public education system as well as some of the overarching factors that contribute to the performance of the country’s public schools, and an introduction to the research and varying philosophical arguments that describe the current conditions of and drive future reform initiatives and discussions on improving the U.S. educational system. The chapter concludes with a summary.



Chapter 3 describes the research methods utilized in the study including the research design, research questions, population and sample, instrumentation with an outline of the development of the School Work Culture Profile and the early studies used to establish the validity and reliability of the instrument, the field test for the study, data collection procedures, an analysis of the data, the variables for the study, and a summary.

The findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4. The parts of this chapter include the response rate, the demographic characteristics, a data analysis and results the demographic factors, and a summary.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school-work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida. The review of the literature presented in this chapter discusses: (a) School Culture, (b) School-Work Culture, (c) the School Work Culture Profile, (d) Research Using the School Work Culture Profile, (e) Related Studies, (f) the State of the Nation's Educational System, (g) School Reform, (h) the Great Recession, (i) School Choice, (j) Public Charter Schools, (k) Public Non-Charter Schools, and (l) summary.

### **School Culture**

To understand school culture more fully, the meaning and impact of culture should be examined. Deal and Peterson (1999) described the effect of school culture on all aspects of the educational institution. They believed that school culture influenced, “from what faculty talk about in the lunch room to the type of instruction that is valued, to the way professional development is viewed, to the importance of learning for all students” (p. 7). In organizations, culture, often referred to as the way we do things around here, is an “all encompassing tapestry of meaning” and its “ways are transmitted from generation to generation” (Deal, 1987, p. 5).

Otherwise, when referring to culture in schools as a construct, culture “helps explain why classrooms and schools exhibit common and stable patterns across variable

conditions” (Deal, 1987, p. 6). Deal and Peterson (1999, p. 2) stated that culture can be used to explain the sense that there is “something special, yet undefined . . . something extremely powerful but difficult to describe . . . this ephemeral, taken-for-granted aspect of schools is often overlooked and consequently is usually absent from discussions about school improvement.” Furthermore, they stated that:

The term *culture* provides a much more accurate and intuitively appealing way . . . to understand a school’s “own unwritten rules and traditions, norms, and expectations that seem to permeate everything: the way people act, how they dress, what they talk about or avoid talking about, whether they seek out colleagues for help or don’t, and how teachers feel about their work and their students. (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 2)

According to L. D. Coble (professor, University of North Carolina—Greensboro; personal communication, June 10, 2008), at least 350 definitions for culture are existent in the literature database. His definition centers around three levels—a) observable behavior; b) shared values (“the deep stuff of culture; what’s important in your school”); and c) organizational assumptions about reality—which contribute to the frames (“windows to the world that allow us to view the world or what’s going on”) or *lenses* by which leaders view or order things in relation to understanding a school’s culture.

### School Work Culture

Krajewski and Snyder (1996, p. i) define school-work culture as “the social and psychological integration of the skills, beliefs, and performance patterns of a given school at a given time.” Additionally, Snyder (1988a) described how work culture is a distinguishing feature seen in the consistency of patterns in top high schools and successful corporations where the overarching goals *pervade the culture*. Barnes (1995) conducted a study to “identify the school work culture in specific terms and to identify specific elements of the work culture” (p. 7) or, “more specifically . . . to determine the

common, shared and unique themes in the work culture, describe the culture of schools, and determine relative strength and valence of specific school work culture elements” (p. 70). She found that school culture, including “the shared values, beliefs, and deep basic assumptions held by staff members” (p. 175) tend to progress into organizational norms that influence school productivity effectively and provide a foundation for school improvement when school culture is cultivated.

Reames (1997) stated that distinctive variables are evident in productive school work cultures. The structural variables relate to how schools are operated by work groups which also support and rely on innovation and to some degree, *risk taking*, the emphasis on school-wide goal setting and planning, continuous staff development related to school goals, and the perception of the school as a learning community. The procedural variables were related to the amount of collaboration by school members, supportive and developmental collegial feedback, and the extent of participation in the decision-making process. In her investigation on the relationship between the perception of teachers of their work culture and their level of organizational commitment and efficacy, she found that there was a significant relationship between the structural and procedural variables that impact teachers’ perception of their work culture but not necessarily so on matters of teacher efficacy.

### **The School Work Culture Profile**

The School Work Culture Profile (SWCP) (Snyder, 1988a), a diagnostic instrument developed by Snyder as an accompaniment component of the Managing Productive Schools Training program (Parkinson, 1990), provides a means to measure the development of work culture and the degree and perception of the worker’s level of

participation in organizational practices based on the four sub-domains of “a) planning; b) program development; c) staff development; and d) assessment” (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 2000, p. 189). Bruner (1997) referred to the SWCP as an instrument that could be utilized to determine the generalization of whether school work culture is a hindrance to or support of educational productivity and quality. The instrument consists of a six-page booklet including operational definitions, directions for responding to the instrument, and the 60-item questionnaire. The questionnaire items are presented in random order and use a five-point Likert scale format with the choices strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree to record participant responses that may be machine or hand scored. Designed for group administration, the instrument requires 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Further enhancing its utility, the SWCP has been translated for use in six languages (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 2000).

**Research Using the School Work Culture Profile.** Darling (1990), in the attempt to identify and analyze whether a relationship existed between the transformational and transactional leadership styles of principals and the collaborative efforts of teachers in selected elementary schools in Minnesota, administered the SWCP to teachers in five transactional leader and five transformational leader schools to assess the collaborative efforts of teachers in the four sub-domain areas. She found that significant, predictive relationships existed between leadership and collaboration.

In a study to determine whether work culture was a significant determinant of school academic productivity in Catholic elementary schools, Cornell (1991) used the SWCP in a study of principals and full-time faculty members at 16 Catholic elementary schools in Baltimore, MD. The achievement percentile scores in math and reading for

fourth and eighth graders were used to measure productivity, while the SWCP scores were used to assess the perceptions of principals and faculty concerning the relationship between work culture and productivity. Her research found no significant relationship between the two factors, although subsequent interviews seemed to indicate that among schools with a higher SES, there was a perception that work culture did make a difference.

Bursheim (1993) utilized the SWCP in a study involving K-6 teachers and principals of 19 schools in Minnesota, Colorado, and Pennsylvania in an examination of the relationship between cooperative learning settings and productive organizations to discover the variations impacted by school and faculty characteristics in dimensions of Productive School Work Culture and a Cooperative Learning School Environment. The researcher sought to determine if there were positive relationships that existed between perceived practices and values in dimensions of cooperative learning environments relative to productive school work cultures; if significant differences between study participants and their length in the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program existed; if significant differences between principals' cooperative learning training relative to variations and predictive differences in regard to faculty gender and years of teaching experience in their value of cooperative learning dimensions existed; if significant predictive differences related to faculty characteristics existed, and cooperative learning training and cooperative learning class time in relation to variations in perceived practices and values in dimensions of cooperative learning and productive work culture; and whether or not existent differences relative to school size and variables in professional education were significant and consistent. The results from the research were that

significant positive relationships existed between the perceived practices investigated and the dimensions of Cooperative Learning School Environments and Productive School Work Culture as well as between most of the dimensions of value regarding Cooperative Learning School Environments and Productive School Work Culture; that although school size was not a significant factor, significant differences could be attributed to other factors such as efforts toward collaboration, the complexity of communications, processes for decision making, etc.; the length of time in the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program was significant; that faculty gender, professional education related to cooperative learning, and years as principal/years of experience yielded significant predictive differences while amount of training/years of experience yielded higher acceptance of the hypotheses of value in Cooperative Learning Environments for participants with less than 10 years of experience, but that as cooperative learning class time increased, its acceptance tended to increase.

Gossard (1993) found that schools that use accreditation models requiring staff involvement in the process of accreditation tend to have more productive school work cultures. She used the SWCP in an attempt to determine whether elementary schools that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and utilize one of four types of accreditation models (i.e., traditional accreditation models)—1) a 10-year self-study that involves the staff in comprehensive study in 10 areas; 2) a 5-year interim review in which staff monitors and revises the self-study and an annual report of progress; 3) goals that are worked on during each of the remaining eight years are reported and requires no staff involvement; and 4) a school renewal model which requires staff developing yearly plans for continuous school improvement in specific areas)

exhibit a difference in work culture in relation to the overall school work culture which include the four domains that comprise the SWCP: planning, program development, staff development, and assessment. She stated that the findings of the research “clearly reveal that there was a more productive school work culture when teachers were involved in the decision to use the school renewal model, either in collaboration with the school administration or through input to the school administration,” as opposed to when the decision was made alone by “either the school administration or the district administration” (p. 128).

Bishop (1995) examined the relationship between school productivity and school work culture in public elementary schools in Georgia. Teachers in schools identified by a state model that selected teachers from schools that exceeded, positively or negatively, expectations on the state mandated test were administered the SWCP. After applying Idaszak and Drasgow’s Revised Job Diagnostic Survey for statistical analyses, the researcher found that there was no effect between school work culture and school productivity, and that a *perceived higher school work culture* did not influence student performance, positively, on the mandated state tests. However, *perceived teacher autonomy* produced an effect on performance level.

Bruner (1997) included the SWCP in a study that sought to determine the extent to which schools identified as either high or low performing according to the academic indicators of the State of Florida’s Vital Signs were functions of highly developed school work cultures. She found that the study participants that had been deemed *High Performance Schools* did, indeed, consist of school work cultures that were more highly



developed and collaborative by nature than those schools identified as *Low Performance Schools*.

To determine whether there was a high correlation between scores from the SWCP and Snyder's Education Quality Benchmark System (EQBS), Greenlee (1997) investigated internal consistency reliability and criterion-related validity using data from a sampling of six low and high performing Central Florida elementary schools as identified by the Florida Vital Signs indicators. Her efforts resulted in findings that both the SWCP and the EQBS measured the same construct, school work culture. Although the magnitude of the relationship was found to be modest, a statistically significant correlation existed. The instruments were also found to measure different attributes of school work culture.

***Related Studies.*** Balcerek (1999), in the previously discussed study, utilized *ex post facto research* from the ABC Accountability Model in public elementary schools in North Carolina to investigate whether the leadership practices of principals in high and low performing schools existed. She compared principals' scores and teacher ratings derived from the administration of the Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Kouzes and Posner at high performing or inadequately performing schools and determined that there was no statistically significant relationship in the effective leadership practices of principals whether they were in high or inadequately performing schools. Limitations presented in the study were that principals and teachers were assumed to respond conscientiously, to maintain high ethics in the administration of the survey and the following of the administration procedures, and that teachers were not intimidated in the process of assessing their principal.

Welter (1990) investigated how collaborative school work cultures affected teacher efficacy (their self-reflection on issues of competency) and the influential effect of teaching on student learning at the secondary level. The findings of the study indicated that no significant relationships obtained between collaborative school work culture and teacher efficacy and that very little collaborative work existed at the secondary level for schools that did not participate in the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program. Also, variables other than collaborative school work culture had significant and more predictive effects on teacher efficacy.

### **The State of the Nation's Educational System**

“Education is widely held to be crucial for the survival and success of individuals and countries in the emerging global environment” (Louis, Leithwood, Washington, & Anderson, 2010, p. 7). According to Provasnik, Gonzales, and Miller (2009), while the performance of American students “neither lead nor trail the world in reading, mathematics, or science at any grade or age” (p. 45), it has been shown that the achievement of American students continually lags behind that of international students from other industrialized nations in administrations of international assessments of student achievement. In contrast, Loveless (2002) states that American students are cast in *a favorable light* in elementary schools. “American students rank among the top one-third of nations in mathematics” . . . and *even better* in reading . . . “one of three or four countries with the highest test scores. High school comparisons, on the other hand, are a national embarrassment” with U.S. students scoring *well below average* in math and science (p. 16). However, there are differing purposes between international assessments and the data yielded from such assessments should be used, as is suggested by the

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), to “enable the United States to benchmark its performance to that of other countries” (2008a, p. 1). And, decades later, despite attention, few *comprehensive explanations* can adequately account for the gap in achievement existent between Black and White students (Burnett, 2006). But, new research suggests that the plight of those “students who lose the most ground academically in U.S. public schools [which] may be the brightest African-American students” (Viadero, 2008a, ¶ 1), has lately been addressed by a significant increase in the states’ support for publicly-funded universal pre-K programs (Mead, 2008). Additional evidence has been reported in data from “long-term trend assessments” by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which shows that across age groups 9, 13, and 17, “increases from 1975 to 2008 were greater for Black students than for White students in reading” and in mathematics from 1973 to 2008 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008b, p. 2). Chudowsky, Chudowsky, and Kober (2009, p. 1) found that “progress in math was particularly noteworthy . . . for African Americans scoring at or above the proficiency level, where 95% of states with [adequate] data [reported] made gains.” The NCES (2010a) in its annual report *The Nation’s Report Card—Reading 2009: National Assessment of Educational Progress at grades 4 and 8*—showed that while reading scores for students in grade 8 were up since 2007, the scores for students in grade 4 remained unchanged. Other findings reported were:

- One-third of fourth graders performed at or above the *Proficient* level;
- Performance of racial/ethnic fourth-grade groups has not significantly changed since 2007;
- Racial/ethnic gaps persist in achievement for students in grade 4;

- Private school fourth-grade students outperform public school students;
- Female students score higher than male students in grade 4;
- Results by family income level for fourth-grade students have shown no significant change since 2007;
- There has been an increase in scores since 2007 in three states and decrease in four states for fourth graders;
- Gains were made for lower- and middle-performing students in grade 8;
- All racial/ethnic eighth grade groups made gains since 2007, but gaps persist;
- Public eighth-grade students have made gains since 2007;
- Gender gaps were smaller for students in grade 8 than in 1992;
- Lower-income students and students in city schools in grade 8 made score gains; and
- While scores increased in nine states since 2007, no states showed a decline for students in grade 8.

On the other hand, the 2009 NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) found that in some of the nation's largest cities, reading gains were being made in grades 4 and 8 when compared to national student performance at the same levels (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010b).

Other arguments suggest that the continued growth and development of the charter school movement and other school choice options have helped increase educational opportunities for American parents. Opportunities for school choice in the United States, as revealed by Tice, Chapman, Princiotta, and Bielick (2006), have continually expanded since the 1990s with parents now having the ability to access and

select from a wide range of public school options including “ interdistrict or intradistrict choice plans, charter schools, magnet schools, and publicly funded voucher options to attend private schools”(p. iii). Private school options exist that allow parents to “elect to enroll their children in private schools (religious based or secular) or decide to homeschool them” (p. iii).

More importantly, according to Lips and Feinberg (2006), is that the increase in the amount of empirical data available to researchers over the past 15-20 years has enabled researchers to study more accurately how school choice programs impact students, families, and school systems. Also, they state that researchers are now able to provide evidence that school choice programs are actually working. Furthermore, they state that compared to public school students, students who participate in school choice programs have made academic gains and when public schools face competition from choice programs, they improve as well (Lips & Feinberg, 2006). Then again, Smrekar and Goldring (1999) pointed out that school improvements have been impacted by parental choice and are rather ambitious and controversial.

Proponents of school choice maintain that it promotes racial balance voluntarily rather than through court-ordered busing of children to distant schools in unfamiliar neighborhoods. They argue that it enhances academic excellence by making individual schools more focused on providing quality instruction in order to attract students. Finally, choice is seen as a way to counteract the effects of income level on educational opportunities by establishing expanded options for lower-income families that are typically available to wealthier families who are able to buy or rent homes in neighborhoods with more desirable schools. (p. 6)

But, “the discussion about *choice* today is as much about *how* and *how much* as it is about *whether*” (Brookings Institute, 2003, p. 3).

Subsequently, there are two underlying responses to public policy on the increased demand for school choice that policymakers have been forced to deal with

(Sweetland, 2002). On the one hand, there remains pressure to provide more choice options for families within the present public school system, and on the other, provide improved quality in public schooling to eliminate the need of families to seek alternatives outside the auspices of the public school system with each of these responses necessitating more funding and “time to implement than did the existing systems” (Sweetland, 2002, p. 9).

Meanwhile, millions of students leave the public education system without the benefit of having received a quality education (Lips, 2008). Although Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, and Snyder (2000) have warned that unless schools undergo a change in the provision of services and methods of delivery, they continue to risk the prospect that students will be indoctrinated with outdated skills and orientations more appropriate for days past and that are not applicable or relevant to social issues of the present and the globalized workforce. Similarly, Deal and Peterson (1999) posited, schools must be held to the same standards as business because “poor products can be recycled but a young person who does not receive a quality education is hard to salvage” (p. 11), therefore equating to much higher risks in education when things are not *done right*. For that reason, the reform of schools in urban areas must follow the lead of parents who are increasingly choosing schools for their child(ren) that have shown progress while emphasizing school climate and school culture over what has become the measure of record in all schools receiving public funding—performance on standardized tests (Baxter, 2004).

With the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, an era of noticeable increase in the public and political disapproval and dissatisfaction with public schooling began in the

U.S. continuing through the end of the 1990s (Reardon & Yun, 2002). As the public's unease with the quality of education "is at an all-time high, the public confidence in the ability of educators to address these concerns is at an all-time low" (Schlechty, 1997, p. 1). In recent times, "our nation's schools have suffered a serious loss of public confidence. . . . The public's support dwindled as a steady stream of stories emerged about violence in the schools, declining student achievement, and the poor preparation and performance of teachers" (Dwyer, Barnett, & Lee, 1987, p. 30). In June of 2008, the NCES released the seminal report, *The Condition of Education 2008* (Planty, Hussar, Snyder, Provasnik, Kena, Dinkes, KewalRamani, & Kemp) which detailed reports of occurrences of crime in the nation's public schools, comparisons of achievement on international assessments, and teacher and staff information as well as other important data regarding the state of education. In the same report, Schneider, the commissioner of the NCES, looked at overall comparisons of international assessments and wrote that in 2006, "U.S. 4<sup>th</sup>-graders performed above the international average [of the] 45 educational jurisdictions around the world" (p. vi), according to the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS), which assessed their reading literacy. "Students in 10 jurisdictions scored higher than U.S. students, on average, and U.S. students scored higher, on average than their peers in 22 jurisdictions" (p. vi).

Orfield (2002) hinted that with the intense scrutiny that has been placed on the inequalities found in public schools over the past 20 years, a consequential increase in the strength of the suggestions developed that private schools would continue to offer attractive alternatives to parents. As previously lamented, "regrettably, millions of American students continue to pass through the nation's public schools without receiving

a quality education” (Lips, 2008, p. 1). Resultantly, a trend developed in which students were withdrawn from public schools between 1993 and 2003 that has generalized across gender, SES and of poverty, grade levels, levels of parent education, family type and structure, geographic region, and types of community. Tice et al. (2006) stated that the trend also held for White and Black students alike. Additionally, tuition voucher programs that provide families with low-incomes an opportunity to send their child or children to tuition-based, private schools have become a powerful school choice option because those families would not be able, otherwise, to afford that choice without financial assistance (Watkins, 2006). Also, there has been a noticeable increase in the parents opting to homeschool their child(ren) for a variety of reasons including “to provide religious or moral instruction, concerns about the school environment, and dissatisfaction with the academic instruction at other schools” (Hussar & Bailey, 2008, p. 2). According to the National Center for Education Statistics’ National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), “1.5 million students (1,508,000) were homeschooled in the United States in the spring of 2007” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008c, ¶ 3).

Then again, there are varying opinions about other factors that cause drains on a society when the education system performs poorly. More to the point, Lips (2008) posits that poor performance in the nation’s public schools results in an even greater imposition on taxpayers in the form of decreased life expectancy and earning potential for students, and greater societal costs such as an increase in social welfare payments levied on our communities. Over the years, policymakers’ proclivity toward the measurement of the academic performance of students, schools, and districts has caused a



steep increase in the number of legislators and state leaders who seriously consider connecting school choice options to ‘measured academic performance’ (American Legislative Exchange Council, n.d.). On the contrary, Schlechty (1997) argued, “it is not, however, declining performance that threatens America’s schools; rather, it is the failure of America’s leaders to properly frame the problems that beset these schools” (p. 1). Additionally, extenuating and contributory factors are consistently overlooked or misrepresented when discussions about measured academic performance of students take place. For instance, Planty et al. (2008) argue that one aspect changing in the composition of public school enrollment is that the distribution of racial and ethnic kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in public schools is shifting. The percentage of White students enrolled in public schools decreased between 1972 and 2006 from 78% to 57% while the percentage of students identified as being part of a minority group, whether racially or ethnically, increased from 22% to 31% between 1972 and 1986 and to 43% by 2006. Furthermore, they show where the number of children who speak a language other than English in the home and are of school age (ages 5-17) also increased by 11% from 9% to 20% (3.8 million to 10.8 million) between 1979 and 2006. Also, during 2006, of the school-age children who spoke another language in the home, about 72% spoke Spanish. While there was no measurable difference in the percentage of students who speak English with difficulty (from 5% to 6%) between 2000 and 2006, there was a growth of about 3% between 1979 and 2000 (from 3% to 6%).

In any case, Deal and Peterson (1999) in agreement with Orfield, stated that American schools need extensive improvement and should act more like businesses. As Allen (2008, ¶ 1) pointed out, “despite a country founded by risk-takers, our schools are

the antithesis of American culture—bound by arcane rules, operating regardless of outcomes, eschewing creative technologies and managing human resources like spokes in a wheel, without differentiation or reward.” Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, and Snyder (2000) warn that unless schools undergo a change in the provision of services and methods of delivery, they continue to risk the prospect that students will be indoctrinated with outdated skills and orientations more appropriate for days past and that are not applicable or relevant to social issues of the present and the globalized marketplace and workforce. Lips (2008) cautions that such extensive failure could possibly endanger the prosperity and security of the nation. “Consequently, U.S. politicians of all stripes have placed education at the center of their political platforms” (Louis, Leithwood, Washington, & Anderson, 2010, p. 7). Meanwhile, the cost of public schooling has escalated to a staggering figure that most Americans never imagined while the “seemingly insurmountable challenge society has imposed on public schools” (Sweetland, 2002, p. 12) is often overlooked. Annually, the United States amasses over \$550 billion spent on our K-12 public school system (Lips, 2008), with a reported \$10,892 total expenditures per student in 2004-05, an increase of over 29% from the 1989-90 school-year figures of \$8,437 in terms of constant dollars (Planty et al., 2008). Current expenditures are expected to increase to \$626 billion annually with an \$11,600 per year expenditure per pupil projected by 2017 (Hussar & Bailey, 2008).

### **School Reform**

School reform in American public education is a constant state with school choice, and “has always existed” (Sweetland, 2002) as one continuous ongoing educational reform initiative (Cooley, 2007). Over the last half century alone, public

education has undergone tremendous changes while under constant criticism since its beginning (Sweetland, 2002). In agreement, Barnes (1995) wrote about numerous reform efforts at all levels, national, state, and district alike, where school stakeholders, educators and legislators were focused on trying to find ways to meet the extraordinary challenges of schooling that continue to place many of the nation's students at risk. Good and Braden (2000) contended that both politicians and the media have described American education as being in a state of crisis that dates back to the mid-1950s, at least with the problem of education varying with each passing decade. Hayes (2004) argued that while vocational skills program attracted increasing numbers of students in the 1960s, a conscious effort was made to alleviate the escalating student pressure for increased significance in the curriculum which resulted in the addition of a variety of electives in the curriculum to help students develop self-esteem as seen with the development of the middle school concept. In spite of the well-documented woes of the American public school system, George and McEwin (1999), argue that the middle school has shown promise as a result of the school reform efforts of the 1960s. They state that middle school education has enjoyed "three decades of comprehensive, lasting, and relatively successful reorganization [experiencing] . . . major changes [that] have been wrought from new school names to whole new student-focused philosophies and programs (p. 14). They further stated that the high school was impacted when "virtually every school district in America [has] invested time, money, and energy changing school grade levels, taking one or more grades from the elementary school, and moving the ninth grade to the high school" (p. 14).

The school reform movement of the 1970s focused on a humanistic and open education approach that gave students the freedom to choose curricular options of interest to them as schools featured open-plan teaching and open-space architectural design with teaching roles defined as guides and facilitators (Good & Braden, 2000). As the 1980s arrived, the seminal commentary *A Nation at Risk* documented for the country a bleak view to the landscape of public education in America. The commission contracted to author the report identified several *risk* indicators plaguing public education which included:

- International comparisons of student education that revealed American students scoring lower than students of other industrialized nations;
- 23 million functionally illiterate adults (measured on simple tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension);
- Approximately 13% of 17-year olds considered functionally illiterate (up to 40% of minority youth);
- Achievement scores for high school students on standardized tests, on average, lower than in 1956 (when Sputnik was launched);
- A majority of gifted students not being able to correlate tested ability and comparable achievement;
- A decline from 1963 to 1980 in average verbal scores of over 50 points and 40 points in mathematics on the College School Board's Aptitude Tests (SAT);
- Many 17-year olds lacking "higher order" intellectual skills;
- A steady decline in national assessments of science achievement between 1969 to 1977;

- An increase by 72% of remedial mathematics courses in public colleges and universities between 1975 and 1980;
- Lower tested achievement scores of students graduating from college;
- Costs in the billions reported by business and military leaders on remedial education and basic job skills training such as reading, writing, spelling and computation (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Conversely, extracurricular activities and clubs received increased importance in American high schools while students spent less time studying core curricula subjects and time allotted for instruction decreased (Hayes, 2004). According to Barnes (1995), because the most severe problems in education were documented to be America's high schools, the reform efforts of the early 1980s were directed towards high schools.

George and McEwin (1999) warned that high schools, where students are more diverse in their post school plans, would continue to undergo substantial transformation throughout the early 2000s because it has become essential due to the diversity of the student body and mandates supplied by reports from the state and national levels.

The 1990s saw the role of the school leader strengthen as site management and decentralization of district administration placed emphasis on building administrators' *working knowledge of natural systems* while schools responded to *their changing environment* and became "stronger social forces within their communities for shaping the conditions for successful living and working" (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 2000, p. 10). Studies conducted during this time, such as an examination of teacher perceptions of effective leadership by Belew-Nyquist (1997) strongly suggested that building administrators needed to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of school culture

by gaining insight from the perspective of the teacher about increasing effective leadership and facilitating change that was successful. It was also during the mid-1990s that the accountability movement began to make a stronger presence in public education with the enactment of Public Law 103-227, commonly known as Goals 2000 or the Educate America Act (1994). Outlined in this law were the educational goals to be realized by the year 2000 which included:

- School Readiness. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- School Completion. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.
- Student Achievement and Citizenship. American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter—including English, Mathematics, Science, Foreign Languages, Civics and Government, Economics, Arts, History and Geography—and leave school prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.
- Teacher Education and Professional Development. The nation’s teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to . . . prepare . . . students for the next century.
- Mathematics and Science. United States students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
- Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

- Safe, disciplined, and alcohol- and drug-free schools. Every school in America will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
- Parental Participation. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d., ¶ 4.)

However, by 1996 another path was being charted by government and business leaders at the National Education Summit when the provision for higher standards appeared (Good & Braden, 2000), and yet another with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which solidified the place of high-stakes standardized testing (Bracey, 2003) and increased the attractiveness and formidability of school choice as witnessed by the steady increase towards family and student over the last half of the twentieth century (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010), albeit privatization and/or charter schooling in American public education,.

Consequently, the disillusionment over the degree of quality government and other public institutions exhibit in their ability to resolve vital societal problems has grown over the past 30 years (Cooper & Randall, 2008). One explanation may be found by contrasting the climate in business with the climate in education as Sweetland (2002) did:

As consistent with the state of society and industry at the time, whether all learned was not particularly important. Just as in the industrial complex, defects and rejects were tolerated, not to mention expected. The product—schooling—was considered effective as long as some or enough children learned. Then somewhere along the line, the charge of public schools shifted. The charge became more inclusive and all encompassing. (p. 11)

Lately, an escalation in movement so that the “discussions of the competitive consequences of school choice are most often framed in terms of economic theories of how markets affect the behavior of consumers and suppliers” has occurred (Arsen & Ni, 2008, p. 4). In the attempt to pressure schools to be more responsive to consumer needs and preferences, global educational reform has placed more emphasis on “market-style mechanisms” that focus on provider competitiveness and increased consumer choice schools. In the meantime, many Americans’ lives are affected by their lack of a quality education. “All stakeholders—parents, students, those who teach and run education systems, and the general public—therefore need good information on how well their education systems prepare students for life” (Watanabe & Ischinger, 2006, p. 3). Moreover, as Lipps (2008, pp. 1-2) states, “taxpayers must shoulder the burden of costs caused by the uneducated population.” Consequently, the functioning of America’s educational system has a tremendous impact on the productivity of the economy and how it is distributed across the population (Seftor, 2001). Therefore, it has become “less clear, however . . . the degree to which the public-good aspects of public education necessitate direct public administration of schooling” (Lubienski, 2003, p. 481). Thus, the confidence in government programs and public institutions shifted more or less in the direction of the private sector (Cooper & Randall, 2008) as has happened in America in more recent decades as the attempt to regain competitiveness resulted in increased efforts towards the deregulation of industries and institutions that were essentially privatized and/or previously subsidized, perceptually, in the sake of the public’s interests (Sweetland, 2002).



**The Great Recession.** “The financial and banking crisis of 2008 mushroomed into a severe downturn in the economy in 2008 and 2009, a downturn so severe that it has been termed the ‘Great Recession’ . . . and is especially important to consider” due to its impact on the “largest group of U.S. citizens in poverty,” children under the age of 18 (Foundation for Child Development, 2010, p. 5). The report further outlines the effects, direct and indirect, the recession has on education including: significant federal and state budget cuts in education, healthcare, and services supporting children and youth—services that help to “prepare the next generation of children, especially those in their early years, to be healthy and properly prepared to learn when they enter school” (p. 5); an increase in “the number of children living in families with incomes below the official *poverty line*” (p. 8); and, an increase in the number of children living in inadequate housing situations and homelessness.

**School Choice.** In order to realize fully the promise of competition as a strategy of reform, the public school system must feel the effects of challenge (When Schools Compete, 2001) by progressively-thinking educators to address the intrinsic problems in public education, such as receiving “an education that prepares them for the economic, social, and democratic demands of life and that students are not simply treated as pawns in the political arena” (Cooley, 2007, p. 247). Meanwhile, Augustine (2005) in an analysis of vouchers and the consequential implications for school reform concluded that public schools are not being sufficiently challenged nor subjected, adequately, to market-based pressures by noncompetitive, publicly financed voucher programs. At the same time, according to Lubienski (2003), policymakers are now more willing to develop policies reflective of a more “fundamental reconstruction in the theoretical prescriptions

for the delivery of public services” in which private interests are leveraged “to drive the provision of public goods” (p. 479). Seftor (2001) claims that although much of the recent discussion in academia, policy-making bodies, and among economists has been concentrated on matters of importance to the public sector, future policy undertaken regarding school reform will subsequently impact private institutions as well. Arsen and Ni (2008) state that policies designed for school choice were created to provide market-based incentives that will ultimately change consumer and supplier behavior which are families and schools respectively. Additionally, they say that these policies could possibly produce consequences that are either positive or negative for the traditional public school and the students that remain in them. Cooper and Randall (2008) argue that this policy shift increasingly drives the fear that “privatized agencies will take students away from the public system” and transfer the “measures of successful competition in education” from “profit outcomes,” to “the flow of student inputs and access to the throughputs” and increased public funding or tuition to hire and pay staff in a variety of public and private schools” (p. 210). Although used in an unfamiliar application regarding education, the terms used by Cooper and Randall (2008) as well as Arsen and Ni (2008) are explained as follows: a) “profit outcomes—outputs such as children enrolled in classes, taking and passing tests, being promoted, and going on for more education or getting a job”; b) inputs—“recruiting”; and c) throughputs—“programs, hours taught, and students accumulating enough credits and passing to the next grade” (p. 210). Nevertheless, where only a short period ago, few school choice programs were in existence and “one [had] to scour the countryside to find sizable choice interventions” (Peterson, 2008, p. 5), to the present as over a dozen states have private school choice

programs and school reforms offering parents increased options in choosing schools for their child(ren) continue to spread across the nation (Lips & Feinberg, 2006).

“Education choice exercises a powerful pull on parents of school children” (Greene, Loveless, MacLeod, Nechyha, Peterson, Rosenthal, & Whitehurst, 2010, p. 5). School choice has been practiced by parents for years, to some degree (Cooley, 2007); therefore, it is not really a new idea. It is a *concept and practice* that is neither *radical*, nor is it *really experimental*, but “in fact, if you come from a high-income background, the likelihood is that your parents employed a well-used form of school choice” (Enlow & Ladner, 2005, p. 1), which was leveraged by “buying a home in an area with better performing public schools or by paying twice for education, once in taxes and once in private school tuition (Enlow & Ladner, p. 1). Cooley (2007) stated that although the utilization of choice was more restricted in earlier years when minorities were limited to the schools they could attend simply “on the basis of state-sanctioned racial prejudice” (p. 251), the appearance of school choice in modern contexts is the ability of parents to relocate to districts offering open enrollment, allowing them to choose the school within the district that their child attends or to simply purchase a residence in a high performing school zone so that their child can attend (Sweetland, 2002). In concurrence, Greene et al. (2010) estimated that 24% of parents purchased their current homes so their children could attend the neighborhood schools and 15% of public school students are enrolled in schools selected by their parents rather than schools assigned by districts. However, school choice was not a common practice within the public school system and did not become a readily available option to parents until the 1960s when the magnet school was

introduced, but the range of choice options has continually expanded since then (Grady, Bielick, & Aud, 2010).

For parents of school-age children, LeFevre (2002) opines that concerns appear to be simple, but their concerns are driving “elected officials at all levels of government to respond” (p. 1) quickly. Parents “recognize that a good education is one of the most fundamental building blocks upon which their child’s future success can be based” and the desire “to see their children succeed has been the driving force behind the growing discontent with our nation’s schools” (p. 1). Parents from all walks of life want a better life for their children and “there are few things that concern a parent more” (p. 1).

In their discussion *Choice and accountability: Using school choice to overcome failing academic performance*, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) concluded that “most efforts to expand the educational choices available to America’s elementary and secondary students are driven by a concern that some public schools are failing to provide their students with the education they would need to succeed” (American Legislative Exchange Council, *Choice and accountability*, n.d., ¶ 1).

Therefore, competitive market theories appeal to advocates of school choice and are used more commonly to predict how school choice policies will be responded to by the traditional public school (Arsen & Ni, 2008). Consequently, “*a consumer orientation is developing* with an accompanying question of just *who is the consumer?* As impractical as it might seem, the consumer is everyone” (Sweetland, 2002, p. 10) and the reforms that may lead to solutions in this educational crisis are driven by competition (Allen, 2008). For that reason, a period of rapid growth in school choice transpired due, “in large part to the continuing problems in American publicly funded education, particularly

education in urban areas” (Enlow & Ladner, 2005, p. 2). Accordingly, in response to this, measures were taken by the federal courts that stepped in and removed control from the local school board and transferred it to the state capitol where legislators created a voucher program “in an effort to help children trapped in Cleveland’s (Ohio) failing schools” as occurred during the 1990s when graduation rates dipped to 28%, “one of the worst in the nation” at that time (LeFerve, 2002, p. 1, ¶ 5).

In 2005, ALEC developed six model bills to help legislators craft school choice legislation in their representative districts and stated that the cornerstone of their legislative efforts would be simple just by giving the freedom to choose the best school for their child(ren) to parents: “recognize that school vouchers, tuition tax credits, charter schools, home schooling and virtual schooling . . . are all different incarnations of a critically important concept in the attempt to improve the quality of education in the nation’s schools” (Enlow & Ladner, 2005, p.1).

As well, Greene et al. (2010) believe that several rationales supportive of “the view that parents should be given greater opportunities to choose their children’s schools”, including Friedman’s economic theory—when given autonomy, school districts would operate as do most monopolistic enterprises, *inefficiently*; James Coleman’s social capital theory—suggests that the educational networks formed in choice communities generate social capital; innovation—choice creates better designs of education programs and a greater variety of educational providers; and social equity—“the quality of public schools should not vary substantially based on the socioeconomic status of the families they serve” (pp. 5-6).

According to the Center for Education Reform (CER), a Washington, DC-based school reform advocacy group, in its simplest form, “the term school choice means giving parents the power and opportunity to choose the school their child will attend” (Center for Education Reform, n.d., p. 1 ¶ 1). School choice also represents a method of providing “better educational opportunity, because it uses the dynamics of consumer opportunity and provider competition to drive service quality” (Center for Education Reform, n.d., ¶ 2). And as schools become increasingly thought of and treated as businesses, so too are their functions, expectations, and outcomes related to the business model/mentality which understands that “the knowledge base of the best business . . . also includes knowing that an organization cannot serve all customers in every way” (Sweetland, 2002, p. 10). This is the exact tendency now occurring in the educational arena, as the provisions for elements of school choice (i.e., vouchers, charter schools, etc.) and the ensuing discussions take place, driven by the fact that “traditional public schools have little incentive to improve their efficiency because they operate in relatively monopolistic markets” (Arsen & Ni, 2008, p. 3). Greene et al. (2010) offers the rationale that innovation, encouraged by a greater variety “in providers of education and designs for educational programs,” is linked to choice much more so than by the way that students are assigned to schools in monopolistic systems. Lips (2008) calculated the investment by taxpayers for a K-12 public education at roughly \$100,000, which “often does NOT (emphasis added) purchase a quality education” (p. 2). Sweetland (2002) formulated that “failures [in the free market] create room for more successful producers to enter the market, and consumers, in turn benefit from even lower prices due to

increasing competition among consumers” (p. 10). Education, like most other goods is a commodity that is “sold in a market that undergoes constant change” (Seftor, 2001, p. 2).

According to Cooley (2007), school choice is “essentially . . . altering the governance and funding of the present K-12 public education system to allow parents and students to select the educational institution(s) that best fits their needs” and its “rationale . . . is inherently reliant upon the assumption that increasing private interests and marketplace competition in education will improve the opportunities for the selected students” (p. 246).

The school choice movement has its roots in educational reform theory and practice that dates to the early 1970s, when sociologist Christopher Jencks wrote a report for the federal Office of Economic Opportunity that proposed a voucher program that would enable parents of public school children to choose the school—public or private—that their child would attend. Each parent would receive a voucher, representing a portion of education funding, to be presented at the selected school; the plan provided for additional dollars to be added to the vouchers of poorer children, to encourage schools to accept these students as well as to recognize the necessity (and the cost) of additional educational resources for them. (Cookson & Berger, 2002, p. 26)

Jencks’ views, however, can be traced further to the mid-1950s to Friedman who advocated the use of public funding to finance private schooling through the use of vouchers (Enlow, 2006; Fowler, 2003). Enlow (2006) further argued that the present tendency to provide more choice options in K-12 education is attributed to Friedman whom he said:

Friedman gave new articulation to an old idea of liberty and freedom. He contended that tax dollars should follow the child, allowing parents to choose the school that best fits their child’s unique needs. His proposal, which came to be known as school vouchers, was based on his belief that choices in schooling will ‘create effective competition and improve performance in education, all to the eventual benefit of children, parents, educators, taxpayers, and the society at large. (Enlow, 2006, p. 5)

Although school choice programs have increased a great deal over the past two decades (Fowler, 2002), they are typically considered to be reform initiatives designed to increase competition among America’s schools “through charter schools, vouchers, and tax credits” (Peterson, 2008, p. 5). Several types of school choice programs are employed by districts around the country including a relative newcomer to education, virtual education—online education, residential choice—parents purchase homes in the neighborhoods they want their child to attend school (Greene et al., 2010), and tuition vouchers, also known as *full school choice programs*, that provide a portion of the allotted state public educational funding to send their child to school, allows parents to then use those funds to *attend the school of their choice* while giving them the “fiscal authority to send their child to the educational institution that best suits their child, whether it is a religious or parochial school, another private school, or a neighborhood or magnet public school” (Center for Education Reform, n.d., ¶ 1). These types of programs “specifically target the academic needs of low-income (frequently minority) students, who often live and go to school in high-poverty areas . . . [and] are stuck in persistently low-performing public schools that are not meeting their educational needs” (Watkins, 2006, p. 3), but all approved programs operating in the 12 states that have voucher programs “target voucher eligibility to students that are disadvantaged in various ways” (Wolf, 2008, p. 415). Although vouchers account for “the most contentious debate regarding educational reform” (Seftor, 2001, p. 6), they are also “one of the oldest, most well known, and more fervently criticized forms of school choice . . . the voucher itself is little more than a piece of paper or a credit that can be used to pay for schooling (Sweetland, 2002, p. 9). Nevertheless, the inconclusiveness of the impact of vouchers



and voucher programs due to their *noncompetitive design*, inherent difficulties in the measurement of academic achievement, and the legal and political difficulties that accompany voucher programs (i.e., use at private religious schools) create uncertainty whether they will present a plausible solution to the crisis existent in public schooling today (Augustine, 2005).

Another form of school choice is called *controlled choice* which originated largely to quench mounting pressures on the state to desegregate schools (Peterkin & Jackson, 1994). Controlled choice, as Wells (1990) stated, is a choice option that allows parents to choose the school their child(ren) attend within a specified zone as long as racial and ethnic balances, which govern students' school assignments, are maintained at the school of choice, thereby eliminating market competition while allowing schools to develop unique programs that may be duplicated at other sites based on the successes realized. The basic premise of controlled choice is that school attendance areas are reorganized into zones that create more successful schools in all zones that may have existed in school attendance areas based on residence (Weaver, 1992).

“Private schools and public charter schools are often assumed to offer teachers more control over working conditions such as curricula, certifications, and contract requirements” (Gilbert, 2005, p. 2). Moreover, like private schools, both enjoying increased and widespread bipartisan support, charter schools also share diversity in mission and design (Powers, 2002). “Charter schools vaulted into the education policy arena several decades ago. In 1990, not a single charter program appeared on the American educational landscape; twenty years later, their rapid ascension in political popularity coincided with growth in enrollment” (Frankenberg, Siegal-Hawley, & Wang,

2010, p. 7). “Charter schools were developed, in part, to serve as an R&D engine for traditional public schools, resulting in a wide variety of school strategies and outcomes” (Dobbie & Fryer, 2011, p. i). Consequently, charter schools have become one of the most widely used forms of school choice in the United States today and “continue to be largely an urban phenomenon with more than half of all charter schools located in urban centers” (Latke & Gross, 2012, p. 13). A comprehensive study by Allen and Consoletti (2008) presented the following argument.

Charter schools are doing an especially good job of targeting services to students at both ends of the instructional spectrum who are failed by a “one-size-fits-all” education system: teen parents, special education students, English language learners, and gifted and talented students. Conventional public schools often do not provide the individualized attention and tailored curricula that these students need to ensure their success. (p. 5)

They also found that:

- States with multiple authorizers create the highest quality and quantity of charter schools.
- Charter schools have grown at a rapid pace over the last ten years, but state caps and moratoriums on new schools are now impeding the necessary growth;
- Even though they are public schools and should receive the same amount of federal, state and local funds, charter schools receive nearly 40 percent less funding than other public schools;
- Despite receiving less money, charter schools are able to offer longer school days, longer school years, and innovative curricula not available in conventional public schools;
- Contrary to what charter school opponents have reported for years, charter schools do serve a majority of at-risk minority and poor students; and
- States with strong charter laws give charter schools freedom and autonomy to manage their operations. Eighty-five percent of [study] respondents [did] not participate in a union or collective bargaining unit, and charters are moving towards performance incentives and merit-based pay. (p. 3)

In a press release regarding the popularity of school choice, the CER stated that “as children across America head back to school, new evidence shows that school choice is more popular than ever before” with more families “choosing charter schools and

voucher programs to meet the educational needs of their children” (Center for Education Reform, 2007b, p. 1, ¶ 1). But on the other hand, charter schools have been reported as a contributory force in the re-segregation of the country’s schools. Recently, achievement differences in U.S. public attention has increased for *racial and ethnic background* students and “the effectiveness of charter schools across ethnic and racial dimensions is especially important since so many charter schools are focused on serving historically underserved minority students” (CREDO, 2011, p. 13). Orfield (2010) states,

The charter school movement has been a major political success, but it has been a civil rights failure. As the country continues moving steadily toward greater segregation and inequality of education for students of color in schools with lower achievement and graduation rates, the rapid growth of charter schools has been expanding a sector that is even more segregated than the public schools. . . . We know that choice programs can either offer quality educational options with racially and economically diverse schooling to children who otherwise have few opportunities, or choice programs can actually increase stratification and inequality depending on how they are designed. The charter effort, which has largely ignored the segregation issue, has been justified by claims about superior educational performance, which simply are not sustained by the research. Though there are some remarkable and diverse charter schools, most are neither. The lessons of what is needed to make choice work have usually been ignored in charter school policy. Magnet schools are the striking example of and offer a great deal of experience in how to create educationally successful and integrated choice options. (p. 1)

Greene et al. (2010) presented the following recommendations to expand choice options:

- choice be exercised through systems in which parents have more options than at present (with the expansion of virtual education programs being a promising means to that end);
- admission into particular schools within systems of choice be open;
- selection into oversubscribed schools and programs be determined by lottery (which could be conducted using weights to enhance socioeconomic or geographic balance when that is a desired goal);
- choice systems not include a default (all parents would have to choose);
- all schools supported with public funds within a choice system be subject to the same standards and assessment regimen under which traditional public

schools within a state are required to operate in order to provide transparency for choice;

- the popularity of schools as revealed through parental preferences be reflected in funding formulas so that more popular schools garner additional resources to meet enrollment demand;
- substantially undersubscribed schools be restructured or closed;
- a metric of the extent of choice at the school district level be developed that would be available to the public and policymakers; and
- school districts with both low levels of choice *and* low levels of performance be especially encouraged at the federal level to increase their levels of choice. (pp. 19-20)

*Charter Schools.* “Charter schools are part of a reform effort that is redefining public education in the United States” (Lubienski, 2000, p. 3). Gleason, Clark, Tuttle, and Dwyer (2010) noted that since the creation of the Public Charter School Program (PCSP) by Congress in 1994, designed as a means of providing technical assistance, start-up funding grants, and promoting growth and development, the federal government has played a major role in supporting the charter school movement *during their brief history* and have returned federally appropriated funding (\$256 million in FY 2010) to levels prior to the declines experienced between 2004 and 2008.

In the Modern Era, charter schools represent one of the most, if not the most, revolutionary, yet controversial, educational reform initiatives (Sarason, 1998, p. xvii) mirroring the present preference of the “do-it-yourself attitude” (Brouillette, 2002, p. 1) that began sweeping the nation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. These schools, according to Bancroft (2003) tend to be seen more “as a means to revitalize education reform . . . [that] are supposed to offer educators a chance to break away from burdensome bureaucracy and regulations to form successful, even innovative, teaching and learning environments” (p. 2). Allen (Allen & Consoletti, 2008) said that:

Charter schools are [by definition] great public schools . . . [that] some are already there, some are still working at it, and occasionally, some miss the mark

altogether . . . like any relatively new innovation, however, the kinks are part of the experience that make all aspects of schooling better . . . [because] mistakes are good to learn from, if discovered quickly and corrected . . . [which is] perhaps the most salient reason that charter schools now serve students in larger percentages than any other single reform of public education to date. . . . The great public innovation [that we know as charter schools] is delivering on the promise of what makes a great public school. (p. 2)

Moreover, charter schools “offer all three hallmarks of real education reform—or disruptive technology . . . accountability, performance-based pay . . . [and] consumer choice” (Allen, 2008, ¶ 3), while receiving only “61 percent of the funding of their district counterparts, averaging \$6,585 per pupil compared to \$10,771 per pupil at conventional district schools” (Center for Education Reform, 2008a, ¶ 1). In the state of Florida, though, charters schools receive 69% of the funding that conventional public schools receive, averaging \$6,552 per pupil at charter schools compared to \$9,542 per pupil in conventional public schools (Center for Education Reform, 2008b).

Drawing from the ideas attributed to Shanker’s 1988 keynote address to the American Federation of Teachers, the concept of charter schools began the path to existence (Bracey, 2003; Brouillette, 2002; Cookson & Berger, 2002; Weil, 2000). As the latest offering of school choice (Good & Braden, 2000), and one element of the growing demand for more accountability, the idea that schools free from the overburden of federal, state, and district bureaucratic policy, as well as the exclusivity and providence of the local school board (Nathan, 1996, p. xiii), charter schools became an attractive concept that would provide competition for the stagnant, failing policies of public schooling that “offer parents and students an alternative to inadequate public schools” (Bancroft, 2003, p. 2). Since the opening of the first charter school in Minnesota in 1991, charter schools have made significant gains in the education of America’s school children

(Nathan, 1996). “Charter schools, for the most part, have been a K-12 phenomenon” (Wong & Tierney, 2001, p. 1081) and “have, in less than 15 years, become a reform movement of educational and political importance” (Cookson & Berger, 2002, p. 1).

Charter schools have been defined as: schools receiving public funding that remain independent of “direct government control, but held accountable for achieving certain levels of student performance and other specified outcomes” (Cookson & Berger, 2002, p. 25); contracted public schools that are legal entities held accountable under a negotiated contract with the empowering local district or state governing body formed by “a group of parents, teachers, school administrators, nonprofit agencies, organizations, or businesses [that seek to provide an] alternate to public schools in order to provide choice within the public school system” (Weil, 2000, p. 6). Betts and Tang (2011) state that they are public schools that “receive more independence from state laws and regulations than do traditional public schools [and are viewed as a] major innovation in the public school landscape” (p. 3) due to the inherent autonomy granted to “experiment with alternative curricula and pedagogical methods and different ways of hiring and training teachers” (p. 3). However they differ from the traditional public school because “they can be shut down by their authorizers if they do not perform well” (p. 3).

Sirko (1999) stated that charter schools are designed to introduce “competition within the public educational system [by attracting] educational consumers” (p. 3), but referred to as an “autonomous entity [operating on the] basis of a charter or contract” (p. 2) between the school and its sponsor, primarily the local school or state board and “receives educational funds as if it were a public school” (p. 2). Or simply as Mead (2008) states, “independent public schools that are publicly funded and accountable to the

public for results” (p. 2). An additional and appropriate definition for charter schools comes from Manno (1999):

An independent public school of choice, given a charter or contract for a specified period of time (typically five years) to educate children according to the school’s own design, with a minimum of bureaucratic oversight. It may be a new school, started from scratch, or an existing one that secedes from its school district. It is held accountable to the terms of its charter and continues to exist only if it fulfills those terms. As a public school of choice, it is attended by students whose families select it and staffed by educators who choose to teach in it. (p. 1, ¶ 2)

By 2007 there were over 4,000 charter schools in 41 states (and the District of Columbia), enrolling well over 1 million students (Williams, 2007). That figure grew to 4,250 schools serving “more than 1.2 million students (Mead, 2008, p. 2) with 347 new charters opening in the 2007-2008 school year, *up 8%* from the previous year, a significant increase “in light of a challenging political environment for school choice in which, among other things, many states are reaching their self-imposed caps on charter schools” (Center for Education Reform, 2007c, ¶ 3). In 2009, there were more than 4,900 charters schools (Miron & Dingerson, 2009) and more than 5,000 charter schools serving more than 1.5 million students in 2010 (Booker, Sass, Gill, & Zimmer, 2008, ¶ 1; Gleason et al., 2010) while more than 365,000 names linger on charter school waiting lists nationally (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2009). “Likewise, and not unlike school reform efforts of the past, charter schools appeal to proponents across the political spectrum with divergent—and often competing—agendas for the reform of public education” (Powers, 2002, p. 1) in ways that private schools may not. They “tend to be smaller in size enrolling on average 348 students, nearly 35 percent less than conventional public schools” providing what some studies have shown to be

“advantageous for learning, creating an intimate environment to better serve the individual needs of students” (Allen & Consoletti, 2008, p. 4). A substantial amount of literature and research has developed on the size of smaller schools being advantageous over larger schools (Oxley, 1994; Shapiro, 2009). Lubienski (2000) acknowledged,

As a widely popular reform movement, charter schools focus on student achievement and curricular innovations as driven by the choices of parents, rather than the directives of bureaucratic governance. Frustrated with the ‘one-size-fits-all’ model of traditional public schools, charter school proponents and parents place their hope in the ability of autonomous schools to provide an array of options for children, as well as competition for moribund districts (*sic*) schools. In doing so, they insist that—as opposed to vouchers, for example—charter schools operate within the public education system, since they are, in the end, public schools. Therefore, according to their supporters, they are not a form of privatization. (p. 3)

On the contrary, charter schools disproportionately serve low-income and minority populations, serving average student bodies composed of 53% minority students and 54% low-income students and approximately 40% of charter schools served student bodies of 60% or more minority and/or “at risk” students in 2006 (Center for Education Reform, 2007a) except for charter schools in the city of New York. A report generated by the United Federation of Teachers (2010) found that “New York City’s charter schools, as a group, are failing to serve a representative sample of the City’s public school children” (p. 1). Data within the New York State Education department revealed that charter schools, funded with public monies, were serving “significantly fewer than the average of the City’s poorest children and 10 to 25 percent fewer of such children in the charters’ own neighborhoods” (p. 2). They were also found to serve “less than four percent of English Language Learners (“ELL”)” on average “rather than 14 percent of such children in the district’s public schools (“the district schools”)” and “less than 10 percent of charter pupils are categorized as special education students versus a citywide



average of more than 16 percent in the district public schools.” Additionally, New York City charter schools, “despite their concentrations in highly diverse neighborhoods . . . . charters as a group admit substantially fewer Hispanic and/or immigrant students.” Resultantly, charter school population is heavily concentrated with more “African-American students than is true in the City as a whole or even in the neighborhoods charters are supposed to serve” (p. 2).

Similarly, Orfield (2002) argues that charter schools are largely concentrated in “some of the nation’s most hypersegregated metropolitan areas . . . . and too often create the illusion of real choice without providing the slightest challenge to the color lines that usually define educational opportunity” (p. 1). The enrollment patterns of these schools, as a consequence, cause “almost a third [of black students] to end up in apartheid schools with zero to one percent of white classmates, the very kind of schools that decades of civil rights struggles fought to abolish in the South” (p. 1). They, in fact, “offer even more extreme race and class separation without evidence of providing higher quality schooling” (p. 2).

Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, and Wang (2010) studied enrollment patterns across the regions of the country and found that enrollment trends vary substantially.

Patterns in the West and in a few areas in the South, the two most racially diverse regions of the country, also suggest that charters serve as havens for white flight from public schools . . . in the industrial Midwest, more students enroll in charter schools compared to other regions, and Midwestern charter programs display high concentrations of black students. (pp. 4-5)

In addition, charter school leaders/principals have a tendency “to be relative newcomers to administration” with nearly “one-third (29 percent) of charter school principals” new to administration and “more than half (58 percent)” of administrators

entering “in the first four years of serving as a principal,” in contrast to “traditional public school principals [who] tend to be more seasoned with only 16 percent new to administration and 42 percent with four or fewer years under their belt” (Campbell & Grubb, 2008, p. 5). Regarding teachers in charter schools, Stuit and Smith (2008) found that charter school teachers were 130% more likely to leave the teaching profession and 76% more likely to change schools than teachers in traditional public schools.

For the 2007-2008 school year, 358 charter schools were operating in Florida ranking the state second highest in the nation related to the number of schools and second highest based on the number of students enrolled in charter schools (Florida Senate, 2007). Additionally, the state and the Florida Schools of Excellence Commission (FSE) was recently praised by the CER for approving 17 new charter schools to entities other than local school boards, as do 17 other states “which tend to have nearly four times as many charter schools than states that only allow a school board approval” and “are also home to the highest quality charter schools” (Allen & Consoletti, 2008, p. 4). Established by law in 2006, the FSE, an independent body and the new authorizer of Florida’s charter schools, based on a combination of models in the District of Columbia, Arizona, and Michigan, is now a member of eight states recognized by the CER for having the best charter school laws in the country and is ranked at number six (Consoletti, 2008).

Conversely, Orfield (2010, p. 2) reports that “there has been a severe failure to collect essential basic data about charter schools.” Stuit and Smith (2008, p. 3) stated that “the rapid growth in charter schools over the past two decades has occurred despite inconclusive evidence that they are academically superior to their traditional public

school counterparts.” Although charter schools have lately received a considerable amount of attention from researchers as a result of their growth in number of schools and population of students served, most studies of charter schools have focused on using data sets that track student achievement over time or random assignment data from school admission lotteries as mechanism to control for differences between traditional public school students and students who attend charter schools (Booker, Sass, Gill, & Zimmer, 2009, ¶ 2). Furthermore, there is existent evidence that suggests that charters schools, which research has linked to ‘*weak schooling opportunities*,’ are often “associated with heightened economic segregation” (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010, p. 11). Some of the data they reviewed showed some states reporting that charter schools served “disproportionate numbers of relatively affluent students who are *not* eligible for free or reduced lunches (FRL), while others report higher levels of FRL-eligible students (eg., low-income students) in charters” (p. 11).

Latke (2008, p.viii) stated that “charter school studies are highly varied in quality. . . [and] only about a third of all charter studies can be trusted to give a fair picture of whether students are better off in a charter school or not.” Nicotera (2009, p. 1) agreed and said that “high quality studies make up a very small percentage of the existing charter school research.” And, “beyond measuring achievement effects, however, there has been only limited analysis of the impacts of charter schools on the students who attend them” (Booker, Sass, Gill, & Zimmer, 2009, ¶ 2). Additionally, Nicotera also noted that “there are a small but impressive number of public charter schools and networks of charter schools that are dramatically exceeding academic expectations” and “at the same time, there are a small but depressing number of public charter schools performing at the

bottom of the heap” (2009, p. 2). In the 2008 report, *A Commitment to Quality: National Charter School Policy Forum Report*, the U.S. Department of Education declared that “while many charter schools are performing at the highest level, some struggle to provide the quality education our students deserve” (2008, p. 1). Although two subgroups, students in poverty and ELL students, are outperforming their counterparts in traditional public schools in both reading and math, the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) (2009a) at Stanford University depict a dismal performance of charter schools in stating that the results of their findings from “a longitudinal student-level analysis of charter school impacts on more than 70 percent of the students in the United States” (p. 1) reveal “in unmistakable terms that, in the aggregate, charter students are not fairing as well as their traditional public school counterparts” (p. 8) and more importantly, that 17 percent, or only 17 out of every 100 charter schools, “provide superior education opportunities for their students” (p. 1). Also revealed in the same study is that “over a third, 37 percent, deliver learning results that are significantly worse than their students would have realized had they remained in traditional public school” with the nearly 50 percent remaining experiencing “results that are no different from the local public school options” (p. 1).

In a study of charter schools in eight states, Zimmer et al. (2009) found “no evidence that charter schools are systematically attracting above-average student” (p. 84) and that “in rapidly growing districts with capacity challenges, charter schools may act more like a release valve than a source of competitive pressure” (p. 78).

Except for high school students where “substantial positive effects on both high school completion and college attendance” were found (Booker, Sass, Gill, & Zimmer,

2008, p. 3), the results for the state of Florida show no difference than what was found nationally. “Reading and math scores were significantly lower in charter school students compared to their traditional public school counterparts” and in fact, “African American students attending charter schools performed significantly below their traditional public school counterparts in reading and math while Hispanic students experienced no discernable difference between charter school and traditional public school performance” (Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, 2009b, ¶ 15). The results for charter schools students in New York City, however, were different. The typical charter school student in New York City was found to have performed “better than their virtual counterparts in their feeder pool in reading and math. . . [and] relatively better in math than in reading” in school-by school comparisons with nearly 30 percent outperforming their local alternatives in reading and about 60 percent of charter schools “producing learning that is equivalent to their regular school counterparts” while “12 percent delivered worse results” (Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, 2010, p. 2). Also, Hoxby, Murarka, and Kang (2009) found that New York City’s charter schools enrolled largely poor, Black students and very few Asian students. But the students who were enrolled in the city’s charter schools shared similar traits with students who applied to charter schools in the random lottery system, but were not accepted (“lotteried out”). They additionally found that, on average, students who attended charter schools for grades k-8 would close more than 80% of the ‘Scarsdale-Harlem’ achievement gap whereas a *lotteried-out* student had a high probability of remaining on grade level, they were able to close the ‘Scarsdale-Harlem’ achievement gap significantly. The charter high school student who remained in the charter school was 7% more likely to earn a

diploma by age 20 for each of the years spent in that school and 21% likely to receive a diploma if he were enrolled in grades 10 through 12 than his traditional public school counterparts. Some of the policies ‘associated’ (not necessarily causes) with charter schools in New York City achieving these results were:

- a long school year;
- a greater number of minutes devoted to English during each school day;
- a small rewards/small penalties disciplinary policy;
- teacher pay based somewhat on performance or duties, as opposed to a traditional pay scale based strictly on seniority and credentials; and
- a mission statement that emphasizes academic performance, as opposed to other goals. (p. vii)

Gleason et al. (2010) in their final report, *The Evaluation of Charter School Impacts*, an evaluation that studied 36 charter middle schools in 15 states comparing student outcomes for students who were admitted to the charter schools on the basis of gaining admittance through a random lottery selection process against students who participated in the lotteries but were not admitted, discovered that charter schools that held lotteries were neither more nor less successful than their traditional public school counterparts in improving student achievement, school progress, or student behavior; a wide, statistically significant variance in the impact of charter schools on student achievement exists; statistically significant effects on positive math test scores were evidenced moreso for charter schools that serve more low income or low achieving students than for their counterparts in charter schools that served more advantaged students; and that certain operational features of charter schools, such as smaller

enrollments and using ability grouping in English and/or math classes, tend to produce more positive impacts on student achievement.

Nevertheless, the charter sector has been given “an unprecedented opportunity for growth and impact” (Latke, 2010, p. x) due to the prominent featuring of charters by President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan in the recent governmental funding initiative, Race to the Top, and other school improvement grants which have prompted “a number of major urban school districts [to open] their doors to charter schools as a way to replace low-performing schools” (Latke, 2010, p. x). Although “charter schools are increasing in number and size”, and despite rising interest, they presently enroll about “2.5 percent of all public school students” (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2020, p. 4) and “are most likely to comprise a significant portion of the market share in big cities like New York, Detroit, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans” (p. 7). Therefore, “it is no longer a question of whether the number of charter schools will grow, but rather a question of how much, in which cities, and what types of students they will serve?” (Christensen, Meijer-Irons, & Latke, 2010, p. 1). Nevertheless, at the same time it continues to promote the growth of charter schools, the Obama administration should take immediate action to reduce the segregation in charter schools, working instead to achieve the integrative promise of charter schools” (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010, p. 5).

***Non-Charter, Public Schools.*** Although public schooling was “established long ago as a necessity, rather than a luxury” (Sweetland, 2002, p. 10), its “historical structures do not work today, at least not as effectively or efficiently as in the past. Today the school must cater to multiple social, political, religious, and economic

demands” (p. 10) and consequently have become “such complex social and bureaucratic structures that responding to the student as a whole has become more difficult” (Snyder & Snyder, 1996, p. 6). Correspondingly, Barnes (1995) reasoned that societal events such as changes in demographics, issues in funding, problems with a growth in the population of homeless citizens, decisions rendered by the courts, and the increased specialized needs of a heterogeneous population have all had contributory effects on schooling. Therefore, public schools have increasingly examined the development of new programs—alternative schools, magnet schools, schools-within-schools, etc.—“for the potential of these innovations to support higher levels of achievement in those populations underserved by the public schools of this country” (Peterkin & Jackson, 1994, p. 126). As opposed to serving only the most capable, “the public school complex was, [and still is] designed to serve everyone” (Sweetland, 2002, p. 10) with an “all encompassing,” simple logic that “all children can learn; all children will learn; all children must learn; and now, the public school mandate is to ensure that every child learns . . . up to an increasingly specified level of achievement” (p. 11). More importantly, “with the psychological, sociological, and economic backgrounds of students forgotten, public schools are increasingly expected to produce a uniform product” (p. 11).

The public educational system in America is different than educational systems in most other countries in that it is a national system with the responsibility of providing education to the population lying in the hands of the states and local school boards (Thattai, n.d., ¶ 2). The federal, state, and local government all contribute to the funding of the educational system with policies and curriculum determined by the local school



board, a group of elected officials having jurisdiction over the school district. This system, formally developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the suggestion of Thomas Jefferson, had an informal existence in the 1600s under the tutelage of religious groups until an increasing immigration of people from numerous countries and varying faiths undermined the system by opposing the imposition of religious views by the clergy educators and providers through the public education concept (Thattai, n.d., ¶ 3). During the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Reformers challenged the system by informing and organizing the masses around the “belief that common schooling could create good citizens, unite society, and prevent crime and poverty and education”, which had previously been “highly localized and available only to wealthy people” (¶ 5). Subsequently, the common school movement set a deliberate path to establish a system of public schools open to all students regardless of economic status, free of charge, under the administration of civil authorities and completely supported by taxes beginning around 1820 (Herzberg, 2002) that concluded with the legislature authorizing the creation of the U.S. Department of Education with the *Department of Education Act* in 1867 (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007). As a result of the efforts of the “common-school reformers”, by the end of the century, elementary education was free and available to all American children (Thattai, n.d., ¶ 5). But the battle to delineate the separation of the Church and the state, regarding public education, was far from over and remained a source of contradiction until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when landmark rulings by the United States Supreme Court charted a different course for future rulings by dealing with the separation of Church and state. According to Herzberg (2002), the Supreme Court ruling stated:

The Court concluded that the wall between Church and state should be both ‘high and impregnable’ (*Everson v. Board of Education*, 1947, p. 18). This

decision was important in shaping the modern concept of the ‘*public school*’, not only for its broader conclusions about church-state separation which would influence court decisions concerning education during the next half-century, but also for laying out the relationship between the government and religious schools. The following year, in deciding *McCollum v. Board of Education* (1948), the Court forbade even voluntary religious instruction during school time in public school classrooms. (p. 50)

Public school enrollment grew at a fast pace between 1950 and 1960 at both the elementary and secondary level and peaked in 1971 (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007; 2009). “This enrollment rise was caused by what is known as the ‘baby boom,’ a dramatic increase in births following World War II”, but was followed by a yearly decrease in enrollment from 1971 to 1984 (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007, p. 7; 2009, p. 9). Similarly, the total number of public schools declined from a high in 1929-1930 when there were approximately 248,000 to an estimated 97,000 schools in 2004-05 due, largely, to the trend toward consolidating small schools (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2007). But this trend has been reversing in recent years increasing to 99,000 schools in 2006-07 (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2009). As of 2002, “almost 90% of children enrolled in K-12 institutions attend[ed] public schools” (Herzberg, 2002, p. 2). Even so, public school enrollment increased 26 percent between 1985 and 2008, “from 39.4 million to 49.8 million. . . [with] a 29 percent increase in elementary enrollment. . . [with] part of the relatively fast growth in public elementary school enrollment [resulting] from the expansion of prekindergarten programs” (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2009, p. 1). With total enrollment of children in public schools expected to set enrollment records between 2008 and 2017 reaching 54.1 million projected students, the 2008 projection of public school students enrolled at the elementary and secondary level in the United States is expected to reach approximately 49.8 million students with 14.9 million students in

grades 9 through 12 and 34.9 million students enrolled in pre-K through 8th grade (Schneider, 2008). Those figures have been updated to reflect 60.4 million total students with 40.5 million students in pre-K-8 grade levels and 17 million in grades 9 through 12 with 9 states expected to experience an increase of more than 15% (Hussar & Bailey, 2008).

In 2003-04, public schools employed nearly 3.2 million teachers of over 5.5 million total employees with pupil/teacher ratios reported at 16.1 (15.8 in elementary schools and 17.6 in secondary schools) during the 2005 school year (Planty et al., 2008) with an even further decrease to a 15.5 pupil/teacher ratio in 2006” (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2009, p. 53). And, by 2017 that figure is projected to reach 3.7 million teachers with an overall decrease in the pupil/teacher ratio to 14.6 (Hussar & Bailey, 2008).

Although public schools are continually scrutinized due to their poor performance on national and international tests of achievement, decades long reform movements designed to increase student achievement, and the overall structure of the U.S. national educational system, progress has been evidenced in previously outlined reform efforts:

- In the 1960s, vocational skills program attracted increasing numbers of students in a conscious effort to alleviate the escalating student pressure for increased significance in the curriculum which resulted in the addition of a variety of electives in the curriculum to help students develop self-esteem as seen with the development of the middle school concept.

- The impact on the high school when school districts in America invested time, money, and energy changing school grade levels, moving the ninth grade to the high school.
- The 1970s focus on a humanistic and open education that gave students the freedom to choose curricular options of interest to them as schools featured open-plan teaching and open-space architectural design with teaching roles defined as guides and facilitators (Good & Braden, 2000).
- The 1980s and the increased importance of extracurricular activities and clubs in American high schools while students spent less time studying core curricula subjects and time allotted for instruction decreased (Hayes, 2004).
- The 1990s and the role of the school leader being strengthened as site management and decentralization of district administration placed emphasis on building administrators' "working knowledge of natural systems" while schools responded to "their changing environment" and became "stronger social forces within their communities for shaping the conditions for successful living and working" (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 2000, p. 10).
- It was also during the mid 1990s that the accountability movement began to make a stronger presence in public education with the enactment of Public Law 103-227, commonly known as Goals 2000 or the Educate America Act (1994).  
Outlined in this law were the educational goals to be realized by the year 2000.

With the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, an era of noticeable increase in the public and political disapproval and dissatisfaction with public schooling began in the U.S. continuing through the end of the 1990s (Reardon & Yun, 2002). As the public's

unease with the quality of education “is at an all-time high, the public confidence in the ability of educators to address these concerns is at an all-time low” (Schlechty, 1997, p. 1). In recent times, “our nation’s schools have suffered a serious loss of public confidence . . . . The public’s support dwindled as a steady stream of stories emerged about violence in the schools, declining student achievement, and the poor preparation and performance of teachers” (Dwyer, Barnett, & Lee, 1987, p. 30).

Recent applications that receive little if any attention on a broad scale basis are contributing to the cause of improving schools across America. A few of the applications include the Accelerated Schools Project, “one of the nation’s best-known whole-school reforms designed to improve the school performance of students at risk of underachievement” (Bloom, Ham, Melton, & O’Brien, 2001, p. 1) developed by Levin and colleagues and in use in over 1,000 elementary and middle schools. In their evaluation of the Accelerated Schools Approach, Bloom et al. (2001) found that although implementation of the project was a “difficult, time-consuming process . . . schools that stuck with the reform were able to improve the school environment” and experienced “increases in students’ test scores” eventually by “a statistically significant amount” (p. 74).

“High school reform has moved to the top of the education policy agenda, commanding the attention of the federal government, governors, urban school superintendents, philanthropists, and the general public. All are alarmed by the stubbornly high dropout rates” (Quint, 2006, p. 1). While, “the most serious problems in high schools are concentrated in America’s large urban centers and in rural areas of the South and Southwest” (Quint, 2006, p. 6), the Small Schools of Choice (SSC) high

school transformation process in New York City, in which in approximately six-years time, “failing high schools were closed and replaced with hundreds of new secondary schools” and these “small, nonselective, public high schools serving students in grades 9 through 12 . . . approximately 100 students per grade and open to students at all levels of academic achievement” (p. 1) designed as “a viable and accessible option for the district’s most disadvantaged students . . . served a population that [is] almost exclusively comprised of low-income students of color” (p. 60), was shown to contribute to a 6.8% increase in the graduation rate of high school students (Bloom, Thompson, & Unterman, 2010).

Other similar initiatives are being adopted by a number of districts and include “structural changes—by breaking up large comprehensive high schools into small learning communities (SLCs) or small schools lodged within the same building or by establishing stand-alone small schools” in which “self-contained groups of students who take classes together from the same group of core-subject teachers,” in which these teachers then “meet regularly to discuss students’ academic and personal progress and issues so that they can better advise and support both their students and each other” (Quint, Thompson, & Bald, 2008, p. 14); the “Early College High School which affords students a personalized environment, challenging classes, academic and social supports, and the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a college associate’s degree within four-years” (pp. 14-15); in Career Academies, students are prepared *for both college and the world of work* by taking three or more academic courses combined with at least one occupational course linked to the Academy’s theme; in the First Things First model, “clusters of up to 350 students and their core-subject teachers and thematic elective

teachers” (Quint, 2006, p. 10) remain together throughout high school and “professional development activities are centered on promoting active, cooperative learning, setting clearly defined, high academic standards, and aligning curricula with state and local standards” (Quint, 2006, p. 10); and, in the Talent Development model, an extended-block schedule of “four 90 minute classes meet daily, making possible ‘double-doses’ of English and math in a small learning community composed of interdisciplinary teacher teams, ideally responsible for about 90 students each” (Quint, 2006, p. 10), have common planning time that enables team teaching in the Ninth Grade Success Academy, which progresses to small learning communities of about 350 students encompassing both a core academic and work-based learning experiences in the Tenth to Twelfth Grade Career Academies, all while students with “serious attendance or discipline problems or other needs” (Quint, 2006, p. 10) may attend the Twilight Academy. Gains evidenced in Talent Development schools “outpaced gains in comparison schools on indicators of progress toward graduation” (Kemple, Herlihy, & Smith, 2005, p. 80). All of these designs, nevertheless, attempt to ameliorate the difficulties many students experience in ninth grade “where the greatest number of high school students start to fall off course” (Kemple, Herlihy & Smith, 2005, p. 6) and begin a trajectory towards dropping out.

Alternative schools were designed in an attempt to provide students with additional opportunities when traditional public and private schools which were either incompatible with or failed to meet their learning and socialization needs and conditions (Peterkin & Jackson, 1994). Alternative schools, according to Broughman and Swaim (2006, p. A-4), “provide nontraditional education and may serve as adjuncts to regular schools, . . . fall outside the categories of regular, special education, and vocational

education, although they provide similar services or curriculum, . . . provide a nontraditional setting or nontraditional system of teaching.”.

“Magnet schools were designed to build on the examples set by alternative schools and by the thematic “examination” schools found in many U.S. cities” and “in response to the mandate of school desegregation issued by the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision of 1954” . . . in the expectation that “by creating magnet schools, districts hoped to draw students across segregated residential areas to desegregated environments” (Peterkin & Jackson, 1994, p. 128). Quite the contrast, critics of magnet schools claim that when there are few magnet schools in an area, they may become *academically selective* and *exacerbate* class or socioeconomic *cleavages*, especially when parents with middle-class backgrounds “are more motivated and more informed regarding the availability of educational options, while lower-income parents opt for or otherwise *end up* in conventional attendance area schools with no specialized offerings and fewer resources” (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999, p. 9). They further stated that magnet schools, in regard to issues of *access and resources* have a tendency to *cream off* highly motivated and able students and more highly qualified and effective teachers “resulting in diminished educational opportunities (e.g., less rigorous curricula, lower expectations by teachers, and different school climates)” (p. 9) for those left behind.

The *school-within-a-school concept*, “a programmatically distinct component of a neighborhood school [that] provide[s] magnet themed instruction to only those students who choose the magnet program” (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999, p. 24), “was developed to offset the impersonal and sometimes bureaucratic nature of large schools” in which “small groups of students and teachers come together to create one or more educational



entities within a larger structure” and their units “may be thematic, autonomous, or an essential component of the larger school” (Peterkin & Jackson, 1994, p. 129).

Nevertheless, and in spite of all its shortcomings, “public schooling is a reflection of America. To some of us [in public education], public schooling is America” (Sweetland, 2002, p. 8). Consequently, “compelling incentives for individuals, economies and societies to raise levels of education have been the driving force for governments to improve the quality of educational services” (Watanabe & Ischinger, 2006, p. 3).

### **The Setting**

According to the 2006 census estimate, the state of Florida was home to 18,089,888 residents. The state population in terms of ethnic background is listed as follows: White (Non-Hispanic) 58.0%; Black 16.5%; American Indian and Alaska Native 0.5%; Asian 3.0%; persons reporting two or more races 1.5%; and persons of Hispanic or Latino origin 22.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a). The state population grew to an estimated 18,328,340 by 2008 with ethnic background percentages of White (Non-Hispanic) 60/3%; Black 15.9%; American Indian and Alaska Native 0.5%; Asian 2.3%; persons reporting two or more races 1.4%; and persons of Hispanic or Latino 21.0% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a). By 2009, the population increased again to 18,537,969 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The central Florida county in which the study was conducted is one of Florida’s most populous counties with approximately 1,157,738 residents in 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a) and 1,180,784 in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a). The county, located on the west coast of Florida, covers a land area of roughly 2,000 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a), an area larger than the state of Rhode Island.

The largest city in the county had a population of approximately 332, 888 according to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (2006b), covers a land area of 2,000 square miles with a population density of 2,707.7 person per square mile. The 2006 census estimates that the population in terms of ethnic background for this city were listed as follows: White (Non-Hispanic) 64.7%; Black 26.1%; Hispanic 19.3%; persons reporting two or more races 2.9%; Asian 2.2%; American Indians and Alaska Natives 0.4%; and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander 0.1%. In 2006, nearly 25% of the population were persons under the age of 18 with 22.9% of people speaking a language other than English in the home; 12.2% were foreign born; and 18.1% of the population lived below poverty (U.S Census Bureau, 2006b). Also, 77.1% of the population over 25 were high school graduates with 25.4% of the over 25 population holding a Bachelor's degree or higher (U.S Census Bureau, 2006b). For the 135,776 housing units in Tampa, the homeowner rate was 55.0% with a median value of \$81,500 and a median household income of \$34,415 (1999) for the 2.36 persons per household (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006b).

In Florida's 67 school districts, there were over 168,000 teachers (Florida Department of Education, 2008f) in approximately 3,877 public schools (Florida Department of Education, 2007a) with an enrollment of 2,652,684 students (Florida Department of Education, 2007b). But by the fall of 2009, there was a loss of almost 2,200 teachers in the state to 186,724 teachers (Florida Department of Education, 2010a) teaching 2,620, 801 students, (Florida Department of Education, 2010b), reflecting a loss of nearly 32,000 students. However, there was an increase of 63 schools in the number of active public schools in the state up to 4,040 by December of 2009 (Florida

Department of Education, 2010c). During the school year 2003-04, there were 400,719 students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 196,037 students who were English Language Learners (Hoffman & Sable, 2006) and a statewide student/teacher ratio of 17.9 (p. 11) or 16.5 at the elementary level, 18.9 for middle schools, 19.4 in high schools, with 12.5 for other schools. For this same period, the public school racial/ethnicity composition figures were 1,326,692 White students (51.3%), 629,123 Black (24.3%), 571,148 Hispanic-Non White (22.1%), 52,986 Asian/Pacific Islander (2.6%), and 7,679 American Indian/Alaska Native (0.3%) students (Hoffman & Sable, 2006).

Public schools in Florida, according to the Florida Department of Education (Enrollment size of Florida's public schools, 2007b), have some of the highest enrollment averages in the nation. For the 2003-04 school year, the average for public elementary and middle schools, 654 students per school for elementary and 1,038 for middle schools, was the nation's highest. "At 1,548 per school, average enrollment for Florida's public high schools is more than twice the national average which is 758" (p. 1). By the 2006-07 school year, the averages for elementary were still highest in the nation with the elementary average remaining at 654 students per school, but the high school average increasing to 1,717 students per school while the average for middle schools dropped to 933 students per school making it second in the nation (Florida Department of Education, 2009a). According to a recent press release by the Florida Department of Education (2010d), a decade of educational progress has resulted in a jump in rankings from 10<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation by Education Week in 2010 Quality Counts: Fresh Course, Swift Current annual report which "tracks state policies and performance across key areas of education and assigns each state with an overall point total to signify their educational standing in

the nation” (¶ 1). Although the state has one of the highest enrollment averages, the average teacher salary lags behind that of the national median. For example, the average teacher salary in Florida during the 2007-2008 school year was \$46,922 (Florida Department of Education, 2008f) compared to the 2006 national median salary of \$50,784 (Swanson, 2008).

The Private School Universe Survey (PSS) for 2003-2004 listed 1,803 private schools with 27,144 FTE (full-time equivalent) teachers serving 323,766 (Broughman & Swain, 2006) students throughout the state, however the Florida Department of Education (2008f) listed 381,346 students for that time period. Although there was a slight decline in pupil enrollment by the 2005-2006 PSS to 323,302, there was an increase in schools to 1,872. By the 2007-2008 school year, private school enrollment increased to 335, 211 students (Florida Department of Education, 2008f) with approximately 28,414 FTE teachers (Broughman, Swain, & Keaton, 2008) within the state.

For purposes of accountability, the State of Florida utilizes a uniform system composed of student achievement data from the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) to determine and communicate school performance “relative to state standards” based on calculations of student annual learning gains and proficiency as measured by achievement on the Sunshine State Standards and how well students in the lowest quartile progress (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). Schools are awarded a letter grade, A-F, according to the percentage of the population tested, how well the school prepares their lowest students determined by student scores from the previous year’s FCAT administration, and the proficiency of students in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. As related by a press release from the Department of Education,

“Florida has more schools earning ‘A’s’ and ‘B’s’ than ever before” (Florida Department of Education, 2008b, ¶ 1). Statewide, 1,583 schools earned a letter grade of A, 542 earned a B, 565 Cs were earned, 154 grades of D earned, and 45 schools earned a letter grade of F of the 2,889 public schools that were graded during the 2007-08 school year (Florida Department of Education, 2008b). In terms of percentages, 55% earned an A, 19% earned a B, 20% earned a C, 5% earned a D, and 2% earned Fs (Florida Department of Education, 2008b). During the 2008-2009 school year, 1,822 schools earned a letter grade of A, 495 schools earned a B, 420 schools received a C, 173 schools earned a D, and the number of schools earning an F decreased to 44 for the 2,954 schools graded in 2009 (Florida Department of Education, 2009b).

However, the school grading process does not necessarily indicate or communicate progress according to criteria set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which measures a student’s adequate yearly progress (AYP). Although the state failed to meet AYP exhibiting difficulty with its economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and students with disabilities meeting proficiency levels in reading and mathematics, 77% of the national criteria were met (Florida Department of Education, 2008e). 787 of Florida’s public schools met the provisions of AYP for the 2008 school year. Of the A schools, 87% met 90% of the AYP criteria, 78% of B schools met 80% of the AYP criteria, 89% of the C schools met 70% of the criteria, 92% of all D schools met 60% of the criteria, while 98% of the F schools met 50% of the AYP criteria (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). Private schools do not participate in the state grading system in Florida.

On the other hand, data from other sources portray a different picture of the performance of schools in Florida when compared on a national level. In the Florida—State Highlights 2008 report, a supplemental report to the comprehensive study and National Highlights Report by Education Week’s Quality Counts 2008, a study with additional support from the Pew Center on the States, that examines indicators based on state-survey data from the Editorial Project in Education (EPE) Research Center (2008), analyses of original data, and information published in outside sources, Florida earned an overall grade of C+. The 2009 report showed the state’s grade improved to a B-. (The indicators that contribute to the overall score and companion grade for the state are listed below. For a more complete discussion of each indicator, see Appendix A.

- Chance for Success: State Success Indicators;
- Providing Opportunities for Success;
- Elementary and Secondary Performance: K-12 Achievement Index;
- Nation Receives Passing Grade on Achievement, But Just Barely;
- Standards, Assessments, and Accountability; Policy Indicators;
- Transitions and Alignment: Education Alignment Policies;
- The Teaching Profession: Efforts to Improve Teaching;
- Reaching the Parity Line; and
- School Finance: Equity and Spending Indicators.

*Gray* (name assigned to protect the identity of the school district) County Public Schools (GCPS) fared well in the 2008 administration of the FCAT. One hundred three *Gray* County schools earned a letter grade of ‘A’ , there were 46 ‘Bs’, 53 ‘Cs’, 11 ‘Ds’, and only 3 grades of ‘F’ (Florida Department of Education, 2008a). Regarding AYP, *Gray* County Schools received scores that mirror the state’s exactly with the same subgroups experiencing difficulty meeting proficiency in the same content areas and meeting 77% of the criteria as a district (Florida Department of Education, 2008d). Of the 26 charter schools in the county, 12 were graded. With eight schools having met all

criteria for AYP and one school receiving an incomplete, grades for the county's charter schools are as follows: A—5, B—2, C—2, D—1, F—1, and I (incomplete)—1 (Florida Department of Education, 2008c).

For the 2008-2009 school-year, *Gray* County schools and students fared even better than during the previous year. Serving 192,054 students in 239 schools—139 elementary k-5, 43 middle schools, 25 high schools, 2 k-8, 26 charter schools, and 4 career centers (Florida Department of Education, 2011)—120 schools received a state grade of “A” while the number of schools receiving a grade of “B” or “C” decreased and no schools received an “F” (Florida Department of Education, 2011). The following year, the number of schools in *Gray* County grew to 250—142 elementary k-5, 44 middle schools, 27 high schools, 2 k-8 schools, 4 Career and Technical schools, 4 Career centers, and 27 charter schools serving 207,549 total students (Florida Department of Education, 2011). For the 2011 school year, 93% of high schools earned a letter grade of ‘A’ or ‘B’, 73% of middle schools earned a grade of ‘A’ or ‘B’, and 51% of elementary schools earned a letter grade of ‘A’ or ‘B’ (Florida Department of Education, 2011). The school district served over 192, 000 students (Asian 3.44%; Black 21.48%; Hispanic 29.57%; Indian 0.26%; Multi-Racial 5.10%; and 40.10%) in 260 schools (142 K-5; 44 middle schools; 27 high schools; 2 K-8; 4 career centers; 5 vocational/technical centers; and 36 charter schools) employing 15, 468 certified teachers, 236 principals, 396 assistant principals, 9,107 support staff, and 250 district administrators (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

## Summary

School culture has had an impact on all aspects of the educational institution and helps to explain the stability evidenced in schools and classrooms as well as in achievement and performance levels and customer satisfaction likewise. School-work culture is a distinguishing factor and presents distinctive variables that are manifested in the consistency of high-performing schools. Snyder developed the School Work Culture Profile in 1988 as a diagnostic tool to provide a means of measuring the development of work culture and the degree and perception of the worker's level of participation in organizational practices based on four sub-domains of planning, program development, staff development, and assessment. Although the instrument has been used extensively in numerous dissertations and organizational studies around the world, it has been used less since recent reform initiatives have focused on accountability measures as the predominant means of measuring school effectiveness.

The public education system in America exists in a cyclical, perpetual state of reform, but a conscientious effort has been made to improve schools at all levels. Whereas public dissatisfaction levels remain high with the state of public education, similar sentiments are evident within all areas of government as the schools struggle to move forward under the seemingly insurmountable burden of resolving the nation's societal problems while attempting to provide a quality education to all who enter regardless of background, socioeconomic status, capability level, native language, exceptionality, etc., but within a *one-size-fits-all* approach.

As the framework of education has become increasingly compared with the business model, market-driven theories as reform strategies have given rise to



competition for students amongst educators in the attempt to affect improvement through subsidized competition and increases in school choice offerings. Meanwhile, school choice has seen a revitalization in school districts nationwide. Charter schools, consequentially, are increasing in number, enrollment, and stature and are being seen as an integral component in reforming the nation's public schooling system. And charter schools have experienced an increase in growth of 8% with nearly 350 new schools.

In spite of the new growth, new studies show that students enrolled in charter schools are not fairing well. With only 17 out of every 100 charter schools providing educational opportunities that are superior to their traditional public school counterparts, the rapid growth of the charter school movement may be forced to address issues of performance or they may find those issues being dealt with legislatively. With the exception of high school students attending charter schools who tend to have higher graduation rates and enrollment in college, in Florida things are no better especially for African American students who perform significantly worse than their counterparts in traditional public schools.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida. The parts of this chapter are: a) Research Design, b) Research Questions, c) Population and Sample, d) Instrumentation, e) Field Test, f) Data Collection Procedures, g) an Analysis of the Data, h) the study Variables, and i) Summary.

Limited research related to the perception of school-work culture of faculty and administrators exists in public charter schools and public non-charter elementary schools. As discussed in more depth later in this study, a wealth of research exists on school culture as well as findings that indicate the importance and role of school administrators in the development of school culture, an influential factor on school faculties, the practices, norms, and traditions celebrated in schools and the ways those practices are passed down through generations, as well as the effect of culture on the stability evidenced across classrooms in typically high achieving schools. The School Work Culture Profile, an instrument designed to measure the perceptions of the work culture in a school and its performance regarding organizational planning, staff development, program development, and assessment developed by Snyder (1988b), has been used extensively in studies on school reform efforts regarding the effects of changing school culture through the 1990s. However, with the constantly changing focus of school

reform initiatives, the turn of the century ushered in an era of increased accountability, high-stakes standardized testing, school choice and discussions of the privatization of public education, all contributing to an under-utilization of the instrument in present research, with little to no research utilizing the SWCP to examine the perceptions of administrators and faculty members in comparisons of public non-charter and public charter elementary schools.

Consequently, the School Work Culture Profile may offer an attractive and inexpensive means to gather the necessary data about a school's work culture to provide the impetus for meaningful reform at the school level. As schools are able to reform individually, the achievement landscape of schools may then be able to show progress in improving the status of the public school, particularly in urban areas. Additionally, the database of literature on studies across the two elementary school types, public charter and public non-charter, regarding the perceptions of faculty and administrators of school work culture are inadequate, if existent.

### **Research Design**

This study utilized an ex post facto research design, including a paper-and-pencil instrument to provide responses about the school-work culture perceptions of administrators and faculty of public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida. The survey represents the *most common* application for gathering descriptive research data (Merriam & Simpson, 2000) and can be readily generalized to larger populations (Jaeger, 1984). It is advantageous in "that it allows the researcher to guide participants along pertinent lines of thought associated with the phenomenon" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 147) and is

particularly useful in the assessment of a variety of types of information such as opinions, beliefs, or attitudes (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).

### **Research Questions**

In order to investigate the perceptions of school-work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Is there a difference in the perception of the instructional staff members (both administrators and faculty) of public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools related to school work culture in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida?
2. Is there a difference in perception between school administrators and faculty in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools of school work culture?
3. Is there an interaction between type of school (public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools) and job category (administration and faculty) of the perception of school work culture?

### **Population and Sample**

For the 2007-2008 school year, *Gray County Public Schools* was reported to be the eighth largest school district in the nation (National Center for Education Statistics (2008d)), listed enrollment figures for total pupil enrollment K-12 as 186,325 students, with 4,303 students enrolled in charter schools, and 2,243 enrolled in pre-school programs. In addition, there were 8,605 enrolled in adult academic programs, and 4,322

students in adult vocational programs for a total enrollment at all school centers at 205,798 students, and an additional 958 McKay Scholarship/Voucher students—exceptional education students (students with Individual Education Plans [IEP]) who participate in a state-operated voucher program (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008d). In the county's 209 schools—136 elementary schools, 42 middle schools, 2 K-8 schools, 25 high schools, and 4 career centers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008d)—the school district employed 15,370 certified teachers, 227 principals, and 393 assistant principals. Also, the district provides 60 additional centers including Early Childhood centers, Exceptional Student Education [ESE] centers, and 27 charter schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008d). Although the district gained nearly 6,000 more students by 2011 serving over 192,000 students (Asian 3.44%; Black 21.48%; Hispanic 29.57%; Indian 0.26%; Multi-Racial 5.10%; and 40.10%) in 260 schools (142 K-5; 44 middle schools; 27 high schools; 2 K-8; 4 career centers; 5 vocational/technical centers; and 36 charter schools), there was not a major gain in staff members to serve those students as the employment statistics showed that the district employed 15,468 certified teachers, 236 principals, 396 assistant principals, 9,107 support staff, and 250 district administrators (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

**Sample Description.** The sample for this study was composed of three public charter elementary schools and three public non-charter elementary schools from the most populous urban area of a large central Florida county. The selected schools were all identified as being in the urban metropolitan area of the Central Florida County. The urban metropolitan area is defined as all territory, population, housing, and annexations

being within the incorporated city boundary limits and annexations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Schools that did not fit the research criteria of an urban location were eliminated from the sample selection process. Remaining district elementary schools were alphabetized and assigned a sequential number beginning at one until all urban elementary schools were assigned a number. Charter schools were alphabetized and assigned a sequential number beginning at one until all urban charter schools were assigned a number. A table of random numbers was then used to select the three representative schools from each type. There were two schools selected that elected not to participate in the study. Those schools were eliminated with the next randomly selected school meeting the research criteria used as a replacement.

A comparison of the participant schools' overall state school grade as a function of performance on state standardized achievement tests and the demographic composition characteristics (racial/ethnic enrollment and socio-economic status—percentage of economically disadvantaged students) of the schools participating in this study are not consistent with census data for the schools in the Central Florida county. See Table 1 for the demographic and performance data information for the schools participating in this study.

The majority of the schools participating in this study had high concentrations of minority and economically disadvantaged student enrollments. Charter schools performed at a higher level than non-charter schools with two charter schools performing two letter grades higher than non-charter schools and one charter school performing equal with the highest performing non-charter school. The two highest performing charter

school earned state assigned school grades of *A* while the highest performing non-charter school and the lowest performing charter school earned a letter grade of *C*. The remaining non-charter schools earned letter grades of *D*. See Table 1 for demographic and performance characteristics of the participating schools.

### **Instrumentation**

The School Work Culture Profile (SWCP) was designed in 1988 by Snyder to “obtain a quantitative measure of a school’s (or system’s) work patterns” (Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, & Johnson, 1993a, p. 1; Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, & Johnson, 1994, p. 1) as well as “identify school personnel’s perceptions about current work practices within a school” (Parkinson, 1990, p. 43) around four thematic areas, or sub-domains, of school work: Planning Development, Staff Development, Program Development, and School Assessment. See Appendix B for a copy of the SWCP and accompanying answer sheet. The design of the SWCP is such that the four sub-domains consist of 15 items in each sub-domain. As shown in Table 2, the sub-domains are matched with each numbered item depicting the final item bank category resulting from the comprehensive content validation process.

Table 1

*Comparison of Demographic and Performance Information for Participating Schools*

School	School Type	Race/Ethnicity Enrollment %	SES %	School Grade	
1	Non-Charter	528	94.3%	C	
		White			0.9%
		Black			85.6%
		Hispanic			10.0%
		Other			3.4%
2	Charter	156	91.0%	A	
		White			1.3%
		Black			92.3%
		Hispanic			6.4%
		Other			0.0%
3	Charter	233	32.2%	C	
		White			28.6%
		Black			36.9%
		Hispanic			20.6%
		Other			11.0%
4	Charter	169	88.2%	A	
		White			1.2%
		Black			91.1%
		Hispanic			7.1%
		Other			0.6%
5	Non-Charter	389	97.9%	D	
		White			3.1%
		Black			78.4%
		Hispanic			17.5%
		Other			1.0%
6	Non-Charter	490	95.5%	D	
		White			2.07%
		Black			88.6%
		Hispanic			7.1%
		Other			2.2%

Specifically, “the SWCP measures the extent of professional involvement in shaping the school’s work culture, which is defined as the interdependence of the school’s improvement plan, its staff development programs, instructional programs, and



its school assessment procedures” (Snyder, n.d., ¶ 1). Johnson and Snyder (1996) stated that the “model was based on an in-depth study of the literature on productive organizations and work cultures in business and education” (¶ 9) and developed with the intent in enabling “principals and their teachers to determine the extent of professional involvement in decision making for the school’s development” (¶ 2).

Table 2

*School Work Culture Profile: Item Bank by Category*

Domains	Item #
School Planning Domain	1, 5, 10, 14, 19,24,28,31, 35, 38, 41, 45, 50, 53, 57
Staff Development Domain	2, 6, 9, 13, 17, 22, 27, 32, 36, 40, 43, 46, 49, 54, 58
Program Development Domain	3, 7, 12, 16, 20, 23, 26,30, 33, 37, 42, 47, 52, 55, 59
School Assessment Domain	4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, 29, 34, 39, 44, 48, 51, 56, 60

*Note.* From *School Work Culture Profile: A Data Analysis Worksheet & School Development Planning Guide* by K. J. Snyder & K. M. Snyder (1998). *Reprinted with permission from the author.*

Johnson and Snyder (1996) further stated that “the instrument is also intended to assist researchers in explorations of changing school work cultures” (¶ 2). This section contains the instrument development and early study information including the piloting and revision processes as well as comprehensive face, construct, and content validation procedures, and reliability studies.

**Instrument Development and Early Studies.** Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, and Johnson (1993a) reported that local and national expert panels examined the SWCP for face validation “with respect to logical relevance of subscale and clarity” (p. 5) on the items. “A total sample of subjects ( $n=416$ ) were from 100 Florida elementary schools representing 40 of the 67 school districts in Florida” (p. 5). The SWCP, including questionnaire, directions, and a machine-scorable answer sheet, was distributed to each of the subjects in the sample with data collection provided via mail. After the initial creation of the 100-item scale, it was piloted in various workshops with principals over the course of the next year. The instrument was then revised and refined utilizing feedback gathered from administrations of what was called at that time, *A Perception Profile: My School’s Work Culture*, and field tested in 1984 in Maryland, Missouri, and three counties in Florida. School officials in Pasco County Florida determined that the instrument held valuable potential as a means of gathering district wide data after engaging in a multi-level refinement of the instrument in order to modify the language for greater clarity among teachers.

In 1987, a grant to become one of three state pilot sites was awarded to Pasco County from the Florida Council on Educational Management to develop Level III Principalship Certification Programs. The grant and ensuing studies provided the impetus for rigorous reliability and validation studies which led to further editing and reorganization of the instrument to become more suitable for research.

Renamed the *School Culture Profile*, early editions were then “submitted for reliability testing in the summer of 1987” (Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, & Johnson (1993a, p. 7) in Pasco County and yielded responses from 46 elementary school teachers.

The Cronbach alphas obtained on the instrument “were strong indicators of reliability and led to the modification or elimination of several items as well as the movement of a subset of items to the assessment subscale from the staff development subscale and resulted in the attainment of “alpha reliability scores of .82 to .85 on the fours [sic] subscales and a composite scale alpha of .95” (p. 7). The refined instrument was then renamed, the *School Work Culture Profile*.

According to Banerji (n.d.), content validity was ensured through systematic steps with preliminary reliability investigations in the first phase of instrument validation and construct validity and additional reliability investigations conducted in the second phase using factorial analysis procedures all in compliance with the Technical Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. Banerji (n.d.) outlined the stages of development of the SWCP as follows:

1. Development of items based on the author’s review of literature on the Indicators of productive work cultures.
2. Review of items by a panel of school administrators and teachers for the Pasco County School District.
3. Review of items by measurement experts.
4. Content validity based on a panel of national experts; and
5. Examination of domain validity using internal consistency reliability estimates. (pp. 1-2)

**Validity.** Validity is “generally concerned with the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure” (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996, p. 262) and is, in regard to testing, “the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of specific inferences made from test scores” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 640).

*Construct validity of the SWCP.* Parkinson (1990) conducted a study to “investigate the underlying constructs of the SWCP. The reliability and factor structure

of the instrument were examined for evidence of construct validity” (p. 108) and the following research questions were proposed for consideration:

1. What internal consistency reliability estimates are obtained for the SWCP?
2. What is the factor structure of the SWCP?
3. How do the empirical constructs of the SWCP compare with logically generated constructs of School-wide Planning, Staff Development, Program Development, and Assessment? (pp. 108-109)

The researcher found “reasonable preliminary evidence for supporting the construct validity of the SWCP” (p. ix) and reported that “the logical scales of the instrument were found to have good to very good Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .73 to .91 . . . [and] the alpha coefficient for the total scale was .97” (p. viii). When a common factor analysis was conducted, the “Cronbach alpha coefficients of the factor subscales ranged from .76 to .89 (p. ix).

Additionally, although homogeneity was apparent, eight factors were identified within the domain of items. Fifty-three of the 60 items loaded onto one of eight factors, one item loaded onto two factors, and “seven items did not have a high enough loading (above .39) to sort onto any factor”. (p. 111)

Snyder (n.d.) state that data regarding content validation was derived from a comprehensive and conclusive series of content validation processes. The four domains of planning development, staff development, program development, and school assessment have a mean rating ranging from 5.32 to 5.72 on a six-point scale. Standard deviations of individual items were less than 0.20, indicating strong agreement among most reviewers on the ratings for a given domain of items.

Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, and Johnson (1993a) indicated:

To investigate content validity, the sixty-item edition of the SWCP was mailed to a panel of seventeen experts in the field. Fifteen members of this nationwide Panel returned an eleven-page questionnaire on the language clarity and the item relevance of the SWCP items. A six-point Likert rating scale was used for both the language clarity scale and the item relevance scale.

A rating of six was awarded an item judged to be very clear (language clarity scale) or very relevant (item relevance scale). The panel’s responses were carefully analyzed both numerically and for item revision suggestions. Item means were calculated for the four subscales and for the total scale. In language

clarity, the subscale means ranged from 5.32 to 5.64; the total scale mean equaled 5.53. Six items were deleted, four new items were written, and the language of many items was revised.

A second content validity survey containing the revised edition of the SWCP was mailed to a panel of seventeen reviewers. Fourteen members of the panel were on the earlier panel. Two early panel members were dropped from the second panel. Of the second panel, eleven members responded to an eighteen page questionnaire. The analysis of their responses led to the current selection of the School Work Culture Profile. (p. 8)

In a later report titled *The School Work Culture Profile: A Factorial Analysis and Strategy* produced in 1993, Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, and Johnson (1993b) pointed out that results from additional testing assessed the “global components of work culture” (p. 2). They submitted that “the purpose of the study was to use primary and second-order principal components analyses. A second-order factor analysis will incorporate an additional level of analysis by showing how the first order factors group into higher order factors” (p. 2). A sample group ( $N=498$ ) teachers from five elementary schools (169 teachers), four middle schools (140 teachers), and three high schools (189 teachers) in Pasco County Florida were sent the questionnaire, directions, a machine-scorable answer sheet, and data were then collected by mail. The justification for the principal components analysis was to answer the question of whether differing factors would “emerge if 1.00s are put in the main diagonal than if communalities are used” (p. 9) which was attributed to Gorsuch’s contention that negligible differences exist when moderate commonalities are found when a large number of variables are present. Because more than 250 subjects were used and a mean commonality greater than or equal to 0.60 existed, eigenvalues greater than one were extracted and individual questions having a factor loading greater than or equal to 0.30 were retained. The findings were reported as follows:

The first order principal components analysis yielded ten factors. The prerotation eigenvalues for the components were 22.21, 2.44, 1.79, 1.68, 1.54, 1.35, 1.13, 1.11, 1.06, and 1.08. Results of these solutions involve a first [order] factor that might be characterized as a general or *g* factor. This is a factor with which most items were highly correlated and suggests the existence of a unidimensional factor structure. . . . The means varied from 2.56 to 4.48, while the standard deviations varied from 0.67 to 1.13. (p. 10)

The reporters additionally stated that one of the results found in the first-order principal components analysis was that the factors presented a matrix of correlations which is essentially a method known as a second-order factor analysis. The finding that numerous multiple loadings were present in the first order varimax also suggested “a first-order oblique solution as well as a second-order result” (p. 10) was the determinant to extract second-order factors. Ultimately, the authors presented the findings stating:

Cronbach alphas for the factors (subscales) follow: subscale one .92, subscale two .88, subscale three .61, subscale four .60, and the composite for all questions .95.

The subscale intercorrelations for the subscales follow: (a) Factors one and two .75, (b) Factors one and three .69, (c) Factors one and four .68, (d) Factors two and three .73, (e) Factors two and four .63, and (f) Factors three and four .54. These intercorrelations do not represent factor scores but subscale scores derived by summing the response category values for the salient items for a subscale. (pp. 11-12)

In conclusion, the study further showed that the second-order factors clarified “additional perspectives on a school’s work culture” (p. 15). The school work culture: “it’s total quality management strengths; its interdependent work dimensions; the interdependence between the school and clients in shaping goals; and in the opportunities for professional development” (p. 15) are contributory factors that imitate contemporary thought “about the interdependency of systems and clients, and of work and professional development” (p. 15). In essence, these are the dimensions necessary “for developing market driven school programs and services” (p. 15).

In 1994, the researchers continued to examine the utility of the SWCP as a work culture productivity model and its development as a culture instrument and recorded the areas of generalization across primary factors found when the second-order component analysis was conducted. A sample of subjects ( $N=925$ ) from 112 schools representing 41 of the 67 school districts in Florida were administered the SWCP as reported in previous administration procedures. A first-order principal component analysis with individual questions with a factor loading greater than or equal to .040 retained that yielded 10 factors with prerotation eigenvalues for the components found to be “20.38, 2.99, 1.76, 1.59, 1.53, 1.32, 1.19, 1.11, 1.07, and 1.02” (Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, & Johnson, 1993b, p. 12). As in the previous study, a probable  $g$  factor was noted. With statistical significance determined to be 0.17 for a sample size of 925, they found “ten primary factors of 52 questions . . . . Eight questions did not attain the designated factor loading or were factorially complex” (p. 14). Additionally, the second-order ‘solution’ indicated “four higher order factors of 35 total questions” (p. 14) and “generated a new set of relationships among the 60 items on the *School Work Culture Profile*, which are reflective of several major thrusts for organizational transformation within the Total Quality Management literatures” (p. 15). Also, the researchers found that “a greater interdependence among logical work culture [had] emerged, which reinforces the systems thinking imbedded within” (p. 15) the instrument.

In 2002, Johnson, Johnson, and Zimmerman conducted a third-order factor analysis to “show how the first-order factors group into higher order factors” (p. 2) to address the “stagnation in the growth of educational productivity in America . . . focusing

on the ‘what and how’ issues involving achievement and school organization (p. 9). In their conclusion, the authors revealed:

Tools such as the SWCP can help generate data that consider the elements of planning, development, and assessment. The higher order component analysis helps researchers identify the higher-order components that are areas of generalization across the primary work culture components. The two third-order factors are clearly delineated as *Planning and Development Themes* that incorporate items pertaining to school improvement and educational achievement. The third-order solution focuses on educational process variables. These variables include those management factors that sustain productive schools. The SWCP can also describe how changes in work culture are taking effect following the implementation of new strategies of reform. (p. 9)

This conclusion was based on the findings that there were two higher-order factors present in the third-order solution in which eight factor one items were picked up from the second-order solutions and three items from the factor two second-order solution. In addition, “the third-order factor two solution included primarily the factor three and four items from the second-order solution” (p. 9).

**Reliability.** Regarding the reliability of the SWCP, Snyder (n.d.) revealed;

Reliability studies on the subscales show that the internal consistency of the items is very high. Three initial reliability studies were conducted using samples from three populations of practicing educators. Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimates were computed. The initial reliability studies on the SWCP yielded high internal scores (.95 to .97). Additionally, a test-retest design was used on one of the sample groups to investigate the short-term stability of the instrument over a two-week time delay. This yielded a test-retest reliability of .78. Another reliability study was conducted on a much larger, but mixed sample of school personnel from over 50 school districts in Florida, and resulted in Cronbach alphas that were very close to those found in the first series of studies, with a total of .96. Finally, a study utilizing a large sample of teachers from Pasco County in Florida ( $n=504$ ) yielded a total Cronbach alpha of .97. (p. 2)

Parkinson (1990) determined that the range of the coefficients obtained through the Cronbach alpha for the eight factor subscales were .76 to .89, with each item that loaded onto a factor contributing “positively to the alpha coefficient” (p. 120), providing



further evidence that the “factors might represent discrete constructs” (p. 120). The researcher also suggested that “a more definitive factor analysis as well as a content validation study be conducted before a more precise statement can be made on the factor constructs” (pp. 120-121).

Johnson, Snyder, Anderson, and Johnson (1993a) wrote:

The SWCP was tested using two different reliability samples. Two classes of graduate students in education,  $N=46$ , took the SWCP in the fall of 1987. Alphas for the four subscales were between .88 and .93 and .97 for the total scale. A second sample of fifty elementary school teachers in Lee County participated in a test-retest study with a two-week delay time in the spring of 1988. A test-retest Pearson correlation coefficient of .78 was attained. (p. 7)

### **Field Test**

The School Work Culture Profile developed by Snyder in 1988 was administered to the team of sixth grade teachers in a suburban middle school in the Central Florida school district studied in a single setting as a function of convenience due to the researcher’s access to the group (see Appendix B). Sixth-grade teachers were the sample group of choice because in many schools and in the state teacher certification process, sixth grade is included as an elementary grade level (i.e., K-6). The intent of utilizing a field test was to ascertain information regarding test administration procedures, test-item clarity, testing conditions, and any other relevant suggestions offered from the sampling of teachers that resemble the traits of elementary teachers who will be the focus of the study. Prior to administration of the survey, the original response sheet accompanying the SWCP (see Appendix C for a copy of the response sheet) was substituted for a one-page answer sheet (see Appendix D for a copy of the revised response sheet) to provide a more streamlined document that would afford the participants an increased degree of ease during the survey administration. The researcher determined that for the purpose of this

study, additional demographic information obtained would provide an additional source of data that could potentially be utilized at the school site to target staff development, information dissemination, etc., by using the score clusters provided from the additional demographic categories that could be included in a revised response sheet. The additional demographic categories included were: a) Job Category (replaced 'Position'), b) Gender, c) Type of School, and d) Race (see Appendix D).

All sixth-grade teachers were informed of the purpose of the field test prior to the survey administration. The field test was conducted prior to the beginning of the school day with 18 of the 23 sixth grade teachers participating. Two of the teachers later reported that they did not participate in the field test because they forgot the test date and time. Those teachers did inquire if they could still participate by taking the test at a later time, but were told by the test administrator that it was not necessary. They were also thanked for their interest in participating in the field test.

During a brief informational and survey instruction/direction period, the participants were asked to make note of any suggestions that would enhance or clarify the instructions, make the survey administration more convenient, and/or add any criticisms of the instructions or instrument itself and return them to the researcher. Prior to the actual administration of the field test, it was noticed that a glitch in the program that generated the answer sheet caused each answer sheet to number the assigned response selection number that correlated to the response selection (e.g., 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, etc.) sequentially on each answer sheet beginning with the next sequential number—the first answer sheet numbered the answer selections 1 through 5, the second answer sheet numbered the response selections 6 through 10—and continued for each

answer sheet generated. To prevent a delay in the administration of the survey, the researcher quickly made copies of the first answer sheet, distributed the survey and corrected answer sheets to the participants, and began the survey administration. The correction of the problem with the answer sheets delayed the administration of the survey by 5 minutes causing the completion of the field test to average 20 minutes as opposed to the 15 minutes participants were informed it would take to complete the survey. This did not seem to cause a problem with the participants.

Once the field test was completed and all surveys returned to the researcher, the sequentially numbering of the response selections was corrected to prevent the same type of error from occurring in future survey administrations. Also, the comments from the participants were reviewed by the researcher. The comments included the following:

- “Work groups—what are they?
- “Leadership team? What’s that?
- Questions #50 and #57 too much alike.
- What is the staff development program?
- Question #60—assesses should be assessed.

Each comment was considered; however, only the typographical error identified in Question #60 was immediately addressed. During future survey administrations, the researcher determined that the most practical solution would be to discuss the terminology and offer clarity on practical definitions of “work groups” and “leadership teams” as related to the familiar descriptions used at each site that were used to portray the specific types of “workgroups” and “leadership teams” employed at each site immediately prior to survey administrations.

During the tabulation process after the administration of the field test, the researcher discovered that the item grouping for the four sub-domains could be more readily identified in the original response sheet as opposed to the one developed by the researcher. Consequently, a new response sheet was developed that combined attributes of the original response sheet and the revised response sheet (see Appendix E for a copy of the Final Response Sheet) and was utilized during the survey administrations at each school site (see Appendix F for a copy of the Request Letter for Permission to Conduct the Field Test).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Snyder, the developer of the SWCP, granted the researcher permission to use the SWCP for this study during a personal visit to the developer's home. The original permission letter was lost; however, the survey developer sent an electronic version of the letter to the researcher at a later date (see Appendix G for a copy of the permission letter). In addition, the researcher contacted the school district for permission to conduct the study with randomly selected non-charter public and public charter elementary schools. As a function of convenience, the researcher queried a familiar, accessible, and reliable site administrator as the most effective means in developing and presenting an appropriate and effective form of communication that would provide convincing and compelling incentive for the site administrators of the randomly selected schools to give permission to the researcher to conduct research at their site. Once the proper permissions and remaining requirements were met and/or satisfied, the research proposal was submitted to the university's Institutional Review Board.

Faculty and administrators of randomly selected public and public charter elementary schools in an urban metropolitan statistical area of Central Florida were the population for this study. Schools were identified utilizing the most recent listing of schools from the Central Florida Public School District. Of the 159 public charter and public non-charter elementary schools, schools identified as located outside the urban metropolitan statistical area of the Central Florida county were eliminated from the selection process. The sample group for this study was composed of three charter public and three public non-charter elementary schools from the remaining Central Florida public school district's elementary schools located inside the urban metropolitan statistical area of a Central Florida community. Participation in the study was voluntary and extra surveys were made available for teachers and administrators who were absent the day of the faculty meeting and arrangements made for the surveys to be collected by the principal and returned to the researcher at a mutually agreed upon time.

The researcher contacted each selected school's administrator by telephone to provide an introduction as well as provide a brief description of the study. Once contact was made with each school administrator, an information packet was sent to each school. After sending each selected school information about the study including the purpose of the study, time and administration requirements, the researcher secured permission to attend previously scheduled faculty meetings at each school to administer the SWCP to the faculty and administrators of each school site after explaining the purpose of the study to the participants. See Appendix H for a copy of the Request Letter to Principals to Participate in Study. At each site, participants were informed of the importance of answering questions openly and honestly with the assurance of anonymity and

confidentiality. Confidentiality was maintained by having respondents provide only demographic and descriptive information on the answer sheet (i.e., type of position, gender, school type, race, length of service at school, etc.). Participants were afforded an opportunity to address any questions and/or concerns prior to the survey administration.

After a brief introduction and conversation with all participants, the survey was administered to each person. A single answer sheet was provided for respondents to mark their answers. The answer sheet was coded to identify site information only. The researcher remained in the room to collect each survey upon completion. As a token of appreciation and an added incentive to complete the survey, refreshments were provided to the participants.

### **Analysis of Data**

According to Merriam and Simpson (2000), “of all data-gathering techniques available to the researcher, the survey, either written or oral, is used most extensively” and “provides unique advantages to the researcher” (p. 146). The SWCP provided descriptive information on each school’s perceived type of work culture as well as levels of staff involvement. Since the ANOVA, according to Huck (2012, p. 295), is quite versatile as a statistical technique and is one of the most popular inferential tools used “to help applied researchers deal with [more than] two means,” a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA with a between group and within group comparisons was used to describe the findings. Because there were no significant effects, there was no need for a post hoc pairwise comparison.

## **Variables**

In this study, the primary independent variables were job category (administrator and faculty) and school type of the participants (charter school and non-charter school). The dependent variable was the average perception score in the ratings across the domains of program development, planning development, staff development, and school assessment. For each domain, there were 15 selected items which were believed to be indicators of the domain. A total score of the four domains was determined from which an average was derived to represent a mean-perception score for an individual. As such, if there were no missing scores and/or ambiguous values, then the range of total scores for any given individual would be 15-75. Other collected demographic variables included gender, race/ethnicity, and length of experience in current assignment.

## **Summary**

Utilizing the School Work Culture Profile, a paper-and-pencil instrument designed by Snyder in 1988 to obtain quantitative measures of the work patterns in schools, a study was conducted employing a quantitative research design to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of administrators and faculty of public non-charter and public charter elementary schools an urban metropolitan statistical area of Central Florida. The SWCP was submitted to a local and national expert panel for face validation. After refining and revision, it was submitted for reliability testing and further refining and revision and eventually it was determined that the SWCP was an instrument that could be utilized to determine the generalization of whether school work culture was a hindrance to or support of educational productivity and quality.

After conducting a field test to ascertain information regarding test administration procedures, test-item clarity, testing conditions, etc., and securing the proper permissions, the SWCP was administered to administrators and faculty of randomly selected public non-charter and public charter elementary schools in an urban metropolitan statistical area of Central Florida during previously scheduled faculty meetings. A 2 X 2 Factorial ANOVA with between and within group comparisons gave no significant main and interaction effects, therefore there was no need for further analysis.



## **Chapter 4: Findings**

The body of research related to the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in urban areas is limited. Also, the continual change in the focus of school reform efforts has contributed to a decrease in the utilization of the School Work Culture Profile, a data-gathering tool that offers insight into achieving school reform at the individual school level.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida. The parts of this chapter are: (a) response rate, (b) demographic characteristics, (c) data analysis, and (d) summary.

### **Response Rate**

The SWCP was administered during faculty meetings at six public elementary schools in an urban metropolitan area of a central Florida county. There were three public charter elementary schools and three public non-charter elementary schools participating in the study. The survey was administered to 163 participants. Of the 163 study participants, surveys were completed by 161 respondents for a 99% participant response rate. Two of the participants left without completing and returning the survey. One of the participants that did not complete the survey stated that he would complete it

and send it to me at a later time. That survey was not received for the inclusion in this study.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

Of the 269 schools and centers in the central Florida school district investigated, the sample for this study was composed of three public non-charter and three public charter elementary schools from the public schools located inside the urban metropolitan statistical area of the selected county. A table of random numbers was assigned to each urban public charter and public non-charter school and these numbers were used to select three representative schools for each of the two types of schools for the study.

A total of 161 usable participants were involved in the administration of the SWCP for the purpose of this study. The description of study participants by job category (administrator or faculty member) and school type (public charter or public non-charter) is presented below. There were a total of 10 administrators; 4 in the charter schools and 6 in the public non-charter schools. Of the 10 administrators, 9 were female and 1 male. The male administrator worked in a public non-charter elementary school. There were 151 teachers; 130 females and 19 males with two non-charter public school teachers who did not report their gender. Twelve males worked in public non-charter elementary schools and 7 in public charter elementary schools. The breakdown of teachers participating in the study was as follows: 39 teachers worked in public charter elementary schools and 112 teachers worked in public non-charter elementary schools for a study total of 161 participants. See Table 3 for sample demographics based on job category and gender.

Table 3

*Job Category and Gender of Participants by School Type*

School Type	Job Category	<i>n</i>	Gender ( <i>n</i> )	%
Public Charter School	Administrator	4	Female (4) Male (0)	0.025 0.000
	Teacher	39	Female (32) Male (7)	0.199 0.043
Public Non-Charter School	Administrator	6	Female (5) Male (1)	0.031 0.006
	Teacher	112	Female (98) Male (12)	0.609 0.075
No Response		2		0.012

*N* = 161

**Demographic Factors.** Other demographic factors were collected during the study but were not analyzed statistically for the purpose of this study. The demographic factors collected include gender, race/ethnicity (reported as participants described themselves), and length of service in current assignment. In the length of service in current assignment, participants did not differentiate their length of service by the school site, but rather the length of time they had served as either an administrator or faculty member. Although the data were not analyzed, it is not to be suggested that the data were irrelevant, but may provide useful information in other areas of consideration. That data are presented for the purpose of portraying the sample demographic characteristics in Table 4.

Table 4

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Characteristic/ Category	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	19	11.80
Female	140	86.95
Missing	2	0.01
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
African/American	86	53.42
White	55	34.12
Other	16	9.94
Missing	4	2.52
<b>Length of Experience in Current Assignment</b>		
0-5 years	78	50.65
6-10 years	32	20.78
11-15 years	23	14.94
16-20 years	8	5.19
21+ years	13	8.44
Missing	7	0.04

N = 161

Public charter schools surveyed, as a result of their inherent design, were typically much smaller than their public non-charter schools counterparts. Consequently, the number of participants in each job category, administrator and faculty, was smaller for each individual school. Individual school participant composition (three public non-charter and three public charter schools), the number of participants by job category (the

number of administrator and teachers), is presented in Table 5 in the order they were surveyed.

Table 5

*Number of Administrators and Faculty Members by Individual School Type*

School	School type	Administrators <i>n</i>	Faculty <i>n</i>
1	Public Non-Charter	2	37
2	Public Charter	1	9
3	Public Charter	1	17
4	Public Charter	2	13
5	Public Non-Charter	2	39
6	Public Non-Charter	2	36
Total		10	151

*N* = 161

### **Data Analysis and Results**

In order to answer the three main research questions, Statistical Analysis Software or SAS (Elliott & Woodward, 2010) was used for analysis of the data. Given the nature of the variables involved and the research questions, it was deemed reasonable to use an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Data related to the research questions were tested for the assumptions of ANOVA tests: Independence of observations, Equality of variances, and Normality in order to conduct these parametric tests.

Prior to running the ANOVA tests, descriptive statistics, Means and Standard Deviations of the SWCP components, were derived based on the four perceptive sub-

domains of the SWCP, School Assessment, Staff Development, Program Development, and Planning Development, as well as the overall perception across the two main groups of school type and job category. These data are exhibited in Table 6.

Table 6

*Means and Standard Deviation for Profile Components by School Type and Job Category*

School Type	Job Category	<i>n</i>	Profile Components	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Charter	Administrator	4	Overall Perception	5.36	0.49
			School Assessment	3.85	0.34
			Staff Development	3.95	0.62
			Program Development	4.23	0.39
			Planning Development	4.05	0.30
	Teacher	39	Overall Perception	5.00	0.90
			School Assessment	3.63	0.74
			Staff Development	3.78	0.77
			Program Development	3.95	0.60
			Planning Development	3.72	0.70
Non-Charter	Administrator	6	Overall Perception	5.49	0.50
			School Assessment	4.06	0.33
			Staff Development	4.11	0.32
			Program Development	4.20	0.53
			Planning Development	4.10	0.43
	Teacher	112	Overall Perception	4.77	0.65
			School Assessment	3.55	0.45
			Staff Development	3.58	0.62
			Program Development	3.66	0.53
			Planning Development	3.54	0.51

In this study, all the ANOVA results were interpreted in terms of Type III Sums of Squares (*SS*) which, as opposed to Type I *SS*, which addresses the effect of a given categorical independent variable on a dependent variable while controlling for the other

categorical independent variable(s). There was the need to examine, provide various tests for, and articulate consequences if and/or when these assumptions were not met and embrace possible subsequent remedial measures. In this study, there were no serious indications of how the data were collected and subsequently there was no need to check for the existence of auto-correlation for the testing for independence of assumptions. For example, in this study, the participants were uniquely different in that one could not belong to a charter school staff and a non-charter school faculty at the same time and that administrators and faculty members did not have a crossover between job categories.

For each ANOVA, tests by school type and job category on each of the four sub-domains and overall perception score, Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was used to determine if there was statistical evidence that this assumption might have been violated. There appeared to be no such evidence that the assumption had been violated. These were evident by Overall Perception [ $F = 2.79, p = 0.0968$ ], Planning Development [ $F = 2.92, p = 0.0617$ ], Program Development [ $F = 0.28, p = 0.5992$ ], Staff Development [ $F = 2.79, p = 0.0968$ ], and School Assessment [ $F = 2.81, p = 0.0639$ ]. Finally, the univariate tests of normality indicated that the four perception scores corresponded to the sub-domains and the overall perception of school type and job category. Both the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test statistics yielded  $p$  values  $>0.05$ . This suggested that the data used probably came from a normally distributed population, guaranteeing that the use of the ANOVA parametric test was appropriate for the data. For factors A and B (school type and job category),  $p$  values for the statistic ( $F$ ) were less than alpha (0.05) only for job category in the Planning Development sub-domain,  $F(1,157) = 5.58, p = 0.0195$ ; with administrators scoring significantly higher than

teachers, Program Development,  $F(1,157) = 4.92, p = 0.02$ ; with administrators scoring significantly higher than teachers, School Assessment,  $F(1,158) = 4.20, p = 0.0424$ ; with administrators scoring significantly higher than teachers, and the overall perception,  $F(1,157) = 5.08, p = 0.0258$ , with administrators scoring significantly higher than teachers. Subsequently, while holding school type constant, the null hypothesis that job category had no significant effect on these sub-domains was rejected and it was concluded that the job category main effect was significant in the Planning Development, Program Development, and School Assessment sub-domains, as well as the overall perception with administrators scoring significantly higher in these perception scores. The sub-domain School type and its interaction with job category, however, did not seem to have any significant effect across all of the perception sub-domains. The  $p$  values associated with the obtained values in all sub-domains with the obtained  $F$  statistics revealed scores all greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypotheses for significant school type and interaction effects were not rejected with the conclusion that school type and interaction with job category were not significant across the perception sub-domains or the overall perception. The statistical data are presented in Table 7.



Table 7

*ANOVA Summary Tables for SWCP Overall Perceptions and Sub-Domains*

SWCP Sub-Domain/ Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Planning Development</b>					
<i>F</i> (3, 154) = 3.53, <i>p</i> = 0.0164)					
School Type	1	0.043	0.043	0.14	0.7116
Job Category	1	1.755	1.755	5.58	0.0195
School Type *Job Category	1	0.127	0.127	0.40	0.5259
Error	154	58.46	0.31		
<b>Program Development</b>					
<i>F</i> (3, 157) = 5.09, <i>p</i> = 0.002)					
School Type	1	0.235	0.235	0.78	0.3785
Job Category	1	1.484	1.484	4.92	0.0280
School Type*Job Category	1	0.149	0.149	0.49	0.4834
Error	157	47.37	0.30		
<b>Staff Development</b>					
<i>F</i> (3, 157) = 2.22. <i>p</i> = 0.0884)					
School Type	1	0.003	0.003	0.01	0.9291
Job Category	1	1.106	1.106	2.59	0.1093
School Type*Job Category	1	0.289	0.289	0.68	0.4116
Error	154	65.62	0.43		
<b>School Assessment</b>					
<i>F</i> (3, 157) = 2.10, <i>p</i> = 0.1028					
School Type	1	0.040	0.040	0.14	0.7044
Job Category	1	1.164	1.164	4.20	0.0421
School Type*Job Category	1	0.169	0.169	0.61	0.4363
Error	151	41.82	0.28		
<b>Overall Perception</b>					
<i>F</i> (3, 148) = 3.16, <i>p</i> = 0.026					
School Type	1	0.020	0.020	0.04	0.8436
Job Category	1	2.561	2.561	5.08	0.0258
School Type *Job Category	1	0.270	0.270	0.54	0.4657
Error	145	73.16	0.50		

There were some differences in the degrees of freedom in the respective sub-domains attributable to differences in response rate. Some individuals did not respond to all of the items in particular sub-domains. ANOVA calculations were based on the actual responses.

However, as it has been shown, the impact of the factors school type and job category measured on the various perception sub-domains appeared to be very highly correlated and is shown in Table 8, which presents a summary of Pearson Correlation Coefficients between the various perception sub-domains in this study. The results suggest that the various sub-domains of the School Work Culture Profile are closely related to the coefficients.

Table 8

*Correlation Coefficients for SWCP Sub-Domains*

Sub-Domain	School Assessment <i>r</i>	Staff Development <i>r</i>	Program Development <i>r</i>	Planning Development <i>r</i>
School Assessment	1.0	0.86 <0.0001 152	0.82 <0.0001 155	0.88 <0.0001 152
Staff Development	0.86 <0.0001 152	1.0	0.85 <0.0001 158	0.87 <0.0001 155
Program Development	0.82 <0.0001 155	0.85 <0.0001 158	1.0	0.86 <0.0001 158
Planning Development	0.88 <0.0001 152	0.87 <0.0001 155	0.86 <0.0001 158	1.0

**A Narrative of the Participant Schools.** In order to answer the three main research questions as well as tabulate the scores for the individual participant schools, Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) was used for analysis of the data. In addition, to achieve the scores for each participant school utilizing the accompanying directions for scoring the SWCP, the data were input into the software for analysis

The SWCP consists of 60 items on a Likert-type scale with the numerical values 1-5 correlated to the responses Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) so that if all items were answered with the answers marked for Strongly Agree, or all five(s), the highest possible score would be 300 or likewise, a 60 for all answers marked Strongly Disagree. Consequently, the highest score for each sub-domain would be 75 and the lowest, 15 with all questions answered. School scores were obtained by summing the scores of the participants for each of the four sub-domains and dividing the score for each sub-domain by the number of participants for each school. Once the four-sub-domain scores were totaled, they were added together to obtain the total SWCP score for each school (Snyder, 1988b).

For the purposes of this research study, to determine the relativity of a school's Teacher Involvement patterns in relation to the school's SWCP score, the data were analyzed using a scale of Low Involvement (Low Development), Moderate Involvement (Moderate Development), and High Involvement (High Development) for each sub-domain. A High Involvement School equates to scores between 241 – 300; Moderate Involvement Schools score between 190 – 240; and Low Involvement Schools obtained scores less than or equal to 189.99. The Development Level provides the *reliable information* about how developed the school's work culture is (Snyder, 1988a) and helps

identify those areas where the school's development goals, the "identified improvement targets that stretch the school's capacity to accomplish its main functions or to meet emerging challenges" (Snyder, 1988a, p. 2) can be focused. School scores in the study ranged from 198.67 to 244.90 total points with a study mean of 224.

***School Profiles.*** This section provides in-depth detail about the data obtained for each school participating in the administration of the SWCP and the Involvement and Development Levels for each school participating in this study.

Based on the previously mentioned Involvement/Development Level scale—Low Involvement (Low Development), Moderate Involvement (Moderate Development), and High Involvement (High Development)—for each sub-domain, schools with High Involvement equated to scores ranging between 241 – 300; Moderate Involvement Schools scored between 190 – 240; and Low Involvement Schools obtained scores less than or equal to 189.99). Of the six schools participating in the study, four schools scored in the Moderate Involvement (Moderate Development ) range. Three of the schools were non-public charter schools and one was a public charter school. The remaining schools, two public charter schools, scored in the High Involvement (High Development) range. When the Involvement Level (Development Level) scores were compared to the state assigned school grade, the two charter schools attaining the High Involvement (High Development) scores were found to have received state school grades of A. The remaining schools received Moderate Involvement (Moderate Development). When the scores for these schools were compared to the state assigned school grades, it was found that these schools all received state assigned school grades of D. The school with the lowest Involvement Level (Development Level) score of all schools was the one

remaining charter school. School Profiles, the schools' mean SWCP scores and Involvement/Development Level are presented in Table 9

Table 9

*Participant School Development Levels*

School Number	School Type	SWCP Mean Score	Involvement/Development Level
1	Public-Non Charter	230.28	Moderate
2	Public Charter	244.90	High
3	Public Charter	198.67	Moderate
4	Public Charter	246.00	High
5	Public Non-Charter	219.07	Moderate
6	Public Non-Charter	202.11	Moderate

The individual profile of mean scores attained by each school is reported in Table 10. In the Planning Development sub-domain, scores were between 49.61 and 61.33; Staff Development, from 50.18 to 62.10; Program Development scores were 51.32 to 63.20; and School Assessment scores ranged from 42.28 to 60.47.

Table 10

*Profile of Sub-Domain Scores by School*

School	Sub-Domain Scores			
	Planning Development <i>M</i>	Staff Development <i>M</i>	Program Development <i>M</i>	School Assessment <i>M</i>
School 1	55.82	56.46	60.53	57.47
School 2	59.50	62.10	63.20	58.30
School 3	50.39	50.89	55.11	42.28
School 4	61.33	61.33	62.87	60.47
School 5	54.68	55.02	55.59	53.78
School 6	49.61	50.18	51.32	51.00

The data in Table 11 present the Cronbach Alpha values for the SWCP sub-domains. The values range from 0.956 to 0.970 indicating extremely high Cronbach Alpha values.

Table 11

*Cronbach Alpha Values for SWCP Sub-Domains*

Sub-Domain	Cronbach Alpha
Overall Perception	0.956
School Assessment	0.970
Staff Development	0.967
Program Development	0.970
Planning Development	0.966

## **Summary**

The SWCP was administered to 161 teachers and administrators from public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in a large metropolitan central Florida county for the purpose of this study. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS). The results of the ANOVA tests indicated that there were differences by job category: administrators scored significantly higher than the faculty on the overall perception and three sub-domains of school work culture, planning development, program development , and school assessment. There was no difference on the staff development sub-domain. There was no difference between the perceptions of instructional staff by the type of school (public charter and public non-charter). In addition, there was no interaction between job category and school type.

## **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in an urban metropolitan statistical area of Central Florida. The parts of this chapter are (a) summary of study, (b) conclusions, (c) implications, and (d) recommendations for further research.

### **Summary of Study**

As has been previously stated, the body of research related to the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in urban areas has been limited. Also, the continual change in the focus of school reform efforts has contributed to a decrease in the utilization of the SWCP, an economical data-gathering tool that offers insight into achieving school reform at the individual school level. Limited research related to the perception of school-work culture of faculty and administrators exists in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in urban areas.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida.



In order to investigate the perceptions of school work culture of administrators and faculty in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. Is there a difference in the perception of the instructional staff members (both administrators and faculty) of public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools related to school work culture in a large urban metropolitan county of Central Florida?
2. Is there a difference in perception between school administrators and faculty in public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools of school work culture?
3. Is there an interaction between type of school (public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools) and job category (administration and faculty) of the perception of school work culture?

Faculty and administrators of randomly selected public charter and public non-charter elementary schools in an urban metropolitan statistical area of Central Florida were the population for this study. Schools were identified utilizing the most recent listing of schools from the Central Florida Public District. Of the 159 public charter and public non-charter elementary schools, schools identified as located outside the urban metropolitan statistical area of the Central Florida county were eliminated from the selection process. The sample group for this study was composed of three public charter and three public non-charter elementary schools from the remaining Central Florida public school district's elementary schools located inside the urban metropolitan

statistical area of a Central Florida community. Participation in the study was voluntary and extra surveys were made available for teachers and administrators who were absent the day of the faculty meeting and arrangements made for the surveys to be collected by the principal and returned to the researcher at a mutually agreed upon time.

The School Work Culture Profile (Snyder, 1988b), a diagnostic survey instrument developed by Snyder as an accompaniment component of the Managing Productive Schools Training program (Parkinson, 1990), provides a means to measure the development of work culture and the degree and perception of the worker's level of participation in organizational practices based on the four sub-domains of "a) planning; b) program development; c) staff development; and d) assessment" (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 2000, p. 189). Bruner (1997) referred to the SWCP as an instrument that could be utilized to determine the generalization of whether school work culture is a hindrance to or support of educational productivity and quality. The instrument consists of a six-page booklet including operational definitions, directions for responding to the instrument, and the 60-item questionnaire. The questionnaire items are presented in random order and use a five-point Likert scale format with the choices strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree to record participant responses that may be machine or hand scored. Designed for group administration, the instrument requires 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

The SWCP was returned by 161 of 163 administered, the  $N = 161$  was utilized in the data analysis. However, there were some missing item responses in several questionnaires which had minimal impact on the data findings. There a total of 10

administrators and 151 teachers who returned the questionnaire. Each of the six administrations of the SWCP was conducted during faculty meetings.

The data were analyzed using ANOVAs and Cronbach Alpha for reliability purposes. Also, an item analysis was performed on the sub-domain questions.

**Summary of Results.** The SWCP was returned by 161 of 163 administered, the  $N = 161$  was utilized in the data analysis. However, there were some missing item responses in several questionnaires which had minimal impact on the data findings. There a total of 10 administrators and 151 teachers who returned the questionnaire. Each of the six administrations of the SWCP was conducted during faculty meetings.

Each sub-domain, with the exception of staff development, for the administration of the School Work Culture Profile (Snyder, 1998) yielded significant differences in the perceptions of administrators in public charter and public non-charter elementary schools and the faculty members of those schools in this research.

1. There were no differences in the perceptions of instructional staff members between public charter elementary schools and public non-charter elementary schools, in terms of the SWCP sub-domains and the overall score. Public charter and public non-charter school instructional staff responded to the SWCP sub-domains similarly, therefore, the type of school the respondents worked in, albeit public charter or public non-charter, did not impact their perceptions.
2. The data suggest that there were significant differences in perceptions between school administrators regardless of the type of school and the faculty members of both types of schools in three of the four sub-domains (Planning Development, Program Development, School Assessment) of school work culture with the

exception of the sub-domain of Staff Development. The mean perception for administrators in both types of schools was higher in the three sub-domains than was that for faculty members.

Administrators in both types of schools and teachers in both types of schools responded similarly; however, administrators and faculty members think differently regardless of the school type. Administrators typically have more direct input in the three sub-domain areas of Planning Development, Program Development, and School Assessment as a function of job responsibility. The time requirement of administrators for these areas is far more substantial than is that required of faculty members.

3. There was no interaction between type of school and type of job category, whether administrator or faculty member, for any of the sub-domains or the overall perception. In other words, the perceptions of administrators and faculty members of both types of schools do not appear to be dependent upon whether or not they work in charter or non-charter public schools.

The administrative functions and responsibilities of running a school do not change regardless of the type of school one works in. Nor for that matter, do instructional tasks and responsibilities change whether teaching children in public charter or public non-charter schools.

## **Conclusions**

The conclusions emanating from this research include the following:

1. Schools are equal regardless of the type of school.

2. The culture of administrators remains the same regardless of the type of school.  
The same can be said for faculty members.
3. The perceptions of administrators and faculty members are not determined by the type of school in which they work.
4. Administrators and faculty members do perceive certain aspects of school work culture differently. Program Development, Planning Development, and School Assessment are administrative functions, whereas Staff Development may be perceived to be more of a personal function.

A commonality exists between public charter schools and public non-charter schools—in the end, they are schools with the sole purpose of educating students. They are populated with the collection of parents who enroll their children there and the teachers, and administrators that work there within a set of prescribed functions to provide a free and appropriate education to all enrolled. The administrative functions and responsibilities of operating a school are no different whether one is an administrator of a public charter school or a public non-charter school. Faculty members in both public charter schools and public non-charter schools have the same charge—provide quality instruction that meets the educational standards set by their state department of education. The perceptions of administrators and faculty members are less determined by the type of school they work in, but perhaps, more by what they do and why they do it. However, their perceptions do appear to be impacted by the functions and responsibilities they have within a school setting.

## **Implications**

Public charter schools and public non-charter schools were not perceived to be significantly different for the individuals, both administrators and teachers, who work there, based on the SWCP. Although many discussions have been held about the need for charter schools, their role may be one component in improving the educational outcome for many students who experience difficulty in other environments. The results indicates that both charter school and non-charter school instructional staff members perceive things similarly and share the same values related to the perceptions of school work culture. Very often, within public school districts, charter school instructional staff may be marginalized and/or viewed as unequals. Therefore, efforts to mainstream and encourage cross-institutional collaboration might be helpful to improve the educational conditions for all students.

The differences between the administrators and the faculty in the overall perception, planning development, program development, and school assessment were all higher for administrators in both charter and non-charter public schools. Based on the intent of the SWCP, which is to determine how connected the individuals in a school setting are to the sub-domains, the planning development, program development, and school assessment scales indicate that efforts need to be focused on increasing the collaborative conversations in these areas.

Based on the findings that teacher perceptions of school work culture was lower than that of administrators on three of the four sub-domains, there exists a disconnect in the thought processes of administrators and teachers. For administrators, this has implications about entrenching a more collaborative involvement in the planning,

program development, and school assessment. Conversations could be focused on developing inclusionary practices that increase teacher input in meeting schools' stated goals, which increases their ownership.

College of education and educational leadership programs could do more in terms of placing emphasis on the charter school movement as an alternative for innovative ideas needed to address the state of the national educational system.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

One potential research study might investigate the underlying and/or contributory factors that cause the differences in the perceptions of faculty members and administrators of school work culture related to school assessment, program development, and school planning.

Also, additional research could explore the agreement in the perceptions of school work culture of faculty and administrators in regard to staff development to determine the basis for the similarities. On the other hand, staff development may be perceived by teachers as a professional/personal growth area. Additional research to investigate the underlying reasons for this discrepancy is warranted.

Complementary research is recommended that would add to the existing database that could provide more details into the relationship between student achievement and school culture to determine if school culture is an influencing factor upon student achievement.

Further studies, including a more diverse sample of participating schools, could be more useful in terms of generalizability of the study findings. Demographic factors such as race/ethnicity, length of service in current assignment, gender, that were included

in this study only as a means of data gathering to determine the characteristics of study participants, may be useful in ascertaining if there are significant influences based on those characteristics.

This study investigated three specific public charter schools that were randomly selected. There are differences in the majority of charter schools and elite schools of any type, whether they be charter, private, or public non-charter. An investigation of similarities or differences in these types of schools could be conducted to determine whether the results of this study are comparable.

The majority of charter schools are by design smaller than the typical non-charter public school. Since previous literature extols the virtue of small schools and their impact on student achievement (Oxley, 1994; Shapiro, 2009), schools of both types sharing characteristics that could be matched in terms of student enrollment may be studied to determine whether school size may have influenced the results of this study.

This study was conducted in one school district within the state of Florida. Additional research may be conducted on other school districts within the state of Florida, of both greater or smaller sizes, to establish whether or not the findings are similar.

Other areas of potential research could investigate the findings of school work culture in other states. Different states have varying state policies that influence the perception of charter schools and may or may not be more receptive and inclusive of the charter school movement.



The SWCP was written in 1988 and the verbiage of the individual items may have changed and may need updating to reflect the language based on the current emphases and policies regarding education systems in the present.

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## **Appendix A: State Survey Data Indicators**

## Appendix A (Continued)

- Chance for Success—an index that combines information from 13 indicators spanning an individual's lifetime, career to cradle (indicators include family income—percentage of children from families with income at least 200% of poverty level in 2006; parent education—children with at least one parent with a secondary degree in 2006; parental employment—children with at least one parent working full-time and year-round in 2006; linguistic information—children whose parents are fluent English speakers; preschool enrollment—three- and four-year olds enrolled in preschool in 2006; kindergarten enrollment—eligible children enrolled in kindergarten programs in 2006; elementary reading—fourth grade public school proficient on NAEP in 2007; middle school mathematics—eighth grade public school proficient on NAEP in 2007; high school graduation—public high school students who graduate with a diploma in the class of 2004; postsecondary education—young adults enrolled in postsecondary or with a degree in 2006; adult education attainment—adults with a two- or four-year postsecondary degree in 2006; annual income—adults with incomes at or above national median in 2006; and steady employment—adults in labor force working full-time and year-round in 2006.) Florida earned a C+ in 2008 (p. 3) and a C in 2009. (p. 2)
- Providing Opportunities for Success—an index that captures the importance of education throughout a person's lifetime, career to cradle (indicators include preparation in early childhood, the performance of the public schools and educational and economic outcomes in adulthood.) Florida earned a C+. (p. 4)
- Elementary and Secondary Performance—the K-12 Achievement Index, an index that examines 18 distinct state achievement measures related to reading and math performance, high school graduation rates, and the results of Advanced Placement exams (indicators include 4<sup>th</sup> grade made—percent proficient on NAEP in 2007; 8<sup>th</sup> grade math—percent proficient on NAEP in 2007; 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading—percent proficient on NAEP in 2007; 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading—percent proficient in reading on NAEP in 2007; 4<sup>th</sup> grade math—scale score change on NAEP in 2007; 8<sup>th</sup> grade math—scale score change on NAEP in 2007; 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading—scale score change on NAEP in 2007; 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading—scale score change on NAEP in 2007; reading gap—4<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP scale score in 2007; math gap—8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP scale score in 2007; reading-gap change—4<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP 2003-2007; math-gap change—8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP (2003-2007); math excellence—percent advanced on 8<sup>th</sup> grade NAEP in 2007; change in math excellence—percent advanced on NAEP (2003-2007); graduation rate—public schools class of 2004; change in graduation rate—public schools 200-2004; high AP test scores—scores of 3 or higher per 100 students in 2006; and change in AP scores—change in high scores per 100 students 2000-2006.) Florida earned a D+ in 2008 (p.5) and a C in 2009. (p. 2)
- Nation Receives Passing Grade on Achievement, but Just Barely—points are awarded on this index based on three distinct aspects of student achievement: current levels of performance, improvement over time, and achievement equity between poor and nonpoor [sic] students. Florida earned a C. (p. 6)
- Standards, Assessments, and Accountability which indicates whether the state has policies enacted across subject areas and grade levels (indicators include

academic content standards—standards adopted in the core subjects during 2007-2008; English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies/history standards are clear, specific, and grounded in content at all levels; revision schedule—state has regular timeline for revising standards in all core subjects; supplementary resources—materials elaborate on standards in all core subjects and materials were provided for particular student populations; test items used to measure student performance across grade levels; multiple choice and short answer items across grade levels; extended-response items across subject areas, portfolios of student work; alignment of assessments to academic standards; vertically equated scores on assessments in grades 3-8 in English and math; formative assessments or item banks provided to educators; state ratings—state assigns ratings to all schools on criteria other than AYP; statewide student ID—state has a statewide student identification system; rewards—state provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools; assistance—state provides assistance to low-performing schools; sanctions—state sanctions low-performing schools). Florida earned a B in 2008 (p. 7) and an A in 2009 (p. 2)

- Transitions and Alignment—education alignment policies (indicators include early learning—state early standards aligned with K-12 measures; school-readiness definition—state formally defines school readiness; school-readiness assessment—readiness of entering students assessed; school-readiness intervention—programs for students not deemed ready; kindergarten standards—learning expectations aligned with elementary; college readiness—state defines college readiness; college preparation—college prep required to earn a high school diploma; course alignment—credits for high school diploma aligned with postsecondary system; assessment alignment—high school assessment aligned with postsecondary system; postsecondary decisions—high school assessment used for postsecondary decisions; work readiness—state K-12 system defines work readiness; career-tech diploma—state offers high school diploma with career specialization; industry certification—K-12 has path for industry-recognized certificate or license; and portable credits—K-12 pathway to earn career-tech credits for postsecondary). Florida earned a C in 2008 (p. 8) and a C+ in 2009. (p. 2)
- The Teaching Profession—efforts to improve teaching (indicators include accountability for initial licensure—substantial coursework in subject area taught, test of basic skills, test of subject-specific knowledge and pedagogy, student teaching, and other clinical experiences during teacher training; discouraging out-of-field teaching—parental notification of out-of-field teachers and a ban or cap on the number of out-of-field teachers; evaluating teacher performance—formal evaluation of all teachers’ performance required, student achievement is tied to teacher evaluation, annual basis for teacher evaluations, evaluators of teachers receive formal training; teacher education programs—rankings/results published for teacher preparation institutions, programs accountable for graduates’ classroom performance; data systems to monitor quality—unique identification number assigned to each teacher by state, link teacher and student records by course/subject and state assessment results; reduction of entry and transfer barriers—alternative-route program for teacher preparation, teacher-license



reciprocity or portability arrangement with other state(s), teacher-pension portability across state lines; teacher-pay parity—teacher salaries at least equal to comparable occupations; districts report school-level salaries for teachers; pay-for-performance programs rewards teachers for raising student achievement; differential role for teachers formally recognized by state; incentives for teacher-leadership roles; incentives for teachers to earn national-board certification); incentives and allocations/building and supporting capacity—managing and allocating teaching talent—fully licensed teachers, highly-qualified teachers, first-year teachers, and national board certified teachers tracked by state data systems, by school poverty level; incentives to teachers working in targeted schools, to board-certified teachers working in targeted teaching assignment areas, to board-certified teachers working in targeted schools, and to principals working in targeted schools; supports for beginning teachers—induction program for all new teachers funded by state, mentoring program for all new teachers funded by state, mentoring program standards for selecting, training, and/or matching mentors, reduced workload for all first-year teachers; professional development—formal professional-development standards, professional development financed by state for all districts, districts/schools required to set aside time for professional development, and professional development aligned with local priorities; school leadership—standards for licensure of school administrators, supervised internship for aspiring principals, induction or mentoring program for aspiring principals; school working conditions—program to reduce or limit class size implemented by state, student-teacher ratio median in elementary schools is 15:1 or less, state tracks condition of school facilities, state reports school-level information on climate and working conditions, state imposes penalties for school violence, and state finances program to reduce school violence. Florida earned a C in 2008 (pp. 9-10) and a B in 2009. (p. 2)

- Reaching the Parity Line—an original analysis by the EPE Research Center that finds that public school teachers nationwide make 88 cents for every dollar earned in 16 comparable occupations. Florida ranked 39<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states and the District of Columbia. (p. 11)

School Finance—equity and spending indicators including wealth neutrality score—relationship between district funding and local property wealth; McLoone Index—actual spending as percent of amount needed to bring all students to median level; coefficient of variation—amount of disparity in spending across districts within a state; restricted range—difference in per-pupil spending levels at the 95<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> percentiles; adjusted per-pupil expenditures (PPE)—analysis accounts for regional cost differences; students funded at or above national average—percent of students in districts with PPE at or above U.S. average; spending index—per-pupil spending levels weighted by the degree to which districts meet or approach the national average for expenditures; and spending on education—state expenditures on K-12 schooling as a percent of state taxable resources. Florida earned a C+ in 2008 (p. 12) and a C- in 2009. (p.2)

## **Appendix B: The School Work Culture Profile**

Appendix B (Continued)

Directions: Please read each sentence carefully and determine the extent to which it describes what occurs in your school. Indicate the extent of your agreement with each statement by shading the space on your answer sheet that best represents your response.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. The school administration and the staff identify goals to improve the school each year.
2. The staff development program builds the school's capacity to solve problems.
3. Instructional programs are guided by learning objectives.
4. Work groups (committees, department teams, grade level groups, etc.) are assessed on their contribution to the achievement of school goals.
5. Data about student achievement, school services and programs are analyzed by the professional staff to aid in identifying school development goals.
6. Staff development programs provide opportunities to learn new knowledge.
7. The readiness level of students is considered when selecting/developing instructional programs.
8. Staff members provide constructive feedback to each other regularly.
9. Staff development programs provide opportunities to practice newly learned skills.
10. Parents participate in identifying school goals.
11. Work groups monitor and revise their work through periodic assessment of the progress made toward goals.
12. Instructional programs are planned cooperatively by the professional staff.

Appendix B (Continued)

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

13. Staff development programs are designed to facilitate adult learning.
14. Students have input into school development goals.
15. Individual staff members alter their work patterns in response to feedback.
16. Instructional programs facilitate student mastery of learning objectives.
17. Staff members have opportunities to develop skills for working successfully in a group/team.
18. School evaluation is based on school goals.
19. Tasks are identified for accomplishing school development goals.
20. Classroom organization and activities facilitate student learning.
21. School evaluation includes assessment of student achievement data.
22. Staff members have opportunities to learn by working cooperatively with colleagues.
23. Teachers identify learning expectations for students.
24. School time is structured to provide for cooperative work activity.
25. School evaluation is a cooperatively planned system.
26. Students are provided with reinforcement, correctives, and feedback on their performance.
27. Staff members are supervised and/or coached regularly.
28. Professional staff members are assigned to work in teams.
29. Work groups are assessed on the extent to which work group goals are achieved.
30. Students engage in cooperative learning activities.

Appendix B (Continued)

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

31. Professional staff members participate on school-wide task forces and/or committees.
32. Supervision of teaching is based on cooperatively identified goals and emerging needs.
33. Students are provided with sufficient time to succeed in learning tasks.
34. Work groups report periodically on progress to the school leadership team.
35. School-wide task forces and committees work to achieve school development goals.
36. Supervision helps teachers to solve instructional problems.
37. Resources are used to meet school goals.
38. Commonly held beliefs, values and norms are consistent with school development goals.
39. Individual staff members are assessed on the degree to which individual performance goals are achieved.
40. Staff members observe and coach each other,
41. Work group plans are reviewed by the leadership team.
42. Parents serve as a resource to the school's instructional program.
43. Supervision builds and maintains professional self-esteem.
44. Individual staff members are assessed on their contribution to work group goals.
45. High performance expectations exist for each role group (for example: teachers, counselors).
46. Supervision reinforces strengths in current job performance.

Appendix B (Continued)

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Undecided
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

47. Community resources are used in the school's instructional programs.
48. Individual staff members are assessed on their contribution to overall school goals.
49. Work group leaders have opportunities to develop specific leadership skills.
50. All staff members develop individual performance goals to contribute to school development goals.
51. Student achievement data are used to assess each teacher's performance.
52. The school's budget reflects prioritized school goals.
53. Each staff member's performance goals are reviewed with the school's leadership team.
54. Staff members share their ideas and concerns for improving work productivity in their work group.
55. The school's leadership team helps work groups to succeed.
56. Periodic feedback from sources outside the school is used to modify work practices.
57. Individual performance goals for staff members are linked to the school's development goals.
58. Staff member's problem solve, plan, and make decisions together in productive ways.
59. Staff members function as a resource to each other,
60. Student achievement is assessed in relation to overall school goals.





























































**Appendix C: School Work Culture Profile Response Sheet**





### School Work Culture Profile

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ # Years at location \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ Level \_\_\_\_\_

- |     |   |     |   |     |   |     |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1.  |    | 2.  |    | 3.  |    | 4.  |    |
| 5.  |    | 6.  |    | 7.  |    | 8.  |    |
| 9.  |    | 10. |    | 11. |    | 12. |    |
| 13. |    | 14. |    | 15. |    | 16. |    |
| 17. |    | 18. |    | 19. |    | 20. |    |
| 21. |    | 22. |    | 23. |    | 24. |    |
| 25. |   | 26. |   | 27. |   | 28. |   |
| 29. |  | 30. |  | 31. |  | 32. |  |
| 33. |  | 34. |  | 35. |  | 36. |  |
| 37. |  | 38. |  | 39. |  | 40. |  |
| 41. |  | 42. |  | 43. |  | 44. |  |
| 45. |  | 46. |  | 47. |  | 48. |  |
| 49. |  | 50. |  | 51. |  | 52. |  |
| 53. |  | 54. |  | 55. |  | 56. |  |
| 57. |  | 58. |  | 59. |  | 60. |  |

			
Planning Development	Staff Development	Program Development	Assessment

\_\_\_\_\_  
Total Score



## **Appendix D: Revised Response Sheet**

**SWCP Response Sheet**

Demographic Information

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>1. Job Category</b>                                | <b>2. Gender</b>                            | <b>3. Type of School</b>                             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator                | <input type="checkbox"/> Male               | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-charter public          | <input type="checkbox"/> Charter       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Female             | <input type="checkbox"/> Private                     |  |
| <b>4. Race</b>  |   | <b>5. Length of experience in current assignment</b> |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic Non-White | <input type="checkbox"/> 0 – 5 years                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American       |   | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 15 years               | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 – 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ |   | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 – 25 years               | <input type="checkbox"/> 21+ years     |

Appendix D (Continued)

Directions:

Please use the legend below to record your answer to each corresponding question and number in the questionnaire. For example, if you Strongly Disagree with question 1, write a 1 beside number 1; if you Strongly Agree, write a 5. Use the same process for all five possible responses for each question.

<b>1</b>	=	<b><i>Strongly Disagree</i></b>
<b>2</b>	=	<b><i>Disagree</i></b>
<b>3</b>	=	<b><i>Undecided</i></b>
<b>4</b>	=	<b><i>Agree</i></b>
<b>5</b>	=	<b><i>Strongly Agree</i></b>

- |           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____  | 16. _____ | 31. _____ | 46. _____ |
| 2. _____  | 17. _____ | 32. _____ | 47. _____ |
| 3. _____  | 18. _____ | 33. _____ | 48. _____ |
| 4. _____  | 19. _____ | 34. _____ | 49. _____ |
| 5. _____  | 20. _____ | 35. _____ | 50. _____ |
| 6. _____  | 21. _____ | 36. _____ | 51. _____ |
| 7. _____  | 22. _____ | 37. _____ | 52. _____ |
| 8. _____  | 23. _____ | 38. _____ | 53. _____ |
| 9. _____  | 24. _____ | 39. _____ | 54. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 25. _____ | 40. _____ | 55. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 26. _____ | 41. _____ | 56. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 27. _____ | 42. _____ | 57. _____ |
| 13. _____ | 28. _____ | 43. _____ | 58. _____ |
| 14. _____ | 29. _____ | 44. _____ | 59. _____ |
| 15. _____ | 30. _____ | 45. _____ | 60. _____ |

## **Appendix E: Final Response Sheet**

**SWCP Demographic Information**

































































- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1. <b><u>Job Category</u></b>                   | 2. <b><u>Gender</u></b>                     | 3. <b><u>Type of School</u></b>                             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator          | <input type="checkbox"/> Male               | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-charter public                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Charter       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher                | <input type="checkbox"/> Female             | <input type="checkbox"/> Private                            |  |
| 5. <b><u>Race</u></b>                           |   | 5. <b><u>Length of experience in current assignment</u></b> |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic Non-White | <input type="checkbox"/> 0 – 5 years                        | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American |   | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 15 years                      | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 – 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) |   | <input type="checkbox"/> 21+ years                          |  |

Appendix E (Continued)

**Directions:**

Please use the legend below to record your answer to each corresponding question and number in the questionnaire. For example, if you Strongly Disagree with question 1, write a 1 inside the symbol; if you Strongly Agree, write a 5. Use the same process for all five possible responses for each question.

<i>1=Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>2=Disagree</i>	<i>3= Undecided</i>	<i>4= Agree</i>	<i>5=Strongly Agree</i>
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1 	2 	3 	4 
5 	6 	7 	8 
9 	10 	11 	12 
13 	14 	15 	16 
17 	18 	19 	20 
21 	22 	23 	24 
25 	26 	27 	28 
29 	30 	31 	32 
33 	34 	35 	36 
37 	38 	39 	40 
41 	42 	43 	44 
45 	46 	47 	48 
49 	50 	51 	52 
53 	54 	55 	56 
57 	58 	59 	60 
			
Planning Development	Staff Development	Program Development	Assessment

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Score

**Appendix F: Request for Permission to Conduct Field Test**

Appendix F (Continued)

Wayne A. Quin  
XXXXXX  
XXXXXX  
May 20, 2009

XXXXXX  
Principal  
XXXXXX  
XXXXXX

Dear XXXXXX,

As I have shared with you in previous conversations, I am a doctoral candidate at the University of South Florida, College of Education. Part of the requirements for fulfillment of the degree is the completion of a study involving serious inquiry that will either lead to new knowledge or expand the existing base of knowledge as it relates to a specific question. For the purpose of my study, I will be looking at school-work culture.

I am writing to request your permission to enlist the team of sixth grade teachers at your site to participate in a field test I will be conducting in complete anonymity for the purpose of ensuring that the administration of the survey instrument and answer document is convenient and has clear, easy to understand instructions. Please accept this request for your permission to administer the field test at your site at a date and time to be arranged with/by you.

Enclosed please find a brief description of the purpose of the study as well as the survey instrument itself for your review. I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wayne A. Quin



**Appendix G: Letter of Permission to Use the School Work Culture Profile**

**Dr. Karolyn J. Snyder**

October 28, 2012

Mr. Wayne A. Quin  
Assistant Principal  
XXXXXXXX, FL

Dear Wayne:

I am very pleased to learn that you have completed the study of the school work cultures in schools of Central Florida, and are ready to defend your dissertation. We have talked often about your study, and the importance of a school's work culture for its achievements.

Please know that you have my approval, as the author of the instrument, to use the *School Work Culture Profile* for data gathering in your dissertation.

I look forward to reading the results of your school comparisons in your dissertation, and hope that a copy will come my way.

Best wishes for your dissertation defense.  
Karolyn J. Snyder

## **Appendix H: Request Letter to Principals to Participate in Study**

Appendix H (Continued)

{Name}  
{Address}  
{City, State, Zip}  
{Date}

{Name, Principal}  
{School Name}  
{Address}  
{City, State Zip}

Dear {Principal's Name}:

I know you and your teachers are busy at this time of year as I too, am in the mist of this year's FCAT administration, as well as preparing for graduation and the close of the school year. I have spent over 15 years working in this district: seven years teaching and eight as a school-level administrator. I am asking you to please take a few minutes to review this letter and the accompanying survey that was designed to determine the perceptions of school work culture of administrators and teachers. If possible, I would like to meet with

- classroom teachers,
- other certified teachers who are on staff with responsibilities that may be outside of the classroom (i.e., reading coaches, mentors, specialists, etc.),
- Guidance Counselors,
- and building administrators.

The participation of the faculty in this study will contribute to the knowledge base on school work culture in public schools. The responses are anonymous; the data is confidential, and the total time needed is **no more than 20 minutes before or after school, during a school faculty meeting. Refreshments will be provided to the participating teachers.** I do not need any student contact.

This survey will be administered as part of a study to compare the perceptions of teachers and administrators of school work culture in various types of public schools. The survey is based on a school's organizational practices in four sub-domains: a) planning; b) program development; c) staff development; and d) assessment. The district will approve the study once the names of the participating schools are submitted and I will then present you with a copy of that letter prior to the arrangement of a date to administer the survey. I will follow-up with a telephone call to discuss the possibility of presenting this survey to your teachers and administrators. I wish you and your staff a successful FCAT administration at {Name} Elementary.

Sincerely,

Wayne A. Quin  
Ph.D. Candidate

## **About the Author**

Wayne Quin has served as a Special Education Teacher, Department Head, Assistant Principal, and as Principal at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, in both public charter and public non-charter schools.

As a part of the requirements for the doctoral program, Wayne studied, conducted research, and gave presentations in Sweden, Finland, and Russia. He obtained the Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts, and Master of Education degrees at the University of South Florida.

Wayne is married and the proud father of twins. In his spare time he enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, and playing music.