

**BOUNDARY SPANNING LEADERSHIP
IN FAMILIES OF SCHOOLS IN A SCHOOL SYSTEM**

by

© Margaret Wakeham

A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland

September, 2016

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Abstract

Multiple types of boundaries affect how members of school systems interact and influence one another. The study of boundary spanning leadership is emerging as a new strand of literature in education (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011) related to the evolution of organizational and leadership models that distribute leadership, recognize and value diversity, respect identities, and honour multiple perspectives (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harris, 2009; Hogg, 2009; Hogg, van Kippenberg & Rast III, 2012; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard, Brown & Dibbon, 2009).

In my study, I explore the lived experiences of five central office leaders and eight principals in two families of schools in one urban school system. The eight schools accommodate children of elementary school age who represent an eclectic mix of socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. I treat the school district as the overarching case, the two families of schools as sub-cases, and the eight schools as additional sub-cases in my multi-case study. Based on individual open-ended interviews with the thirteen educational leaders I develop themes related to their boundary spanning leadership practices. I also use the annual district and school reports to provide contextual information for the cases. As well, I report on the perceptions of teachers of their own schools as registered by the School Climate and Organizational Citizenship Index survey (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Parish, & DiPaola, 2006).

My study suggests that central office leaders and school principals employ boundary spanning leadership practices on a daily basis to make meaning, administer initiatives, create conditions for collaboration, and transform policies and events. Central

office leaders and principals interact directly and indirectly with each other, with teachers and the public across multiple boundaries to share information, coordinate plans, develop relationships and improve schools.

With increased centralization of governance, school systems need boundary spanning leaders more than ever to lead and sustain systemic improvement and innovation. My study of the boundary spanning leadership practices of central office leaders and principals adds to our knowledge of leadership and organizational learning in school systems.

Keywords: Boundary spanning leadership, collaboration, school systems, diversity

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and patience during my research project. I also wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Bruce Sheppard for his unwavering guidance and insight during my research journey. I wish to thank Dr. Jean Brown, Dr. Noel Hurley, and Dr. Alice Collins for their help during the writing of this thesis. Thank you to Dr. Gerald White for his assistance in analyzing the survey data. I acknowledge with much appreciation the contribution of the central office leaders, principals, and teachers of the urban school district where I conducted my research.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
List of Appendices	x
Chapter 1	1
Research Context.....	1
Boundary Spanning Leadership as a Theoretical Framework.....	7
Boundary Spanning Leadership and Distributed Leadership	8
Distributed leadership.....	8
Boundary spanning leadership in school systems.	9
Designated and actual leadership.	10
Families of schools.	14
Problem and Procedure.....	16
Purpose	18
Research Questions	19
Chapter 2	20
Boundary Spanning Leadership Literature Review	20
Boundaries	22
Boundary Spanners	22
Boundary Spanners and School Systems	23
Boundary Spanning Leadership, Organizational Theories and School Systems	26
Closed systems	27
Natural systems.....	28
Bureaucracies.....	29
Integrated organizational models.....	30
Beyond Structural and Organizational Boundaries	33
Power and politics.	33

Culture in school systems.....	35
Diversity in school systems	35
Trust in school systems.....	36
Personal and social identities in school systems.	38
Organizational Learning in School Systems.....	39
Communities of learning.	39
Leadership in School Systems	42
Types of leadership.....	42
Leadership theories.....	43
Leadership theories for school systems	45
Leadership in school systems in the twenty-first century.....	46
Distributed Leadership	47
Distributing leadership.	47
Families of schools.	52
Boundary Spanning Leadership in School Systems	53
Overview	53
Boundary spanning roles	54
Chapter 3	64
Methodology	64
A Qualitative Approach.....	64
Collecting the Data.....	68
Consent process	68
Confidentiality limitations.....	69
Interviews.	69
Documents	70
Teacher surveys	71
Analysis of the interviews.	71
Annual reports	72
Survey results	73

Summary	74
Chapter 4	76
Contextual Information on the School System, Schools and Leaders	76
Annual reports.	77
Central office leaders.	79
Families of schools.	80
The Beam family of schools.	80
The Light family of schools.	84
Time of Study	87
Chapter 5	89
Results.	89
Research Question One	92
Boundary Spanning Leadership	95
Central office leaders' boundary spanning interactions.	95
Types of boundaries.	101
Boundary spanning leadership practices.	109
Summary	125
Research Question Two.	127
The Beam family of schools.	128
Types of boundaries.	132
Boundary spanning leadership practices.	139
The Light family of schools.	151
Types of boundaries	155
Boundary spanning leadership practices.	161
Summary	173
Research Question Three	175
Boundary Spanning Leadership and Distributed Leadership	176
Central office leaders.	176
The Beam family principals.	181

The Light family principals.	184
Summary	189
Research Question Four	189
Central office leaders and transformational practices.	190
The Beam family principals and transformational practices.	193
The Light family principals and transformational practices.	194
Summary of Results	196
Question one	197
Question two.	198
Question three.	199
Question four	201
Chapter 6	202
Conclusion	202
Methodology and context	202
Results.	203
Theoretical implications	211
Future research.	213
Limitations of the research	215
Summary	216
In the Year after the Study	217
References	219

List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Boundary Spanning Leadership Practices in School Systems</i>	11
Table 2 <i>Boundary Spanning Functions</i>	56
Table 3 <i>Boundary Spanning Leadership Progression</i>	57
Table 4 <i>Boundary Spanning Leadership Functions</i>	60
Table 5 <i>Boundary Spanning Leadership Practices in School Systems</i>	62
Table 6 <i>The Prism School District</i>	77
Table 7 <i>The Prism School District</i>	92
Table 8 <i>Boundary Spanning Leadership Interactions, Types and Practices</i>	95

List of Figures

Figure 1 <i>Boundary Spanning Roles</i>	58
---	----

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 <i>Ethics Approval</i>	235
Appendix 2 <i>District Permission</i>	236
Appendix 3 <i>Permission to use Survey Organizational Citizenship Measure</i>	237
Appendix 4 <i>Permission to use the School Climate Index</i>	238
Appendix 5 <i>Informed Consent Form - Central Office Leaders</i>	239
Appendix 6 <i>Informed Consent - Principals</i>	244
Appendix 7 <i>Informed Consent - Teachers</i>	249
Appendix 8 <i>Interview Protocol for Central Office Leaders and Principals</i>	254
Appendix 9 <i>School Climate and Citizenship Index</i>	257
Appendix 10 <i>Scoring the School climate Index and Organizational Citizenship Behavior</i>	258

Chapter 1

Research Context

Organizational theories have evolved over the last century from a mechanistic one-best-way philosophy (Fayol, 2011; Taylor, 2011) to comprise countless arrangements suited to the multifaceted demands of ever changing complex systems (Cross, Ernst, & Pasmore, 2013; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Mintzberg, 1980; Shafritz, Ott & Jang, 2011). Theories about leadership have changed to underline the value of constituent participation, employee consideration, non-defensive thinking, and capacity building within organizations (Argyris, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Collins, 2007; Cross et al., 2013; O'Toole, 1995, Senge, 2006). Likewise, public education leaders have sought organizational changes to improve the effectiveness of school systems (Coffin & Leithwood, 2000; Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood, 2010; Leithwood & Duke, 1999) but have confronted what Sheppard, Dibbon, and Brown (2009) call “the inherent paradox of working within the norms of hierarchy while altering organizational structures to support collaborative leadership and organizational learning” (p. 33).

Scholars have revealed the need to develop and share expertise in school systems through communities of practice (Wenger, 2000), professional learning communities (DuFour, 1997; Fullan, 2001), and distributed leadership (Harris, 2009; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Organizational learning and shared leadership have emerged as essential to build professional capacity, broaden participation in decision-making and improve school systems (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Muijs & Harris, 2007;

Sheppard et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Central office leaders and school principals have shown themselves to be key players who span professional, organizational and other boundaries to support professional growth, to encourage dialogue, and to forge connections within the school system (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009). To span the boundaries of organizational systems, effective leaders recognize and manage differences such as location, designations, and beliefs both implicit or explicit, that affect and mediate the interactions of leaders and constituents across settings, roles and functions (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2015). To transform school systems, boundary spanning leaders create common spaces that promote dialogue and honour diversity among leaders and teachers to permit the sharing of best practices and skills (Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009).

It is important to explore how boundaries affect the implementation of collaborative leadership approaches such as distributed leadership in school systems. The study of boundary spanning leadership of formal leaders, therefore, represents a new and important strand of literature in education that complements and extends existing theories about organizational leadership (Cross et al., 2013; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Riley, 2014; Robertson, 2009; Williams, 2015; Williams, 2011). In particular, boundary spanning leadership offers the potential to illuminate reasons why distributing leadership succeeds in some situations and not in others.

In my study I explore the boundary spanning leadership practices of five central office leaders and eight school principals in two families of schools in one school district

in Atlantic Canada. I uncover multiple types of boundaries that influence leaders' interactions, and I consider how the boundaries affect distributed leadership and educational change in a publically funded school system.

Public education in Canada is an open system affected and buffeted by internal and external forces, directives, perceptions and conditions, and equipped with resources designed to optimize student learning and prepare children to lead sustainable lives (Young, Levin & Wallin, 2007). The public expects educators in public schools to demonstrate leadership, promote innovation, foster safety, respond to societal demands and ensure that students develop intellectually, psychologically, physically and socially (Evans, 2001; Leithwood, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2000). To achieve society's educational goals, school systems need qualified and competent leaders who are willing to address the complex demands of today's world (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Muijs, 2011). The traditional model of educators working alone governed by strict rules for performance and compliance within a highly structured traditional hierarchy no longer works to fulfill the public's requirements for professional and informed innovative teaching and leadership (Gronn, 2000; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Wenger, 2000; Young et al., 2007).

One-person heroic leadership and one-size-fits-all curriculum create a culture of compliance and dependency (Marks & Printy, 2003; Robertson, 2009; Timperley, 2005). Successful school systems display a positive working culture (Leithwood, 2010) where leaders and teachers acquire and exchange skills and insights, work together, and share in decision-making (Halverson, 2007; Leithwood, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009; Wenger, 2000). Productive school systems consist of leaders who exhibit collective and individual

efficacy, conduct research, support innovation, and interact as skilled professionals within and through the boundaries of organizational structures (Harris, 2009; Leithwood 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Leaders in strong school systems employ boundary spanning practices to achieve relationships within and between the central office, schools and the public (Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Effective central office leaders and school principals create conditions and opportunities for professional growth for leaders and teachers; they provide encouragement, and recognize and connect the goals and circumstances of individual educators with those of the school system (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2004; 2011; Timperley, 2005). Leaders in successful school districts facilitate safe, honest and respectful dialogue; they foster trust and honour diverse points of view (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Fleming & Waguespack, 2007; Hogg, 2009; Kramer, 2009; Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009; Stein & Coburn, 2010).

In Canada, however, across provinces and territories, the trend by governments to centralize and consolidate authority, reduce the number of local school systems, increase the size of schools, and extend the distances between sites threatens to undermine the effectiveness of school system leaders (Sheppard et al., 2009; Sheppard, Galway, Brown, & Wiens, 2013; Young et al., 2007). As formal district authorities locate further and further away from the communities they serve, central office leaders and school principals seek ways to bridge ever widening boundaries to safeguard professional dialogue, support innovation, and respond to external and local community priorities (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2007; Sheppard et al., 2009; Young et al.,

2007). Central office leaders and school principals look for ways to lead across tangible and intangible boundaries to forge reciprocal connections, promote professional growth, conduct inquiry, and improve the performance of schools and the school system (Leithwood, 2010; Miller, 2008; Robinson, 2009; Wenger, 2000).

Sheppard et al. (2009) observe that, “leadership and organizational learning are interrelated; with organizational learning being dependent on the capacity of the organization to facilitate collaboration among individual learners who take on distributed leadership responsibilities and learn from each other” (p. 15). A comprehensive picture of distributed leadership includes both designated formal leadership and unfixed informal leadership (Spillane & Coldren, 2011) within and outside defined boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Miller, 2008; Williams, 2011). Distributed leadership, whether planned or unplanned, is inherent in schools and school systems (Harris, 2004; Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Timperley, 2005).

To connect distributed leadership with improving organizational effectiveness, however, formal leaders, whether in schools or central offices, emerge as key players in optimizing the quality and structure of initiatives (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2011; Leithwood, 2010; Mascall, Leithwood, Strauss & Sacks, 2009; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009). Formal leaders establish the conditions and routines that define distributed leadership, build organizational capacity, broaden decision-making, and increase effectiveness (Mascall et al., 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Sheppard et al., 2009). Formal leaders manage and evaluate interactions (Spillane & Coldren, 2011), nurture commitment (Ernst & Yip, 2009), encourage participation (Harris, 2004), and

ensure the exchange of knowledge and skills (Wenger, 2000) across a range of boundaries (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2015). Formal leaders encounter boundaries that are power-related (Mayrowetz, 2008), cultural, ideological, hierarchical, organizational, professional, social and psychological when they nurture collaboration within and among groups of skilled, experienced, knowledgeable and diverse constituents (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Harris, 2009; Platow, Reicher, & Haslam, 2009; Williams, 2015). Conversely, formal leaders are well placed to recognize when groups have too much in common, are insular in their thinking, detached from others, and disconnected from the main organization (Hogg, 2009; Janis, 2011). To bring diverse constituents together, formal leaders often serve as brokers of new identities (Kanter, 2009; Platow et al., 2009; Williams, 2011) that honour existing circumstances (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011), while at the same time offering new possibilities (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2015). Boundary spanning formal leaders provide school systems with the “contextual knowledge, interpersonal skills, trust and connectedness” (Miller, 2008, p. 373) required to engage constituents in meaningful interactions within and across groups (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

The boundary spanning leadership perspectives and practices of formal leaders in school systems merit exploration (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Steele, 2010). There is a need to know more about how formal leaders span the divides of different boundaries in the school system, and how they demonstrate leadership within, between and across groups, settings, and roles (Aldrick & Herker, 1977; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Marrone, 2010; Martins, Gilson & Maynard, 2004).

More needs to be known about the connection between boundary spanning leadership practices and distributed leadership. An exploration is desirable of how boundary spanning leadership structures, such as families of schools, help share leadership to transform teaching and learning practices in a school system.

Boundary Spanning Leadership as a Theoretical Framework

The study of boundary spanning leadership represents a theoretical framework to explore the interactions of formal leaders who span divides within and between organizations across roles, ranks and settings. Boundary spanning leaders connect groups and individuals, synthesize and communicate information from one context to another (Aldrick & Herker, 1977; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). They help constituents find meaning and make sense of change (Balogun, 2003); they acquire resources, buffer groups from interruptions, and coordinate group activities (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Boundary spanning leaders value diversity (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2015), and acknowledge the importance of social networks, school cultures, and pre-existing structures (Penuel et al., 2010; Spillane, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Boundary spanning leaders facilitate connections and relationships (Robertson, 2009), create conditions for meaningful exchanges among constituents (Miller, 2008), and nurture trust across organizational arrangements and routines (Halverson, 2007). They develop processes to support successful inter-group interactions (Kanter, 2009; Krochick & Tyler, 2009) that “transcend group differences and build a shared sense of ‘us’ by bridging deep identity divisions, or cultural divides within a group and focusing members on shared values, attitudes, practices, and goals” (Hogg, 2009, p.24). Boundary spanning

leaders influence the quality of professional interactions, the reciprocal exchange of expertise, the acceptance of diverse perspectives, commitment to a shared vision, and the cohesiveness of individual and group efforts (Brundrett, 2010; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Leithwood, 2010; Miller, 2008; Muij & Harris, 2007; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009; Timperley, 2005; Wenger, 2000).

Boundary Spanning Leadership and Distributed Leadership

In this section I explore the relationship between boundary spanning leadership and distributed leadership as it relates to school systems, designated and actual leadership, and families of schools in a school system.

Distributed leadership. Mayrowetz (2008) asserts that “One universal definition of distributed leadership may never be achieved” (p. 433). Descriptions of distributed leadership, however, suggest that collaborative leadership between formal and informal leaders, shared decision-making, and professional capacity building add efficiency and effectiveness to organizations (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2009; Mayrowetz, 2008, Sheppard, Hurley, & Dibbon, 2010; Spillane, Camburn, Pustejovsky, Parejo, & Lewis, 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Distributed leadership rests on the premise that “Leadership resides in the human potential available to be released within an organization” (Harris, 2004, p. 12) rather than in one individual (Timperley, 2005).

Distributed leadership initiatives, however, do not always work well in schools and school systems (Mascall et al., 2009; Robertson, 2009; Woods & Gronn, 2009). Timperley (2005) observes “that enthusiasm for the possibilities [of how distributed leadership] may unfold does not mean becoming blinkered to the limitations of the

concept itself and an ability to think about it and outside of it” (p. 418). A greater knowledge of boundary spanning leadership (Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009) may contribute to an increased understanding of why distributed leadership, touted as a desired condition for achieving ongoing improvements in schools and school systems (Fullan, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Hargreaves, 1994; Sheppard et al., 2010) produces mixed results (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Harris, 2004, 2009; Louis, Mayrowetz, Smiley, & Murphy, 2009; Mayrowetz, 2008; Mascal et al., 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Newcombe & McCormack, 2001).

Boundary spanning leadership in school systems. Interest in boundary spanning leadership is growing as research demonstrates the importance of promoting professionalism, sharing leadership, and honouring diversity within organizations (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harris, 2009; Hogg, 2009; Hogg, van Kippenberg & Rast III, 2012; Leithwood, 2010; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009). Formal leaders encounter fixed and fluid boundaries that may be hierarchical, professional, personal, organizational, geographical, political, cultural, personal, social, (Ernst & Chrobot- Mason, 2011), temporal or virtual (Martins et al., 2004). Leaders span boundaries to help constituents make sense of change (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011), bring attention to social conditions (Halverson, 2007), and manage power and authority (Williams, 2011). Boundary spanning leaders mediate the impact of external forces on staffs, foster positive relationships and commitment, develop communities of learning, and pursue organizational goals (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Coldren, 2007; Wenger, 2000).

Scholars note that boundary spanning leaders engage in several kinds of practices such as administering interactions (Aldrich & Herder, 1977), making meaning (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981), creating conditions, and transforming routines (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Williams, 2011) (see Table 1). To appreciate the connection between distributed leadership and boundary spanning leadership practices, more needs to be known more about the lived leadership of formal leaders who span boundaries in schools and school systems (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). Worthy of inquiry also are the types of boundaries that central office leaders and school principals confront as they harness the skills and leadership distributed within schools and the school system (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011).

Designated and actual leadership. Formal and informal leaders emerge in school systems when multiple voices contribute to organizational change (Leithwood, 2010). While both groups of leaders influence the quality of teaching and learning (Mascall et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Sheppard et al., 2009), formal leaders play a more deliberate role in boundary spanning leadership because they interact across various constituencies more often (Miller, 2008). Formal leaders are positioned to ensure safe conditions for inter-group and intra-group interactions, nurture non-defensive informed dialogue, and afford opportunities for all to participate in organizational change (Argyris, 1999; Senge, 2006).

Table 1 *Boundary Spanning Leadership Practices in School Systems*

Making Meaning	Administering	Creating Conditions	Transforming
Communicating	Coordinating	Ensuring safety and trust	Bringing about systemic change
Interpreting	Managing	Honouring diversity	Encouraging growth
Developing and exchanging knowledge, skills and practices	Planning	Generating commitment	Being innovative and creative
	Organizing	Forging relationships	Taking risks
	Buffering	Developing new identities	
	Gathering resources	Connecting	
	Monitoring	Building on experiences	
		Creating a sense of belonging	
		Building a culture of collaboration	

Note. This table is based on several academic sources but in particular “Boundary crossing and boundary objects” by S. F. Akkerman and A. Bakker, 2011, *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), pp. 132-169. doi: 10.3102/00345431404435; “Boundary spanning roles and organization structure,” by H. Aldrich and D. Herker, 1977, *Academy of Management Review*, 2(2), pp. 217-230. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/pss/257905>; “Bridging the boundary: External activity and performance in organizational teams” by D. G. Ancona and D. F. Caldwell, 1992, *Administration Science Quarterly*, 37(4), pp. 634-665; “Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations,” by C. Ernst and D. Chrobot-Mason, 2011, New York: McGraw Hill; “The life and times of the boundary spanner,” by P. Williams, 2011, *Journal of Integrated Care*, 19(3), pp. 26-33. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14769011111148140>.

Distributed leadership and organizational learning are features of strong school systems at all levels (Harris, 2011; Leithwood, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009). Designated and actual leadership, however, do not automatically combine to improve organizational

effectiveness (Harris, 2009; Mascall et al.; Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Sheppard et al., 2012; Timperley, 2005). Effective formal leaders need practices that build on the leadership strengths of constituents, foster professionalism, share decision-making, increase capacity, and align the undertakings of multiple groups (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2009; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Yet, despite efforts over decades to establish formalized routines, frameworks, and professional communities to distribute leadership to improve schools and school systems, results have been varied and uneven (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Halverson, 2007; Harris, 2009; Louis et al., 2009; Mayrowetz, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Harris (2009) argues that better understanding and management of the roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups, and recognition of the potential conflicts of people and priorities are needed. In essence, to be effective, formal leaders must develop greater awareness and skill to navigate the boundaries that define and delimit groupings in schools and school systems (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Riley, 2014). Formal leaders, according to Mascall et al. (2009), must plan carefully to avoid “anarchic misalignment” (p. 84) where subgroups attend to their internal goals or oppose or compete with other groups, or with the larger organization. Successful school districts create collaborative structures that allow both central office leaders and school principals to interact in support of the distribution of leadership within the system (Leithwood, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009). Central office leaders are able to oversee systemic interaction, collaboration, and communication across the boundaries of settings, ranks and roles in school systems (Steele, 2010). At the school

level, principals may act to reformulate power and authority relationships, and demonstrate leadership that is more than a formally designated position (Harris, 2011).

Successful school districts serve as hubs of strategic and systemic leadership for teaching and learning in schools (Leithwood, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009). Leithwood's (2010) review of thirty-one North American school district central offices identifies strategic alignment with public policy, shared accountability, communities of practice, communication, relationships, district culture, and a district-wide sense of efficacy as among the top ten attributes of strong school board jurisdictions. A Pan-Canadian study of school boards by Sheppard et al. for the Canadian School Boards Association (2013) reveals that district leaders and trustees in Canada rank leadership and professional development among their top five priorities.

Formal leaders at central offices and school principals who develop boundary spanning leadership practices may be able to reconcile the disconnect between established hierarchical structures, power relationships, habits, and identities, with the potential relationships, growth and leadership present within the school system (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harris, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Boundary spanning leadership represents an important area of study for public education (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Millward & Timperley, 2010). However, there is inadequate understanding of what boundary spanning leaders do, how and why they do it, and in what way they create the desired conditions for effective interactions (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Connaughton, Shuffler, & Goodwin, 2011; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Hogg,

2009; Marrone, 2010; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009; Williams, 2011; 2013).

Findings suggest that boundary spanning leaders confront ambiguities and challenges in defining their own identities at the same time as they seek to balance their primary roles with their inter-group responsibilities (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Brundrett, 2010; Williams, 2013). Boundary spanning leaders may require more specific knowledge and practical acumen to understand the complexity of this kind of leadership (Williams, 2011; 2013). It is important to know if and how boundary spanning leaders distribute leadership, evaluate progress, and improve professional practice, skills, attitudes and knowledge in schools and school systems (Miller, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009).

Families of schools. My study explores the boundary spanning leadership interactions of five central office leaders and eight principals in the Prism School District. Two of the central office leaders, in addition to their other duties, work collaboratively with specific clusters of schools called families. Senior education officer (SEO) Beam works with the Beam family, while senior education officer (SEO) Light works with the Light family. Four of the principals are members of the Beam family while the other four principals are members of the Light family. Sheppard et al. (2009) provide a theoretical framework for the function of families of schools within school systems. Families of schools serve as sub-systems within a school district, and vary in membership from six to twelve or more schools. The designated central office leader and the principals of the family of schools share responsibility for teaching and learning, school development,

professional growth, school evaluation, resources, and community relations. The families of schools serve as advisory councils for central office, platforms for interactions between central office and schools, and forums for collaboration among member schools. The families form part of the structural organization of the district where central office leaders, principals, teachers and staff work together in an effort to bolster organizational learning, build capacity within the system, and share decision-making.

Ideally, central office leaders responsible for families of schools become supportive partners of principals and schools rather than simply the agents of accountability for central office. Within the families of schools, central office leaders and principals exchange insights, and share experiences from one family to another across the district. A family of schools can develop joint professional development initiatives and share examples of exemplary teaching and expertise. Sheppard et al. (2009) observe that principals and teachers value increased participation in vision-setting, planning and decision-making about teaching and learning. Sheppard et al. (2009) provide a matrix that clarifies the kinds of decisions each level of the school system hierarchy can or cannot make independently. They observe that principals in families of schools act as “boundary spanners and brokers between constituents in their individual schools, other schools, and the district office” (p. 61). Central office leaders serve as “partners and boundary spanners between schools, families of schools, and schools and the school district” (p. 98). Families of schools in school systems in theory provide a platform for the reciprocal flow of information and expertise within the district and among schools.

The Prism District, a large school system in Atlantic Canada utilizes the theoretical framework of the family of schools as described by Sheppard et al. (2009). It is unknown if the family of schools' configuration supports boundary spanning leadership by central office leaders and principals of schools that distributes leadership and creates transformational change.

Problem and Procedure

Scholars have noted that multiple boundaries affect how school systems function and how leaders and constituents assess and manage their contributions to the functioning and improvement of their particular groupings (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Steele, 2010). A gap exists in our knowledge of the boundary spanning interactions and practices of central office leaders and principals in school systems. More needs to be known about how central office leadership and school principals utilize boundary spanning leadership practices to cross multiple implicit and explicit boundaries to share leadership and foster innovation across settings, roles and functions in a school system. More information is needed about the types of boundaries that formal leaders encounter when they seek to work collaboratively with individuals and groups to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, leadership and decision-making within and across organizational groupings. Heifetz (2009) notes that leading across groups requires strong leaders who help constituents to forge common ground, mold new identities, and adapt to change.

In my research, I explored how five central office leaders and eight principals in two families of schools interacted across multiple boundaries to create conditions for

change, build organizational capacity, distribute leadership, and transform practices. The Prism School District was the overarching case and the families of schools and selected member schools were sub-cases of this multi-case study (Sullivan, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). I conducted my research with the approval of the Interdisciplinary Committee on Human Research at Memorial University and the participating school district. I obtained signed permission from all the individual participants, central office leaders, principals, and teachers to pursue my study. I interviewed five central office leaders and eight principals individually and face to face using the same interview protocol of open-ended questions. To provide contextual information on the cases, I examined the annual reports of the school district and the participating schools and I administered an anonymous teacher survey to gauge their attitudes towards organizational climate and professionalism in the schools.

I employed purposeful sampling (Morse, 2004; Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2006; Sullivan, 2009). I asked the chief operating officer to recommend professional leaders at the central office to participate in my study. And then, based on her recommendations, I identified five central office leaders who agreed to participate. Two of the central office leaders were specifically responsible for a particular family of schools. I asked the family of schools' central office leaders to recommend principals within their families to partake in my research. I contacted the recommended principals and four principals from each family of schools that agreed to participate. I then asked the principals for permission to administer an organizational citizenship survey to their teaching staffs. Seven of eight principals agreed. The selection of the sample cascaded from the recommendations of the

chief operating officer of the district to the identification of central office leaders, which led to the involvement of specific families of schools, to the recruitment of principals, and lastly to the participation of teachers within the selected schools. Hence all of the participants in the sample were interconnected, from the district to the family of schools to the school level. They worked together in a shared system and engaged in boundary spanning functions in the course of their work. I sent a copy of the written transcription of the interview to each participant for their approval. I then used the member-vetted texts for my analysis. I employed QSR's NVivo 10 (2012) software to help me record, organize, and code my results. The data from the surveys and the reports provided important contextual information on the cases in the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to explore the role of boundary-spanning leadership practices of formal leaders in a school system and to consider how their practices help distribute leadership and support change. Inspired by the literature on boundary spanning leadership, I sought to unpack the insights and practices of formal leaders at central office, in families of schools, and in schools.

The study of boundary spanning leadership in families of schools in a school system is significant to the field of education because it identifies how boundary spanning leadership among central office leaders and principals in families of schools, supports organizational learning, distributes leadership, and transforms practices. The study also suggests that further research is warranted on boundary spanning leadership in school systems.

Research Questions

1. How do central office leaders in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
2. How do school principals in families of schools in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
3. How does boundary spanning leadership help distribute leadership in a school system?
4. How does boundary spanning leadership help transform schools and support innovation in a school system?

Chapter 2

Boundary Spanning Leadership Literature Review

The study of boundary spanning leadership is evolving as an important strand of study for school systems (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Boundary spanning leadership theory represents a framework to examine the increased levels of interaction, responsibility, and accountability distributed across ranks and functions in current school systems. Boundary spanning leadership is connected to the evolution of organizational and leadership theories and practices in education. From an early mechanistic rational structural view of schooling (Callahan, 1962; Evans, 2001) many systems have moved to establish more professional orientations, adopt systemic thinking; promote dialogue, share decision-making, and support organizational learning (Harris, 2004; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Mintzberg, 1980; Senge, 2006). Through initiatives such as professional learning communities (DuFour, 2004), communities of practice (Printy, 2008; Wenger, 2000) and distributed leadership (Harris, 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Printy, 2008) school system leaders have recognized the importance of inter-related groupings at all levels of the school system (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2010; Miller, 2008). Through organizational learning communities, educators have participated in inquiry, exchanged skills and ideas, examined data, pursued professional growth, and built relationships (Leithwood, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Using a distribution of leadership, school system administrators and teachers have combined their thinking to understand and solve problems, and make decisions together (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

Shared professional learning and leadership initiatives have resulted in the formation of both fixed and temporary groupings within school systems, each with particular boundaries, and all with the challenge of communicating and working with other groups or individuals for the greater good of the system (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Marrone, 2010). As groupings with various identities and boundaries proliferate in school systems, it is important to explore how boundary spanning leaders act to foster interaction within and across groups, generate new ideas, and contribute to the overarching goals of the system.

For several years, scholars have encouraged school system leaders to broaden participation in leadership beyond formal designations to better utilize the leadership capacity inherently distributed within the system to foster organizational learning, improve efficiency, and share decision-making (Gronn, 2009; Halverson, 2007; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2010; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Distributed leadership initiatives, with principals and teachers working together to improve their schools, have tended to work best when organizational barriers are modified and routines are created that allow participants to engage meaningfully in both formal and informal leadership (Harris, 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Formal leaders at both the central office and school levels of school systems have played a major role in establishing the mechanisms, plans and conditions for effective distributed leadership (Mascall et al., 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

As leadership is distributed, key individuals influence the conditions that affect how school systems manage interactions, coordinate activities, represent and communicate the contributions of their groups across settings, and generate positive change (Robertson, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009). One of the compelling challenges, however, for leaders and their constituents has been to ensure that distributed leadership arrangements deliver the promised improvements for school systems and do not descend into poorly planned incoherent efforts (Mascall et al., 2009) or become misguided attempts to download work to other levels of the organization (Louis et al., 2009).

Boundaries

Boundaries help define and delimit the roles of individuals and groups in organizations, and communities (Adams, 1976; Aldrick & Herker, 1977; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981; Williams, 2015). Ernst and Yip (2009) call boundaries a “basic aspect of organizational life” (p. 88) that characterize the differences and social divisions inherent among members of an organization. Boundaries, according to Ernst and Chrobot-Mason (2011), “may be borders that limit human potential, restrict creativity and innovation, and stifle necessary business and societal change” (p. 3), or in contrast, boundaries can be points and edges of contact where individuals and groups meet, navigate differences, manage tensions, share stories, exchange ideas and skills, and build relationships.

Boundary Spanners

Boundary spanners or boundary crossers are terms that describe those who link the work of one group to that of another, (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Hogg, van

Kippenberg, & Rast III, 2012; Steele, 2010) and interact across and through structural and social confines to influence the effectiveness of organizations and communities (Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008). For decades, researchers in business and the social sciences have examined boundary spanners in organizations as disseminators of information and influence, bargaining agents, and managers of activities across groups (Adams, 1976; Aldrick & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). Recent research has highlighted the role of boundary spanners as agents of cohesion, respecters of diversity, builders of organizational capacity, forgers of relationships, sense makers, and leaders of change (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Williams, 2011). Boundary spanning leaders in today's organizations administer activities within and between groups, communicate, interpret, inform, mediate differences, foster unity, and promote innovation (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; D. Williams, 2015; P. Williams, 2011).

Boundary Spanners and School Systems

As leaders and constituents in school systems engage more regularly in interactions within and across settings, roles and functions, formal leaders must achieve a deeper appreciation of how boundaries affect school improvement, organizational professionalism, and shared leadership (Brundrett, 2010; Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009). More needs to be known about the boundary spanning leaders in school systems and how they engage with individuals, groups, networks and communities to realize change (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Marrone, 2010; Millward &

Timperley, 2010; Williams, 2011). Do boundary spanning leaders engage in practices that enable productive and innovative dialogue across settings and responsibilities? Do boundary spanning leaders help distribute leadership? Is there any evidence that boundary spanning leadership contributes to transformational change in school systems?

Explorations of boundary spanning leadership exist within the context of major theories about organizational leadership of the past century (Argyris, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Callahan, 1962; Collins, 2007; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; O'Toole, 1995; Senge, 2006; Shafritz, Ott & Jang, 2011). The evolution of understandings about organization and leadership offers insights about why and how boundary spanning leadership is now emerging as important for school systems (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009). The study of boundary spanning leadership provides a framework to deepen our understanding of educational leadership, and to uncover the conditions, dispositions, knowledge and skills that affect intra-group and inter-group relations in school systems (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009).

Akkerman and Bakker (2011, p. 132) contend that “Both the enactment of multi-voicedness [and] the unspecified quality of boundaries create a need for dialogue, in which meanings have to be negotiated and from which something new may emerge” (p. 142). They caution that discomfort and ambiguity become part of the process when participants access new skill sets and adapt to new roles, work cultures and expectations.

Boundary spanning leaders understand that organizational members define themselves through their affiliations with groups, and tend to trust, respect, and act with

those who most closely share their characteristics, thoughts and feelings (Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Hogg, 2009). Formal leaders who work in school systems must therefore structure and focus their interactions so that constituents feel at ease in de-privatizing their practice and sharing their ideas with the whole organization (Lieberman & Mace, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010). Boundary spanning leadership means creating conditions to promote openness and trusting professional relationships that build on the strengths and interdependence of different groups (Getha-Taylor, Silvia, & Simmerman, 2014; Robertson, 2009).

Personal, social, professional, geographic, and organizational boundaries all affect the collective and collaborative work of groups (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Marrone, 2010; Miller, 2008; Williams, 2011). Ernst & Chrobot-Mason (2011) contend that boundary spanning leaders create conditions that respect and honour diversity, and take into account demographic differences such as gender, race, education, ideology and social standing. Marrone (2010) points to the importance of recognizing individual characteristics of group members such as job satisfaction, commitment, sense of justice, motivation, and purpose. Miller (2008) opines that the way people feel about their involvement determines the depth of their engagement in initiatives. Boundary spanning leaders activate participants' sense of shared social and professional identity while at the same time reassuring them of the value of their primary identities (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Platow et al., 2009). For example, Wenger (2000) comments that productive communities of practice possess energy for learning and inquiry, trust each other professionally and personally, engage in open and honest exchanges, believe their contributions will be

reciprocated, and are future focussed. Groups often confront the problem of geographical distances that separate members of groups over short or long distances from different office locations to different cities, town and countries and lead to challenges of understanding of each other's local conditions and culture (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Martins et al., 2004).

Complex ground rules and understandings influence constituents' willingness to be honest with those in formal positions of authority (O'Toole, 2008). Boundary spanning leaders inspire confidence in organizational members through their commitment to pervasive shared participation in leadership (Sheppard, et al., 2009). Organizational structures, hierarchies, formal roles, vertical and horizontal relationships and functions, and perceptions of power also affect how participants work together within and across groups (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harris, 2004; Sheppard et al., 2009; Williams, 2011).

Boundary Spanning Leadership, Organizational Theories and School Systems

The development of boundary spanning leadership represents part of the historical evolution of organizations and school systems in the western world. Schools and schooling have existed for many centuries: one room school houses, schools run by religious orders and local authorities (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2010; Leithwood and Duke, 1999; Young et al., 2007), and large factory-like institutions (Callahan, 1962). Any examination of boundary spanning leadership within school systems must take into account its organizational and ideological underpinnings (Akkerman & Bekker, 2011; Riley, 2014).

Closed systems. Publically funded school systems over the years have mirrored many principles, practices and structures originally conceived for industrial, commercial and public organizations (Evans, 2001; Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2000). While organizational practices date back to the ancient hierarchical divisions of tribes and clans, modern administrative precepts trace their origins to the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth century (Shafritz, Ott and Jang, 2011). By the late 1800s, inspired by principles of engineering and economics, the factory model became a powerful and popular way to organize work, assign duties, and optimize production in organizations (Shafritz & Ott, 1996). Devotion to the pursuit of finding one best way to achieve efficiency (Taylor, 2011) found appeal among many school governance bodies in the early twentieth century (Callahan, 1962). Early school system leaders took inspiration from Taylor's scientific management processes to design school governance and schools; breaking down tasks into parts, creating specialized positions, providing diligent oversight and expecting optimum results (Callahan, 1962). Educational administration also came to reflect Fayol's (2011) top down principles for business managers, to include a division of work, unity of command and direction, distinct levels of authority and responsibility, and commitment to organizational goals (Gordon, 2009). The factory model of the early twentieth century became the fundamental organizational prototype for schools (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Young et al., 2007).

Gulick's (1937) guidelines for business and public administration, referred to as 'POSDCoRB', planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting also appeared in school system management (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). School

administration and teaching became jobs of compliance to formal directives (Young et al., 2007). Educational administrators adopted command and control practices, and expected teachers to work alone and to do what they were told (Evans, 2001; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Time would demonstrate that a closed approach to schools and school systems would not adequately address the complex demands of public education (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2000).

Natural systems. The proliferation of large complex organizations in the twentieth century (Bolman & Deal, 1991) led to the development of new ideas about management and leadership (Shafritz & Ott, 1996) that would also affect the administration of school systems and schools (Gordon, 2009; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). But in addition to the industrial models of organizations, theorists such as Follett (2011) emphasized the importance of human relations, while Maslow (2011) linked worker behaviour to human needs. Social, psychological, and social forces outside the purview of the formal design of organizations began to garner more interest (Shafritz, Ott & Jang, 2011). Mayo, (2003) famous for the Hawthorne experiments, wrote in 1933 that “problems for a century [had] been defined in terms of economics and the clear logic of economics [while] social and human factors [had] been disregarded” (p. 179). Simon (2011) observed that the general principles of management were inadequate to address the range of situations actually encountered by administrators, while Selznick (2011) asserted that classical management models paid insufficient attention to the irrational elements of organizational conduct. Overall, scholars began to examine more carefully the natural interactions, teamwork, informal associations and individual needs of

organizational members (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Shafritz, Ott & Jang, 2011). An organic or natural perspective for organizational design reflected the influence of formal and informal elements (Blau & Scott, 201; Mayo, 2003); the presence of underlying components, complexities and exchanges (Katz & Kahn, 2011; Meyer & Rowan, 2011), the impact of differing beliefs about work and supervision (McGregor, 2011), and the impact of the motivating power of human physical and psychological needs (Follett, 2011; Maslow, 2011).

Organizational models began to incorporate consideration of people and contexts because the rational structural paradigm did not adequately address all aspects of organizational behaviour (Selznick, 2011), the ambiguities, the interdependence of members (Ouchi, 2011) or the intricacies of decision-making (Janis, 2011; Simon, 2011). Parsons (1949) wrote that formal organizations were social systems that needed flexibility. Leaders had to learn to rely more on workers to respond to dynamic unpredictable environments (Burns & Stalker, 2011). The organizational changes happening in industry also affected the work of school systems and schools (Evans, 2001; Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

Bureaucracies. Beyond organizational models conceived for commercial purposes, Max Weber (2011) wrote about the development of a bureaucratic scheme of management (Shafritz, Ott & Jang, 2011). Weber described a bureaucracy as a well-ordered hierarchy of officials with a graded distribution of authority appropriate to their positions and expertise, and governed by rules and expectations. Bureaucrats would see their work as a vocation through which they would gain positive social standing, earn a

fixed salary, acquire life long tenure, and merit a pension. Weber's bureaucratic model, while reminiscent of the scientific management approach to organization in its highly structured design, was different because it considered the needs of officials for financial security and self-esteem. Much of Weber's notions of bureaucracy endure today in the fixed hierarchy of positions, tasks, responsibilities and authority in school systems and schools.

Yet, conceptualizations of bureaucracies also evolved over time. Mintzberg (1980) described bureaucracies that contained structural elements, coordinating mechanisms, design parameters, and contingency factors, that differed depending on their purpose. For example, simple bureaucracies suited simple tasks with a high degree of centralization and direct supervision; machine bureaucracies were appropriate for large complex undertakings composed of highly skilled technical workers with formalized roles managed by a vertical hierarchy of control, while professional bureaucracies accommodated highly knowledgeable personnel in a more horizontal hierarchy where work was decentralized, more self-directed, and "minimally formalized" (p. 322). School systems and schools often reflect a combination of bureaucratic models, but tend to resemble authoritarian top down models of bureaucracies (Evans, 2001; Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Integrated organizational models. For more than thirty years, attention has turned to understanding and addressing not just the structural and human relations elements of organizations but the interplay and interdependence of both (Argyris, 1999; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Senge, 2006). Organizations and their members, in order to prosper

and improve, need to be able to learn; to detect and correct errors, to recognize their limitations, to support honest exchanges, foster innovative thinking, and focus on people and relationships (Argyris, 1999; Senge, 2006). Senge (2006) asserts that organizations in which members engage in open dialogue across boundaries are better able to generate a shared vision, build personal mastery, foster team learning, explore mental models, establish trust, develop systems thinking and “discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization” (Senge, 2006, p. 4). The same concepts hold important implications for leadership and professional learning within school systems and schools (Leithwood, 2007; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009).

Hoy and Miskel (2013) contend that the organization of public education resembles a semi-professional structure with professional standards for educators within highly centralized structures, reflecting both Weber’s and Mintzberg’s bureaucratic influences. School systems with their distinct central offices and individual schools also exhibit characteristics of Mintzberg’s (1980) divisional bureaucracies; and teacher communities of practice, as multiple non-permanent professional groupings, are similar to Mintzberg’s notion of adhocracies. School districts and schools also reflect Weick’s (1976) loosely coupled systems because the governance bodies, central office leaders, school administrators, teachers, students and parents participate in both independent and interdependent functions. Yet, despite advances in organizational concepts, school systems continue to focus on formal and technical relationships within defined structures that restrict collaboration and constrain non-defensive dialogue (Argyris, 1999; Senge,

2006). Evans (2001) argues that school systems are still predominantly structured according to a rational mechanistic model.

Hoy and Miskel's (2013) integrated organizational model provides a template for school systems that redefines organizational boundaries as open points of contact where information, ideas and practices flow in and out across settings, roles and functions. Such an organizational framework supports collegial and professional interaction and helps distribute leadership. Based on this model, school systems integrate elements of structural-rational paradigms such as Weber's organizational schema, Mintzberg's bureaucratic models, Weick's loose coupling, and Argyris's and Senge's organizational learning.

How a school system is conceptualized affects how citizens understand public education, and influences the leadership, interactions, boundaries and connections experienced by the public, governments, central offices, school administrators and teachers (Evans, 2001; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Sheppard et al., 2009). Fluid notions of school organization can however result in complex and contradictory responses by stakeholders who simultaneously endorse centralized control and standardized student programming, while at the same time they champion broad community participation, increased teacher professionalism, shared leadership and local decision-making (Brundrett, 2010; Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Harris, 2011; Leithwood & Duke 1999). Likewise, traditional hierarchical structures continue to challenge the implementation of efforts to improve schools, foster strategic thinking, enable educators to adapt to

changing conditions, and contribute meaningfully to school development (Harris, 2004, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

Those who work in public school systems need to be able to function within the constraints and structures of their organizations and at the same time engage in dialogue and form creative solutions to complex challenges (Senge, 2006; Sheppard et al., 2009). Working within the confines of existing structures, however, is only one of the challenges for leadership in school systems (Senge, 2006). Power, politics, culture, diversity, trust and identity can be boundaries (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Hogg, 2009) that exert influence on the effectiveness of interactions within organizations (Ball, 1987; Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2011) such as school systems and schools (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Robertson, 2009).

Beyond Structural and Organizational Boundaries

Power and politics. Writing in 1981, Pfeffer (2011) called power the “the property of the system at rest” and politics “the study of power in action” (p. 280). Power and politics affect how society as a whole exerts control over organizations such as school systems and how members of school systems interact with each other and with their environments (Anderson, 1990; Ball, 1987; Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Legitimate power arises from formal designations of authority and responsibility, while other power resides in individuals and unofficial groupings who may contribute positively or negatively to the operation of school systems (Ball, 1987; Bryk & Schneider, 2011; Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). Formal and informal power may support systemic improvement or conversely entrench the status quo to the detriment of authentic and

socially just reform (Anderson, 1990). Formal leaders in school systems may dominate and control events through a vertical hierarchy rather than create practices that encourage principals and teachers to “behave as peers [and not] as superiors or subordinates” (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991 p. 22). Power affects whether or not leaders and constituents feel safe when they exchange views, express alternate perspectives, and commit to a shared vision (Ball, 1987; Harris, 2004; Pfeffer, 2011). Leaders in school systems and schools need to establish conditions that provide security for their constituents, so that power does not become an insurmountable boundary for open honest interactions, and trusting respectful professional relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Evans, 2001; Harris, 2004; Mayrowetz, 2008; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Politics and formal political actors influence policies, curriculum, resources, structures, and conditions for teaching and learning (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Micro-politics, politics within school systems and schools, often underlie disagreements among staffs, conflicts of ideology, and opposition to external influences (Ball, 1987). Micro-political sub-groups, resistant to change, act to undermine top down directives, protect self-interests and stymie innovation (Ball, 1987). Bishop and Mulford (1999) note that, “school reform efforts need to anticipate, as well as attend to the ‘detail’ and meanings evident in the micro-politics of schools” (p. 181).

As with all organizations, the power and politics that permeate the structures of school systems affect how groups interact with one another personally and professionally (Miller, 2008; Timperley, 2005; Williams, 2011). Effective boundary spanning leaders adopt practices that manage political influences (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Williams,

2011), support democratic and professional approaches to sharing power (Ball, 1987), facilitate leadership (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991) and encourage the participation of all constituents (Harris, 2004; Wenger, 2000). Boundary spanning leaders in school systems, however, need resources and more than superficial decision-making processes to generate meaningful collaboration (Somech, 2010; Williams, 2011).

Culture in school systems. School systems include cultural boundaries expressed in the values, vision, norms, common understandings, beliefs, and language which influence how leaders and constituents carry out their daily work (Sergiovanni, 2000). Shared assumptions bind people together (O'Toole, 1995), contribute to their identity, and shape their practices (Schein, 2011). Schein contends that leaders need to be “able to perceive the functional and dysfunctional elements of the existing culture and to manage cultural evolution and change in such a way that the group can survive in a changing environment.” (p. 358). Schein (2004) observes that individuals have culture within them; behaviours and attitudes that change as they form new groups, craft new identities and question basic assumptions.

Schools are deeply affected by embedded cultures of behaviour present in the informal, subtle and symbolic aspects of school life (Harris, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2000). It is important for formal leaders to be sensitive to the culture(s) within the school system and its subsystems when seeking to interact across cultural boundaries (Hogg, van Kippenberg, & Rast III, 2012).

Diversity in school systems. Diversity is another boundary that formal leaders encounter in school systems (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Individuals and groups within

organizations represent a range of backgrounds, educational levels, ages, characteristics, ethnicities, affiliations, ideologies and interests that affect how they interpret their work and how they respond to organizational changes (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009). The challenge for formal leaders is to recognize, affirm and honour sub-group identities while at the same time building a common purpose that transcends differences and leads to respectful and meaningful interaction (Ernst & Yip, 2009). Kanter (2009) comments that “Effective intergroup leaders involve people from differing groups in creating a new entity focused on a future in which they all can share, without eliminating their individual histories” (p. 78).

In school systems, boundary spanning leaders must ensure that diversity, rather than present as a barrier to progress, enriches communities of practice (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Wenger, 2000), contributes to improving social responsibility (Anderson, 1990), fosters inclusion (Sergiovanni, 2000) and promotes innovation and creativity (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). Alternatively, if leaders ignore, disrespect, and misunderstand diversity, organizations such as school systems risk becoming splintered, polarized and ineffective (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Marrone, 2010).

Trust in school systems. Trust is another key intangible boundary for boundary spanning leaders in school systems (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Halverson, 2007; Robertson, 2009; Stein & Coburn, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Trust with its individual, relational, psychological and sociological dimensions (Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2009) affects the success of leadership initiatives in school systems (Muijs &

Harris, 2007). In order to work effectively across boundaries, leaders and constituents must trust each other (Chhuon, Gilkey, Gonzalez, Daly, & Chrispeels, 2008).

Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggests that trust comprises five major components: benevolence, respect, openness, honesty and competence. Benevolence ensures that school system actors feel safe and protected when they take risks. Respect occurs when system members hear and listen to one another, even when their perspectives differ. Openness means sharing relevant information. Honesty is an expectation that participants will be truthful and ethical. And competence is when people are skilled enough to do the work they take on and actually do it (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The presence or absence of trust affects the quality and meaningfulness of professional interactions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). How school systems and school leaders relate to each other determines in part whether or not system members commit to change (Fullan, 2003; Louis, 2007).

The actions of formal leaders contribute to the development of trust, professionalism and shared leadership (Muijs and Harris; 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Where there is high trust, leaders and constituents embrace change, and where there is low trust, they regard innovation with suspicion. Louis (2007) remarks that:

The implication for administrators is that trust cannot be easily separated from expanded teacher empowerment and influence. Teachers are not passive actors in the schools, but co-constructors of trust. As active professionals, teachers who feel left out of important decisions will react by withdrawing trust, which then undermines change. (p. 18)

School systems and school leaders traverse trust-related boundaries when they are patient with change attend to embedded cultures of distrust and recognize how their behaviours are received and interpreted by others (Louis, 2007). Bryk and Schneider

(2002) observe that “a broad base of trust across a school community lubricates day-to-day functioning and is a critical resource as local leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans” (p. 6). The presence of trust leads to more autonomous self-regulating practices whereas distrust leads to more controlling mechanisms and inauthentic collaboration (Adams et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Personal and social identities in school systems. Personal and social identities emerge as boundaries for boundary spanning leaders (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Heifetz, 2009, Hogg, 2009). 2010). Hogg (2010) contends that personal identity theory defines actors according to their individual attributes, in terms such as outgoing or introverted; while social identity theory interprets identity based on people’s associations and interactions with groups such as professional peers or neighbours, teachers or community leaders. Boundary spanning leaders in school systems need to be aware of their own and others’ identities as they marshal the contributions of individuals and groups (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

Leaders benefit from being competent, confident, open to dialogue and respectful of diversity (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Miller, 2008; Williams, 2011). Boundary spanning leaders in school systems enlist the contributions of constituents across formal and informal lines (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010). Marrone (2010) suggests that leaders who work across different groups need a tolerance for ambiguity, and a sense of self efficacy in order to gain influence and reputation within and beyond disparate groups. But as Hogg (2009) cautions, boundary spanning leaders must recognize that constituents define their identities, personally and

socially, by a range of measures and tend to trust, relate, and respond to those who resemble themselves, and distrust and reject those who are different.

Organizational Learning in School Systems

Boundary spanning leaders with rich experiences in diverse settings help broker common understandings across different constituencies in school systems in support of organizational learning (Miller, 2008; Sheppard et al., 2009). Wenger (2000) characterizes all organizations as social learning systems composed of communities of learning, boundary processes and community identities. In school systems and schools, communities of learning provide opportunities for educators, formally or informally, to address organizational challenges, set goals, grow professionally, pursue interests and contribute to school leadership (Printy, 2008). Formal leaders, however, must ensure that communities interact productively within and across boundaries of settings, ranks and functions for the benefit of the larger organization (Printy, 2008; Wenger, 2000). Effective school systems support and encourage the establishment of communities of learning and reveal a systemic commitment to professional growth for leaders and teachers (Leithwood, 2010).

Communities of learning. Boundary spanning leadership promises to enhance interactions among communities of learning within school systems (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008). Learning communities in schools (DuFour, 2004; Fenwick, 2004; Giles & Hargreaves, 2006) have become a way to improve the professionalism of educators, enhance practices, distribute leadership, make schools more effective (Goldstein, 2003; Lambert, 2005) and facilitate organizational learning (Gajda & Koliba,

2008; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Sheppard et al. 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). In communities of learning, formal leaders and teachers work and learn together, provide peer feedback, and offer mentorship (Halverson, 2007; Leithwood, 2010). So it is important to explore the practices leaders employ to span the boundaries of the professional groupings and to forge a reciprocal exchange of insights and practices across groups (Connaughton et al., 2011; Robertson, 2009).

The term *professional learning community* often describes organizational learning in school systems (DuFour, 2004; Sheppard et al., 2009). As with communities of practice (Wenger, 2000), the focus of learning communities is on collaboration and learning to advance educator skills and knowledge for the benefit of students, and to permit them to participate in relevant decision-making and direction-setting for the school system and schools (DuFour, 2004). Formal leaders and constituents have to learn to balance and manage their primary administering and teaching duties with their additional committee and team responsibilities (Brundrett, 2010). Working within and across subgroups in school systems and schools involves re-envisioning social identities, revising understandings of power, learning to collaborate, and discovering how to weather conflict (Brundrett, 2010; Chrispeels, Brown, & Castillo, 2000). Formal leaders at central office and principals in schools must oversee groups, and lend structure, support, and expertise when needed (Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

Efforts to implement more collegial configurations in school systems, however, have not been easy (Mascall et al., 2009). Traditional configurations of administration and power are not always compatible with increased interaction and collaboration among

educators (Harris, 2011; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Weick (1976) characterizes schools as loosely coupled systems where organizational elements overlap and intersect while they retain separate identities and independent functions: the private practice of the teacher behind a closed door; the separate domain of the principal's office; the boardroom of the school district or the floor of the local legislature. However, regardless of the loosely coupled nature of school systems (Weick, 1976) and the hierarchies and organization of schools so reminiscent of the structural rational paradigm (Callahan, 1961; Evans, 2001), efforts continue to improve school systems (Sheppard et al., 2009).

Formal leaders, who span the boundaries between formal and informal groupings, are well placed to promote collaborative practices that improve the performance of school systems and schools (Fullan, Bertani, & Quinn, 2004; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2007; Sergiovanni, 2000). Formal leaders must commit to building “professional, organizational, and leadership capacity and processes within a school or school district to maintain and improve organizational performance based on experience and collaborative learning with the intent of improving student learning” (Sheppard et al., p.10). Yet, a key challenge for formal leaders is how to infuse a more professional coherent orientation to leadership into existing educational arrangements (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). If leaders cannot overhaul prevailing educational structures they should at least identify and address the specific practices and elements that confound change (Sheppard et al., 2009).

Boundary spanning leaders within school systems and schools have much to relate about practices that impede or succeed in moving school systems and schools structurally and

philosophically towards a more professional and collegial model of operation (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009).

Leadership in School Systems

Existing leadership theories serve to categorize to some extent the range of leadership practices existent in school systems. Debate continues, however, on how well such theories match the needs of educational leadership.

Types of leadership. The study of school leadership according to Leithwood and Duke (1999) grew in importance in the twentieth century because scholars wanted to understand and identify leader behaviours, observe the connection between leader practices and success in schools, and construct lessons for the preparation of future educational administrators. Leithwood and Duke report that similar to organizational theories, leadership theories have evolved over time. While organizational theorists focused on structures and operations, leadership scholars studied how leaders influenced and motivated their followers to be committed and engaged in the service of the organization (O'Toole, 1995; Evans, 2001; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

In the early twentieth century industrial leaders and their counterparts in education, were expected to be powerful, efficient and businesslike (Callahan, 1962). Even with the emergence of a more human relations perspective, traditional leaders often used the strength of their positions to manipulate personnel, and exercise paternalistic behaviours to enforce dutiful compliance to directives (O'Toole, 1995). Strong all-knowing leadership, although consistent with the tenets of rational closed models of organizations, over time has proven inappropriate for the integrated open professional

systems of public education (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Sergiovanni, 2000).

Leadership theories. In the pursuit of an understanding of ideal leadership behaviours scholars have examined the traits, skills and practices of leaders in numerous domains (Argyris, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978; Bryant, 2003; Collins, 2007; Feidler, 1981; Kouzes & Pozner, 2007; O'Toole, 1995; Senge, 2006; Stogdill, 1948). Effective leadership has been described as generous, visionary, competent, collaborative and knowledgeable (Collins, 2007), ethical (Evans, 2001; Leithwood, 2007; Murphy, 2005), trustworthy and honest (Bryk, & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Tyler & Kramer, 1996) inter-personal, (Getha-Taylor, 2008), and considerate (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Caldwell, 2010).

Stogdill (1948) comments that leadership exists within individuals but is influenced by a complex interrelationship of individual, group and organizational structures, events, and purposes. Fiedler, (1981) notes that appropriate leadership depends on the situation. Kouzes and Posner (2007) conceive leadership skills and practices as accessible to everyone, not just a select charismatic few. Other scholars argue that charisma, perceived by many as desirable in leaders, harms organizations if combined with self-serving egotism, exploitation of others and authoritarianism (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Collins, 2007). Collins (2007) warns that powerful charismatic leaders tend to achieve temporary gains that disappear when the leader leaves. Leadership in professionally oriented organizations often lacks the status and power that inspires

followers to commit effort and energy to achieving organizational goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Evans, 2001; O'Toole, 1995).

As organizational structures have become increasingly complex and focussed on human dynamics and innovation, so too have theories about leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bryant, 2003; Burns, 1978; Collins, 2007; O'Toole, 1995). Bolman and Deal (1991) see leadership as more than a position, as both formal and informal, and as mediated by contexts and relationships. Burns (1978) describes leadership as either transactional or transformational in order to explain the complex relationships that lie between the “poles of brute power and wholly reciprocal leadership-fellowship” (p. 20). Transactional leaders initiate exchanges based on financial, political, psychological and other consequences (Bryant, 2003; Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders create a shared vision, inspire followers to improved levels of motivation and commitment, and focus on building relationships in support of a common purpose (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bryant, 2003; Burns, 1978; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Adaptive organizations require leaders who span boundaries, traverse ranks and functions, think systemically, elicit commitment, guard against defensiveness, build knowledge and skills capacity, and create conditions for constructive interactions (Argyris, 1999; Senge, 2006). According to O'Toole (1995), positive organizational change occurs in conditions of democratic, inclusive value-based leadership that honours the contribution of all organizational members. Kouzes and Posner (2007) contend that good leaders model desirable behaviours, communicate effectively with constituents, foster innovation, nurture trust, and build a collective identity. Senge (2006) says

effective leaders provide opportunities for followers to participate in authentic dialogue. Bennis, Goleman, and O'Toole (2008) claim that strong leaders respect constituents who speak truth to power.

From the image of a single all-knowing powerful leader in a vertically organized hierarchy (Fayol, 2011; Weber, 2011), notions of leaders have evolved to become constructs of 'leadership' where multiple actors contribute to setting direction, growing professionally, exchanging expertise, and making decisions (Argyris, 1999; Gronn, 2009; Senge, 2006).

Leadership theories for school systems. The evolution of leadership theories in organizations has influenced ideas about leadership in public education (Evans, 2001; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; York-Barr, & Duke, 2004). In a review of the literature of the twentieth century on educational leadership, Leithwood and Duke (1999), identify twenty different dominant leadership models that they categorize as: instructional, transformational, contingent, moral-democratic, and managerial. Each leadership model has a particular focus. Instructional leaders use expert knowledge to inform their practices (Leithwood & Duke, 1999) with a combination of hierarchical, technical and psychological authority to establish expectations for teaching and learning (Evans, 2001). Transformational leaders in school systems aim to generate a collective vision inspire superior commitment from constituents, encourage educators to work collectively to achieve common goals, provide support and stimulation, build relationships and develop a positive productive school culture (Burns, 1978; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Contingent leadership adherents concentrate on problem solving skills related to the leader's

responses in the face of particular circumstances (Feidler, 1981). Moral-democratic leadership scholars advise leaders to use a moral compass, demonstrate a commitment to democratic principles and social justice to create caring progressive communities in school systems (Evans, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2000; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Managerial leadership focuses on the functions, tasks and behaviours of competent leaders who perform duties in a structured rational way and is reminiscent of Burns' (1978) concept of transactional leadership and Gulick's (2011) definition of managerial functions: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting.

York-Barr and Duke (2004) in a report on two decades of studies on teacher leadership reveal that schools are moving towards more shared participation in leadership, where the role of formal leaders remains strong and the leadership functions of teachers can be ambiguous. York-Barr and Duke observe that trusting relationships and the support of formal leaders help teachers balance teaching assignments with leadership responsibilities.

Leadership in school systems in the twenty-first century. In the early part of the twenty-first century, scholars espouse approaches to school leadership that aim to improve school effectiveness, support organizational learning, bolster constituent commitment, respect diversity and share leadership within and across school systems and schools (Miller, 2008; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Roberson, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009). Educational leaders seek ways to improve school systems and schools through systems thinking, non-defensive dialogue, professional growth, and relationship building

(Halverson, 2007; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2010; Mayrowetz, 2008; Roberson, 2009; Senge, 2006; Sheppard et al., 2009). Concepts such as communities of practice (Leithwood, 2010; Printy, 2008; Wenger, 2000), professional learning communities (Dufour, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Robertson, 2009) and distributed leadership (Halverson, 2007; Harris, 2004; Robertson, 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Timperley, 2005) are situated in notions of professional hierarchies (Mintzberg, 1980), as well as in theories about instructional, transactional, transformational, moral-democratic, managerial and other views of leadership (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Educational researchers continue to examine the roles, structures and practices of school systems and provide suggestions for change (Honig, 2008; Fullan, 2003; Leithwood, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009). Leadership models, similar to organizational models, incorporate features of many perspectives to respond to the needs of school systems. Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) argue that students benefit most from an integrated form of leadership that combines strong instructional leadership with the qualities of transformational leadership. Others argue for a more distributed approach to leadership (Harris, 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

Distributed Leadership

This section includes a discussion of distributed leadership and the role of families or clusters of schools in school systems as mechanisms to share leadership.

Distributing leadership. Leadership is intrinsically distributed within school systems (Mayrowetz, 2008; Sheppard, Seifert, & Wakeham, 2012), and evident in the influence that formal and informal leaders exert on organizational operations and

practices (Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Leadership in school systems is interconnected and interactive, defined in tasks and subtasks linked together in often imperceptible and unpredictable ways (Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Spillane and Coldren argue that informal leadership needs to be unravelled and understood as an antecedent to plans for school improvement. Formal leaders have to recognize the complexity of each situation and explore the potential of distributed leadership available within the school system and schools (Brundrett, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Formal leaders must also be aware that leadership, whether latent or explicit, formal or informal, can inhibit or support change initiatives (Harris, 2004; Sheppard et al., 2009).

For more than a decade scholars have identified distributed leadership as a way to re-conceptualize leadership in school systems and schools (Brundrett, 2010; Gronn, 2009; Harris, 2004; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Formal leaders distribute leadership when they harness the contributions of multiple members to identify problems, seek collective solutions, support continuous professional development, and share decision-making (DuFour, 2004; Gronn, 2009; Harris, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009). Distributed leadership challenges the position that strong individual leaders acting alone offer the best hope for improving schools (Timperley, 2005; Sheppard et al., 2009). When leadership is distributed, teachers and administrators fulfill different but important roles and interact more as colleagues and co-learners than as leaders and followers (Halverson, 2007; Sheppard & Dibbon, 2011).

Distributed leadership, to be effective, requires trusting relationships, open and honest communication, (Harris, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2009) and an understanding of

how to balance the roles of teaching and leading (Brundrett, 2010). Leadership is affected by context and situation, interactions, and formal leader practices (Bolman and Deal, 1991; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Teacher confidence, communication with the administration and with each other, conflict resolution skills (Muijs & Harris, 2007), and morale (Sheppard et al., 2010) all affect how distributed leadership functions in school systems (Harris, 2011).

Productive schools relate well to each other, to their communities, and to the central office (Sheppard & Dibbon, 2011). In schools building leadership capacity demands staff participation and skill development at all levels (Lambert, 2005). In successful school districts, Leithwood (2010) notes that formal leaders play a critical role in establishing “collaborative and congenial working relations with school administrators and teachers” (p. 259). Distributed leadership means establishing a collective vision, sharing responsibility for organizational goals, growing professionally, and making decisions in a purposeful way to improve schools (Harris, 2009, Mayrowetz, 2008, Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

In practice, distributed leadership is not about eliminating formal leadership positions or rendering formal administrative positions meaningless; neither is it about simply downloading administrative work to teachers (Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Reconciling the inherent differences of authority and responsibility, nonetheless, presents challenges to implementing distributed leadership (Harris, 2004).

Educators possess authority through their formal designations (Hoy & Miskel, 2013), education and skill, and through their shared values and beliefs (Evans, 2001).

Existing hierarchical structures, habits of isolationism and traditional assumptions about the work of teaching and school leadership all complicate the successful implementation of leadership models that promote collaboration, distribute leadership and share decision-making (Sheppard et al., 2009). But, revising traditional hierarchical organizational schemes is possible to favour the development of high quality teacher collaboration in learning communities in school systems (Gadja & Koliba, 2008; Muijs & Harris, 2007).

When leadership is distributed in school systems, the potential exists to alter and perhaps to disturb what have been traditional organizational expectations for those who lead and those who follow (Harris, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2007). School systems and schools may adopt inadequate structures and routines, and fail to ensure that collective endeavours are worthwhile (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2009; Timperley, 2005). School systems and school leaders may experience difficulty in establishing organizational arrangements and routines that support collaboration in safe and trusting conditions (Halverson, 2007). Formal leaders such as principals may feel uncomfortable relinquishing power (Harris, 2011; Miller, 2008; Muijs & Power, 2007). Teachers may experience stress (Mayrowetz, 2008) if their teaching workload and leadership duties become too onerous (Brundrett, 2010; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). So, school system leaders need to find ways to provide resources, time and professional development to help constituents learn and share leadership skills and practices (Brundrett, 2010; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Timperley, 2005).

Leaders in schools and school systems can experience difficulty in establishing organizational arrangements and routines to support collaborative work in safe and

trusting conditions (Harris, 2004; Halverson, 2007; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). The proliferation of different groupings may fragment practices rather than promote competent and coherent efforts (Harris, 2009; Timperley, 2005). In implementing a distributed approach to leadership, formal leaders cannot ignore the importance of the context of the school system and the schools within it: the social and cultural conditions; the pre-existing relationships; the professional strengths and needs of participants; the political and micro-political influences; the level of trust; and the degree of readiness for change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Penuel et al., 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane, 2009; Timperley, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

It is important to remember that formal leaders at all levels of the school system play important roles in supporting distributed leadership, by developing structures and routines that facilitate collaborative approaches to improving the system and its schools (Coffin & Leithwood, 2000; Sheppard & Brown, 2000; Sheppard & Dibbon, 2011; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). When central office leaders share leadership and collaborate more frequently with school principals; and principals collaborate more often with other principals and with the teachers in their schools, greater attention needs to be paid the leaders who span the boundaries between the various groups (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011, Riley, 2014; Robertson, 2009).

My exploration of boundary spanning leadership in a school system provides insights into the types of boundaries that formal leaders encounter and the practices they employ to distribute leadership across divides. Formal leaders demonstrate that boundary spanning leadership can also bring about transformational changes in school systems.

Families of schools. One of the strategies that central office leaders use to distribute leadership within the school system is to establish sub-systems or clusters of schools called families (Sheppard et al., 2009; Shortall, Greene-Fraise, & Harnett, 2007). The Prism District in my study organizes its schools in formally designated families. Central office leaders assign schools to specific groupings (Parker & Lafleur, 2004) based on criteria such as location and demographics (Shortall et al., 2007). Formal structures for families of schools include regular meetings and dedicated oversight by an assigned central office leader (Fullan, 2001; Sheppard et al., 2009; Shortall et al., 2007). Central office leaders expect principals and staffs in families to work with their member schools to access mutual support, visit one another's schools, plan joint projects, offer mentorship, exchange and acquire resources and information, (Parker & Lafleur, 2004) and share in the leadership within the district (Sheppard et al., 2009; Fullan, 2001). As a smaller sub-system of the district, families of schools are supposed to work together to implement policies and strategies that enhance student achievement (Parker & Lafleur, 2004). The family of schools' arrangement allows central office leaders, and a small group of principals and staffs to collaborate on school development plans and professional growth initiatives (Sheppard et al, 2009). Structural affordances such as families of schools, however, do not necessarily guarantee that distributed leadership as envisioned will occur, because as Sheppard et al. (2009) observes:

Shifting to a collaborative approach to leadership and facilitating an environment in which constituents feel genuinely invited to engage in leadership and are willing to do so are not processes that occur automatically as a result of decree or by merely providing the opportunity (p. 51).

Families of school arrangements are intended to help leaders overcome boundaries between roles, functions and settings within the school system. To achieve successful and productive interactions that harness and encourage leadership at all levels of the school system (Fullan, 2001), formal leaders such as central office leaders and principals navigate multiple boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008; Riley, 2014; Robertson, 2009). The boundaries that leaders span may be formal and informal, horizontal, and vertical across settings, ranks and functions (Marrone, 2010); tangible and intangible divides that exist in hierarchies, organizational structures, ideologies, personal and social identities, cultures, and geographic locations (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). More needs to be known about the boundary spanning practices of central office leaders and principals who interact to support collaborative leadership in school systems, families of schools and schools.

Boundary Spanning Leadership in School Systems

It is important to understand what boundary spanning leadership looks like in an organization such as a school system. It is necessary to situate the study of boundary spanning leadership in the context of the research.

Overview. When multiple groups with multiple boundaries interact within a school system, formal leaders often employ boundary spanning leadership practices (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Riley, 2014; Robertson, 2009). The distribution of leadership and the promotion of organizational learning in school systems require structures, procedures and opportunities that support overarching goals and espouse a shared vision at all levels of contact (Sheppard et al., 2009). Beyond structural and

organizational supports, communities of learners require boundary processes (Sheppard et al., 2009; Wenger, 2000), and boundary spanning leadership (Ernst & Yip, 2009) that enable collaboration and growth under inclusive respectful conditions (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). Understanding the lived experiences and practices of boundary spanning leaders is important to any discussion of the impact of boundaries in school systems and schools (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Miller, 2008; Sheppard et al., 2009).

As with organizational and leadership theories, research on boundary spanning leadership began with studies outside education (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). Boundaries have helped define organizations, differentiate entities and functions within structures, and create roles that link together ideas, individuals, groups and communities (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Ernst & Yip, 2009). Boundary spanning has occurred at many levels between individuals, teams and networks (Marrone, 2010) across structural, technical, psychological, sociological, cultural, demographic, temporal, and geographic barriers (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Martins et al., 2004). Studies in business and other professions offer important insights for exploring boundary spanning leadership in education (Robertson, 2009).

Boundary spanning roles. The emergence of boundary spanning leadership as a focus for study offers to extend our understanding of organizational and leadership theories as they apply to interactions within and among groups, organizations and systems (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981; Williams, 2011).

Boundary spanning leadership moves away from a closed command and control paradigm of leadership (Fayol, 2011; Taylor, 2011) to one of fluid interaction, collaboration and non-defensive dialogue (Argyris, 1999; Senge, 2006) in a complex open professional dynamic organizational structure (Mintzberg, 1980).

Understandings of the role of boundary spanners in organizations have changed over time (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981; Williams, 2011). Boundary spanners, according to Aldrich and Herker (1977), manage, filter and facilitate the exchange of implicit and explicit information between groups; they act as buffers, scout for personnel and assess for future needs. Tushman and Scanlan (1981) observe that boundary spanners cut across hierarchical and organizational structures to represent the organization, and gather information; to act as conduits and translators of knowledge between the outside world and the internal organization. Ancona and Caldwell (1992) categorize boundary spanning practices in organizations as being either ambassadorial or task-coordinating (see Table 2). Boundary spanners engage in communication, represent the group, access resources, control membership, coordinate work, mold new perspectives, and foster interdependence among factions (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992).

Table 2 *Boundary Spanning Functions*

Ambassadorial	Task Coordinator
Access power	Access work-flow structure
Promote the work	Manage horizontal dependence
Secure resources	Coordinate
Buffer against interference	Negotiate Give feedback Scout talent

Note. Adapted from “Bridging the boundary: External activity and performance in organizational teams,” by D. G. Ancona, and D. F. Caldwell, 1992, *Administration Science Quarterly*, 37(4), pp. 634-665.

In addition to ambassadorial and task related functions, scholars claim that today’s boundary spanning leaders need to create conditions that support productive intra-group and intergroup interactions; provide direction, align goals, and sow commitment among participants (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Hogg, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Robertson, 2009; Williams, 2011). Ernst and Chrobot-Mason (2011) assert that boundary spanning leaders manage boundaries, forge common ground, and discover new frontiers by using six kinds of practices: buffering, reflecting, connecting, mobilizing, weaving and transforming (see Figure 1). Boundary spanning leaders *buffer* when they minimize distractions, create safety, and manage the exchange of information. Leaders *reflect* when they honour diverse identities, respect deeply held perspectives, surface commonalities, and demonstrate patience. Leaders *connect* when they provide a neutral space to meet where group members can get to know one another, and build trusting

relationships. Leaders *mobilize* when they encourage participants to develop a shared vision that protects their composite identities and simultaneously endorses their new superordinate identity. Leaders *weave* when they incorporate the collective histories, viewpoints and strengths of participants as part of their new shared identity. Boundary spanning leaders *transform* when they span boundaries to help groups achieve transformational goals.

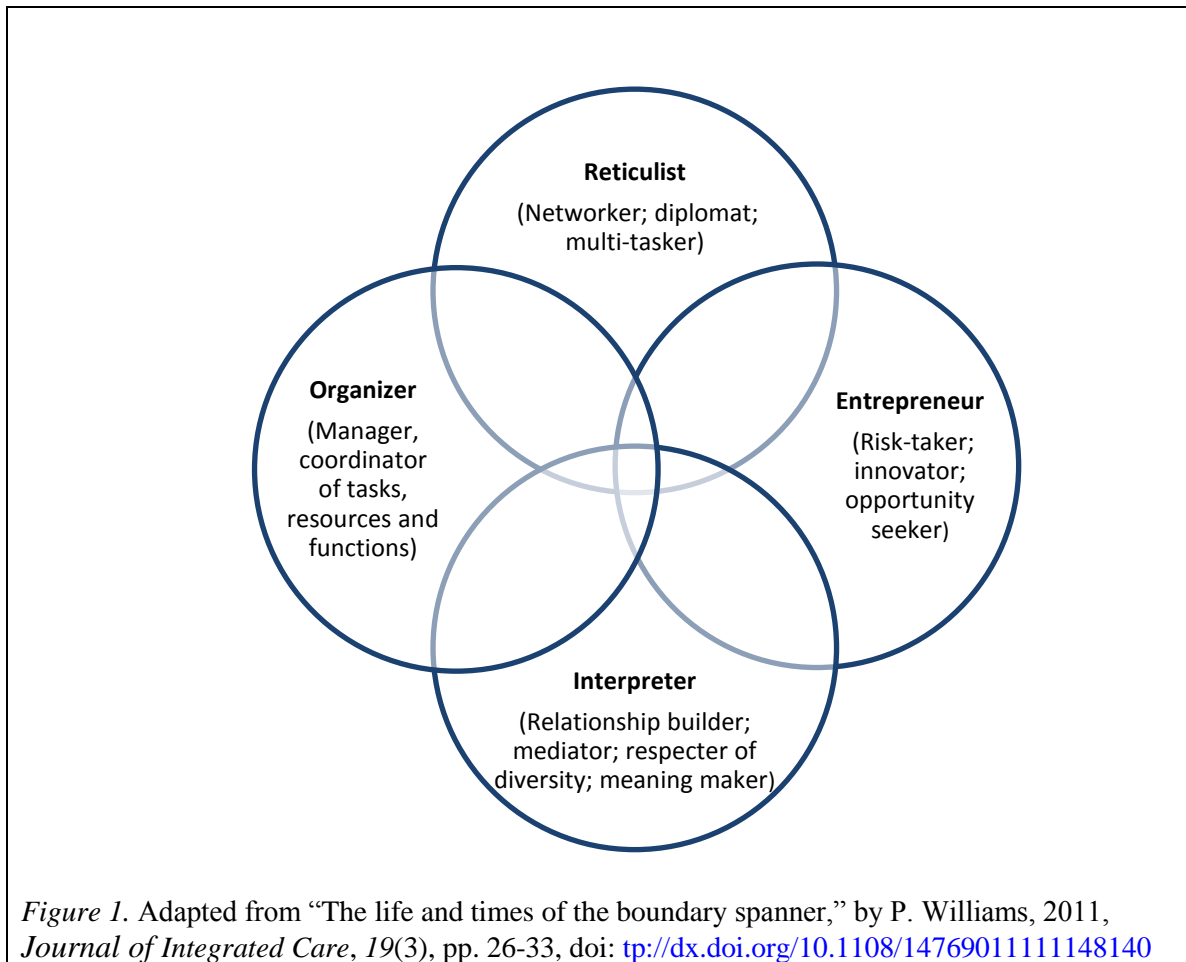
Table 3 *Boundary Spanning Leadership Progression*

1. Manage Boundaries	(Buffering and reflecting)
2. Forge Common Ground	(Connecting and mobilizing)
3. Discover New Frontiers	(Weaving and transforming)

Note. Adapted from *Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations* by C. Ernst and D. Chrobot-Mason (2011), New York: McGraw Hill.

Williams (2011) offers a similar, but different way to conceptualize the role of boundary spanners who may be constituents or leaders (see Figure 1). He categorizes boundary spanners as reticulists, entrepreneurs, interpreters and organizers. *Reticulists* manage multiple responsibilities, engage in political and diplomatic exchanges and enable communication within complex interdependent systems. *Entrepreneurs* take risks, create innovation, take advantage of opportunities and generate contacts. *Interpreters* build personal relationships, engender empathy, trust and respect, mediate conflicts, and honour diversity. And *organizers* manage, coordinate, and gather resources and knowledge together to achieve goals. Williams comments that, “in the complex and distributed power relationships that characterize collaborative settings, there is a need for more sharing and negotiation, rather than direction” (p. 31).

Figure 1 *Boundary Spanning Roles*



Akkerman and Bakker (2011) present a model for boundary spanning leadership that reflects previous literature but also connects it more directly to school systems and schools. They use four headings to describe boundary-spanning leadership: *identification*, *coordination*, *reflection* and *transformation* (see Table 4). The category of *identification* includes the ability of boundary spanners to define their own identity (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Platow et al., 2009), balance roles (Balogun, 2003; Ernst & Yip, 2009), tolerate ambiguity (Miller, 2008), gain acceptance in groups (Stein & Coburn, 2010),

mediate tensions (Hogg, 2009) and make sense of information (Connaughton et al., 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Robertson, 2009; Williams, 2011). Akkerman and Bakker (2011) comment that in the *identification* process “The learning potential resides in a renewed sense-making of different practices and related identities” (p. 143). The second category is *coordination* (Williams, 2011) where boundary-spanning leaders address discontinuities, manage communication, establish routines, create smooth interactions, and enhance meaning-making from one context to another. Boundary spanning leaders engage in *reflection* when they tune into the importance of settings, diverse values and perspectives to facilitate dialogue to construct new understandings, skills and identities. Boundary spanning leaders bring about *transformation* when they effect new deep changes in practices and generate joint responses to problems, all while respecting the unique identities of constituents (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011).

In summary, effective boundary spanning leaders demonstrate understanding of intragroup and intergroup complexities (Marrone, 2010); are flexible, adaptable, moral (Williams, 2011), assertive, but cooperative (Miller, 2008); yet willing to be vulnerable (Robertson, 2009). In addition to technical and administrative expertise, boundary spanning leaders display interpersonal understanding, trustworthiness, and a sensitivity to differences in the diverse identities and beliefs of others (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008). Boundary spanning leaders are sensitive to contexts (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Miller, 2008; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981); they buffer distractions (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011), and establish trust and security in exchanges and

relationships (Fleming & Waguespack, 2007; Hogg, 2009; Kramer, 2009; Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009; Stein & Coburn, 2010; Williams, 2011).

Table 4 *Boundary Spanning Leadership Functions*

Identification	Coordination	Reflection	Transformation
Defining one's practice	Connecting	Being aware of the differences in settings	Making profound changes in practice
Working in many camps	Translating		
	Creating routines	Weighing multiple perspectives	Solving a problem jointly
	Smoothing out bumps	Considering diversity	Creating meaningful dialogue that leads to change, new routines, new ideas
		Expanding views	Respecting the identities of composite groups
			Engaging in hybridization

Note. Adapted from “Boundary crossing and boundary objects”, by S. F. Akkerman, & A. Bakker, 2011, *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), pp. 132-169. doi: 10.3102/00345431404435.

Boundary spanning leaders build on the capacity of individuals and groups to work together to generate innovative ideas and transform thinking (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). They seek to overcome psychological and sociological, structural and operational barriers (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Hogg, 2009; Krochik & Tyler, 2009) and exhibit dispositions that enable them to provide leadership while responding to multiple demands (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Williams, 2011).

Boundary spanning or intergroup leadership “takes us beyond the sense of leadership as an individual-level property and enables us to see leadership as a group level phenomenon that is grounded in a dynamic relationship between individuals and groups in a changing changeable world” (Platow et al., 2009, p. 41).

As formal leaders in school systems embrace more distributed forms of leadership, through communities of practice (Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Wenger, 2000) and arrangements such as families of schools (Sheppard et al., 2009), it becomes important to explore how the practices and experiences of boundary spanning leaders affect collaborative leadership and help bring about transformational change. Boundary spanning leadership occurs in school systems among multiple formal and informal leaders within and across multiple internal and external groupings. The experiences and perspectives provided by the five central office leaders and eight school principals in the two families of schools in the Prism school system contribute to a clearer understanding of how boundary spanning leadership practices in school systems contribute to the effectiveness of the school system.

Based on my research in the Prism School District and the relevant literature, I propose a model for boundary spanning leadership informed in particular by the writings of Ancona and Caldwell (1992), Ernst and Chrobot-Mason (2011), Williams (2011), and Akkerman and Bakker (2011) (See Table 5). I organize boundary spanning leadership under four categories: *making meaning*; *administering*; *creating conditions*, and *transforming* and I use this model to explore the results of my interviews with central office leaders and principals in two families of schools in the Prism School District.

Making meaning subsumes practices related to communication, interpretation, and the development and exchange of skills, knowledge and practices. The category of *administering* includes administration, management, planning, organizing, buffering, gathering resources and monitoring. *Creating conditions* covers practices that serve to address matters of safety, trust, commitment, relationships, identities, connections, experiences, culture, and belonging. The category of *transforming* comprises systemic change, growth, creativity, innovation and risk-taking.

Table 5 *Boundary Spanning Leadership Practices in School Systems*

Making Meaning	Administering	Creating Conditions	Transforming
Communicating	Coordinating	Ensuring safety and trust	Bringing about systemic change
Interpreting	Managing		
Developing and exchanging knowledge, skills and practices	Planning	Honouring diversity	Encouraging growth
	Organizing	Generating commitment	Being innovative and creative
	Buffering	Forging relationships	Taking risks
	Gathering resources		
	Monitoring	Developing new identities	
		Connecting	
		Building on experiences	
		Creating a sense of belonging	
		Building a culture of collaboration	

Note. This table appeared in chapter 1 and is based on several academic sources but in particular “Boundary crossing and boundary objects” by S. F. Akkerman and A. Bakker, 2011, *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), pp. 132-169. doi: 10.3102/00345431404435; “Boundary spanning roles and organization structure,” by H. Aldrich and D. Herker, 1977, *Academy of Management Review*, 2(2), pp. 217-230. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/pss/257905>; “Bridging the boundary: External activity and performance in organizational teams” by D. G. Ancona and D. F. Caldwell, 1992, *Administration Science Quarterly*, 37(4), pp. 634-665; “Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations,” by C. Ernst and D. Chrobot-Mason, 2011, New York: McGraw Hill; “The life and times of the boundary spanner,” by P. Williams, *Journal of Integrated Care*, 19(3), pp. 26-33. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14769011111148140>.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The study of boundary spanning leadership in families of schools in a school system explores the perspectives and practices related to intra-group and inter-group interactions of five central office leaders and eight school principals. The scope of the research is limited to one school district in Atlantic Canada, two families of schools, and eight schools (four from each family). The study includes individual interviews, an analysis of annual district and school reports, and a teacher survey. The names of the school district, central office leaders, principals, families of schools, and schools as they appear in this thesis are pseudonyms. The genders of the participants may also differ from those of their real life counterparts.

A Qualitative Approach

Methodology represents a way of thinking about and studying social reality while methods describe the procedures and strategies enlisted to collect and analyze data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data, but I interpreted the findings using qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2012). I utilized a case study approach (Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014) that involved in-depth interviews (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and document analysis (Merriam, 2009; Rapley, 2007). I also enlisted a quantitative instrument, a standardized survey of teachers, to provide contextual information about the cases and to complement the other sources of data (Creswell, 2012; Rank, 2004).

I chose qualitative methodology because it represents an emic idiographic position that concentrates on the rich details of particular situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam 2009), and explores the interaction of the resources, backgrounds, abilities, judgements, thoughts, activities, and worldviews of the participating actors (O'Donoghue, 2007; Patton, 2002; Wisker, 2009). Qualitative methodology allows for ambiguity, and permits the sensitive, fair, and effective treatment of participants (Charmaz, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

I selected a multi-case study approach because I wanted to explore an overarching case, the formal leadership in the school system, while simultaneously looking at cases within the larger case, the leadership of the families of schools and the principals' leadership in the member schools (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). A case study method suited my research questions and allowed me to explore how thirteen formal leaders in a school system practiced boundary spanning leadership and how the practices influenced the distribution of leadership and supported transformational changes.

The case study approach allowed me as the sole researcher with limited resources to restrict the object of my inquiry while still examining the rich human experiences of professional leaders within a bounded historical, situational and cultural context (Denzin, 2004; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006). I treated the school system as the all-encompassing case; the families of schools as sub-cases of the system; and the schools as sub-cases of the families of schools and of the school system. Each component of the case study, the district office, the two families of schools, and each individual school acted as "an arena

or host or fulcrum to bring many functions or relationships together for my research” (Stake, 2006, p. 2).

While case studies do not exhaust or represent the broad spectrum of possible responses and views of central office leaders, principals or teachers, they do provide valuable insight into specific situations (Seidman, 2006; Stake, 2006). Case studies particularize rather than generalize (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014), and afforded me richly descriptive authentic data about boundary-spanning leadership among selected educational leaders in one school system and eight schools (Hammersley, 2004; Merriam, 2009). Despite the small size of the sample, I was able to uncover the beliefs and conditions of the selected key informants (Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Patton, 2002), to reveal evidence and a range of viewpoints (Creswell, 2007) about boundary-spanning leadership within a school system at a particular point in time.

My sample was purposeful and comprised sub cases within the overarching case of the school system (Morse, 2004; Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2006). The sampling procedure involved a snowball effect (Patton, 2002) beginning with the cooperation of a key informant (Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2006; Patton, 2002), the chief executive officer of the school district. She recommended to me the names of central office leaders whom she felt would agree to participate in the project. Based on her recommendations I contacted and enlisted the participation of two executive leaders and three senior education officers at the central office.

I then asked the two central office leaders who had dedicated responsibilities for families of schools to suggest to me the names of principals of their family member

schools who in their opinion would contribute rich information to the research (Patton, 2002). Based on their suggestions I engaged the participation of the principals and staffs of eight schools, (four from each family of schools). As a second source of data, I also invited teachers in the participating schools to complete a survey about organizational citizenship and leadership. For my third source of data, I read and analyzed the publicly available annual reports of the district and the schools to garner information for contextual background for the cases in my study (Merriam, 2009).

In all, I conducted thirteen in-person individual semi-structured interviews; collected a total of 127 teacher surveys in seven of eight schools; and examined nine recent annual reports, one from the central district office and eight from each of the participating schools. I interviewed five central office professional leaders and eight principals at locations and times convenient to them (Seidman, 2006). Each face to face interview lasted an average of one hour. I audio-recorded the sessions and I later transcribed the texts. I conducted member checks with participants; I sent each interviewee a copy of the written transcription of their interviews to review and critique for accuracy and validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sandelowski, 2008).

With the permission of the district leadership and seven of the eight principals, I asked teachers in seven schools to participate anonymously in the completion of the *School Climate and Organizational Citizenship Index* survey (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, Parish, & DiPaola, 2006). I also conducted a document analysis (Merriam, 2009) of the annual reports of the district and each school to gain contextual information about the school system and the participating schools.

Collecting the Data

The process of conducting this study involved seeking ethics approval, and ensuring confidentiality protection for the participants. I developed and utilized an interview protocol. I analyzed public documents, and conducted surveys.

Consent process. I sought and received approval from the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research of Memorial University to conduct a study on boundary spanning leadership in families of schools in school systems. I requested and obtained permission from the Chief Executive Officer of the selected school district to interview central office leaders and school principals, and to administer an anonymous survey to teachers. All participants received a written description of the purpose of the research and a consent form to sign to confirm their voluntary involvement in the study. The central office leaders completed a single consent form in which they agreed to take part in a face to face individual audio-recorded interview plus allow me to contact recommended schools to interview principals and administer a teacher survey. The participating principals also signed a single consent form giving me permission to interview them individually and face to face. I further asked the principals for permission to administer a teacher survey in their schools.

All eight principals agreed to be interviewed, but only seven consented to administer the teacher survey. The teachers in the seven schools who agreed to complete the anonymous survey signed a single consent form for that sole purpose. My project relied on the informed and voluntary consent of participants who were free to withdraw at any time. I interviewed and audio-recorded five central office leaders and eight school

principals. The interviewed leaders at the central office and principals received a copy of the interview protocol a week in advance of the actual sessions to allow them to think about their answers.

I kept all data private and confidential. As the sole researcher I was a peripheral participant observer (Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2006). I am a former school administrator, but I no longer hold any professional relationship with the study participants.

Confidentiality limitations. I took every effort to ensure that the research data were kept confidential and secure. I assigned pseudonyms to describe the district, the schools and the participating central office leaders, principals and teachers. I also used fictitious names to report my research findings in presentations, and publications. Only I knew the identity of all the participants and locations of the study sites. Only I had access to the original data. However, it still remained possible that through informal contacts, participants may have been able to discern the identities of other people and locations involved in the research. Also, it is possible that central office leaders and principals shared copies of the written transcripts of their interviews with others.

Interviews. Kvale (1996) describes research interviewers as miners or travelers. Miners find the treasure concealed within people's narratives while travelers collect and reconstruct stories to retell once their travels are finished. For this research I developed a semi-structured interview protocol that allowed me to be both a miner and a traveler: to mine the perspectives and practices of the research participants, but also to reconstruct and retell their stories (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002). I selected interviewing as the mode of inquiry because it allowed the central office formal leaders and the school principals to

share their narratives of experience and describe the elements and context of their leadership behaviours (Seidman, 1998) in a purposeful way (Enosh, Adital, & Buchbinder, 2008). From the interviews I gathered descriptive data on their perspectives and practices in their own words and gained an understanding of how they lived their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and interpreted their world (Denzin, 2001).

The interview protocol included seventeen open-ended questions and incorporated a range of topics that probed details, impressions and perceptions of lived events (Charmaz, 2008) related to boundary spanning leadership. The script of the semi-structured interview protocols contained the same questions in the same sequence for all interviewees. But, because questions were open-ended, participants could be flexible and expansive in their responses (Bryman, 2001; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Patton, 2002). The interview answers provided rich descriptions of the participants' professional lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Seidman, 2006) as formal educational leaders in the school system schools.

Documents. Documents provide a source of stable, easily obtainable data grounded in the real world that supply information, reveal patterns, and supplement findings from other data sources (Hall, 2009; Merriam, 2009). The Prism School District and its schools produce publically available annual reports. The district level report conveys information about the school system's strategic plan, governance, senior leadership, and finances. The district provides data on human resources, schools, district demographics, parent councils, and partnerships; it contains updates on high school graduation rates, new programs, technology use, professional development and school

construction. The individual school annual reports offer information about their school development plans, staffing, school councils, partnerships, communities and projects; they document student achievement and highlight school accomplishments. The school district annual report and the school reports represent a rich source of contextual data for the cases in my study.

Teacher surveys. The quantitative data collection portion of the study involved a survey for teachers called the *School Climate and Organizational Citizenship Index* (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2006). I received permission from Megan Tschannen-Moran to utilize the index (See Appendix 9) and the interpretation key for my study (See Appendix 10). The index is a paper and pencil standardized forty-three item Likert scale assessment designed to generate an individual school rating of collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic press (expectations for student achievement), community engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour.

The survey data revealed valuable contextual information about teacher perceptions of the strengths of their schools, their leadership, their professionalism, student achievement and the level of staff engagement. Teachers in seven of the eight schools volunteered to complete the survey. The principal of one school, Red Tree Elementary, did not give me permission to administer the survey because he felt it was too late in the school year and the teachers were too busy with grading.

Analysis of the interviews. I analyzed the interview data using a constant-comparative approach to build theory and explore phenomena through coding,

categorizing, and making comparisons to concepts in the literature (Charmaz, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2006). I personally transcribed the audio interviews and sent each participant a copy of their interview transcript to solicit their feedback and ensure that the record was accurate.

I employed QSR's NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software (2012) to transcribe and collate the content of the interview transcripts. I categorized the interview texts according to the leadership designations of the participants. I created a section for the responses of *central office leaders* which I further subdivided into executive leaders and family of school senior education officers. I developed categories for each family of schools, the Beam family and the Light family. I assigned the four *principal* interviews from the Beam family to one group and the four *principals* from the Light family to another group. Using NVivo 10 I analyzed the interview content of the participants within and across the groupings of central office, of the executive leaders, central office senior education officers, Beam family principals and Light family principals. I used the seventeen questions of the interview protocol as an initial organizing tool to record and then code the responses of the participants. I looked for and identified emerging themes linked to my research questions. I compared the commonalities and differences in the data of the participants within and across themes within and across their groups. I connected my findings with the literature on boundary spanning leadership and reported on my results.

Annual reports. I analyzed the district and school annual reports to obtain contextual information for the case studies (Hall, 2009). I employed NVivo 10 software

to house, organize and assemble data from the content of the reports. As I read the reports I kept in mind the source and origin of the material, and the intended audience (Rapley, 2007). The reports supplied information about the district, and each of the eight schools and their communities. From the reports I was also able to gain insight into the coherence of plans, priorities, conditions, and perspectives between the central office and schools; among the member schools of families of schools; from one family of schools to another; and from school to school.

Survey results. The results of the *School Climate and Organizational Citizenship Index* (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 2006) provided contextual information from the perspective of teachers for seven of the eight schools in my study. I invited teachers in the seven schools to complete the surveys individually at their leisure and then return them to me. Three of the seven school staffs, in fact, opted to complete the surveys as part of their scheduled staff meetings. When teachers completed the surveys during staff meetings the participation rate per school ranged from 65% to 80% of teachers. The participation rate of teachers who completed surveys at their leisure varied from 20% to 78% of potential participants. To analyze the index data, I used the official response key provided for the index (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2006) and employed SPSS 19.0 software to calculate the results of each category for each school and to interpret the results.

The survey responses provided valuable contextual information about teacher perceptions of the strengths, the leadership, the professionalism, the student achievement and level of staff engagement in each of their schools. The survey results also indicated

how the schools in the research sample compared to one another and with schools in general.

The three sources of data, (interviews, surveys and documents) permitted me to offset the possible limitations of using only one method of inquiry (Flick, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Greene, 2007), and to improve the quality and trustworthiness of the results (Creswell, 2012; Denzin, 2004). As previously mentioned, I did member checks with each of the interviewed participants to ensure their acceptance of the written transcriptions of their interviews and to incorporate their corrections into the final texts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sandelowski, 2008). Through the interviews, surveys, and document analysis (Patton, 2002), I explored the leadership perspectives and practices of a five central office leaders, eight school principals and the perceptions of 127 teachers in two families of schools within one school district at a moment in time.

Summary

To explore the boundary-spanning leadership practices of central office leaders and principals in families of schools in a school system I conducted a multi-case study that involved one school district, two families of schools, and eight schools. I developed a common protocol based on the literature on boundary spanning leadership to interview five central office leaders and eight principals. I transcribed the interviews and used NVivo 10 to assist me in the identification of emerging themes and the analysis of the data. To garner contextual information for the case studies, I reviewed the annual reports of the district and of the schools, and I conducted teacher surveys on school climate and organizational citizenship. In presenting the data I am sensitive to the fact that I name a

number of participants with different organizational roles, settings, and functions. I therefore use tables 6 and 7 in chapters 4 and 5 to help guide the reader in understanding the professional designations and relationships among the participants.

Chapter 4

Contextual Information on the School System, Schools and Leaders

Case studies focus on “a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009). Each case exists in a context with its own identifying attributes and conditions (Merriam, 2008; Stake, 2006). The cases in my study involve five central office leaders, and eight principals in two families of schools within a large urban school district. Of the five central office leaders, two leaders, Dr. Hugh and Dr. Shade are members of the executive branch of the district at the director or assistant director level. The other three central office leaders serve as senior education officers (SEOs). SEO Ray, SEO Beam, and SEO Light occupy mid-level leadership positions headquartered at the central office. SEO Ray’s assignment involves programming and is district wide. SEO Beam and SEO Light exercise designated responsibilities for specific families of schools and liaise directly on behalf of the district on matters of programming, policy, and planning with specific school principals and school development committees. SEO Beam oversees the Beam family of schools; SEO Light oversees the Light family of schools (See Table 6).

To acquire contextual information about the thirteen participating leaders, I analyzed the publically available annual reports of the school district and the participating schools. I also posed background related questions to the leaders during the individual interviews. As well I administered a survey to teachers in seven of the participating schools. The district and school reports contain information that helps situate and identify the conditions where the research occurred. The individual interview responses of the

central office leaders and principals offer insights into the leaders' histories and experiences. The teacher surveys gauge teacher perceptions of climate and organizational citizenship in their own schools. The following sections of this chapter contain information based on the annual reports, the teacher surveys and the individual interview responses.

Table 6 The Prism School District

	<i>The Prism School District</i>								
Central Office Executive Leaders	Dr. Hugh Dr. Shade								
Central Office Senior Education Officers	SEO Beam <i>Beam Family of Schools</i>				SEO Light <i>Light Family of Schools</i>				SEO Ray <i>District-Wide</i>
Schools	<i>Apricot Dale</i>	<i>Teal Stone</i>	<i>Silver Wing</i>	<i>Bronze Ville</i>	<i>Red Tree</i>	<i>Blue Bell</i>	<i>Yellow Grove</i>	<i>Purple Heather</i>	<i>Programming All Schools</i>
Principals	Mr. Pitt	Mr. Lake	Ms. Flight	Ms. Rock	Mr. Apple	Mr. Ring	Ms. Star	Ms. Moss	All principals

Annual reports. The Prism School District produces a publicly available district annual report that includes data on demographics, goals, partnerships, student achievement and initiatives. Located in Atlantic Canada, the Prism District employs 3100 administrators and teachers, and comprises 118 schools split almost evenly between urban and rural settings. Despite the even distribution of schools, the number of students in rural schools represents only one quarter of the district's student enrolment. The size of schools varies throughout the school system. Approximately one third of the district's

schools house less than 200 students; another third serve between 200-399 students; and the remaining third accommodate 400 or more students.

The eight participating schools in my study are urban and situated within ten kilometers of the central office. Two schools, Red Tree and Bronze Ville, comprise less than 300 students; five schools, Apricot Dale, Teal Stone, Blue Bell, Yellow Grove, and Purple Heather, house approximately 400 children; and one school, Silver Wing, holds more than 500 pupils. The professional staffs of the schools, administrators and teachers combined, vary in number from 15 to 50 per site. All schools accommodate varied combinations of children aged five to twelve.

The Prism School District's annual report identifies the support of parents and the surrounding communities as critical to the success of the school system's quest to deliver quality educational programming to students. Leithwood (2010) finds that successful school districts foster parental and public engagement. The annual report emphasizes the importance of the district's relationship with provincial government departments, professional associations, unions, health, social service, and legal authorities, post-secondary institutions, advocacy groups and charitable bodies. The district report defines partnerships as external liaisons. The report does not include or mention any information about the district's interactions with their families of schools.

School districts engage in systemic and strategic planning to bring about school improvement (Leithwood, 2010; Sheppard et al., 2009). The Prism District's annual report organizes its strategic plan under the headings of: *students*, *staff*, and the *system*. *Student* initiatives include creating high expectations for achievement with increased

emphasis on twenty-first century learning, inclusion, and students at risk. Under the second category of *staff*, the district goal focuses on improving personnel recruitment, working conditions, professional growth, evaluation plans, technology use and leadership capacity. Under the third category of *system*, the Prism District goal is to improve organizational effectiveness, infrastructure, and technology plans.

Students in the Prism District, according to the annual report, surpass the provincial high school graduation rate, with three quarters of graduates completing school with an academic or honours certificate, and one quarter of students finishing with a general diploma. The district report does not list student achievement at other grade levels.

Central office leaders. The two central office executive leaders, Dr. Shade and Dr. Hugh, have occupied their positions for less than five years. SEO Ray, SEO Beam and SEO Light have been in their jobs for more than five but less than ten years. The five participating central office leaders describe themselves as experienced teachers and administrators who hold advanced degrees at or beyond the Master's level in education. Combined teaching and administrative experience ranges from twenty to thirty-plus years in the K-12 school system. The central office leaders all characterize their professional careers as a progression of appointments from school teacher to school administrator to central office programming, human resources or executive roles. They say they were encouraged by others to become leaders. Dr. Shade says she found herself in a position where she "was approached more and more by [her] administration to take the lead on things" which resulted in career changes. Dr. Shade and SEO Beam both comment that

they did not aspire to occupy their current jobs and were reluctant to leave behind their classroom teaching and school administrator jobs, but are nonetheless pleased they did. Dr. Shade observes that she “never thought [she] would be in [her] position” while SEO Beam offers that at first she “resisted [but then agreed to] try it on a short term basis” which resulted in a long term commitment.

Families of schools. The Prism School District divides its school system into clusters, or subsystems called families of schools (Sheppard et al., 2009). The Beam and the Light families in the Prism District include primary and elementary schools located in urban settings. SEO Beam is the central office leader with dedicated responsibilities for the Beam family of schools, while SEO Light works with the Light family of schools. Four schools from the Light family of schools and four schools from the Beam family took part in the multi-case study.

Schools in the Prism School District each produce an annual report. The report is a public document, submitted to the district and published in print and online. The document contains an overview of each school’s development plan and an update on the school’s progress towards achieving its goals. The reports also contain contextual information about the school’s student achievement, demographics, partnerships, and projects.

The Beam family of schools. The Beam family of schools includes ten primary and elementary schools located in urban settings. I enlisted the participation of four schools in the Beam family: Teal Stone School, Silver Wing Elementary, Bronze Ville School, and Apricot Dale Academy. Student populations range in number from

approximately 300 at Bronze Ville School to more than 500 children at Silver Wing Elementary. Apricot Dale Academy and Teal Stone School accommodate approximately 400 students each. Educational staffs, including teachers and administrators number from 25 to 55 from one school to another.

The Beam family annual school reports. The four schools in the Beam family all aim to improve student achievement in a safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. The school reports describe plans to support and integrate the use of technology into teaching and learning. Apricot Dale Academy and Silver Wing Elementary emphasize the importance of improving assessment practices. Apricot Dale Academy also targets improving language arts and mathematics achievement. Bronze Ville School envisions bettering achievement in the whole curriculum. Silver Wing Elementary highlights differentiated learning and social justice in its plan, while Teal Stone School underlines the importance of student and teacher wellness.

Student achievement in external testing varies across the four participating schools and subject areas in the Beam family. Apricot Dale Academy's scores match or exceed most provincial benchmarks in language arts and mathematics testing at grades 1, 2, 3 and 6. Teal Stone School is above average in grade 1 reading, and in most areas of grade 3 language arts and mathematics, and surpasses the provincial average in grade 6 mathematics, but is below average in grade 6 language arts. Silver Wing Elementary shows above average achievement in grade 2 reading but registers mixed results in other grades in language arts and mathematics, with below average scores in most testing areas. Bronze Ville School, which does not house grade 6 students, reports below average

scores in all external testing except in grade 2 reading where results exceed provincial averages.

The Beam family schools describe partnerships with governments, post-secondary institutions, community organizations, charitable groups, and businesses that support school projects related to learning, the arts, health, fitness, social justice, environmental stewardship, entrepreneurship and citizenship. Bronze Ville School and Silver Wing Elementary are particularly proud of their ‘peaceful school’ efforts. Teal Stone School’s report describes how the school’s corporate partnerships help support the breakfast program, the new playground, and literacy projects. Apricot Dale Academy makes note of the close partnership of the school with their municipality with whom they share facilities and resources.

Interviews with the principals of the Beam family schools. The principals in the four Beam family schools all began their careers as teachers of mainly primary and elementary aged children; they progressed to being assistant principals and then onto being principals. All principals hold at least one masters’ degree in education. And one principal has a more advanced degree. Three of the principals possess additional qualifications in special education.

Apricot Dale Academy’s Mr. Pitt, a very experienced administrator attributes his growth as a leader to his reputation as a “go to person”. Bronze Ville School’s Ms. Rock, in her fifth year as a principal, says it was a matter of circumstance: a combination of an administrator’s retirement and the insistence of colleagues to pursue the job. Ms. Flight, the veteran principal of Silver Wing Elementary, views her qualifications and background

as the deciding factors in her career advancement. Teal Stone School's Mr. Lake, with more than ten years of experience as a school administrator, says he was inspired by the capable school leaders he met during his career.

The Beam family principals comment in their interviews on the students in their schools. The principals of Apricot Dale Academy, Silver Wing Elementary, and Bronze Ville School consider their students to be mostly middle class children. Mr. Pitt from Apricot Dale Academy observes that his students display "a middle class culture [not] higher class culture [and not] socio-economic challenged culture." Yet, two of the so named middle class schools, Bronze Ville and Silver Wing, still offer a free breakfast program for their students. In contrast, Teal Stone School's Mr. Lake says his school represents an eclectic mix of students from varied socio-economic backgrounds, with more than one third of the population living at or near the poverty line. Teal Stone School offers both a free breakfast program and a free lunch program to students to help address poverty issues.

The Beam family teachers' surveys. Teachers from all the four schools in the Beam family completed *The School Climate Index and Organizational Citizenship Survey* (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2006). The participation rate varied from school to school from 78% of teachers at Bronze Ville School to 64% at Silver Wing Elementary, 50% of Teal Stone School and 39% of teachers at Apricot Dale Academy. All four schools scored at or above average on measures of collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic press, community engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour. Teal Stone School scored average

in all areas except community engagement where it was above average. Silver Wing Elementary was average in all domains and above average in community engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour. Apricot Dale Academy was average in collegial leadership but above average in all other areas. Bronze Ville School scored above average in every category, above average in community engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour, and at above average in collegial leadership and teacher professionalism.

The Light family of schools. The Light family of schools includes six schools at the primary and elementary level in an urban area. The four participating schools are Red Tree Elementary, with a student population of less than 300, and Yellow Grove School, Blue Bell Academy, and Purple Heather with student enrolments of around 400 students each. The professional staffs range in size from about fifteen to thirty-five.

The Light family annual school reports. The annual school reports of the participating Light Family schools reveal many common goals. All four schools seek to improve teaching, learning and assessment through differentiated teaching, and the use of twenty-first century learning tools and practices. All schools promote socially just, inclusive learning in a positive, safe and respectful environment. The goals of Red Tree Elementary also emphasize the importance of physical wellness and appropriate student behaviour. Purple Heather School's goals include improving communication and collaboration among all stakeholders in its school community. Yellow Grove School accentuates the importance of fostering leadership throughout the school and the school system. Bluebell Academy highlights the importance of improving collaborative learning

practices. The four Light family of schools' principals all underline the importance of collaboration, participation, and shared leadership in their school communities.

Student achievement in external provincial assessments varies among the four schools in the Light family. According to the annual reports Blue Bell Academy surpasses the provincial average scores in grade 3 and grade 6 language arts and mathematics, matches the provincial average in grade 2 reading but is below average in grade 1 reading. Yellow Grove School records above average ratings in grade 3 language arts and mathematics, and in grade 6 language arts, but scores below the provincial average in grades 1 and 2 reading and in grade 6 mathematics. Purple Heather and Red Tree schools register below provincial average ratings in most aspects of language arts and mathematics in provincially administered tests in grades 1, 2, 3 and 6.

All four schools in the Light family describe in their reports projects and partnerships with external groups such as government agencies, foundations, charitable associations and corporate donors. The schools' shared initiatives include drug and alcohol awareness programs, student art projects, mentorship opportunities, free breakfast and lunch clubs, fitness and sporting events, recycling, student leadership, and outreach to the community. Blue Bell Academy also reports on direct corporate financing for its school playground and recreational activities.

Interviews with the principals of the Light family schools. The interviews with SEO Light and the principals of the four participating schools in the Light family offer insight into their backgrounds and their paths to leadership. All the principals of the Light family schools began their careers as primary or elementary teachers prior to assuming

administrative positions. All principals hold at least one degree at the Masters level. Mr. Ring of Blue Bell Academy, has more than ten years' experience as a school administrator, and says he always wanted to be a teacher and that his leadership journey began when he was asked by the school district to fill in for an administrator. Ms. Moss of Purple Heather Elementary, a principal for less than five years, says she was inspired by her own former school administrator whose example ignited in her an interest in leadership. Ms. Star, the veteran principal of Yellow Grove School explains that she was older than her peers when she started teaching and that this maturity contributed to her attaining a principal's job early in her career. Mr. Apple, a near novice principal of Red Tree Elementary, describes his path to leadership as a gradual progression from being a teacher in different school boards, to becoming a vice principal, and then principal.

Three of the principals from the Light family also make observations about the composition of their student bodies. Mr. Apple of Red Tree Elementary and Ms. Moss from Purple Heather School, whose annual school reports show below provincial average scores on external testing, say that their schools serve students from socially and economically challenged communities. Ms. Star from Yellow Grove School describes her students as sharing a diverse mix of backgrounds representing "all levels of [the] social ladder."

The Light family of schools' teacher surveys. Three of the four Light family schools, Yellow Grove School, Bluebell Academy and Purple Heather Elementary, agreed to participate in the voluntary anonymous survey, *The School Climate Index and Organizational Citizenship Survey* (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-

Moran et al., 2006). Red Tree Elementary chose not to join in the survey because of the lateness in the school year and the workload of its teachers. The response rate of teachers completing surveys varied from 80% of teachers at Blue Bell Academy, to 65% of teachers at Yellow Grove School, to a low of 20% of teachers at Purple Heather Elementary. Blue Bell Academy rated themselves as above average in community engagement, and average in collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic press, and organizational citizenship behaviour. Yellow Grove School scored their school as above average on teacher professionalism, community engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour, and average on collegial leadership and academic press. Purple Heather School teachers appraised themselves as above average in all categories. Overall, the three participating schools scored as average or above average on community engagement, collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic press, and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Time of Study

I gathered the data for this research during the spring and summer of 2013 at a time when the provincial government had just announced a major reconfiguration of school boards and a complete reorganization of the school system for the following year. The participants in this study did not know specifically how the changes would affect them or their positions.

In the year following the data collection, the central office leaders were the ones most affected by the systemic changes. Of the five participating central office leaders, one took a planned retirement, two opted for unplanned retirements, and two assumed

different leadership roles at the reconfigured central office. None of the participating central office leaders stayed as designated leaders of families of schools. In comparison, the organizational impact on principals was minimal. Seven of the eight principals continued in the same roles in the same schools in the following year while one principal took a planned retirement. The configuration of the families of schools did not remain intact in the new larger school system.

Chapter 5

Results

In this chapter I present my findings on boundary spanning leadership as perceived and experienced by thirteen professional educational leaders within one school system, the Prism School District. As previously noted, the Prism School District organizes its schools in clusters or families of six to fourteen schools based on common characteristics such as location, programming, and demographics (Parker & Lafleur, 2004; Shortall et al, 2007). I gathered data from five central office leaders and eight school principals. I explored the interactions of central office leaders with one another, with their families of schools, and with principals. I probed the interactions of principals with central office leaders, with members of their own family of schools, and with other principals in general. Of the five central officer leaders, three leaders performed district-wide responsibilities, while two leaders focussed specifically on designated families of schools. Senior Education Officer Beam worked with the Beam Family of schools while Senior Education Officer Light worked with the Light family of schools. Of the eight participating principals, four belonged to the Beam family of schools, while the other four principals were part of the Light Family.

As described in chapter three, I employed a multi-case study approach: casting the school system as the overarching case, and treating the central office, the families of schools and the member schools as sub-cases (Stake, 2006). I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews (Fraenkel, & Wallen, 2006) with five central office leaders and eight school principals from two families of schools within the Prism School District. To

attain contextual information about the Prism District and the schools, I examined the current annual report of the school district and the eight annual reports of the participating schools. The reports contained descriptions of the district and schools and their communities, evidence of the plans and goals of each site, data on student achievement, and updates on their initiatives and partnerships. To gain insight into the school climate and teacher professionalism of the participating schools I administered a survey to teachers who agreed to participate, the *School Climate and Organizational Citizenship Index* (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2006). I used the reports and the surveys to provide background information about the overarching case of the school district, and the sub-cases, the participating schools. I relied on the content of the individual interviews with central office leaders and principals to respond to the following research questions:

1. How do central office leaders in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
2. How do school principals in families of schools in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
3. How does boundary spanning leadership help distribute leadership in a school system?
4. How does boundary spanning leadership help transform schools and support innovation in a school system?

As previously described in the first chapter, all interviewees responded to the same interview protocol of seventeen open-ended questions. The interviews lasted one

hour on average. I audio-recorded and I later transcribed the sessions. As a member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sandelowski, 2008), I sent each participant a copy of the transcription of the interview to elicit feedback and to ensure that each of them was satisfied with the content of the transcription. I used the participants' responses to make corrections and adjustments to the interview data.

I interviewed two executive leaders, Dr. Hugh, and Dr. Shade and three senior education officers, SEO Beam, SEO Light, and SEO Ray. In the Prism District, the executive leaders exercise line authority over both the central office senior education officers and the school principals. The senior education officers, in collaboration with the central office executive officers, oversee school principals. SEO Ray manages an area of programming for all schools in the district. SEO Beam and SEO Light, in addition to their district-level duties, oversee and liaise with a designated cluster or family of schools that range in size from six to fourteen schools per family.

I then utilized the QSR's software package NVivo 10 to record, and organize the responses of the participants. I manually developed themes based on the responses. Using the pseudonym, the Prism District, I organized the research sample under the headings of central office and families of schools. I further divided the central office heading into two sub-headings: executive leaders and senior education officers.

The next level of analysis, beyond the district central office, were the Beam family and the Light family of schools. Principals from four schools of each family participated in the study. The schools became sub cases of each family group. The Beam family of schools was composed of Apricot Dale Academy, Teal Stone School, Silver

Wing School, and Bronze Ville Elementary. The schools of the Light family consisted of Red Tree Elementary, Blue Bell Academy, Yellow Grove School, and Purple Heather Elementary (See Table 7).

I used the items from the interview protocol to organize the responses of the participants. I coded and re-coded their answers (Charmaz, 2004; Lockyer, 2004) to identify commonalities and differences among the perspectives of the central office leaders and the principals of the families of schools. In the following section I relate the findings to the research questions.

Table 7 *The Prism School District*

	<i>The Prism School District</i>								
Central Office Executive Leaders	Dr. Hugh Dr. Shade								
Central Office Senior Education Officers	SEO Beam <i>Beam Family of Schools</i>				SEO Light <i>Light Family of Schools</i>			SEO Ray <i>District-Wide</i>	
Schools	<i>Apricot Dale</i>	<i>Teal Stone</i>	<i>Silver Wing</i>	<i>Bronze Ville</i>	<i>Red Tree</i>	<i>Blue Bell</i>	<i>Yellow Grove</i>	<i>Purple Heather</i>	<i>Programming All Schools</i>
Principals	Mr. Pitt	Mr. Lake	Ms. Flight	Ms. Rock	Mr. Apple	Mr. Ring	Ms. Star	Ms. Moss	All principals

Note. Tables 6 and 7 are repeated in chapters 4 and 5 to help the reader identify the roles, settings, and functions of the various participants in the study.

Research Question One

The first research question is: How do central office leaders in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership? To answer this query, I examine the interview responses of the central office leaders, whom I subdivide into executive leaders and

senior education officers (see Table 8). Boundary spanning leaders in order to cross or span boundaries must interact across settings, roles and functions where they encounter multiple types of boundaries and engage in a range of boundary spanning leadership practices. Hence, I organize the interview responses of the central office leaders to fit within one of three categories: 1) boundary spanning interactions, 2) types of boundaries, and 3) boundary-spanning leadership practices. The three categories of boundary spanning leadership practices reflect the evolution of relevant research on leaders who interact across differences and divides with individuals and groups.

In their interactions, boundary spanning leaders confront structural and social barriers (Adams, 1976; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Aldrick & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981), that affect how they share information and administer the work of different parts of the organization (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Hogg, van Kappenberg, & Rast III, 2012; Steele, 2010). Through their interactions, boundary spanning leaders attempt to establish contacts, develop relationships, build understandings, inspire trust, and improve systems (Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009).

Central office leaders experience many types of boundaries as leaders in the school system. The five leaders comment on how different kinds of boundaries affect their work. As boundary spanning leaders, central office leaders talk about how they find ways to recognize, value and navigate differences such as personalities, formal designations, structures, identities, functions, demographics, social and cultural expectations, politics and geographic distances (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Martins

et al., 2004). Boundaries present as frontiers of interaction and integration where individuals and groups meet, manage dissimilarities, build connections, and work together; or as barriers that impede change and stymie innovation (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2013).

The third category is boundary-spanning leadership practices. I focus on four sub-categories of practices inspired by the relevant literature: *administering*, *making meaning*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming* (Adams, 1976; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Aldrick & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Cross et al., 2013; Cullen, Palus, Chrobot-Mason, & Appaneal, 2012; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Harvey, Peterson & Anand, 2014; Kislov, 2014; Marrone, 2010; Power, 1973; Riley, 2014; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981; Williams, 2011; 2013). Under the boundary-spanning category of *administering* practices, I include management, planning, organizing, buffering, resourcing, and monitoring activities. Under *making meaning* practices, I examine communication, interpretation, and the exchange of skills, knowledge and experiences. For *creating conditions*, I consider how participants develop relationships, generate trust, respect diverse identities, forge commitment, honour differences, and foster a culture of belonging. In the fourth category, *transforming*, I search for boundary spanning leadership practices that support risk-taking, demonstrate creativity, inspire growth, and generate innovation and systemic change.

Table 8 *Boundary Spanning Leadership Interactions, Types and Practices*

	Boundary Spanning Interactions	Types of Boundaries	Boundary Spanning Leadership Practices
Central Office Executive Leaders	Interact with groups and individuals across structural and social divides. Share information.	Hierarchical Organizational Personal Professional	Administering Making meaning Creating conditions Transforming
Central Office Senior Education Officers	Link work within and across organizations. Develop relationships. Build understanding. Inspire trust. Build networks.	Ideological Geographic Cultural Political and policy	

Note. This table summarizes the kinds of boundary spanning interactions, types of boundaries, and boundary spanning leadership practices that central office leaders report they encounter in their work.

Boundary Spanning Leadership

Central office leaders' boundary spanning interactions. I asked five *central office leaders* in the Prism District to describe their boundary spanning interactions with other central office leaders, with school principals, with teachers, and other members of the educational community. Of the five central office leaders, two participants, Dr. Hugh and Dr. Shade, are executive leaders with line authority over central office staff, school leadership and school personnel. The other three leaders work as senior education officers, SEO Ray, SEO Light, and SEO Beam, who interact with the central office

personnel as well as with the leadership of the schools in the school system. SEO Ray carries out programming duties district-wide with all schools. SEO Light and SEO Beam indicate they work on behalf of the Prism District with designated families (groups) of schools: The Light family of schools and the Beam family of schools respectively. All the leaders report that they engage in many different kinds of boundary spanning interactions in the course of their work.

The two executive leaders and boundary spanning interactions. The two executive leaders of the Prism District, Dr. Shade, and Dr. Hugh, interact mainly with other central office leaders. Dr. Shade offers that, “percentage wise [she spends] two thirds of her time with central office personnel and the other third [with] school principals and teachers and others.” Both executive leaders describe their interactions at central office as collaborative whether at regular weekly scheduled meetings or during informal consultations and conversations. Dr. Hugh observes that his interactions extend beyond his own designated area to include discussions “on a regular basis on issues not specific to [his] division”. Hugh describes how his particular background, education and experience, often affect deliberations on resources, policy, programming and planning and comments that it is the “diversity around the table that [brings] the best possible solutions to be explored.” Both executive leaders say they work regularly, both formally and informally, with the central office senior education officers responsible for the families of schools. Dr. Hugh says they work “very closely together.”

The executive leaders describe their rapport with principals as being influenced by the relationships they have cultivated with them over time. Dr. Hugh feels that

principals provide a variety of perspectives and that it is “important to value and acknowledge diversity [in order to have] productive interactions.” The two executive leaders, however, characterize their current contact with principals as largely indirect mediated by senior education officers who interact more frequently and directly with principals in their designated families of schools. Dr. Shade comments that she does not “want to avoid the principals [and loves] the direct dealing with principals but [that she believes] strongly in the chain of leadership authority.” Dealings with teachers for executive leaders are also indirect, filtered through other central office leaders and principals. Dr. Hugh describes his direct interactions with teachers as “minimal”, and confined to events such as professional development days and visits to schools.

Both executive leaders add that besides colleagues, principals and teachers, they interact closely with the provincial department of education. Dr. Hugh describes “daily contact with the department [of education] on whatever [is] happening [and says not a] day [goes] by [without] some level of contact with [them].” Dr. Hugh and Dr. Shade also dialogue with school trustees, school councils, universities and community agencies. Dr. Shade says part of her job is to “reach out to all [she is] responsible for working with.” In summary, the two executive leaders at central office characterize their interactions with central office leaders as frequent and direct; their dealings with principals and teachers as infrequent and indirect; and their communications with other educational agencies as sometimes frequent and sometimes direct.

The three senior education officers and boundary spanning interactions. I

asked the three remaining central officer leaders, the senior education officers, to describe

their regular interactions with central office staff, principals, teachers and the broader community. SEO Ray carries out district-wide programming responsibilities that affect central office personnel, and all school teaching staffs. SEO Light focusses his attentions on the Light family of schools and SEO Beam looks after the Beam family of schools.

SEO Ray describes his dealings with other central office staff as being part of a team. He feels that the “the team [counts on him] to keep them informed [about] initiatives [they are] undertaking.” He calls his work with principals “multi-faceted [with] layers” of intermediaries such as program specialists, itinerant teachers and specialists acting on his behalf as go-betweens in the implementation of provincially approved “policies, procedures, [and] protocols”. His contact with school principals is typically indirect and achieved through itinerant personnel who help span the boundaries between the central office and the schools to address local issues. SEO Ray’s direct involvement with principals occurs rarely and usually in crisis situations. He says he seldom works directly with teachers, and sees them only if they come to the central office or attend a school meeting. SEO Ray participates in the province’s department of education initiatives and sees himself as a “liaison for the district.” Ray says he interacts on behalf of the central office with individuals and community agencies.

SEO Beam, the senior education officer responsible for the Beam family of schools, describes her work as on the “front lines” involved in continuous interactions with peers at central office, executive officers, programming and human resources administrators, as well as with school principals and teachers. Beam tries “to plan what [to do for] the bigger issues, the school development, [and] to be able to look at academic

achievement and initiatives”. She sees herself as “the first contact for the school [to deal] directly with an issue [or to direct] them to where they [need] to go.” SEO Beam engages in widespread collaboration and consultation within the central office to garner advice to share with her schools to help solve problems. She observes that “a lot of interaction [goes] on.” SEO Beam says that while most of her contacts are with central office colleagues, she communicates regularly with principals through emails, phone calls and site visits. She says that much of her work is “with school principals.” SEO Beam convenes four formal meetings per year with the principals and assistant principals of the Beam family of schools often in partnership with other families of schools. Beam says that within her family she observes a great deal “of interactivity [such as] problem-solving [to share] collective wisdom.” She works closely and directly with the school staffs in the Beam family to develop and execute their multi-year school development plans, “throughout the entire school development process.” SEO Beam points out that the intensity of the collaboration is “cyclical” resulting in down years for some schools depending on where they are in the school development planning cycle. She describes her direct interactions with teachers as infrequent and often limited to the teachers who work on the school development teams. SEO Beam’s job also involves parents and community agencies. SEO Beam exercises boundary spanning leadership between the central office and her family of schools. Beam indicates that she facilitates interaction among her family’s schools, spanning the boundaries between sites and staffs.

SEO Light reports that he regularly interacts with his central office colleagues both formally and informally. Informally, central office colleagues meet “every morning

for coffee [to] set a plan for the day and [exchange] ideas for the week [to work] together as a team [and discuss] challenges, successes and moving forward.” Formal meetings happen monthly with executive and other divisions. Similar to SEO Beam, SEO Light regularly works with central office leaders. But he is also in contact with one or more of the principals in his family of schools on a daily basis. Light comments that in addition to the four formal families of schools’ meetings, he interacts with principals to offer support as they “work through” problems. He values the “informality and the informal structures and relationships and interactions that [he has] set up particularly in [his own] family of schools.” SEO Light observes that direct contact with teachers is limited to professional development days, staffing, and as part of succession planning for leaders. He also interacts with post-secondary institutions, community agencies and parents. SEO Light engages in boundary spanning leadership between central office and the Light family schools, between the central office and parents, and between the central office and external agencies.

In summary, the central office leaders, (executives and senior education officers), interact often and directly with colleagues and staff at central office. The executive leaders, Dr. Shade and Dr. Hugh, also make regular direct contact with provincial educational leaders, board trustees, and community agencies. Dr. Shade and Dr. Hugh have few direct dealings with principals and teachers in the schools in the Prism District. The senior education officer, SEO Ray interacts with leaders at the central office and relies on itinerant staff to deal directly with schools. Ray dialogues also with provincial authorities and with community agencies. The senior education officers, SEO Light and

SEO Beam, span the boundaries between the central office and the schools to interact directly with the principals of their families of schools to relay information, solve problems, monitor progress, and plan for the future. They schedule regular meetings, visit face to face, and exchange emails, texts and phone calls with the principals in their designated families. But similar to the executive leaders and SEO Ray, the family of schools' senior education officers have little direct contact with teachers and depend on principals to play a boundary spanning leadership role between central office leaders and school staffs.

Types of boundaries. I asked the five *central office leaders*, the two executive leaders and the three senior education officers to comment on the types of boundaries they encounter in their work. The leaders agreed that hierarchical, professional, personal, ideological, organizational, cultural, geographical, political, and policy boundaries affect their interactions with colleagues and constituents in the school system.

Hierarchical boundaries. The two executive leaders and the three senior education officers recognize the challenges of working across different types of boundaries. They feel that *hierarchical* boundaries help define their positions within the organization. Dr. Shade and Dr. Hugh serve as part of the executive branch of the school district. They interact regularly with the school board trustees, engage in district-wide planning and decision-making and exercise line authority over central office and school personnel.

The central office senior education officers work at a tier below that of the executive leaders and participate in regular central office level meetings. Their functions

vary depending on their assigned responsibilities. SEO Ray oversees a segment of programming district-wide. He also provides leadership for itinerant professionals headquartered at central office, but has little direct contact with schools. SEO Light and SEO Beam, in addition to their central office responsibilities, liaise regularly with the schools in their designated families of schools, and provide leadership for the development, implementation, and evaluation of school development plans. They work closely with principals and serve as conduits for the reciprocal exchange of information between the central office and schools. While in practice, the senior education officers provide direction to school principals and teachers, they do so under the guidance of the executive leaders.

Hierarchical boundaries affect how central office leaders interact with one another and with school principals. Dr. Shade, the executive leader observes that regardless of formally designated roles, her interactions with colleagues and constituents require respectful discourse. Shade believes that, “it [does not] matter what station in life [you are] on or what rung of the ladder [in] the hierarchy, [a leader should show] politeness and correctness.” Both the executive leaders and the three senior education officers believe they have to ensure that hierarchical designations do not inhibit honest dialogue with each other, with principals or with the public. The leaders all say they welcome input and value divergent opinions. Likewise, when colleagues or principals seek their advice, the central office leaders aim to be forthright and give what Dr. Shade calls their “real opinion [because] the last thing [need is] group think, because [in] very complex situations multiple perspectives [inform better] decision-making.”

SEO Ray, the district-wide senior education officer recognizes that formal roles pose difficulties because of “the varied personalities and [perceptions of the role of the] senior education officer.” Ray points out that as senior education officers, they are not “the bosses of principals, [that they operate] alongside of them and [are] there to support them.” The central office leaders, executives and senior education officers, recognize it is important to span hierarchical boundaries, whether vertical and horizontal, in order to work effectively with colleagues and constituents (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harvey et al., 2014).

Professional boundaries. Professional boundaries are important for central office leaders. Dr. Shade feels she is “held to a very high standard in [her] role [for] something as simple as attire.” Dr. Hugh opines that differences in viewpoints about teaching and learning, and various educational experiences, affect discussions about plans and programming and sometimes lead to professional disagreements among central office staff. He observes that among his colleagues are “people [with whom he chats] about things [and] other people [with whom he does not] share things.”

SEO Beam finds it demanding to manage requests from principals that are outside her professional responsibilities saying, “there [are] those [who call] about things [that are not] part of what [she does] [but she refers them] onto [who is] responsible for it.” SEO Light reflects on the range of boundaries he experiences in his professional role and says there are “many different boundaries [to] encounter in the course of interactions with school principals, teachers, board personnel, [and] outside agencies.” Light finds guidance in the district’s “strategic plan [that focusses on] teaching and learning, and

supporting teaching and learning, so in all [his] interactions [he is] a member of [the] team that's supporting that in [the] district." All central office leaders acknowledge the importance of professional identity as an important part of boundary spanning leadership (Williams, 2011) in their interactions with each other, with school leaders, and the public.

Personal boundaries. Personal boundaries affect how central office leaders navigate the divide between personal relationships and professional responsibilities. Dr. Hugh, one of the executive leaders, pays close attention to boundaries when he speaks to colleagues even though he may know them well. Hugh comments that he could "interact with [someone] every day, [and something] could be said [in] good natured humour, but those same words said by somebody [at a] different level of accountability could be interpreted in a much different way."

Dr. Shade feels it is important to maintain personal "credibility" with associates and staff, to counter perceptions among colleagues and principals that she has been out of the classroom too long and has forgotten about the realities of day to day schooling. SEO Ray, the district wide senior education officer, raises the problem of "personal boundary issues when people [know him] personally as well as professionally." He becomes uncomfortable when friends try to leverage their personal relationship with him to influence district level decisions, on matters such as resource allocation.

SEO Beam points to the importance of "balance" in defining personal and professional boundaries. SEO Light believes it is wrong to suppress your personal authentic self and observes that "people still [need] a smile [and a] strong element of caring and that [solves] a lot of problems." The experiences of the central office leaders

corroborate research that connects personal boundaries to professional actions (Balogun, 2003).

Ideological boundaries. Ideological differences are also important boundaries for the central office leaders. Dr. Hugh comments that he may “have ideological views, political views even that [are] part of [him]. But to overtly display those, particularly if [they are] in conflict with the organization, then [he] just [does not] go there.” All central office leaders concur that while educators love to debate the nature of the learner and what should be learned, they have to find common ground in order to proceed. The central office leaders acknowledge that their decisions are directly influenced by the dictates of their formal leadership in the province’s department of education. But they also note that external agencies in the broader community lobby educational leaders to incorporate their agendas into the policies, practices, and programming of the school system. Entities such as post-secondary institutions, think tanks, non-profit organizations, and service clubs champion products, positions, processes, and notions of teaching and learning not always in sync with the official curriculum. SEO Light believes that external agencies should not be ignored and that school system leaders need to address the “twenty-first century learner piece, [and] [to enable] students to be global, economic citizens,” and that educational leaders and external groups need “to be able to sit at the same table together [and this is a] boundary [they should do] more work on.” For SEO Light, the dialogue with external agencies crosses both ideological and organizational boundaries. Central office leaders search to find ways to hear, consider, and manage the

requests of external stakeholders (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011) while honoring their defined commitment to public education.

Organizational boundaries. Similar to hierarchical boundaries, organizational boundaries allow central office leaders to delimit their responsibilities and permit them to respond reasonably to the demands of the school system. But as much as they value the defined parameters of their positions, the leaders agree that circumstances often demand more fluid interpretations of their jobs, so they can work with other divisions within the district such as finance and maintenance. The central office leaders recognize that organizational boundaries affect how they interact with principals and teachers in schools. They agree that in their interactions they must demonstrate respect for the expertise and authority of principals and teachers and not be perceived as taking over their jobs.

SEO Light believes that his experiences have helped him span organizational barriers and that he's "been around long enough to work [his] way around the system." SEO Light's comments support Miller's (2008) observation that boundary spanning leaders are adept at working through and around organizational boundaries.

Geographical boundaries. According to the central office leaders, *geographical* boundaries become most important when a significant reorganization of the school system takes place. Martins et al. (2004) note that geographical and locational boundaries affect the work of organizations. The central office leaders recall that the last time the provincial authorities reconfigured school districts, a new district subsumed several smaller jurisdictions under a new larger authority. This realignment meant repositioning

central and regional offices and reassigning many new schools and communities to the new board. Central office leaders confronted the realities of longer distances between sites, a new mix of urban and rural settings, and an increased variety of school structures. Dr. Shade explains how the organizational change resulted in the creation of a “big district [with] geographical considerations [that affected the] timeline, the things [they did and needed] to be cognizant of.” With the creation of the new district, being physically present at schools for routine visits or to help solve local problems became more complicated for central office leaders. Yet, SEO Light celebrates the diversity of the new school system and says, he has “beautiful miles [on his car] because [he has] been able to visit many schools and to go to many different places.”

Cultural boundaries. The central office leaders interpret the question on *cultural* boundaries in different ways. Some leaders talk about the increasingly diverse socio-cultural make-up of the district. SEO Light observes that “culturally [the district must] to be able to work with people coming from different countries and cultures. Other leaders interpret culture as the operational culture of the school system. Some central office leaders say they work to foster effective relationships among diverse groups, such as between rural and urban communities. Dr. Hugh says he pays attention to “the history that people [bring] and the cultures that they [worked] in; what they [stand] to gain and what they [stand] to lose.” Other central office leaders underline the importance of recognizing the unique cultural identities of individual schools. SEO Beam comments on the cultural identity of the central office and says that senior management exerts a powerful influence on the school system’s working culture. The central office leaders say

that leading across the cultural boundaries within the school system means adapting to different settings and different needs. Cultural boundaries encompass the working routines of formal leaders and teachers, and also include the socio-economic realities of the school system's parents and students. Akkerman and Bakker (2011) note that "in response to challenges of facing boundaries, education scholars have become interested the ways in which continuity in action, or interaction is established despite sociocultural differences" (p. 133). Central office leaders describe the school system as ever evolving, characterized by constant change and renewal in the face of ever increasing cultural diversity in the communities they serve.

Political and policy boundaries. Central office leaders' encounter political and policy boundaries at work. Despite the overall positive tone of the interviews, an undertone of caution appears when it comes to discussing political influence on the work of the school system. Dr. Hugh says it is "so political [and he has] to be so careful." In fact, all central office leaders express disquiet about the increased demands from the public to involve elected politicians more directly in routine school district decisions. But, SEO Light suggests that, "people when [they struggle] with something always want to go right to the top and they don't realize there are structures and processes, [and you could] get lost in the politics."

Dr. Shade acknowledges that the school system policies are open to influence from the government and the public. Dr. Hugh observes that the "boundaries of district, government, trustees, [and] interest groups [and] political boundaries [are sometimes] constricting and often [do] not support productive decision-making." SEO Ray says that

the implementation of policies in schools is frequently flawed because of the multiple layers of interpretation that result in practices that are “way outside policy” and inconsistent with district intentions.

In summary, the central office leaders (the two executive leaders and three senior education officers) encounter multiple types of boundaries within the central office, across the school system, and in the broader educational community. The leaders recognize that hierarchical, professional, personal, ideological, organizational, cultural, geographical, political, and policy boundaries affect their interactions with colleagues and constituents. They report that they collaborate with each other and with principals to exercise direct and indirect boundary spanning leadership across the school system.

Boundary spanning leadership practices. I asked the five *central office leaders* to talk about their boundary spanning leadership practices within the central office, in the school system, and with the public. The leaders’ responses indicate that more than a third of their interactions occur during scheduled and unscheduled meetings. About one quarter of their encounters deal with the professional growth of professional staff, and another quarter of their exchanges focus on district and school development. Less than a fifth of their reported interactions address leadership capacity growth and implementing directives in the school system.

Consistent with the literature on boundary spanning leadership (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981; Williams, 2011), the central office leaders’ boundary spanning leadership practices can be sorted into four categories:

making meaning, administering, creating conditions, and transforming. This four pronged conceptualization of boundary spanning leadership has evolved over time. Aldrich and Herker (1977) describe boundary spanners as members of organizations who share and manage information, administer the exchange of data it moves from one group to another to help inform the decisions of the organization. Tushman and Scanlan (1981) observe that boundary spanners also interpret information to clarify its meaning from one context to another. In addition to the *meaning making* functions, Ancona and Caldwell (1992) conceptualize boundary spanners as ambassadors and task-coordinators who *administer* initiatives, encourage interdependence among groups, and manage projects. *Making meaning* and *administering* across boundaries appear as two clear leadership functions of boundary spanners. A third leadership practice of boundary spanning leaders that emerges is *creating conditions* that facilitate sharing knowledge, and support administering interactions (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Hogg, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Robertson, 2009). Boundary spanning leaders *create conditions* when they nurture trust, sow commitment, honour diversity and foster productive relationships across roles, functions, and contexts (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Hogg, van Kippenberg, & Rast III, 2012). In addition to *making meaning, administering, and creating conditions*, boundary spanning leaders are well positioned to *transform* organizational practices through their knowledge, skills and understanding of group interactions (Marrone, 2010); their adaptability and capacity to respond to multiple demands (Williams, 2011); and their creativity and risk-taking to promote innovation (Akkerman & Bakker, 201; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason). The following section looks at how the five central office leaders in the

Prism School District practice boundary spanning leadership consistent with the categories of *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions* and *transforming* policies, processes, and events.

Making meaning. The responses of the central office leaders demonstrate that they participate regularly in boundary spanning *making meaning* leadership practices within the Prism school system. *Making meaning* includes communicating, sharing, interpreting and generating information, skills and knowledge. The two executives and the three senior education officers either directly or indirectly, exchange, produce and interpret data with each other within their office, with provincial leaders, with the principals of the school system, and with the public. Central office leaders speak of how they conduct research, dialogue with constituents, develop policies, analyze feedback from principals and teachers, and help solve school system problems. SEO Ray, the district wide senior education officer receives and relays to the district “a lot of directions and initiatives from the department of education.” The central office leaders keep abreast of new teaching and learning innovations, listen to suggestions from the public, and explore new teaching and learning initiatives that help them span the boundaries within the school system and the broader community.

Central office leaders support professional development within the school district and encourage central office personnel, school administrators, and teachers to work across boundaries to improve their skills, conduct research, and gather and exchange information and practices. As well, central office leaders develop their own professional growth plans. Dr. Hugh comments that he uses technology to “share and discuss with

others [his professional growth plan] on an on-going basis.” Dr. Shade characterizes her role in professional development as indirect, as “overseeing the planning and implementation at the district level”; helping the senior education officers work with principals to lead improvement efforts in teaching and learning. Dr. Hugh recalls how on occasion he works directly with the senior education officers on special projects such as the creation of parent-school support groups. He says that “working with senior education officers and sharing what they think [allows him to] lead [the project] at the administrative level [of the central office].” Senior education officers responsible for families of schools say they interact fairly often and directly with school principals to convey and interpret messages to and from central office. School principals in turn show boundary spanning leadership when they work directly with teachers.

The central office leaders identify the professional growth plans of formal leaders and teachers as bridges to lead across boundaries to respond to the requirements for information and the exchange of skills within the school system. Each plan contains individual goals, strategies and timelines that align with district and school development plans. Central office leaders and principals use the professional growth plans to assess the needs of the schools and the district, and to make decisions about school, family of schools, and district professional development initiatives. SEO Beam describes the process as a way to set the “professional development calendar for the district.”

The family specific senior education officers, SEO Beam and SEO Light, however, comment that they also promote professional development informally through their interactions with the principals in their families. The family senior education

officers sometimes connect schools with one another, and share information between principals about innovations, expertise and new approaches in other schools. SEO Beam talks about the “many wonderful models that [are] going on within the schools [and that] people [are] recognizing that [they do not] need one vocal expert.” The family senior education officers describe themselves as facilitators of the exchange of knowledge and skills, who link requests to resources. SEO Beam observes that individual schools and families of schools often coordinate and design their own professional development initiatives to talk “about [their] common themes, [and] common interests amongst a group a schools.” SEO Light interacts with principals “both formally and informally through the formal structures of professional growth and evaluation.”

The district-mandated professional growth plans, combined with the direct and indirect interactions of central office leaders with principals and teachers, provide vehicles to *make meaning* of information; to exchange and develop knowledge and skills across hierarchical, organizational, and other boundaries within the school system. Central office leaders also identify and encourage prospective formal leaders through the process. Dr. Shade says “periodic meetings [take place] with staff, individual meetings, to talk about where they [are] in their development their goals aspirations leadership plan[s], and how it [benefits the district’s] succession plan.”

The central office leaders demonstrate leadership across a range of boundaries to support professional development as a means to improve teaching skills and knowledge, and nurture leadership within the school system. Dr. Shade says that the formal district leadership programs for new school administrators and potential principals and assistant

principals means that “over time [the district has] gotten to the point where if [teachers want] a job as an administrator in [their] system, [they will have] to go through the program.”

In addition to the individual professional growth plans, the central office leaders identify the district’s *strategic plan*, the schools’ *development plans*, and the district and schools’ *annual reports* as key resources for planning, recording and communicating progress in achieving goals across boundaries with the district and in schools. Dr. Hugh refers to the district strategic plan as a “living document [that they access] constantly [in meetings] with principals.” The district plan is the umbrella guide for the development of individual school plans that also reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the schools. The family senior education officers, SEO Light and SEO Beam, work closely with the principals in their families to develop school plans and evaluate school effectiveness. SEO Light takes “the lead for school development” with the Light family of schools, and SEO Beam works closely with the Beam family of schools. SEO Beam and SEO Light guide and advise the school development teams of their member schools on local issues, and the plans and priorities of the district and the province. The family senior education officers participate in the internal and external reviews of their family of schools; they identify and organize external evaluation teams to prepare reports on the schools. Both leaders connect the school development process to *making meaning* boundary spanning leadership practices across hierarchical, organizational, ideological, and professional boundaries within the school system.

In summary, the central office leaders participate in numerous boundary spanning leadership interactions throughout the school system related to *making meaning*. Leaders value the information and direction contained in formalized professional development plans, district plans, and school plans and reports. The central office executive leaders deal directly with other central office leaders and indirectly with school leadership to *make meaning* of information. The family specific senior education officers interact directly with central office leaders, and with and between the principals in their member schools. The family senior education officers exchange information indirectly with teachers through the principals of the schools.

Administering. Central office leaders describe how they practice boundary spanning leadership through *administering* functions such as coordinating, planning, organizing, resourcing, buffering and monitoring activities. Many of the administrative interactions take place during meetings, both scheduled and unscheduled. The central office leaders say that at least they enjoy control of most scheduled meetings. SEO Beam says she is responsible for her “own agenda [but at times is] required to attend meetings [for example] on staffing and job competitions.” Dr. Shade lives “by the calendar [but remains] flexible [and] would like to [focus on planning] but sometimes [it is about] crisis management [especially if there is] media involvement.”

Also, central office leaders are responsible for *administering* provincially mandated directives that often mean liaising with the department of education and organizing district-wide professional development sessions for principals and teachers. SEO Ray says that the provincial department of education once allocated the district

“\$75,000 [to organize] a provincial conference [that took] a lot of planning.” The central office leaders describe managing and administering resources as a balancing act, where resources, human and otherwise, financed by the provincial department of education, frequently come up short in response to identified needs in the school system. All central office leaders participate in deliberations on staffing and offer assistance to school administrators who confront resource challenges. The responses of the central office leaders demonstrate boundary spanning leadership between the provincial department of education and the school system in administering directives, distributing resources, organizing professional development and lending support to principals and teachers.

For central office leaders, many administering functions of boundary spanning leadership involve technology, devices and software to conduct and manage their interactions with one another and with their constituents in the school system. Teleconferences, online forums, and conferencing platforms such as Microsoft Link, help them organize low cost efficient meetings in multiple locations across geographical boundaries. SEO Beam comments that communication technology allows her to set up consultations on short notice over long distances, and that, “if [she wants] a meeting at 10:30 everyone [can] log on,” and she observes that being digitally “connected [is] convenient.” Conversely, the preponderance of emails, phone calls, and voicemails to central office leaders is very time consuming for them. SEO Beam estimates that she receives “150 plus emails [and] a ton of phone calls every day.” The central office leaders find strategies to manage electronic communications. Dr. Hugh claims that if he cannot answer an email in a line or two, he picks “up the phone and [arranges to] sit down and

have a meeting [and] talk face to face.” Dr. Shade says she solves a lot of problems “by having personal communications versus technology.” SEO Light describes how he relies on his executive assistant to monitor his phone calls and remarks that it is “hard not to answer [the] phone when it [rings]. But [he’s] learned to let [his] assistant do that [to] be that filter.” Budget cuts affect how central office leaders handle their communications. SEO Beam laments that the loss of a dedicated assistant for senior education officers adversely affected her work, because her assistant “kept track of all of [them].” Central office leaders also use traditional written communication because as Dr. Shade notes there is always a need for “the formal letters, [in] certain circumstances [with] a formal signature on something.” Central office leaders avail of a range of technologies to interact with constituents across geographical and organizational boundaries in the school district. The leaders admit, however that sometimes they prefer to talk directly to people on the phone or meet them face to face.

Another *administering* boundary spanning leadership task for central office leaders is to monitor the effectiveness of the system’s schools. In addition to supporting *meaning making*, the formal school development process ensures that the district and schools are accountable to the public for their effectiveness. Central office leaders and particularly family of schools’ specific senior education officers are responsible for working with school staffs to develop, implement, and assess their school plans. SEO Beam and SEO Light ensure that each school in their family of schools undergoes a formal external review every three or four years. Beam and Light say they select, organize and lead formal review teams composed of principals and teachers from other

schools to evaluate selected schools on a rotational basis. SEO Beam and SEO Light play a key role in producing school evaluation reports based on the findings of the review teams. In between formal school reviews, the senior education officers maintain contact with the principals of their assigned schools to keep abreast of their needs and to act as conduits for interactions between them and the central office, and at times between them and other schools in their family.

In summary, the central office leaders, executives and senior education officers *administer*, (coordinate, plan, organize, resource, monitor, and report), events across boundaries in the school system. Executive leaders mainly demonstrate boundary spanning leadership through administrative tasks within the central office, with the schools indirectly through the senior education officers, and with the provincial department of education. The central office leaders link provincial initiatives to the plans of the central office staff and the school system. The family of schools' senior education officers also participate in central office tasks, but focus on administrative actions that span the boundaries between the central office and the schools.

Creating conditions. Central office leaders say they *create conditions* for boundary spanning leadership when they work with each other and with constituents to establish trust, ensure safety, celebrate diversity, foster commitment, nurture relationships, build identities, forge connections, share experiences, and develop a cohesive culture (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). Dr. Hugh stresses the importance of “personal interaction[s], face to face.” Dr. Shade says it is important to have “an open door.” Hugh talks about his collaborations with senior

education officers, school staffs, and school councils, and how such interactions help him understand “their role [and] build [a] bridge so [they can] have productive conversations about teaching and learning.”

The family of schools’ senior education officers, SEO Beam and SEO Light, say they develop relationships with principals and staffs when they guide schools through the school development process. SEO Beam describes her work with schools as a way to stay connected, because “[she gets] to know the schools intimately to know the personnel [and] to know where they [want] to go [as well as] the issues.” SEO Beam empathizes with the principals’ and teachers’ challenges and calls working with schools “one of the most gratifying parts” of her job. SEO Light says he works “with [schools] closely [to provide] support and opportunities for principals in the system to take the lead.” Working together with school staffs as boundary spanning leaders gives senior education officers the opportunity to build trusting relationships. SEO Beam and SEO Light strive to create positive conditions that bolster leadership capacity in their families of schools, encourage principals to interact with their own staffs and other schools, liaise with central office, and communicate with the community. SEO Beam and SEO Light believe that during the school development process teachers also demonstrate leadership. SEO Beam recounts an instance when she saw a “grade one teacher giving a report, and really getting people on side with it, [and it was much] different than if [it had been just] the principal up saying ‘this is what we need to do’.” SEO Light recognizes opportunities to encourage leadership informally through something “as simple as the conversation with the new teacher [who is] expressing an interest to do something.” The family senior education

officers *create conditions* for boundary spanning leadership by working with the schools in their families of schools on the school development plans and participating in their internal and external reviews. Through their interactions with the schools' leadership and staff, the family specific senior education officers immerse themselves in the everyday reality of their constituents and forge lasting connections, trusting exchanges, and honest deliberations.

In summary, the central office leaders, and in particular the family of schools' senior education officers, SEO Beam and SEO Light, demonstrate that boundary spanning leadership involves *creating conditions* to welcome different viewpoints and respect diverse contexts (Kanter, 2009); harness human and social capital (Fleming & Waguespack, 2007; Robertson, 2009); and establish values and codes of conduct within and across groups (Kanter, 2009). *Creating conditions*, in addition to *making meaning* and *administering*, represents a third important element of effective boundary spanning leadership practices.

Transforming. Boundary spanning leadership offers central office leaders the opportunity to *transform* organizations; to promote innovation, provide services and insights; inspire creativity, encourage risk-taking, nurture growth, and engender systemic change (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). I asked the five central office leaders to provide examples of boundary spanning leadership that brought about transformational changes in the school system. From their examples I chose the following initiatives, one on policy development from Dr. Shade, the executive leader,

and the other from the family senior education officer SEO Beam, on a procedural change to kindergarten registration.

In the first situation, Dr. Shade relates how the Prism district had implemented a *student evaluation policy* that had met with considerable resistance among principals, teachers, and the broader community. She explains that the policy received “significant pushback from the teacher’s union, the general public, mainly due to a misconception about what the philosophy behind this new policy was.” So, the Prism District leadership decided to address the controversy, even though Dr. Shade admits the “horse” was already out of the barn and “running around”. Shade says the central office executive team, in its response to the complaints throughout the school system, agreed to revisit the initiative and to involve “stakeholders, teachers, program specialists, [and] some of [the] senior staff” to work on a committee over a two-year period to review, modify if necessary, and reintroduce the policy. The goal of the group was to invite “people to embrace elements of the change, but also to listen not just to the resisters of the change but to legitimate concerns, [with the] policy.” Among the first initial tasks of the new committee was to negotiate a definition of consensus and decide on a way to resolve disputes. The members expressed “varying views and very strongly held beliefs.” They eventually concurred that reaching consensus meant gauging the general feeling of the group, not invoking majority rule and not insisting on complete agreement of all members. Committee participants then collected input from their colleagues, at district office, in schools, in classrooms and elsewhere to generate a broader representation of the views of everyone affected by the evaluation policy. At the committee table, members

shared their findings. The deliberations were at times difficult according to Dr. Shade because “everyone had to get a little bit out of their comfort zone in terms of listening to others’ views, but it was very instructive for those who were being exposed to a new philosophy.” Shade remarks that one of the key lessons she learned was in order “to embark on major change, a significant amount of consultation [has] to happen up front [and the leadership has] to be clear about [the] vision about what [is] negotiable and what [is] non-negotiable,” and added that “certain aspects of a change agenda [can] be flexible without subverting the main thrust of the agenda.” During the two years of committee work, Dr. Shade says she witnessed many strong informal leaders “come to the fore”, to debate dissenting positions. As a result of the committee’s boundary spanning work, Dr. Shade reports that the evaluation policy was “tweaked” to the general satisfaction of the committee who themselves became a “core group of believers.” The district leadership promised that if it “had further input and things weren’t working according to plan then [they] would adjust the professional development or adjust the regulations.” Dr. Shade believes that the work and leadership of the cross sectional committee helped transform the perception and application of the evaluation policy in the Prism District. Further Dr. Shade adds they were “going down a new road, so over time, [it was] amazing that something that started so controversial, in a way was a good thing.”

Dr. Shade’s example shows that central office leaders who listen and respond to the viewpoints of their constituents across the boundaries of roles, functions and settings are capable of bringing together leaders of dissimilar positions to work productively to review and revise a district policy. Dr. Shade’s response to the policy problem shows that

while no policy is perfect, widespread discontent should not be ignored. Boundary spanning leadership, initiated at the central office level of the school system, can bring together disparate and conflicting constituencies to interact constructively through dialogue, research, and decision-making to establish a policy that transforms student evaluation practice throughout the school system. In the process, central office leaders and committee members and their respective contacts find an opportunity to develop new relationships, and to generate a commitment to innovation and change.

SEO Beam provides the second example of a *transforming* boundary spanning change. She describes how a new initiative of the district to put kindergarten registration *online* drastically reduced the habitual line-ups of the in-person registration days especially for enrolment in programs such as early French Immersion. SEO Beam explains that the process of changing the method of registration to online involved multiple layers of interaction across settings and functions both at the central office and throughout the school system. Initially, Prism School District's senior management team met to consider making the change in kindergarten registration. The main question, according to SEO Beam, at that point was "[could] it be done" and that their "initial thought was absolutely not." But the district leaders, rather than give up, initiated meetings with central office professional staff and invited input from district level technicians, who "talked it through" and considered the idea. Next, the professional staff and the technicians conducted research, and considered the reaction of the public and the media to this change. Further, they examined the technical capacity of the system to handle the revised process across the district. SEO Beam says the central office leaders

also debated the social justice implications for parents and guardians who did not have access to digital devices or the internet. They asked themselves how the look of the online page and sought advice from principals. The district team then created a “prototype page” and requested “honest feedback” from the schools. The planning team incorporated the school leaders’ input into their “test site” to try out the process, and the dialogue continued back and forth between district and school leaders. By the time the date for kindergarten registration arrived, the district was confident the online registration process would work. SEO Beam relates that that the central office professional staff worked “as a team with the technicians, with finance, with programs, with the director of communications, with the principals before [they] finally said [what they were] going to do.” The implementation of online registration of kindergarten students involved boundary spanning leadership across organizational and ideological boundaries. SEO Beam says that the process allowed the district to shift smoothly from a paper-based registration to digital registration, and the move resulted in “the most pain-free kindergarten registration [they’d] ever experienced.” In addition, the online system provides the central office and schools with instant data to guide staffing and programming decisions related to kindergarten. Parents and guardians learn about student placement months earlier than in the past. The example of the online kindergarten registration initiative shows that accessing and harnessing the contributions of multiple spheres of expertise and influence across multiple boundaries at central office and in schools can transform the way a school system operates.

Summary

The responses of the central office leaders to the first research question indicate that the executive leaders in the study engage in boundary spanning leadership most often with other central office leaders, with trustees, with the provincial government department of education and with the public. The executive leaders rely on the senior education officers to be responsible for the families of schools and to liaise with the principals of their member schools. The executive leaders' direct interactions with principals are limited to formal meetings, select committees, and occasional school visits. District executives rarely make direct contact with teachers.

The district's senior education officers interact regularly and often with other senior education officers and with other central office leaders. The senior education officers responsible for designated families of schools exercise boundary spanning leadership with the principals of their families of schools. They meet with school leaders through formal and informal meetings, and collaborate with the schools to develop school development plans. The senior education officers' direct contact with teachers, however, is infrequent and usually occurs during the school development process or during staffing. The senior education officers depend on the boundary spanning leadership of principals to provide a connection between them and teachers. The family of schools' senior education officers act as key boundary spanning leaders across roles, settings and functions, and link the lived experiences of the central office to that of the schools and vice versa; they promote interaction between families of schools, and among the member schools in their families.

Central office leaders, both executive and senior education officers, encounter multiple types of boundaries in their roles that are both helpful and confounding. Central office leaders, for example, value hierarchical boundaries as a way to define and delimit their work. However, they worry that hierarchical distinctions restrict dialogue, and discourage honest exchanges from one level of the vertical hierarchy to another. Horizontal hierarchical relationships present other challenges when senior education officers, who seek the cooperation of school leaders, do not see themselves as the bosses of principals. Central office leaders work hard to keep communication respectful, honest and open at all levels and strive to find avenues to welcome input from all constituents across hierarchical boundaries in the school system.

The central office leaders appreciate the need to be flexible, adaptive and prepared to span many types of boundaries. They feel they have to navigate personal boundaries to make sure they treat everyone impartially while maintaining the capacity to care about, and empathize with principals and teachers. Central office leaders encounter ideological boundaries, but must find common ground among their own and others' beliefs about teaching and learning. Central office leaders work with schools to protect the integrity of school programming and hold schools accountable for their goals through the school development process.

Central office leaders work to span political and policy boundaries when elected political figures, pressured by the public, intervene directly in routine district decisions. Geographical boundaries exist for central office leaders, particularly during times of systemic reorganization when distances between school sites increase and opportunities

diminish for face-to-face interactions between the central office leaders and principals. Central office leaders observe that principals and teachers struggle to establish new work culture boundaries when the province or the district reconfigures schools and recombines staffs. Socio-cultural boundaries emerge as important when student populations in the Prism School District become more varied in economic and ethnic backgrounds. The central officer leaders commit to being sensitive to the ever changing identities of the teachers and students in the school system.

The central office leaders provide examples of boundary spanning leadership practices that involve *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming* the school system. Leaders *make meaning* when they communicate and interpret information, and develop and share skills and practices with each other at central office, with provincial leaders, with the principals of the school system, and with the broader community. Central office leaders *administer* when they coordinate, plan, organize, resource, buffer, and monitor activities in the system. They *create conditions* when they establish trust, ensure safety, celebrate diversity, foster commitment, nurture relationships, build identities, forge connections, share experiences, develop cohesive culture in the district. Central office leaders demonstrate boundary spanning leadership when they *transform* systemic policies and procedures with the contributions and insights of leaders, teachers and others throughout the school system.

Research Question Two

The second research question is: How do school principals in families of schools in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership? To answer this question, I

examine the responses of the participating principals grouped by their designated family of schools.

The Beam family of schools. The Beam family of schools, administered by SEO Beam, consists of ten schools. With the district's and SEO Beam's permission, I interviewed four principals from the Beam family of schools during the spring of 2013. The principals answered the same questions on boundary spanning practices I posed to the central office leaders. I asked the principals to reflect on their interactions, to comment on the kinds of boundaries they encountered in their jobs, and to share their insights on boundary spanning leadership practices. The schools in the Beam family are: Teal Stone School (Mr. Lake), Silver Wing School (Ms. Flight), Bronze Ville Elementary (Ms. Rock), and Apricot Dale Academy, (Mr. Pitt).

Boundary spanning interactions. The principals responded to questions about their interactions with central office leaders, other principals, teachers and the broader community. All principals interact most frequently with the teachers within their own buildings, as Bronze Ville's principal, Ms. Rock states: "teachers definitely district staff, then principals." Only Teal Stone's principal, Mr. Lake, answers that he interacts with central office third, saying that, "after the teachers other administrators and [then] central office."

The principals serve a supporting and complementary role for the central office, as conduits and liaisons that act as go-betweens to implement policies and the district's strategic plan in their schools. According to Apricot Dale's principal, Mr. Pitt, he has "to be the instrument in between [central office personnel] and the school to ensure that

things [get] done.” Bronze Ville’s principal, Ms. Rock, sees herself as “a carry-through person a team player.” Silver Wing’s principal, Ms. Flight, says her role is more consultative, “relaying information, working with [central office] to solve any issues.” Mr. Lake lists the central office as the least frequent group with whom he interacts saying he attends meetings as required, oversees policies, and responds to calls for feedback. Principal Lake describes his contact with the district leaders as “on a needs basis.” Lake says, however, that the district has improved its consultation practices, and that central office is “bringing [principals] in and asking for [their] opinion and sharing the information with [them], whereas before it would be a meeting [to say] what’s been done what’s going to happen.”

The principals in the Beam family of schools generally feel they do not contact one another often enough. Ms. Rock says that they “[tend] to live on [their] own island and maybe [do not] call on [each other] enough.” The principals do seek support from other principals but they may not necessarily be members of their current family; they interact with other school leaders who they have met socially or known through past connections. Ms. Flight relies on a certain circle of peers outside her family of schools for advice saying, she “appreciate[s] their judgement, and [calls] them [to] get their feedback.” Mr. Lake, however, says he likes the collaboration and communication he has with members of the Beam family with whom he has developed a trusting relationship and that overall if he has “a question, a comment or [needs] some clarification, [he has] no qualms in calling anybody in [his] family of schools, just to have a discussion.” He also says he depends on a small circle of close personal friends to “bounce ideas off for some of the

things happening within [the] school setting” that he finds challenging. Given that the four principals represent a subset of a larger family it appears that Mr. Lake, Teal Stone’s principal may have been interacting with schools not in the research sample.

The principals all agree they experience frequent and varied interactions with teachers on a daily basis. Apricot Dale’s Mr. Pitt characterizes himself as a “curriculum leader” whose job is to assess and respond to teachers’ professional learning needs during the implementation of new programming content and approaches, to share his own expertise, and to invite in experts. Bronze Ville’s Principal Rock calls herself a facilitator, a decision-maker, a supporter, and a “team player” who values relationships above all. She says that “relationships [help] others to be the best they [can] be.” Silver Wing’s principal, Ms. Flight, has “lots of interactions with teachers and lots of guidance and direction [is] sought and given.” Teal Stone’s Mr. Lake, believes that “first and foremost [he has] to be a leader; [to exhibit the] qualities of a professional learning community.” Lake accepts the responsibility to guide, explain, interpret and support change in his school, and to be the “the trusting person [who dispels] the apprehension of [what is] to come.”

The Beam family principals interact with many different groups external to the school staff. Apricot Dale’s Principal Pitt says his school is the “hub of the community” used for “activities and programs and community groups”. Bronze Ville’s Ms. Rock depicts the parents of her students as boundary spanners who connect the school with the community. She says her relationships with parents are crucial and that, “if [she has] positive relationships whatever [the] goal [it becomes] everybody else’s goal and vision.”

Silver Wing's Ms. Flight often relays messages from community groups to her students through the school newsletter. All principals comment that they forge connections with political figures to lobby for educational causes such as improvements to their school buildings.

In summary, the four principals of the four schools in the Beam family interact most often across professional and organizational boundaries with the teachers in their own buildings. The principal - teacher relationship emerges as the most important in their work in the success of their school and the realization of their goals. The next most important interactions for three of the four principals are with central office leaders. For Mr. Pitt, Ms. Flight, and Ms. Rock, the geographical, organizational, professional and hierarchical boundaries between their schools and central office do not prevent them from interacting regularly with the district office to exchange information, coordinate plans and solve problems together. For the fourth principal, Teal Stone's Mr. Lake, interactions with central office are less vital than his interactions with fellow principals within the Beam family and throughout the school system. He prefers to communicate with peers across horizontal hierarchical and organizational boundaries. The other three principals list their contact with fellow principals, often outside their family, as third, after their interactions with teachers and central office leaders. Being part of the Beam family for Mr. Pitt, Ms. Flight and Ms. Rock does not privilege communication and consultation among member school principals. Beyond professional boundaries, all principals work at bridging the organizational and geographical divides between the school and home, and between the school and the community. Principals also recognize the need to circumvent

hierarchical boundaries to engage directly with political representatives in order to voice their views.

Types of boundaries. I asked the four principals from the Beam family to comment on the types of boundaries they encounter in their work across roles, settings and functions. They provide their insights on hierarchical, organizational, personal, professional, ideological, geographic, cultural, and political and policy boundaries.

Hierarchical boundaries. Hierarchical boundaries present the Beam family principals with both benefits and challenges. Bronze Ville’s principal, Ms. Rock, believes that the hierarchical line of authority helps them get things done and that if she has a problem she consults with her central office senior education officer as her next line of authority. Likewise, Principal Rock encourages parents to direct their inquiries to the classroom teacher before they come to her. Silver Wing’s principal, Ms. Flight talks about reformulating the hierarchical boundaries within her school where “traditionally the role of principal or assistant principal [has been] seen as *the* authority.” She said she focusses more on developing good relationships with her staff and “building trust earning their respect [and letting teachers know she is] there for them” whether they require resources for their classrooms or support for their professional development plans. Apricot Dale’s Mr. Pitt, however, expresses frustration with the hierarchical boundaries and the multiple layers of authority in the school system. He complains that he is answerable to “a district a department of education and really [he feels like] just another cog in the wheel.” Further, he says that being part of the same union as teachers and sharing the same collective agreement makes him question certain requests from the

central office leaders and to debate his own place within the hierarchical chain. Mr. Pitt asserts that he does “not ask teachers to come to a staff meeting in August. So why [does] central office ask [principals] to come to a principals’ meeting in August?” Mr. Lake of Teal Stone School considers hierarchical boundaries to be similar to professional boundaries. He speaks of the importance of “respect” in interactions between parties and the need to look at the big picture. Mr. Lake sees himself as “only a small piece of the pie” among many other leaders and teachers. But he recognizes that even small contributions help improve his school and the school system. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason (2011) point out that expertise exists in many places in a multi-tiered organization.

Professional boundaries. The Beam family principals concur that professional boundaries affect how they interact with central office, teachers, parents and the public. The principals manage professional boundaries in different ways. Bronze Ville’s Ms. Rock does not think that professional boundaries get in the way of her relationship with central office. She sees her role with “district office, [as] answering to them [while] at the same time [feeling] respected and [free to] be fairly honest with them.” Silver Wing’s principal, Ms. Flight, speaks of her professional interactions within her school and with her community, and says she welcomes and respects teachers and the public, but “always [maintains] professional” boundaries. Flight says she is less formal with her teachers than with parents. Teal Stone’s Mr. Lake feels that part of being professional is protecting confidential information. Apricot Dale’s Mr. Pitt, remarks that parents sometimes misunderstand the professional status of principals and expects them to have “more power” than they actually do.

Personal boundaries. Professional and personal boundaries often overlap for the principals in the Beam family. Bronze Ville’s principal, Ms. Rock does not see a big difference between her personal and professional boundaries in her work. She enjoys good relations within her school and with central office and credits SEO Beam with making school-to-district interactions function well. Apricot Dale’s Mr. Pitt, however, claims that personal boundaries matter because of different religious and social beliefs and that “not everyone [shares] the same philosophy or even personal limits”. He points out that even though he “[works] with [staff] closely [and] almost [feels] like there [is] a personal connection it [is] not. It [is] more a professional one.” He reports that “sometimes people [try] to overstep that [professional] boundary and bring it to the personal level.” Silver Wing’s principal, Ms. Flight describes forging closer ties with the members of her staff, and standing with them to earn their trust, confidence, and respect in the context of being professional but also to be seen as “one of them.” Teal Stone’s Mr. Lake believes that he has a duty to separate personal boundaries from professional boundaries and that and that “difficult conversations” about school matters should stay in school. Williams (2011) cautions that while the interplay of personal and professional boundaries can foster trusting relationships in the workplace, the combination may also lead to perceptions of favouritism, and claims of discrimination against certain constituents.

Ideological boundaries. All four principals in the Beam family recognize that diverse ideological views about children, teaching, and learning create boundaries among educators in the school system. The principals of Silver Wing, Teal Stone and Apricot

Dale give examples where teachers expressed disparate views about student learning and behaviour. Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt, encounters ideological boundaries when teachers in his school disagree about the best response to inappropriate student conduct. Some teachers believe "that there should be no consequences, like just telling a child you shouldn't do that" while others think "that there ought to be definite consequences like missing playtime or detention or suspension." Silver Wing's Ms. Flight says she has to "dig deep" with both parents and teachers to surface "the belief system" that informs their positions and that sometimes there is "a clash in their belief system" and that of the school. She said she works across the ideological boundaries to emphasize their shared commitment to give all children "a successful experience at school." Teal Stone's principal, Mr. Lake, notes that one of his school's teachers opposes the provincial policy of inclusion as implemented. Mr. Lake works hard to break down this ideological boundary, to broaden the teacher's perspective, to keep the conversation going, and to explore the research together. Values and beliefs affect how leaders and constituents work together in groups and develop new understandings (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Robinson, 2009). Boundary spanning leaders find ways to broker agreement, establish trust, engender enthusiasm and build bridges with resisters to change (Cross et al., 2013).

Organizational boundaries. Principals affirm that organizational boundaries influence how they conduct their work. Teal Stone's Mr. Lake talks about how the province, the district and the school, implement the laws and policies that define how schooling is organized and how they teach children. Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock comments on how the graded system based on children's ages sometimes gets in the way of

delivering services to students consistent with their needs. Silver Wing's Ms. Flight reports that committees within schools help create cross-boundary decision-making bodies and help distribute authority among teachers. She says "if someone [comes to her] and [she wants] to buy more math manipulatives, then [she] says to them go check with the [mathematics] committee because they may already be here." Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt believes that central office and the department of education tend to "infringe on [their] free time too much," by requesting that principals do uncompensated work during the summer months such as accepting delivery of textbooks, and says "they're asking people to work on their time off." The four principals' examples reveal that organizational boundaries influence their work in the big picture of the school system, in their duties, and in the everyday reality of their local school structures.

Geographical boundaries. For three of the Beam family principals, geographical boundaries do not appear relevant although, Apricot Dales' Mr. Pitt says he sympathizes with school administrators from rural locations who have to drive long distances to attend meetings in the urban centre. Geographical boundaries are, however, important for Silver Wing's Ms. Flight. She recounts how parents outside her catchment area seek to register their children in her school because of its specialized programming. Lack of space means making tough decisions and she said she hates "to send them away [and worries about] doing them justice."

Cultural boundaries. The Beam family principals interpret the question about cultural boundaries in different ways, some as the culture of the workplace, others as the culture of the community in general and others as the socio-economic culture of the

students in their schools. Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt talks about the socio-economic culture of his school as middle of the road with few examples of economically challenged children or exceptionally rich students. Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock prefers to talk about the working culture of her school staff that she describes as "wonderful [with] tremendous" support for all school projects. Ms. Rock feels, however, that the school district does not project a cohesive working culture because of its size and the pace of change. Silver Wing's Ms. Flight focusses on the increased diversity of world cultures that represent many nations and religions within her student population. Ms. Flight says the school adapts to what she calls "the combination of children the parents and the families and the cultures." Ms. Flight gives examples of small changes such as making sure the school offers a vegetarian option on pizza day as indicative of the school's response to diverse backgrounds in her school. Teal Stone's Mr. Lake relates that he has worked with children and parents from all over the world and he feels the key to overcoming cultural boundaries is to be "open-minded to people's perspectives." Boundary spanning leaders pay attention to work cultures (Schein, 2004) and diverse socio-cultural differences among groups (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Hogg, 2009).

Political and policy boundaries. Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt remarks that political and policy boundaries affect the work of principals and laments that much of the decision-making of governments about schools is based on "city type standards" that do not take into consideration the "setting and the challenges" of rural and smaller schools. Silver Wing's Principal Flight comments that parents know how to involve local politicians when there are concerns about resources and space availability at her school,

and that she often has to deal directly with politicians on school issues.

Summary. In general, the principals in the Beam family and the central office leaders encounter similar kinds of boundaries. The scope of the principals' interests, however, confines itself largely to their own school and the boundaries it shares with the district and the community. The Beam family principals offer few examples of school to school, or family of schools to family of schools, boundary spanning leadership. The Beam family principals appreciate the important boundary spanning leadership that SEO Beam provides to connect their schools to the central office. Similar to the central office leaders, the principals consider hierarchical boundaries as important for defining their responsibilities and their range of authority. They express frustration, however, about organizational boundaries (such as graded classrooms) that do not address the diverse needs of children. Principals bridge ideological boundaries to implement new policies, and bring together diverse perspectives among their own staffs and parents about student learning and behaviour. Unlike the central office leaders, who are reticent about political involvement, the Beam family principals span political boundaries to interact with political representatives on behalf of their school and communities. Principals describe their professional and personal boundaries as intertwined and ever present in their relationships with their school staffs and with the district. The Beam family of principals recognize the importance of work-culture boundaries, socio-economic culture boundaries, and ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Geographical boundaries are not a major consideration for the Beam family principals.

Boundary spanning leadership practices. I asked the principals of the Beam family of schools about the interactions they encounter during their work and to elaborate on specific recent events that involved multiple levels of interaction across roles and settings. As with the central office leaders, planned and unplanned meetings dominate the lives of the four principals and account for more than forty per cent of their interactions. A further third of the principals' statements focusses on professional growth, while the remaining quarter of their attention deals with leadership, and district and school development. Similar to the experiences of the central office leaders, the principals' boundary spanning leadership practices can be categorized as one of *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions* or *transforming* policies, events, and practices.

Making meaning. The Beam family principals say they engage in *making meaning* interactions such as communicating and interpreting information, and developing and exchanging skills, perspectives, and practices as important components of boundary spanning leadership. The principals remark that through the teachers' professional growth plans, and observations and conversations with teachers they gain insight into what is going on in their schools. Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock says she evaluates teacher professional needs and utilizes "what [is] happening [and] the strength of [her] staff to develop PD for teachers." Silver Wing's Ms. Flight conducts individual interviews with teachers to assess their plans and to align them with school goals. Flight says that based on the feedback from her staff, she assigns mentors to teachers, sets up classroom observations, organizes peer visitations, and works with staff to develop formal learning sessions. Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt says that he frees up teachers to "get

[the] professional development [they] asked for.” Teal Stone’s Mr. Lake asserts that professional development occurs all the time at his school, and says he knows what is “happening in classrooms every single day.” He finds that observing teacher practice is more informative than having a conversation, saying “professional growth [is] going [on] because [he is] seeing and living it.” The principals find that the leadership potential among teachers come to the fore during the professional development process if they are given the chance to lead and contribute their expertise. The principals comment that teachers use their plans to grow professionally, acquire support and opportunities for development, exchange information, demonstrate skills, and practice leadership. The Beam family principals use the formal teachers’ professional growth plans to span the boundary between their goals, the school’s goals and the strategic goals of the school system.

The Beam family principals contribute input to the Prism district’s strategic plan. For instance, Silver Wing’s Ms. Flight says that she “forward[s] [her comments and the perspectives of her] teachers to the district.” The Beam family principals and staffs also consult with their assigned senior education officer SEO Beam and the school community to develop their individual school development plans in sync with the district’s goals. The principals say that the school development process offers a way to practice boundary spanning leadership through dialogue, research, data analysis, the exchange of knowledge and skills, and shared reflection with the school community and with the central office. Principals in the Prism District publish their schools’ yearly progress in their annual public reports.

Every three to four years, on a staggered basis, all the schools in the Prism District undergo an external review of their plans by teams of examiners consisting of a central office leader, a school administrator, and teachers from other schools. SEO Beam works with the Beam family of schools to help the school development team in each school to prepare and implement their plans, and get ready for the school's external review. SEO Beam also helps school development teams to revise their plans in response to the recommendations of the external review.

The school development plans guide the decisions of the Beam family principals. For Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt that means putting the school development plan on the agenda of every staff meeting so he and his staff can review and assess its goals. Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock says she ensures the plan is "happening [and stays] current and fresh," and that it all relates and fits together. Silver Wing's Ms. Flight gives the example of how their school's plan to improve technology infrastructure brought about an exchange of information and skills with central office leaders and school system experts. Ms. Flight remarks that the technology project was one of the few times that she consulted with other schools within the Beam family of schools to ask about their experiences with implementing new technology and to find out what it "look[ed] like and [how Silver Wing could] piggy back [on their] lessons learned [and] not [make] the same mistakes [and] start right away with their recommendations?"

In summary, the Beam family principals engage in *meaning making* practices that support boundary spanning leadership within their own schools, with the central office and on occasion with other schools. The principals contribute to the formulation of the

district's strategic plan; connect the goals of the strategic plan to their school development plans and to the teachers' professional growth plans. Leithwood (2010) contends that leaders in successful school districts recognize that teacher professional development leads to school improvement. Harris (2004) attests that strong leaders support and empower teachers.

Administering. Principals engage in *administering* actions such as coordinating, planning, organizing, resource gathering, buffering and monitoring, to demonstrate boundary spanning leadership. Planned and unplanned meetings represent a large portion of the Beam family principals' work. The principals plan their days, but adjust their schedules to respond to unexpected events. Apricot Dales' Mr. Pitt has "a plan for [his] day, week, month [but there is] always something that [takes his] attention from what [he] planned to do." Likewise, Silver Wing's Ms. Flight observes that "rarely [does her] day look like what [she] set out for it to look like." Teal Stone's Mr. Lake comments that the "unplanned things [are] the busiest" and that they interfere with the "consistency and the flow of being able to do a good job." Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock acknowledges that unexpected events and crises derail plans, but says she organizes herself well enough to get things done and completed. As a strategy, Ms. Rock schedules her meetings with staff members and action teams after school. Silver Wing's Ms. Flight confirms that crisis management is a regular feature of a principal's day whether it is "an issue with a parent, [or] an issue between a teacher and another staff member." Teal Stone's Mr. Lake talks about problems that come "off the bus, so that [he has] things to follow up [on] bus incidents." And Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt admits that it is "management by crisis a lot of

times.” Many of the unexpected happenings for the Beam family principals result in meetings with parents who phone or email or show up at the school. Teal Stone’s Mr. Lake said he meets with teachers, support staff, children and others who “all [have] issues and [that are] all important and they all [think] that they [are] number one and [he has] to listen attentively and then follow up.” The Beam family principals demonstrate boundary spanning leadership when they meet formally and informally with the teachers in their schools and the parents in their school community.

In contrast, the Beam family principals do not report any measure of participation in the administration of their formal family of schools’ meetings. The senior education officers organize and plan the family meetings. Bronze Ville’s Ms. Rock says the Beam family school administrators, plus administrators from two or three other families, and the assigned senior education officers meet together four times per year. In Rock’s opinion, too many school administrators are present at the regular meetings and she comments that “the bigger the audience the more disengaged” it becomes. Ms. Rock says she does not make any special connections with the principals in her own family at the meetings. Silver Wing’s Ms. Flight offers a similar view and comments that little occurs at meetings that would “involve [them] doing a lot more together.” Apricot Dale’s Mr. Pitt agrees. Only Teal Stone’s Mr. Lake claims to consult with other principals in the Beam family. In general, the regularly scheduled family of schools’ meetings does not function to facilitate boundary spanning leadership by the principals among the schools in the Beam family.

The principals in the Beam family use technology to conduct administrative tasks across the boundaries between their schools and the central office. Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock says that "going to district meetings [means] bringing [an] iPad and communicating online." Silver Wing's Ms. Flight speaks of the advantages of texting central office leaders "because [it is] faster and [you can] still be in a meeting and check a text to see how they replied." Being connected at all times also had its downside according to Teal Stone's Mr. Lake, who says, "going to bed [at] night [he has] responded to the last of [his] emails and [when he] gets up [in the] morning in the inbox [he finds] another seven." Technological devices allow principals to increase efficiency in their administrative tasks and cut through organizational boundaries between the schools and the central office, but instant access also blurs the boundaries between the principals' work and home lives.

In addition to meetings, the principals in the Beam family conduct administrative tasks that require boundary spanning leadership related to the professional growth plans of teachers, resource requests, professional learning opportunities in the district, school development plans, and school level initiatives. The teachers' professional development plans connect individual professional goals to the goals of the school and the school system. Teal Stone's Mr. Lake describes each teacher plan as a "formal record" accessible to the teacher, the principal and central office that forms the basis of teacher evaluation. Silver Wing's Ms. Flight says she looks at staff plans and meets "with every grade, every teacher individually [to look at] their goals [and to identify] the resources and materials they [need]." Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock comments that it is her role "to

oversee [teachers'] professional development" while Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt says that he makes sure teachers are "freed up to go wherever they [need] to go to get [the professional development] they asked for."

The Beam family principals say the school development plans help them lead across boundaries in their administrative duties. The principals report that with the participation of teacher committees, and in consultation with school councils, they align their school plans with district goals and school community goals. The Beam principals publish their plans in their annual school reports. The principals monitor the progress of their schools. Mr. Pitt of Apricot Dale keeps the plan "on the forefront all the time for teachers and [the] school council" and devotes a portion of every staff meeting to school development. Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock said she ensures that "all the things that [she's] put in [her] plan [are] happening and current and fresh [and] fit together." Similar to the teacher plans, school plans emerge as a means to facilitate boundary spanning leadership within the school, between the school and the central office, and between the school and its community.

In summary, the Beam family principals *administer* events (coordinate, plan, organize, resource, monitor, and report) to span the boundaries within their own school communities, and to a lesser degree their boundaries with the central office. The principals seldom interact for administrative purposes with other Beam family schools. The Beam family principals use technology to communicate with teachers, students, parents and district leaders. The principals utilize teacher professional growth plans to monitor, evaluate, and support the teachers in their own schools. They employ school

development plans to align their school goals with district goals. Membership in the Beam family does not appear to privilege any special bond among its constituent schools. The Beam family principals do not mention the existence of any formal joint processes to link, record and publish the goals and progress of their family schools.

Creating conditions. The Beam family principals, in addition to *making meaning* and *administrating* in their schools, say that *creating conditions* is essential to leading effectively across the boundaries within their schools and with the central office. Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt, provides "opportunities for people to work together [to] build trust [and] relationships [and to] soften the boundaries, [to become] like friends more willing to share [and partake in] collaboration." Working as teams is important for Bronze Ville's Ms. Rock who thinks teamwork empowers and makes "everyone better." Rock appreciates her staff, thanks them sincerely and wants to make them to feel "valued as individuals [and] part of a team." Rock adds that being sincere should not be "a façade" and she models the kinds of interactions she seeks in others. However, Rock admits that she is not "a very active member of the district because [she is too busy] running [her own] ship." Teal Stone's Mr. Lake attests that a "respectful working environment [and a] positive rapport with colleagues" helps him lead across boundaries within his school, but less so with the central office. Lake expects his staff to work hard but he "never [asks them] to do anything more than [he] would do." Lake feels that that living his words nurtures "trust [and] rapport [and creates] conditions for an effective workplace." Teal Stone's Mr. Lake says he makes "time [to] listen attentively to [staff] issues" before decisions are made. Silver Wing's Ms. Flight said she invites teachers to come to her

with requests and suggestions. Flight encourages teachers in her building to visit colleagues' classrooms to observe their strategies because school-wide "the respect [is] already there" as opposed to visiting other schools within their family of schools where they do not know the teachers.

The principals of the Beam family focus on *creating conditions* for boundary spanning leadership within their own schools and among their own teaching staffs. The principals describe team-building, modelling, respect, caring, trust, and relationships as essential for forging ties within their schools. As leaders, the principals create positive work cultures by bringing people together and demonstrating regard for their constituents (Kanter, 2009; Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008; Robinson, 2009). However, the Beam family principals do not describe themselves as very active in *creating conditions* for spanning the boundaries between their schools and the district office; or between the member schools of the Beam family.

Transforming. I asked the principals of the Beam family to provide examples of boundary spanning leadership that *transformed* an existing practice or situation in their school and the school system. Teal Stone's Mr. Lake recounts how a provincial arts grant sparked a school-wide renewal, fostered creativity and growth, generated collaboration among teachers, and forged closer ties between the school and the community. Silver Wing's Ms. Flight describes a situation where multiple social and legal agencies came together to respond to the mental health requirements of an elementary student. She says that the collective deliberations resulted in systemic changes in responding to children with special needs within the school and the school system. Flight observes that ongoing

communication with case workers, teachers and student assistants through face-to-face meetings and electronic media provided insight into an unusual case and uncovered the need for improved professional development and this helped grow leadership capacity at all levels of the team.

Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt gives the example of a collaborative problem-solving environmental safety initiative. The school leadership worked directly with multiple divisions of the school district and the provincial government to ensure that a school staff member with severe allergies could work safely in the school environment. Mr. Pitt says he met with the affected teacher to learn everything he could about her condition. Then he liaised with maintenance managers at the district to identify allergy-friendly cleaning products. The school district then sought permission from provincial central purchasing authorities to order alternate products not approved on the government's standing offer list. Pitt scheduled school repairs on weekends to avoid leaving behind odours such as glue or paint fumes. He describes "a constant exchange of data and information, back and forth from the board facilities and human resources and Occupational Health and Safety, through me back to the teacher and from the teacher through me back to them." Mr. Pitt brought about improvements to the "ventilation" system at Apricot Dale School but could not replace all allergy-inducing parts of the building's structure. Consequently, Pitt worked with the staff to escort and supervise the allergic teacher's students in certain areas of the school; to develop checklists for replacement janitors and cleaners outlining restrictions on products; and to create awareness and empathy among staff for the affected teacher's situation. Mr. Pitt describes the boundary spanning leadership initiative

as *transforming* because it brought about systemic change and organizational learning within his school and across the school system. School leaders and staff, central office leaders and staff, and provincial authorities gained greater awareness of allergies and environmental safety. As a result, the province now provides options of allergy-friendly products on its “commodities listing” for use in all schools in the school system.

Bronze Ville’s Ms. Rock talks about a university-school curriculum-based initiative that she learned about at a family of schools meeting that *transformed* teaching and learning in her school. Ms. Rock invited her school staff to devise a project to participate in the university sponsored research. She especially encouraged three primary teachers who were doing their Master’s degrees to pursue the initiative. Together, the principal and the teachers developed a proposal that incorporated the schools’ goals, the teachers’ professional growth plans and the objectives of the university team. Ms. Rock “sat with [the teachers] and guided them” and consulted with the university researchers. The joint project promoted more “inquiry learning” in schools and involved technology support and improved physical arrangements in classrooms. The teachers became co-researchers and received credit towards their graduate degrees in education. The school received tens of thousands of dollars to bring about “major changes within the school,” such as the replacement of desks with tables and the purchase of electronic tablets. Bronze Ville’s Ms. Rock said she limited the project to one grade level in its first year. Teachers generated and collected data and conducted “the assessment pieces.” The principal met often with the university team and felt the project was going to inspire the “other teachers on [her] staff [and] be part of their professional development”,

anticipating that in time it would affect practices in the school system. Ms. Rock believed the research benefitted the school and the teachers, and resulted in “a personal gain as well as a professional gain”. Bronze Ville’s Principal Rock exercises boundary spanning leadership between the family of schools and her school, the university and her school, and among the teachers within her school. The project gave the school leadership and provided the teachers with an opportunity to transform its teaching and learning practices and its physical plant. However, Ms. Rock does not mention any particular sharing of this project with the other schools in the Beam family.

The examples of *transforming* practices given by principals, involve boundary spanning leadership within schools, across the school system, with the public, and with the provincial government. The examples of *transforming* innovations at all four schools, however, do not indicate specific interactions between the member schools of the Beam family. Apart from learning about the university research project at a family of schools meeting, the school principals do not describe any privileged boundary spanning relationship among the schools of the Beam family.

In summary, the Beam family principals engage in four kinds of boundary spanning leadership practices: *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming*. The Beam family principals exercise boundary spanning leadership with teachers, with their own with central office leaders, and their own school communities. The principals also interact with university researchers and community agencies. The Beam family principals, however rarely lead across the boundaries between the schools within their family, and interact mainly at central office led meetings that occur no more

than four times per year.

The Light family of schools. The schools in the Light family, overseen by SEO Light, are Red Tree Elementary, Blue Bell Academy, Yellow Grove School, and Purple Heather Elementary. The principals of the schools, Red Tree's Mr. Apple, Blue Bell's Mr. Ring, Yellow Grove's Ms. Star, and Purple Heather's Ms. Moss responded to the same interview questions as the central office leaders and the Beam family principals. They describe their boundary spanning interactions, comment on the types of boundaries they encounter in their work, and provide examples of boundary spanning leadership practices.

Boundary spanning interactions. In response to questions about their interactions with central office, other schools, and with their own teaching staffs, the four Light family principals report that like the Beam family, they interact most often with the teachers in their own schools. Unlike the Beam family, however, their second most frequent level of interaction is with other principals in their family rather than with central office leaders. The Light family principals list the central office leaders as their third most frequent contact. Yellow Grove's Ms. Star works "mostly with teachers," and Purple Heather's Ms. Moss says that her interactions are with "teachers [followed by] the other principals [and then with her] senior education officers and program specialists" at central office. Blue Bell's Mr. Ring appreciates the "opportunity to work with the principals" on shared professional development, and Red Tree's Mr. Apple likes to "visit other principals [in order] to get ideas from them to share things" he's learned. The Light

family principals speak positively about their boundary spanning interactions from school to school in their designated family of schools.

The Light family principals agree that that their interactions with the central office leaders are mainly to seek advice, exchange information, and gather insights and expertise on how to implement directives and innovations. Blue Bell's Principal Ring has a comfortable relationship with central office leaders because he has been colleagues with many of them for several years. Purple Heather's Principal Moss comments that being part of the Light family of schools facilitates her interactions with central office leaders and brings about "improved communication [and her] feeling as a principal [that she is] not alone." Moss values the advice of SEO Light who is always "there to contact just to have a chat." She says that, "right from the financial level of central board office to the senior education officers to the program specialists, great relationships [exist] with schools."

Red Tree's Principal Apple talks about "two major parts" of his interactions with central office leaders, one "a communication piece" to exchange advice on issues and problems; and the second as a "resource" piece to identify and acquire resources and resource people to respond to school needs. Apple says central office leaders tell him about innovations in "different schools [where he can] tap into other leaders and their thoughts" and develop his teaching staff's "skill set [through] liaisons with other schools." Similarly, Yellow Grove's Ms. Star works closely with SEO Light as her main contact with central office and seeks his counsel when difficult problems arise at school.

Star comments that she wants “to be portrayed as fair so when [she calls] central office, [they know she really has] an issue [and needs] help.”

In contrast to the principals of the Beam Family, the principals of the Light Family interact regularly with one another. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring describes the inter-principal relationship as “collegial” in part because of their similar “expectations and responsibilities.” Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss says that she has built “relationships with other principals and [she gets] out of it what [she] put[s] in.” Moss meets formally and socially with the Light family principals and enjoys “a really good working relationship.” She believes that principals need “networks to talk about professional development organizational things, leadership and [school] problems.” Red Tree’s Mr. Apple is also pleased with the contacts within the Light family and says that “he’[s] met a lot of people through the family of schools [to plan with] exchange ideas [and] discuss difficulties.” Principal Apple likes visiting other schools to “have a quick tour of the school and [then] come out bursting with ideas and energy.” Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star often connects with principals to get or to give “guidance, [and to provide] that sober second reflection”, to defuse tense situations and uncover a fresh understanding of a vexing problem. Star considers herself “lucky [to have] three or four administrators [with whom she can be] very frank”.

Boundary spanning leadership interactions with teachers are the most important for the four principals in the Light family. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring describes teachers as the “mainstay of the day to day operations” with whom he balances having a professional principal-to-teacher relationship with “developing a supportive collegial atmosphere.”

Purple Heather's Ms. Moss, works hard to develop rapport with her teachers and comments that she treats, "every single teacher with respect as if [they were] loved." Red Tree's Mr. Apple observes that most teachers want to do the "best they [can] do," but he worries about teachers who are still in "isolation mode [who closes] the door and when [he questions] something [think] that [he is] criticizing them [when what he really was asking:] Is this the best for the child?" Mr. Apple describes himself as the teachers' "coach [and] biggest supporter."

Both Purple Heather's Ms. Moss and Red Tree's Mr. Apple talk about recognizing and developing teacher strengths. Apple contends that teachers build their "craft [to fill their] toolbox [with the] more tools the better." Yellow Grove's Ms. Star says she would "like to say that every one of [her] interactions with teachers was positive but [it would] be foolish to say that." Star tells her teachers she is not there "to criticize, [but] to listen [and challenge them] to get the best for the kids."

The Light family principals describe boundary spanning interactions with school parents and the community at large. Blue Bell's Mr. Ring identifies "connecting with parents" as essential to mediating problems that could "put the school on its back." Ring helps parents navigate the educational system, and offers "a lot of supportive handholding" to work through difficult issues. Purple Heather's Ms. Moss agrees that parents and school councils require her attention. Red Tree's Mr. Apple says he also interacts with school board trustees. Yellow Grove's Ms. Star affirms that her school has "a very, very positive and very supportive school community."

The Light family principals acknowledge that school system and school changes affect everyone in their communities and that resistance to new approaches can emerge from any quarter. Purple Heather's Ms. Moss says she plants "seeds early on" as part of the change process. Red Tree's Mr. Apple feels he leads and guides innovation. Yellow Grove's Ms. Star reflects on the dilemma of pleasing her constituents and observes that "when [she does] what everybody [wants], everybody [loves her]. But when [she makes] hard decisions, [she opens herself] up to criticism." Star says being up to date on district policies prepares her to respond to parental misgivings.

In summary, the Light family principals demonstrate boundary spanning interactions most often with the teachers in their schools, next with the other principals in their family of schools, followed by the central office leaders, and the general public. The interactions of the Light family principals resemble those of the Beam family except for one major difference. The Light family principals' regular and meaningful boundary spanning interactions with the family member schools contrast with the almost non-existent inter-school contact reported by the Beam family principals. The four principals of the Light family interact with each other often to seek and share information, and to plan together for professional development.

Types of boundaries. The Light family principals talked about the types of boundaries they experienced in their work. Similar to the central office leaders and the Beam family principals, they shared insights on hierarchical, organizational, personal, professional, ideological, geographic, cultural, and political and policy boundaries.

Hierarchical boundaries. The Light family principals recognize that while hierarchical boundaries exist to delineate functions within the school system, they do not feel overly constrained by formal structures. Blue Bell's Mr. Ring, an experienced administrator, says that "building a relationship with each of the different levels [of the school system takes] a lot of time [but he is] pretty much the same person whether talking to a parent or talking to a teacher." Ring enjoys strong relationships with educators at all levels of the school system, from the province's top bureaucrats to the teachers in the classroom. Purple Heather's Ms. Moss says being "really organized" helps her span the different boundaries and finds "the district nothing but supportive."

For Yellow Grove's Ms. Star, hierarchical boundaries are more "an ideology [of the] people in [the] system." But Star accepts that titles and rates of pay matter more to some than others. She believes that everyone is really "in the same boat [with] different roles in the boat." Red Tree's Mr. Apple, a novice principal, laments that he has not yet developed "the relationships [to work easily] across [hierarchical] boundaries." Apple observes, however, that within his own school "as long as [he accepts] the contributions of everybody, [he flattens] out the hierarchical [divides]." But Apple says he has to remember that as a principal his words have "more power than [he might] think."

Professional boundaries. Professional boundaries affect how the four principals in the Light family interact with the teachers in their schools and their school communities. Blue Bell's Mr. Ring reflects on how codes of ethics and standards influence the way he talks to his teachers even though they belong to the same union. He says that because of professional boundaries he cannot "maintain the conversation the

same way [as if he were] sitting in a position that [had] a different role.” Ring believes his “presence [and his] appearance [contribute to his] professionalism.” Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss uses her professional code of ethics as a guide on how to interact with teachers and to manage the boundaries around being principal. Red Tree’s Mr. Apple says that in his school he is “pretty open and friendly” but always professional with staff and parents, and he occasionally has to put his “boss hat on.” Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star reflects on her professional responsibility to safeguard confidential information and judge how much to share across levels of authority.

Personal boundaries. The Light family principals responded to questions about personal boundaries in different ways. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring says he values personal boundaries but was uncomfortable when teachers tried to pass along rumours to him about other teachers, other schools and the district. He said he was not interested in hearing gossip. Mr. Ring believes that personal boundaries are interwoven with ideological boundaries when it came to sharing stories. Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss says she creates her “own personal boundaries, [but still has] an open door.” Moss is aware that she is always a principal and the public expects certain behaviours from her, whether at the “soccer field [or] out in the community.”

Red Tree’s Mr. Apple works hard to build relationships with his school’s teachers who are often older and more experienced than he is, to assure them of “his respect” and to assuage their fears that he intends to “flip everything around.” Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star, a seasoned school leader, speaks of the personal connections she has developed with educators at all levels over the decades and comments that, “some [were] positive and

some were not so good.” A challenge for Star is to let old wounds heal and old conflicts die.

Ideological boundaries. Differences in ideological beliefs affected the boundary spanning interactions of the Light family principals. The principals point to the challenges of confronting different ideological beliefs within their staffs when they implement new policy directions such as differentiated instruction, inclusion, student assessment, and social justice. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring expresses concern about a decline in the professionalism of new teachers and wonders if “the ‘me’ society [has] infiltrated the school,” because he has witnessed recent hires exiting the building “ten minutes after the bell every day.” Ring believes teachers do not experience “professional collegial development when [they are] not in the [school] building.” But he also argues that “good things [can come] out of different ideological beliefs,” and that it is important to span ideological boundaries in everything from “district policies to school based policies [and] school based expectations [to foster] an atmosphere where people [express] their ideological beliefs.” Ring contends that honest debate informs good decision-making, distinguishes negotiable from non-negotiable positions, and allows people to work together to improve the school system.

Red Tree’s Mr. Apple observes that some teachers in his socio-economically challenged school let ideological boundaries get in the way of empathizing with the situations of the students at the school. Teachers do not always demonstrate appropriate expectations for children from marginalized and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Apple explains that he identifies with the world of his students because he grew up in

circumstances similar to theirs and as a result, he sees “a [school] community full of parents working really hard and if their kids [come to school] on time in the morning dressed [that is] okay.” Mr. Apple says he works with his teachers to “build relationships and build expectations.” At Yellow Grove, Ms. Star says that educators have to be open to change and not “hang on to ideological views [without question], black and white,” beliefs that they had when they began their careers. Ms. Star emphasizes that every child is different and merits more than a one size fits all approach to teaching and learning.

Organizational boundaries. The Light family principals comment on the impact of organizational boundaries on their work. Mr. Ring of Blue Bell Academy complains that divisional boundaries at central office mean he sometimes has “five [different] people asking [him] the same question.” Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss talks about the importance of timetabling at her school to address organizational boundaries. Moss describes how she schedules physical education and music classes back to back to maximize student learning time and to facilitate teacher meetings during the school day. She says that it is “more time efficient, [facilitates] more communication [and] more collaboration, and [that is] what people [are] asking for.”

Red Tree’s Mr. Apple discusses the challenges of overseeing and abiding by the three collective agreements of three different unions within his school. Apple says he struggles with “the different working hours.” He has problems with the district’s maintenance department, and says he has “four rooms full of stuff [ready to] leave the building, and [he’s] been all year trying to get it done.” Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star argues that the different levels of the school system need to focus on “finding solutions” to

problems with organizational boundaries because they all have “parts of the solution.”

Geographical boundaries. Geographical boundaries do not present many difficulties for the principals in the Light family. Red Tree’s Mr. Apple, however, reflects on his previous experiences as a school administrator in a rural area where member schools were an hour’s drive away, and principals travelled “eighty kilometers” to visit each other’s schools. Apple observes that in his current urban setting, geographical boundaries do affect the fundraising potential of schools, with inner city schools able to raise a few thousand dollars compared to tens of thousands of dollars in richer neighbourhoods.

Cultural boundaries. Questions about cultural boundaries elicit different kinds of responses from the Light family principals. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring talks about the working culture of his school and the cross-generational nature of his staffroom where young teachers teach alongside older more experienced teachers. He observes evidence of different work ethics. Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss equates cultural boundaries with staff perceptions of children from lower socio-economic and marginalized backgrounds, such as “refugees, immigrants [who make up her] diverse school population.” She worries about the “stereotypical boundaries within schools,” that affect teacher expectations and beliefs about children’s learning potential.

Red Tree’s Mr. Apple responds that culture refers to “all sorts of things [such as the] wide and varied backgrounds in the school [to the] entrenched culture” in certain housing areas of the school’s catchment area. Apple observes that “families who have had a negative experience with schools [present] real difficulties [and the school has to

overcome] those cultural boundaries [to] bring parents into the school building.”

Likewise, Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star argues that her school’s cultural boundaries are “socio-economic [with] values and interactions that [are] different.”

Political and policy boundaries. The Light family principals do not offer opinions on political boundaries, but speak about policy boundaries that affect their boundary spanning leadership interactions. Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss says that as a principal, she is obliged to positively represent policies to her staff even if she does not “agree with” the policies. Red Tree’s Mr. Apple comments that provincial policies based on student enrolment are often unfair to small schools that need services such as English second language support. Apple also identifies policies around pre-service preparation of teachers, as a boundary to adequately preparing teachers to work with students in challenging socio-economic circumstances. He says that new teachers do not receive enough practical experience to carry out the real work of teaching before starting their first jobs, especially in inner-city schools.

In summary, the principals of the Light family encounter many of the same kinds of boundaries as the Beam family principals and the central office leaders. However, the principals of the Light family convey a more determined commitment than the Beam family to leading across boundaries between schools to achieve their educational goals. They also frequently raise concerns about social justice.

Boundary spanning leadership practices. The principals of the Light family describe their interactions during a typical school day, and provide details on specific examples of boundary spanning leadership they have experienced in their recent past.

Based on their responses, more than half of the principals' contacts occur in planned and unplanned meetings and another third in developing professional, district and school plans. They spend about a tenth of their interactions focussing on building leadership capacity. Similar to the central office leaders and the Beam family principals, the Light family principals describe boundary spanning leadership practices that involve *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming* policies, practices and events.

Making meaning. The principals in the Light family talk about boundary spanning *making meaning* interactions consistent with the literature such as relaying and interpreting information, developing and exchanging skills, and sharing perspectives and practices. The principals say that the strategic plan of the district, the school development plans, and the professional growth plans of teachers provide a context for *making meaning* practices. The Light family principals describe how the information they garner through their discussions with teachers and classroom visitations provides a starting point for school and family of school initiatives. All four principals talk about a recent family-wide professional development session on twenty-first century learning that the staffs of the schools in the Light family collectively planned, developed, and implemented together.

The Light family principals say they communicate regularly with the district office to offer their skills and knowledge, and that of their teaching staffs, to contribute to district led plans and projects. Interactions between the principals and the central office leaders are generally positive. Beyond communication, principals' comment on the value

of participating in district led initiatives. Purple Heather's Ms. Moss, says that belonging to district committees helps her network with other school administrators, share and bring back ideas, and that "having the principals connected to one another [benefits] the district." The Light family principals consider their involvement in district planning as part of aligning the district goals with school goals. Yellow Grove's Ms. Star says the district's strategic plan serves as the basis for her own school's plan so that they are "all in sync with each other." When individual schools undergo their regular external review of their school development plans every three or four years, the Light family principals work closely with SEO Light to assess and evaluate their school's progress. Red Tree's Mr. Apple describes the review process as a means to connect meaningfully with the central office, and involves "a lot of hard work, [that is ultimately] a truly rewarding experience."

The Light family principals recognize that they need to acknowledge and harness the skills of teachers, both within their schools and from school to school within the Light family and across the school system. Blue Bell's Mr. Ring encourages teachers to lead initiatives and assures staff they have "the power to make decisions." Purple Heather's Ms. Moss says she wants "sharing to happen" in her school.

Red Tree's Mr. Apple says he likes to "sit down and reflect upon what [they have] achieved as a staff". Apple and the teachers identify their needs and form committees to address programming and behaviour concerns. He says the process often starts with "a couple of teachers trying things," and then spreads throughout the staff. Teachers then contact colleagues in other schools within and beyond their own family, to dialogue on

common issues. Mr. Apple believes that there are “a lot of good teacher networks and contacts out there and a lot of people working together.”

The Light family principals recognize the link between professional growth and attending conferences. Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star says that she and three of her teachers attended a conference together on new teaching innovations that resulted in changes at her school that spread to other schools in the school system. Ms. Star relates that Yellow Grove subsequently hosted visits from other staffs who wanted to see their teachers model the changes. Yellow Grove teachers also accepted invitations from schools to present their strategies. Ms. Star calls the experience one that built “capacity in [the] teachers, empowering them to share ideas that work.”

In summary the Light family principals, similar to the Beam family principals, demonstrate boundary spanning leadership practices that support *making meaning* within their schools and with central office through uncovering, exchanging, and interpreting information, skills and practices. Unlike the Beam family, however, the Light family principals recognize the value of networking with peers through their family of schools’ configuration. The Light family principals report frequent *making meaning* interactions among family member schools to acquire and share new skills, to model innovations, and to support joint professional development.

Administering. The Light family principals talked about the *administering* tasks of boundary spanning leadership in their work: coordinating, planning, organizing, resourcing, buffering and monitoring. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring compares the nature of his job to a “lighthouse [because he has to] turn rapidly and cast light on so many different

areas.” Ring says he responds to countless and persistent requests from all levels of the school system, in what he calls “rapid fire change ups.” He adds that he is “aware of trying to keep to a schedule tend to the day [but that] certain things” throw him off, and as a result he has to modify his to-do list. Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss says that scheduled and unscheduled meetings are part of her routine, “from the moment [she comes] through the door.” Teachers often ask to see her for a minute, and whether she answers yes or no, they take “their minute.” She says she always has “to be thinking about everything that [is] happening.”

Mr. Apple at Red Tree says part of his *administering* tasks means meeting children and parents every day as they arrive for school. He says “standing at the door for 25 minutes in the morning” gives him a chance to have conversations about what is going in the community and to monitor how his students are doing. Apple also visits all the classrooms in the morning and checks in with teachers to “make sure they [are] in their classroom, [and] that the students [are] starting to get ready for their school day”. Mr. Apple interacts with students and teachers throughout the day at recess and lunch, through informal chats and discussions. He sits down every afternoon with his assistant principal, to review the day’s happenings and to make plans together for the school. Principal Apple also meets with every teacher in his office three to four times a year to discuss their assignments and their resource requirements and to ask them “what [they need] to be able to succeed?”

Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star tries to get as much achieved as possible from her daily plan, but is completely open to unscheduled meetings. She tells parents her door is

always open for them and that she promises to always “meet them.” Star believes in high “visibility” in her school, and says she is “in and out of every class,” not necessarily every single day but quite frequently. As a result, “the students [know her] and the teachers [know she is] there.”

Technology plays a role in how the Light family principals *administer* their work and span the boundaries within their schools, with other schools and with central office. The principals use various electronic devices to improve efficiency. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring comments, however, that he has moments when he wants the email system to “go to the moon” because there are so many messages, and those sending the messages, often central office, expect such rapid replies. Ring calls it a “vortex that [one] can get sucked into.” All four principals report receiving from fifty to more than a hundred emails a day plus phone calls that need to be answered. Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star likes smartphones because, “at the same time as [she is] walking [she can be] answering an email,” but concedes that she often has to answer emails at home in the evening.

The principals in the Light family monitor the professional growth of their teachers. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring recounts that he and his administrative team work with teachers to explain the steps of professional growth and to create trusting conditions for their interactions. Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star connects the professional growth plans of teachers to the goals of the school development plan and the work of the action committees at her school. Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss says that the principals in the Light family work collectively to support professional development initiatives that contribute to teacher professional growth of all Light family schools. Ms. Moss gives an example of a

recent professional development session on twenty-first century learning that teachers from the Light family schools designed, created, organized, and implemented. She explains how teachers came together across schools to take leadership roles and to establish lasting contacts with colleagues at other sites. The Light family principals say they provided the resources and the “structures [and the] time and the PD days to [allow for] the sharing and working together.” Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss contends that professional development must be “more school directed and teacher directed.” Red Tree’s Mr. Apple says he was “proud of the ownership that the staff” took of professional development.

In summary the principals of the Light family spend much of their day attending to *administering* boundary spanning practices such as scheduled and unscheduled interactions with teachers, students, and the central office. The Light family principals monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their schools’ classrooms. They employ technology to improve their efficiency at completing tasks. The principals coordinate schedules to allow teachers to meet with one another, and provide organizational support and resources for initiatives such as professional development sessions within their family of schools.

Creating conditions. The Light family principals acknowledge that *creating conditions*, such as building trust, forging commitment, developing relationships, and making connections across roles, settings and functions is an important boundary spanning leadership practice. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring believes in the power of “face to face” contact over electronic communication when it comes to marshaling support for school or

family of school projects. Ring takes a leadership role and invites the participation of other schools with common interests to meet and jointly address issues at his school building, and he encourages other schools to do the same. Mr. Ring says he works hard to make regular staff meetings meaningful and substantial, and to relegate routine information to newsletters, emails and postings. In a similar way, Purple Heather's Ms. Moss says she creates "the organizational structures the time and the meeting structures [to promote] sharing and leadership among staff [and create a] positive atmosphere" in her school, beginning with her own positive attitude.

Red Tree's Mr. Apple believes in the power of conversations, with individuals and groups, and he says he listens for "consistent and common themes." He comments that "once you start your things together you grow together and then you want to achieve more together," and this benefits the teachers and the students. Apple says that through joint initiatives teachers come to see their jobs "not just to teach at grade level [but] to teach every child" in the school. Mr. Apple believes in "openness and respect [and the] ability to have conflict" and disagreements without damaging relationships so that a "diversity of ideas and philosophies" are aired and explored. Yellow Grove's Ms. Star agrees that "respect [and a] respectful working environment [and being] approachable" are essential to working well with colleagues. According to Star, principals and teachers have to feel "safe [to bring] their concerns forward," and know that their views are heard. Ms. Star adds that a workplace should also be a place where "you want to have fun."

In summary the Light family principals recognize that in addition to *making meaning*, and *administering* as boundary spanning leadership practices, *creating conditions* is an integral part of supporting interactions between principals and teachers, and between teachers and other teachers. The Light family principals focus their efforts on the teachers in their own schools and on the teachers in their family of schools. They do not provide any examples of how they improve the conditions for interacting with central office leaders.

Transforming. I asked the principals in the Light family to talk about examples of boundary spanning leadership interactions that had a *transforming* effect on their school or the school system. Mr. Ring of Blue Bell says his school's special services team developed a document that was "a history of the special education process" of every special needs child in the school. Because of the leadership and actions of the committee, all the teachers of a special needs' child were able to access and contribute to the student's profile, and work together to ensure that the student's prescribed programming, assessment and evaluation were aligned and reflected in the child's progress reports. Through consultation and sharing leadership the teachers at Blue Bell Academy spanned organizational boundaries to transform their level of service to special needs students.

Yellow Grove's Ms. Star recounts that her experience as a member of her professional association's school administrator council transformed her approach to educational leadership and interaction. Ms. Star gives as an example of transformational change her organizational role in the preparation of a recent provincial conference for principals and central office leaders. Rather than dictate an agenda to the committee,

Principal Star sought member input, encouraged debate, and elicited feedback. As a result, she says, the conference committee produced an agenda that reflected the interests and needs of the association's members.

Red Tree's Mr. Apple talks about the importance of informal conversations with teachers as a way to develop *transforming* innovations at his socially and economically challenged school. At Red Tree Elementary the focus of instruction is often basic literacy. But because of his discussions with teachers, Principal Apple also realized they needed to do more for the school's high achievers who were reading well beyond grade level. As a result, the special needs teachers in collaboration with classroom teachers initiated a dedicated online blog where students recorded their comments on higher level books and received feedback from one another, and from teachers on their posts. Mr. Apple calls the plan "a work in progress" that encourages students to advance at an individualized pace. He reflects on the process of change with teachers and says that the first step is to establish "trust [and to] rely upon each other [and] to know that in times of need other people [are] there." He believes that through trust come the "communication [and] conversation" that sparks innovation. Apple observes that as "conversation builds, [teachers] see action and once [they] see action [they start] to see change." He says he gave "power" to the teachers in his school, created "professional conditions" and accepted disagreements to encourage "diversity" of opinion. Principal Apple comments that his staff meetings turned their focus to classroom practices and "celebrating successes." By establishing the appropriate conditions through conversations and interactions, Red Tree's Mr. Apple led across the boundaries between him and the

teachers to address the needs of advanced readers at his school and to create an innovation in the individualized reading plan. Principal Apple comments that “one of the best things about the staff, [is they are] very, very good at finding solutions.”

Purple Heather’s principal, Ms. Moss, gives an example of boundary spanning leadership that involves all the school principals and teaching staffs in her family of schools. She describes how the Light family principals decided to develop their own family professional development day on twenty-first century learning. They envisioned an initiative that would maximize the involvement of teachers in the planning, directing, delivery and benefits of the session. The principals asked teachers to appoint a chairperson at every grade level in every school who then became responsible for overseeing the professional development planning for that grade. The principals and teachers developed a blog to facilitate communication with central office program leaders, to pose and receive answers to questions. Teachers met together at each other’s schools, made valuable contacts, planned, and organized the professional development session on twenty-first century learning. When the day arrived for the formal professional development day, rather than assemble together in one room, the teachers went straight to their dedicated spaces where they received an online message from the family’s principals in the form of a humorous but informative IMovie that included a message from the chief executive officer of the district. At the close of the day the Light family school teachers used Google docs to post information, and evaluate their experiences. The teachers described the day as one of the “best professional development days” they had ever had. Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss notes that “it was all about sharing [and] every

teacher came away with something new.” While the focus of the session was on using technology to enhance twenty-first century learning, the joint family of school project uncovered leadership potential because “leaders [emerged] at every grade level [and everyone learned] a lot of new things.” Moss feels that this collective Light family project paved “the way for the future in [their] schools, the way [they want to do] professional development” and it *transformed* the way principals, the teachers and central office leaders thought about professional development.

The Light family principals provide four examples of *transforming* boundary spanning practices. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring and Red Tree’s Mr. Apple recount initiatives where principals and teachers work together and share leadership to respond to the individualized needs of students within their schools. Yellow Grove’s Ms. Star furnishes an example of a multi-tiered boundary spanning collaboration to design a conference for educational leaders. Purple Heather’s Ms. Moss recounts how the joint planning of a professional development initiative within the Light family of schools resulted in enduring working relationships and boundary spanning leadership among principals, teachers and central office leaders.

In summary the Light family principals participate in four kinds of boundary spanning leadership practices that can be categorized as: *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming*. The Light family principals exercise boundary spanning leadership with teachers in their own schools, with their member principals in the Light family, with central office leaders, and with the public. Unlike the Beam family where principals seldom interact, the principals of the Light family meet and

communicate regularly and purposefully to share information and skills, organize meetings and events, nurture professional relationships, and bring about transforming changes in their schools.

Summary

Boundary spanning interactions create new opportunities for learning, sharing, leading (Kanter, 2009; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009), and transforming the way systems operate (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2009). The responses of the Beam family principals and the Light family principals to the first research question indicate that both groups of principals engage in boundary spanning leadership with the teachers in their own schools. The Beam family principals' next most frequent interactions occur with central office leaders and then with the public. The Beam family principals do not generally span the boundaries between the schools in their families to exchange information, administer events, build relationships or transform collective practices. Their boundary spanning leadership among member schools takes places almost exclusively at formal meetings convened by SEO Beam four times per year.

The Light family principals, in contrast, list their family member school principals as the next most frequent target of boundary spanning leadership after their interactions with their own teachers. The Light family principals list central office leaders as third in terms of frequency of contact. They depend on their designated senior education officer, SEO Light to represent their views and liaise between them and the central office.

The principals, from both families, experience similar types of boundaries to those encountered by the central office leaders. The principals comment that *hierarchical* boundaries define their work relationships and their responsibilities without overly constraining their interactions with central office, with teachers or with each other. The principals from both families characterize their boundary spanning interactions with their constituents as more collegial and respectful than hierarchical. Likewise, the principals see their *professional* boundaries as mediated by laws and codes of ethics. The *personal* boundaries for principals pose challenges because principals and teachers work closely together. Principals realize they have to guard against perceptions of favouritism or cronyism when they socialize with teachers outside of work. The principals from both families confront *ideological* boundaries when central office leaders, principals and teachers respond to teaching and learning innovations in different and divergent ways. *Organizational* boundaries appear in many forms for principals such as when dealing with multiple bargaining units in schools, addressing timetabling problems, and navigating different working hours for principals and central office leaders. For principals in both families, *geographical* boundaries tend only to cause problems when parents want their children to attend schools outside their catchment area. *Cultural* boundaries present to principals in different ways: as work cultures, as marginalized socio-economic culture, and as diverse ethnic cultures. Principals in both families understand they must demonstrate boundary spanning leadership of *political* and *policy* boundaries.

The principals from both the Beam and the Light families exercise boundary spanning leadership through four kinds of practices: *making meaning*; *administering*;

creating conditions; and *transforming*. All the principals *make meaning* when they communicate and interpret information, implement directives, and develop and share skills and practices with teachers in their schools and with central office leaders. Both families of principals execute boundary spanning leadership when they perform *administering* actions when they coordinate, plan, organize, resource, buffer, and monitor activities at their schools and between their schools and the central office. All eight principals *create conditions* when they establish trust, ensure safety, celebrate diversity, foster commitment, nurture relationships, build identities, forge connections, share experiences, develop cohesive culture in their schools and with central office leaders. The principals provide evidence that they employ boundary spanning leadership to *transform* school policies, practices and procedures with the contribution and insight of central office leaders and teachers. Principals in the Beam family exercise boundary spanning leadership with teachers, with central office leaders, their own school communities, and with university researchers and community agencies. The Beam principals, however rarely lead across the boundaries between the schools within their family. The Light family principals, however, make a special effort to extend their boundary spanning leadership practices to their family member schools.

Research Question Three

The third research question is: *How does boundary spanning leadership help distribute leadership in a school system?* Scholars have recommended that formal leaders in school systems and schools find ways to distribute leadership among their constituents beyond their formally designated roles to improve efficiency and effectiveness, share

decision-making, and foster organizational learning (Gronn, 2009; Halverson, 2007; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2010; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Distributed leadership often means that formal leaders must work to modify organizational and hierarchical structures so that a wider range of participants can contribute to both formal and informal leadership (Harris, 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Sheppard, Brown & Dibbon, 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). Distributing leadership entails crossing the boundaries of settings, roles, functions, identities and perspectives to ensure that participants work together respectfully and productively (Brundrett, 2010; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009). Boundary spanning leadership offers a framework to better comprehend how differences and divides affect initiatives to distribute leadership in school systems and schools (Akkerman & Bakker, 2010). I asked the five central office leaders of the Prism District and the eight principals in the Beam family and the Light family of schools to provide examples of boundary spanning leadership practices that helped distribute leadership in the school system or their schools to increase *efficiency* and *effectiveness*, *share decision-making*, and support *organizational learning*.

Boundary Spanning Leadership and Distributed Leadership

Central office leaders. Central office leaders say that leading across boundaries provides opportunities for multiple leaders at multiple levels in the school system to contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness in operations and initiatives. As previously mentioned, SEO Beam gave the example of the district's implementation of online registration for kindergarten. She believed that the change owed its success to the

collective efforts and collaborative leadership of central office leaders, technical staff, principals and teachers. Similarly, Dr. Shade's account of the problems with the implementation of a new student evaluation policy in the district suggested that if formal leaders wanted constituents to "embrace change", they needed to listen to "resisters" and share leadership and participation with representatives of all stakeholders from the development phase to the enactment stage of policy.

The central office leaders provide additional evidence of boundary spanning leadership that supported distributed leadership. SEO Ray gives the example of the implementation of a revised approach to special needs spearheaded by the provincial department of education. He and other district leaders alerted the department to the need to develop locally relevant professional development materials that would be meaningful for principals and teachers. Taking the lead, SEO Ray collaborated with department of education leaders, other central office leaders, principals and teachers, and engaged their guidance and expertise to produce their own home produced videos and documents as part of a portable flexible professional development package. The result was an efficient and effective way to support the implementation of a new program that came about because of shared leadership across multiple boundaries.

The central office leaders say they consider the family of schools' arrangement to be a forum for distributing leadership and for discussion that increases efficiency and effectiveness in the school system. Dr. Shade values families of schools as structures that facilitate communication, interaction and shared leadership. SEO Ray comments that he relies on the designated senior education officers responsible for families of schools to

connect the lived worlds of schools, principals and teachers with the lived world of central office. Overall the central office leaders believe that interactions that span boundaries are essential to distribute leadership and bring about efficient and effective change in a school system.

Sharing decision-making across boundaries, however, does not always produce the results anticipated by the central office leaders, but does nonetheless; provide important lessons for the future. Dr. Hugh gives the example of the construction of a multi-thousand-dollar structure on the grounds of a local school in response to the school's request for improved access to electrical power. The central office leaders recognized the urgency to complete the work, agreed to the request, and supplied the funding. As part of the decision-making process, central office officials, the school principal and assistant principal, district technical staff and the project manager met, reviewed and approved the construction plans. On the diagrams, the soon-to-be built structure seemed small and unimposing. The school administrative team consequently chose not to share the details of the project with their school council or their staff, whose support was desirable but not necessary for the construction to go forward. After all, the school leaders, the staff, and council had initiated the request to upgrade services. The construction of the new tower took place over a holiday period. Unfortunately, when staff and students returned after the break, pandemonium ensued with accusations flying and parents saying to the Dr. Hugh "Who in their right mind would put that there?" The structure had turned out to be much larger and more intrusive than expected. Discussions quickly followed between central office leaders and the school leaders to find a solution

to conserve the school administration's good relationship with its teacher and parent community. Dr. Hugh did not want to waste thousands more dollars removing or rebuilding the structure. In hindsight, the central office and the school administrative team decided they should have delved a little deeper into what the diagrams actually represented and shared more information with their staff and school parents. The goal of the collaboration on the infrastructure installation had been to engage the school and the school district in a joint process to bring about improved electrical service, but the actual result was the creation of an uncomfortable problem that had to be redressed. Dr. Hugh comments that "It [was] too bad that [they had not] picked up on [it]." The infrastructure example illustrates that distributing leadership and sharing decisions across boundaries can be beneficial, but leaders must ensure that those making the decisions are adequately competent to anticipate the implications and the consequences of their directives. The central office leaders demonstrate an awareness of the connection between boundary spanning leadership and shared decision-making. Unfortunately, their awareness grew out of the costly mistake of building an obtrusive structure on school grounds without a thorough public consultation.

Dr. Shade and SEO Ray also describe how they oversee the planning of district level professional development initiatives based on teachers' self-authored professional growth plans. Dr. Shade talks about succession planning and the district's leadership program that all principals and prospective principals attend in order to "develop their leadership capacity."

SEO Beam and SEO Light provide insight on how they engage in organizational learning and capacity building through distributing leadership in their families of schools while using boundary spanning practices. SEO Beam says she “always [looks for] leadership [in] other people.” She sees her actions as “facilitating.” SEO Beam says she learns a great deal from others and speaks to the principals of her family of schools about the “collective wisdom” in the room. She values talking things out, listening to the experiences of the teachers, and seeking their “input.” In her family of schools’ meeting together with the principals, she talks about “common themes, common interests amongst a group of schools,” and getting together to design their own family level professional development.

SEO Light believes that “leadership [is] who you are” and that in his role he has to find “that little spark [that brings] out the leader,” in people. SEO Light feels his role is to identify, nurture, and build the “professional capacity [and] confidence” of aspiring leaders and give them the opportunities to lead. Light works on leadership development with both “new hires [and more experienced] people to [help them] become part of the administrative” staff.

SEO Ray likes to give opportunities to principals and teachers to take on leadership roles because he cannot do everything himself and he knows he needs their support. SEO Beam believes that schools are “leading the charge” with their school development teams who demonstrate leadership in a range of tasks and innovations.

In summary the five central office leaders acknowledge a connection between distributing leadership and boundary spanning leadership practices in promoting increased efficiency and effectiveness, shared decision-making, and organizational learning in the school system.

The Beam family principals. All four principals in the Beam family believe that boundary spanning leadership helps distribute leadership and contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of their schools. Ms. Flight of Silver Wing School observes that “the nature of the initiatives at the school [are] such that [she needs] to invest in [the] leadership within [the] building [because she alone cannot] do it all.” Ms. Rock of Bronze Ville Elementary says one of her main goals is to “promote [and] empower [others] to be leaders [and to plant] the seed,” but that teachers have to take up the challenge to lead change. The Beam family principals consider teacher professional growth plans, the district’s strategic plan, and the schools’ development plans as launching pads to cross boundaries to initiate change. Principal Pitt of Apricot Dale Academy says that his school’s revised development plan includes a specific goal for developing teacher leadership.

Apricot Dale’s Mr. Pitt gives an example of how a school art gallery project came about through boundary spanning leadership by teachers, students and members of the community. As a result, teachers, students, and community members volunteered to work outside school hours to transform the school into an art gallery open for public view.

Silver Wing School’s Principal Flight describes a case of an initiative where multiple layers of interaction across organizational and professional boundaries resulted

in significant technological improvements in her school. Silver Wing's planning team, composed of teachers and administrators, wanted to improve the school's infrastructure to accommodate emerging technologies. Through contacts with other schools, Silver Wing's committee familiarized itself with the steps needed to implement wireless technology in their building. Principal Flight interacted with another principal in the Beam family who had just been through the process. Central office leaders contributed their perspectives and expertise to the Silver Wing School discussions. Informed by all their consultations on hardware, software, and professional development needs, Silver Wing's staff moved ahead successfully with the technology changes to increase student and teacher access to technology and to enhance teaching and learning practices. The examples provided by the principals in the Beam family of schools demonstrate that distributing leadership and leading across boundaries contribute to increased effectiveness and efficiency in their schools. They also contribute to building leadership capacity within the school system.

The Beam family principals report they engage in shared decision-making on a range of issues. Apricot Dale's Mr. Pitt recounts how "a combined group of individuals in the school [decided to do] an inventory check on math manipulatives [and found] a lot of materials they didn't even know," they had. Subsequently, the group of teachers "created a list of materials," available and this resulted in easier access to manipulatives, reduced expenditures on resources, and improved instruction. Teal Stone's Principal Lake observes that "one person [cannot] do everything for the school," so he provides people

with “leadership opportunities [and forges a] trust” to let people do what has to be done to benefit students.

Bronze Ville’s Principal Rock sees herself as “the facilitator the supportive one, [and a] decision-maker [as well as a] team player” whose role it is to help others be “the best they [can] be.” She gives the example of Bronze Ville’s joint project with a local university where her teachers chose to participate in the development, implementation, and leadership of a curriculum innovation that had implications for the whole school. Principal Rock said she “[modelled] shared leadership [and let teachers] go with it.” To take part in the project Ms. Rock and the teachers had to span organizational, geographical, ideological, and professional boundaries.

Principal Flight of Silver Wing School gives an example of decision-making about a child with exceptional needs that required consultation with multiple government agencies, in person and through electronic means to make life-significant decisions about the education of the child. The four Beam family principals demonstrate boundary spanning leadership practices that support shared decision-making, as aspect of distributed leadership.

To identify and encourage leadership and professional development among the teachers in their schools, the principals in the Beam family use face to face interactions, electronic communications, observations of teachers, formal professional growth plans, and the school development process. Bronze Ville’s Principal Rock supports teacher professional learning linked to the school-university partnership that allow teachers to attain university credits, gain knowledge and skills, and offer leadership to the rest of the

staff. Silver Wings' Ms. Flight encourages teachers to avail of professional development opportunities by affording them leave time and financial support. Principal Flight lets staff know when they are doing a great job or sharing skills with others. Teal Stone's Principal Lake envisions his school to be "a professional learning community [and he appreciates] the potential [in] others, [and looks] for strengths, and [provides] opportunities for people to shine or step up to the plate, or to embrace what [needs] to be done." The four Beam family principals say they benefit from their own professional development opportunities as well.

In summary the principals in the Beam family partake in leadership that spans the boundaries within their schools, and between their schools and their communities. Their undertakings serve to distribute leadership to improve efficiency and effectiveness, share decision-making, and increase organizational learning. Among the examples the principals provide are school-to-university joint projects, and a school-to-community art program. Only Silver Wing's Ms. Flight indicates that she relies on other family schools for advice on initiatives in her school. The family of schools' arrangement does not appear to privilege any consistent or pervasive intra-family boundary spanning interaction or distributed leadership among family member schools in the Beam family.

The Light family principals. The four principals in the Light family of schools recognize a connection between boundary spanning leadership and distributed leadership and believe that both kinds of leadership contribute to the efficient and effective running of their schools and their family of schools. Principal Ring of Blue Bell Academy says his teachers take the lead on many initiatives, such as event planning, and consult him

occasionally on concerns such as their budget. In Ring's view, teachers have "the ability to do all kinds of [things] without being double checked." Ring says that formal leaders have to provide the "structures [that permit] teachers to take things and go."

Purple Heather's Principal Moss, comments that it is "very important to know [her] staff [and] give them the opportunities to do things [because it is] very easy sometimes for administration to take it and do it all." Principal Apple of Red Tree Elementary says he notices the "leaders" in his school who support the committees "leading different things." At Red Tree, Mr. Apple conducts a weekly "organizational meeting" with representatives from classrooms, guidance, special needs and administration, for "administrative [items and observes] what a difference it [makes]." Apple then uses his monthly staff meetings to prepare and provide professional development sessions by teacher-led committees because administrative matters have already been addressed.

Yellow Grove's Principal Star comments that in the previous year her school went through its regular three-year external review that brought about a new school development plan that places priority on the development of teacher "leadership." Star feels good about her teachers "becoming leaders and doing well." Also, she says she works on her own professional development plan, particularly in technology, and avails of the expertise of teachers around her.

The principals in the Light family participate in school system initiatives. Purple Heather's Principal Moss serves on district committees and values the networking opportunities it affords. Red Tree's Mr. Apple appreciates his interactions with central

office leaders, administrators and teachers particularly during the external review process. The Light family of schools' principals find opportunities to overcome the physical and organizational boundaries between their schools to work together formally and informally. They call one another for professional advice, visit each other's schools, plan together, and share expertise from one school to another.

In the Light family of schools, principals and teachers share decision-making within schools, between schools, and with central office. The principals lead across physical and organizational boundaries to consult with one another and to distribute leadership. Blue Bell's Principal Ring takes "great pride" in saying that teachers in his school develop projects on their own and only come to him when they need resources. Ring says he tells his staff they have "the power to make decisions." But Ring admits from time to time he disagrees with a decision but lets it stand because in his view that is "the cost of doing business" in sharing decision-making.

Purple Heather's Principal Moss reveals that her school has revised its school development plan to include a "twenty-first century learning team" where teachers take leadership roles. Principal Apple of Red Tree Elementary thinks of teachers as his "colleagues" on whom he depends to help turn around their school. Apple wants to "resource [the teachers] as best" he can. He feels that "teachers [often have] the solutions in them [and] their fingers on the pulse of the issues."

Yellow Grove's Principal Star talks about the Light family professional development initiative on twenty-first century learning where teacher "leaders" ensured that materials and contributions came in from every school. Star comments that the

shared project was “win-win all around.” The Light family principals refer to their family interactions in a positive way. Purple Heather’s Principal Moss wants “to have more [teacher directed] family of schools’ professional development days where schools get together [with] teachers and senior education officers [and] program specialists.” The principals in the Light family promote shared decision-making as part of distributing leadership across multiple boundaries.

The Light family of schools’ principals utilize teachers’ professional growth plans, the school development process, internal and external reviews, and other interactions to encourage and support organizational learning and capacity building across boundaries in the school system. Yellow Grove’s Principal Star believes that her role is to empower “people to be involved in leadership,” and to provide and guide their professional development. Star wants to build “capacity for leadership in everybody: students, teachers, [and] parents [by] providing opportunities” for them to get involved regardless of the boundaries. Blue Bell’s Mr. Ring sees himself as contributing to the professional development of others as a technology savvy resource, and says he is “the go-to person on technology”. Purple Heather’s Principal Moss thinks it is important to encourage teachers, and invite them to share their strengths with other staff. Moss said she provides resource support for teachers to attend conferences and sessions related to their growth plans.

Red Tree’s Principal Apple is a firm supporter of “teacher to teacher” professional development. The teachers at Red Tree Elementary, a small school, regularly go beyond the boundaries of their school to plan with colleagues from other schools within their

family of schools and sometimes beyond their family. Principal Apple claims there are “a lot of good teacher networks and contacts out there and a lot of people working together.” Principal Apple says he and his teachers span organizational and geographic boundaries to improve their professional development.

The Light family principals reflect on the growth of their own professional capacity and credit the family arrangement of schools for contributing to their own professional development. Blue Bell’s Principal Ring says it was “through the family of schools that [they received] most opportunities to get professional development as principals,” where they shared experiences, held discussions, and followed-up with contacts. Purple Heather’s Principal Moss concurs, and adds that she also values attending regional, provincial and international conferences that allow her to gather and share exceptional ideas from “world renowned people.” Yellow Grove’s Principal Star attests that she learns new concepts from attending conferences that she can share when she returns home. Overall, the Light family principals provide examples of organizational learning connected to distributing leadership across multiple boundaries.

The principals in the Light family interact regularly across boundaries within their schools and across the boundaries between their schools and with central office to distribute leadership that increases efficiency and effectiveness, shares decision-making and supports organizational learning. The schools in the Light family appear to benefit greatly from their intra-family network of principals and teachers who collaborate on

planning for instruction and developing joint initiatives. The Light family principals also span boundaries to serve on district committees, attend conferences, and share expertise with colleagues.

Summary

The five central office leaders and the eight principals recount how they span multiple boundaries to increase the level of interaction, responsibility and accountability among their peers, constituents and stakeholders in order to distribute leadership in the school system. They give examples of formal and informal interactions across organizational, hierarchical, professional, ideological, and geographic boundaries of boundary spanning leadership practices that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of initiatives, support shared decision-making, and foster organizational learning.

Research Question Four

Research question four is “How does boundary spanning leadership help transform schools and support innovation in a school system”? According to Akkerman and Bakker (2011), boundary spanning leaders achieve transformational ends when they bring about deep changes in practices, generate new joint responses to problems, embed meaningful routines, ensure safe spaces for interaction while simultaneously conserving and valuing the unique identities and contributions of constituents. Boundary spanning leaders build on the capacity of individuals and groups to generate innovative ideas and transform thinking (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Chrobot-Mason, 2011). As also discussed in research questions one and two, the five central office leaders and the eight school principals provide evidence that they employ *transforming* practices as part of

their boundary spanning leadership. Research question four focusses on the impact of the *transforming* practices on the school system and its schools. In this section I further examine selected examples to demonstrate how central office leaders and school principals span multiple boundaries to create transformational changes and foster innovation.

Central office leaders and transformational practices. The five central office leaders give evidence that they enlist the participation and contribution of peers, school leaders, teachers, support staff and the community across ranks, settings and functions to collaborate to transform practices, policies and procedures and support innovation in the Prism school system. They provide examples of practices that led to transformational changes in the Prism School District. Dr. Shade describes how leading across boundaries transformed the implementation of the district's revised student evaluation policy which had been poorly received by principals, teachers and the public. The central office leaders listened to the feedback from school leaders, teachers and the broader community, struck a committee composed a wide range of constituents, and over two years reworked and revised the student evaluation policy. Structurally, the committee spanned several boundaries: organizational, hierarchical; personal, professional, ideological, cultural, geographical, and political. Over a two-year period, the viewpoints and perspectives of the committee members evolved as they interacted. They confronted ideological differences. At the end of the process, the committee released the revised student evaluation policy into the school system for feedback and received a more positive response than it had years before. Dr. Shade views the revision of the student evaluation

policy as an example of how boundary spanning leadership practices bring disparate factions together to exchange and interpret information in trusting conditions to achieve a transformational change in the school system.

Another example of how through boundary spanning leadership transforms systems, according to Dr. Hugh, presents in how central office-based itinerant teachers act as agents of innovation in the classrooms and teachers they visit. Itinerant teachers typically interact with teachers in classrooms where test results indicate that children are not performing well compared to their peers. This support at times meets with resistance from the teachers in the classrooms targeted for improvement. However, through dialogue, collaboration and discussion all parties come to appreciate the importance of working together to help all children. The itinerant teachers and the classroom teachers develop trusting professional relationships and they harness their collective skills to improve the teaching and learning in their classrooms. Dr. Hugh comments that regrettably government funding cuts signal the elimination of itinerant teacher positions that serve, in his view, a transformational boundary spanning leadership function in curriculum implementation and improvement.

SEO Beam reports how his boundary spanning leadership transformed the kindergarten registration process from a paper and pen in-person process to an on-line procedure. The change represented an innovation that affected all levels of the school system. SEO Beam says that with the support of central office leaders, technicians, principals, and teachers, they brought the idea forward, developed a plan, and implemented the change within a few short months. To achieve what SEO Beam

considers a transformational change, the committee crossed multiple organizational and professional boundaries and brought together an eclectic group of constituents who represented a range of functions, settings, perspectives and skills.

SEO Ray gives the example of how the district implemented significant changes to the service model for children with special needs as evidence of a transformational innovation in the school system. Provincial leaders, central office leaders, principals and teachers dialogued and collaborated to implement an inclusive model of special education that meant teachers worked with special needs children in their home classrooms. Through boundary spanning leadership, SEO Ray worked with teachers and others to help transform the way schools delivered special education programming.

SEO Light believes that the way his family of schools interacts with each member school as a professional learning community is evidence of a transformational change in the school system. Similar to the principals in the Light family of schools, SEO Light takes great pride in describing how the formal school leadership and teachers network together and interact across school boundaries on a regular basis to plan collectively for instruction and professional development.

In summary, the five central office leaders agree that boundary spanning leadership practices help transform policies, teaching and learning, routines, service delivery and professional interaction in the Prism School District. Boundary spanning leadership brings together expertise and perspectives from diverse constituencies to support innovation in the school system.

The Beam family principals and transformational practices. The principals of the Beam family say they also participate in boundary spanning leadership that has resulted in transformational changes in their schools and the school system. As already discussed in response to question two, Bronze Ville's principal and her teaching staff see their participation in a boundary spanning joint school-university research partnership as an example of a transformational change. It has changed the way her staff teaches and how the students learn in their school. Principal Rock says that the project allows her school to acquire new school resources, and provide professional growth opportunities for her teachers.

As also previously mentioned, Principal Pitt of Apricot Dale Academy sees boundary spanning leadership and multi-agency participation as important for adopting environmentally progressive cleaning and repair practices in the school system. Mr. Pitt liaised with central office leaders, the teachers' professional association, and provincial authorities to find a solution that allowed a teacher with severe allergies to continue to work at his school. As a result of the experiences at Apricot Dale Academy, transformational changes occurred in environmental practices throughout the school system.

Silver Wing's Principal Flight describes how her staff is collaborating to apply for technology funding to support their school plans to promote twenty-first century learning. Teal Stone's Principal Lake remarks that as a family of schools they have achieved transformational change in the way they conduct student assessment and evaluation.

In summary, the principals in the Beam family provide evidence of boundary spanning leadership that transforms programming, policies and practices, and leads to innovation in their schools and the school system.

The Light family principals and transformational practices. The Light family's principals offer examples of transformational changes connected to boundary spanning leadership practices across organizational, hierarchical, geographic, ideological, cultural, political, professional and personal boundaries within the school system. As previously discussed in response to research question two, Principal Ring of Blue Bell Academy relates how the efforts of his special needs committee and classroom teachers resulted in the development of individualized profiles for special needs students to ensure that teachers respond appropriately to their learning needs in all school settings. The school-wide collaboration led to a transformational change in the way all teachers taught and evaluated special needs students within their school. As also discussed in response to research question two, Principal Apple of Red Tree Elementary recounts how through informal and formal conversations with teachers he realized that the school's mission had to extend beyond providing basic literacy skills for its marginalized lower socio-economic population, to also provide learning opportunities for advanced readers. Collectively, Mr. Apple and his teachers developed an online blog that encouraged advanced readers to discuss and share their comments on the books they were reading. The result was a transformational change in the way that teachers at Red Tree Elementary addressed the needs of all their students.

At Yellow Grove School, Principal Star underlines the importance of enlisting the input of member principals and central office leaders in helping her professional association's committee plan and put on their provincial conference. Principal Star recognizes that she and her committee need to span personal, professional, organizational, geographic, ideological, cultural and hierarchical boundaries within the school system and within the province in order to construct a relevant agenda for the conference. Principal Star believes strongly in the importance of professional conferences as platforms for the exchange of perspectives and practices that often lead to transformational innovations in schools and school systems.

Principal Moss of Purple Heather Elementary feels that when the principals and teachers in the Light family interact professionally to network and plan that they collectively generate transformational change in their schools and the school system. Similar to SEO Light, Principal Moss is proud of the level of interaction from school to school in her family of schools. The principals and teachers in the Light family of schools regularly meet across the boundaries of their schools both informally and formally. They discuss common concerns, share innovations, conduct grade level meetings and collectively plan for joint professional growth. Principal Moss specifically mentions their collective efforts to improve twenty-first century learning in their schools in a recent professional development project. She describes how SEO Light and the principals exercised a coordinating role in overseeing the initiative, and the teachers showed leadership in creating and administering the details of the professional development sessions and follow-up. Throughout the process, principals, teachers and SEO Light made

sense of new perspectives, exchanged information and offered support. Their work culminated in a professional development day that all participants and teachers characterized as one of their best and most relevant experiences. The professional development initiative also forged an important legacy beyond the event itself. The teachers continued to interact professionally with their peers in other schools in the Light family. SEO Light, the principals of the Light family schools and their teachers lead across numerous boundaries to achieve transformational changes. The principals in the Light family demonstrated how their family of schools' configuration served to enhance inter-school collaboration and interaction.

In summary, the principals in the Light family provide examples of boundary spanning leadership that builds relationships and leads to innovative and transformational changes in their schools and the school system.

Summary of Results

The interviews with the five central office leaders and the eight principals in two families of schools in the Prism School District allowed me to respond to my four research questions:

1. How do central office leaders in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
2. How do school principals in families of schools in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
3. How does boundary spanning leadership help distribute leadership in a school system?

4. How does boundary spanning leadership help transform schools and support innovation in a school system?

Question one. In response to question one, the five central office leaders (two executive leaders and three senior education officers) give examples of boundary spanning interactions, provide illustrations of the kinds of boundaries they encounter, and describe boundary spanning leadership practices used in their work. First, the central office leaders interact directly and most often with colleagues and staff at central office. The executive leaders at central office, Dr. Shade and Dr. Hugh, and the district-wide senior education officer, SEO Ray, also engage regularly with provincial educational authorities and community agencies but rarely work directly with principals and teachers. The senior education officers, SEO Beam and SEO Light, work most often at central office, but also spend considerable time working directly with the principals of the schools in their respective families of schools. The senior education officers responsible for families of schools partake in interactions that span both the internal boundaries of the central office as well as the boundaries between the central office and the schools.

Second, the central office leaders concur that they confront multiple types of boundaries in the course of their duties. They supply examples of leadership that span hierarchical, organizational, professional, personal, ideological, cultural, geographical and political boundaries.

Third, the central office leaders identify four boundary spanning practices that correspond well to the four categories of boundary spanning leadership extracted from the literature: *administering*, *making meaning*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming*

(Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2011). The central office leaders comment that leading across the multiple boundaries within the district office, with external bodies and agencies, and across boundaries with schools, whether directly or indirectly, supports, informs, generates and sustains systemic changes. In particular, the senior education officers responsible for specific families of schools play an integral leadership role of spanning the boundaries between the central office and the schools in the school system.

Question two. In response to research question two, the eight principals of the two families of schools provide evidence of boundary spanning interactions, examples of the types of boundaries encountered, and descriptions of the kinds of boundary spanning leadership practices they utilize in their work. First, the principals in the Beam family report that they interact most frequently with the teachers in their own schools, next with central office leaders, and then with other principals, (though not necessarily the principals in their family of schools). Likewise, the Light family principals say they interact most often with the teachers in their own schools. However, their next most frequent contact occurs with the member principals of the Light family of schools, followed by interactions with central office leaders. The principals in the Light family provide examples of how their leadership extends across the boundaries of their schools to include the participation and contribution of the leaders and staffs of the member schools of their family.

Second, similar to the responses of central office leaders, all eight principals agree that boundary spanning leadership means crossing many types of divides and differences.

They include hierarchical, organizational, professional, personal, ideological, cultural, geographical and political boundaries.

Third, the eight principals describe boundary spanning leadership practices that fall under the four categories of *administering*, *making meaning*, *creating conditions* and *transforming*. The principals of the Beam family describe instances where their schools collaborated across boundaries to participate in partnerships with the school district, local agencies and the university. The Light family relate examples of boundary spanning leadership with the school administrators' professional association, with the schools in their designated family, and within their own schools.

Kanter (2009) contends that any leadership of social groups larger than two constitutes intergroup leadership and that all leadership means “mobilizing, organizing, involving, and inspiring followers in collective actions (p. 83).” Miller (2008) observes that “To varying degrees all educational leaders are called to serve as boundary spanners” (p. 356).

Question three. Question three explored the connection between boundary spanning leadership and distributed leadership in a school system. The five central office leaders and the eight school principals recounted examples of how boundary spanning leadership improved efficiency and effectiveness, broadened participation in decision-making and enhanced organizational learning. The central office leaders view the family of schools' arrangement as a valuable locus for discussion and collaboration among designated central office leaders and school principals. In particular, the Light family senior education officer and the Light family principals take advantage of their family of

schools' arrangement to interact and collaborate regularly. The central office leaders appreciate the importance of the reciprocal exchange of information and expertise with the school principals. They note that shared decision-making, especially in the face of controversial projects such as the construction of infrastructure on school property, is beneficial to the smooth implementation of changes. The central office leaders agree that boundary spanning leadership leads to improved organizational learning, professional development and leadership growth.

The four principals in the Beam family recognize the existence of distributed leadership within their own schools and with external organizations. They describe how they cross multiple boundaries to achieve improvements in technology integration, teaching and learning, special education, and professional development.

The four principals in the Light family focus on the benefits of distributed leadership in their collective development as a family of schools. They relate how they collaborated to create a family wide professional development initiative in twenty-first century learning. The principals describe how the Light family schools' teachers contribute to the leadership, organization and implementation of a professional development project that brings about enduring connections and relationships among multiple staffs across multiple boundaries. The Light family principals emphasise the importance of teacher participation in decision-making and improving organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and learning. For the five central office leaders and the eight school principals, boundary spanning leadership supports distributed leadership.

Question four. In response to question four the central office leaders gave examples of how boundary spanning leadership transforms and supports innovation in a school system. Dr. Shade describes the successful two-year process of revisiting, revising, and reintroducing the Prism District's student evaluation policy. SEO Beam references the transformation of the kindergarten registration process over a short period of time because of the collective effort of multiple constituencies working together across numerous boundaries. The eight principals offer examples of boundary spanning leadership that lead to innovation and transformation at their schools. In the Beam family of schools, for example, Mr. Pitt of Apricot Dale Academy explains how with the collaboration of the province, the district and the school, he was able to transform the environmental conditions and regulations of the school and school system so that employees could work in greater safety. Principal Rock of Bronze Ville Elementary points to the transformational impact of a school-university research partnership that afforded professional development for teachers and changed the way her staff approached teaching and learning. The principals in the Light family recount how by working together across school boundaries within their family of schools they exchanged expertise and developed organizational learning initiatives across school boundaries within their family of schools.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this multi-case qualitative study, I explored the boundary spanning leadership practices of five central office leaders and eight principals in two families of schools in the Prism School System. I uncovered connections between the literature on boundary spanning leadership (Cross et al., 2013; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; D. Williams, 2015; P. Williams, 2011; 2013) and the practices of the school system leaders (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Riley, 2014; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009). I responded to four research questions:

1. How do central office leaders in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
2. How do school principals in families of schools in a school system practice boundary spanning leadership?
3. How does boundary spanning leadership help distribute leadership in a school system?
4. How does boundary spanning leadership help transform schools and support innovation in a school system?

Methodology and context. The multi-case study approach (Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014) in this research provided insight into the self-reported experiences of a select group of educational leaders at the central office, family of schools, and schools of one school system. Using a constant-comparative approach to build theory and explore phenomena (Charmaz, 2008; Glaser & Strauss,

1967; Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2006), I constructed four overarching categories to describe boundary spanning practices in school systems: *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming* events. The interviews with the central office leaders and school principals provided evidence of boundary spanning leadership practices in the Prism School District. In addition to the four categories of practices, I suggested that boundary spanning leadership complements distributed leadership and helps provide transformational change in a school system.

I examined the school district and the school annual reports to gather contextual information about the sites of the study such as their development plans, goals, partnerships, priorities, demographics, finances, and student progress. The school district report focused on improving human resources, system effectiveness and student achievement. The schools' annual reports emphasized creating socially just, inclusive, safe, and productive twenty-first century learning environments for their students and teachers.

The results of a teacher surveys showed that in all participating schools the teachers rated their own school's climate and organizational citizenship as average or above average on a standardized instrument (DiPaola, & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, et al., 2006).

Results. Based on the interviews, I uncovered information about boundary spanning leadership practices among central office leaders and school principals in two families of schools in a school system. I perceived that boundary spanning practices supported distributed leadership, and helped transform events, functions, and practices in

school systems and schools. I identified four themes, *making meaning*, *administering*, *creating conditions*, and *transforming* events, that related well to the boundary spanning leadership practices described in the literature (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Harris, 2004; Platow, Reicher, & Haslam, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Robertson, 2009; Steele, 2010; D. Williams, 2015; P. Williams, 2011, 2013).

In response to question one, the five central office leaders identified the presence of multiple types of boundaries in their professional interactions. They provided examples of how they engages in activities that *make meaning* directly and indirectly across multiple boundaries within the central office setting, between the families of schools, with schools, and with the public. They communicated and interpreted information, and developed and exchanged expertise and knowledge. Central office leaders *administered* tasks across organizational, hierarchical, professional, personal, cultural, ideological and political boundaries to support the realization of projects and changes when they coordinated, planned, resourced, buffered interferences, and monitored events. The central office leaders underlined the importance of *creating conditions* to foster cooperation and professional interactions across roles, settings and functions in trusting, inclusive, and respectful climates. They related that they depended on the input of central office staff, principals and teachers in the school system to help *transform* policies, events, and practices.

The two central office leaders in executive positions, Dr. Shade and Dr. Hugh, focused on boundary spanning leadership that occurred within the central office, as well

as on boundary spanning interactions with the provincial educational authorities, and with the public. They commented that they relied on the central office senior education officers to fulfill the role of boundary spanning leadership between the central office and the families of schools and the schools in the system.

The central office leaders who served as senior education officers interacted and collaborated with colleagues at central office, with provincial authorities, with the public, and with the principals and teachers in the school system. SEO Ray, who had responsibilities for all schools in the district, characterized his interactions with schools as generally indirect via itinerant specialized staff. Ray valued his boundary spanning interactions with provincial authorities which he said he used to marshal support for teacher professional development initiatives and facilitate the implementation of innovations across the system. He said that provincial and district authorities also depended on him to organize in-service for teachers.

SEO Beam and SEO Light worked directly with designated families of schools and conducted regular interactions with the principals of their member schools. They said they met regularly and communicated with school principals both formally and informally and served as the principals' first point of contact in exchanges between the central office and the schools. SEO Beam and SEO Light reported that they interacted directly with principals and indirectly with teachers to implement policies, to help create school development plans for their family member schools, to assess and review their schools' effectiveness, and to support professional growth. They also said they scouted for leadership potential among principals and teachers. The senior education officers

responsible for families of schools emerged as key boundary spanning leaders who interacted across organizational, hierarchical, geographical, professional, personal, cultural, political, and ideological boundaries to nurture reciprocal exchanges between the central office and schools, and among schools.

The five central office leaders helped transform district and school policies, routines and initiatives across boundaries. They enlisted the expertise and support of a range of constituents across multiple boundaries in the system when they for example, revised the district's student evaluation policy or collaborated to modernize the district's kindergarten registration procedures.

To respond to questions two, I analyzed the contents of the interviews with the eight principals from two families of schools in the Prism District. I found that similar to the central office leaders, that the principals demonstrated boundary spanning leadership across many types of boundaries within their own schools, between schools, between the schools and the central office, and between their schools and the public. Collectively, the eight principals identified organizational, hierarchical, professional, personal, cultural, political, geographical and ideological boundaries as present to varying degrees in their daily interactions. Similar to the central office leaders, the principals said they interacted most often across the myriad of boundaries within their own buildings, to *make meaning*, *administer* events, *create conditions* for collaboration, and *transform* policies and practices.

The four principals from the Beam family gave examples of leading across boundaries within their schools to address special education needs, share leadership and

make decisions. They related how they interacted with the central office leadership through their designated senior education officer, SEO Beam, who also helped them develop and evaluate their school development plans. The schools in the Beam family, however, appeared to act independently rather than in concert with other family member schools. For example, Bronze Ville Elementary participated in a school-university research partnership, and Teal Stone School sponsored a school-community arts partnership and neither initiative included the involvement of other family schools. The Beam family principals, nonetheless, did interact with each other at formal meetings even though they rarely sought each other's advice outside their formal encounters. The boundaries between the schools within the Beam family seemed harder to traverse than the boundaries within their schools, between their schools and the central office, and the boundaries between them and the broader public.

Likewise, the Light family principals described daily interactions that occurred with various constituents across many types of boundaries. Their most regular encounters took place within the confines of their own school buildings. Within their schools, the Light family principals lead across hierarchical, professional, personal, political, organizational, cultural and ideological boundaries to *make meaning* of information, *administer* events, *create conditions* for productive interactions, and *transform* policies, events, and practices. Similar to the Beam family they depended on their designated senior education officer, SEO Light, to exercise boundary spanning leadership between them and the central office. The Light family principals also practiced boundary spanning leadership in their participation in provincial professional conferences and in their

leadership of teacher professional development within their family of schools. Unlike the Beam family, the Light family principals regularly met with the other principals in their family grouping to plan collectively, exchange information, support professional development, create conditions for change, and jointly promote innovation.

The eight principals in both families of schools recognized the importance of leading across boundaries to improve their schools, support professional development and strengthen the school system. All the principals acknowledged that the senior education officers assigned to their families of schools provided important boundary spanning leadership across the divides between their schools and the central office.

Question three explored the possible connection between boundary spanning leadership and distributed leadership in school systems. While distributed leadership occurs naturally in schools and school systems, it requires planning and alignment to be effective (Harris, 2004; Sheppard et al., 2012; Spillane & Coldren, 2011; Timperley, 2005). Formal and informal leaders in school systems and schools distribute leadership to improve efficiency and effectiveness, build leadership capacity, and support organizational learning when they share decision-making, use the expertise present in their school systems, and promote professional growth (Gronn, 2009; Halverson, 2007; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2010; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Formal leaders must often modify organizational and hierarchical structures to harness the informal and formal leadership potential that exists among the system's constituents (Harris, 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Sheppard et al., 2009; Spillane & Coldren, 2011).

The five central office leaders and the eight principals in my study lead across multiple boundaries to distribute leadership in their schools and in the school system. Central office leaders and principals interacted with each other and with teachers directly and indirectly across organizational, hierarchical, professional, cultural, political, ideological, and geographic to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of initiatives, share decisions, and foster organizational learning. Central office leaders invited principals and teachers to participate in district initiatives such as the revision of the student evaluation policy, and the modernization of the kindergarten registration process; they crossed boundaries to work with principals and teachers to develop and monitor school improvement plans. Principals in the eight schools worked with teachers to make decisions, exchange information and skills, promote professional growth, and implement change. Principals gave examples of how they worked with their teachers, for example, to conduct research with a local university or partner with a community agency to promote visual art. Principals said they dialogued with other principals to align their professional development plans and help teachers network with colleagues in other schools.

In response to question four the five central office leaders provided evidence that boundary spanning leadership helped *transform* policies, practices, and promote innovation in the school system consistent with the claims found in the literature (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2015). The five central office leaders recognized that whether they were making an operational change such as the new kindergarten registration process or they were implementing a major

revision in student evaluation, they needed to recognize and learn to span numerous types of boundaries.

Principals gave examples of how they accomplished transformational changes in their schools and their family of schools when they lead across divides to work directly with their teachers to transform special education delivery, or improve literacy, or create networks among teachers from different schools. Principals also transformed practices across multiple boundaries when they liaised with multiple agencies to improve educational services, and environmental stewardship in their schools.

The five central office leaders and the eight principals recognized that to transform practices in the school system they would encounter boundaries that defined identities, points of view, roles, functions, and settings. They recognized that they as leaders at different levels of the school system they needed to find ways to work with each other to overcome ideological, professional, personal, hierarchical, cultural, geographical, political, and organizational divides. Central office leaders and principals acknowledged that they devoted most of their boundary spanning leadership to aligning the strengths and perspectives of the professionals within their own buildings, but also said they interacted indirectly and directly with other constituents in the school system. The family of schools' arrangement allowed central office leaders and principals to work more easily with one another and to contribute to transformational changes in the school system. The senior education officers emerged as important boundary spanning leaders in the school system because they participated in direct interactions with central office leaders and also with principals and indirectly with teachers.

Theoretical implications. Boundary spanning leadership represents an important theoretical framework for examining the interactions of central office leaders and principals in a school system (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Riley, 2014; Robertson, 2009; Steele, 2010). Boundary spanning leadership supplements and expands existing theories of leadership that favour systemic thinking and shared participation in leadership (Argyris, 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Collins, 2007; Cross et al., 2013; O'Toole, 1995; Senge, 2006). Boundary spanning leaders span the barriers that influence the effectiveness, efficiency, and professional growth in organizations (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Marrone, 2010). Boundary spanning leaders give voice to diverse perspectives, and align individual and inter-group efforts to support a shared vision (Brundrett, 2010; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Leithwood, 2010; Miller, 2008; Muij & Harris, 2007; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard et al., 2009; Timperley, 2005; Wenger, 2000). Boundary spanning leaders forge connections in school systems (Robertson, 2009), and create conditions for honest, respectful and trusting interactions across functions, roles and settings (Halverson, 2007; Miller, 2008). Leaders who demonstrate boundary spanning leadership in school systems (Akkerman & Hakker, 2011; Millward & Timperley, 2005) promote organizational learning (DuFour, 1997; Fullan, 2001; Wenger, 2000).

Boundary spanning leadership becomes ever more important as provincial and territorial governments in Canada reduce the number of school districts, diminish the power of school boards, increase the distance between schools, and centralize school governance among fewer and fewer people (Sheppard et al., 2009; Sheppard et al., 2013).

The five central office leaders in my study emphasize the need to involve constituents of the school system in a meaningful authentic way when developing policies, improving the system, and implementing change. The eight principals recognize that accessing the contributions of teachers improves teaching practices and generates better decision-making in their schools. The central office leaders and the principals appreciate the importance of *creating conditions* such as nurturing trust and honouring diverse perspectives in support of boundary spanning leadership (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Fleming & Waguespack, 2007; Hogg, 2009; Kramer, 2009; Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009; Stein & Coburn, 2010).

The five central office leaders and the eight principals in the two families of schools demonstrate boundary spanning leadership when they *make meaning* of information and expertise (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981), *administer* events (Aldrich & Herder, 1977), *create conditions* for interactions, and *transform* practices and policies to achieve change and innovation (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009).

Boundary spanning leadership appears to bolster the effectiveness of distributed leadership (Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009) and further our understanding of why efforts to distribute leadership are sometimes successful and sometimes not (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Harris, 2004, 2009; Louis et al., 2009; Mascall et al., 2009; Mayrowetz, 2008; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Newcombe & McCormack, 2001; Timperley, 2005). Formal leaders who want to distribute leadership may need to first recognize and manage multiple boundaries among settings, functions, identities and roles (Ernst & Chrobot-

Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Harris et al., 2009). To be successful, formal leaders may require boundary spanning leadership competencies that inform how they share decision-making, foster professional growth and inject cohesion among disparate groups (Brundrett, 2010; Harris, 2009; Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011). In addition to distributing leadership, boundary spanning leaders have the potential to transform events, policies and practices in organizations when they apply their skills to inter-group interactions (Marrone, 2010), adapt to changing demands (Williams, 2011), and take risks to support innovations and create change (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

In my study the five central office leaders emerge as significant boundary spanning leaders who bridge the divides within their own work settings, build bridges between provincial and district authorities, and interact across the boundaries between the central office and the schools in the school district. In particular, the two central office senior education officers responsible for the two families of schools stand out as important links between the central office and schools, and between schools and other schools. The eight principals in the study also exhibit boundary spanning leadership that connects the lived world of teachers with the policies and initiatives of the district office and other educational authorities. The principals are well placed to nurture teacher collaboration within and among schools, and offer teachers opportunities to interact with central office and with external entities such as universities.

Future research. Boundary spanning leadership represents a theoretical framework to analyse the practice of educational leaders in school systems (Akkerman &

Bakker, 2011; Steele, 2010). It is important to know how such leadership promotes organizational learning, increases the participation of a wider range of constituents in decision-making, promotes teacher professionalism, and builds leadership capacity across roles, settings and functions (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Sheppard et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Insights are possible by examining the practices of leaders who span organizational, hierarchical, professional, personal, geographical, political, cultural, ideological and other boundaries (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011) to bring about improvements in schools and school systems (Miller, 2008; Sheppard et al., 2009). Future research on boundary spanning leadership should evaluate to what extent the observations in this small study are found among a wider range of leaders both formal and informal in schools and school systems. The interview protocol developed for this study could be converted into a survey to be administered to a larger number of participants in multiple jurisdictions. Future researchers could also examine how post-secondary programs for formal educational leaders prepare them to manage the multiple boundaries they encounter in their quest to engage teachers and others in distributed leadership, and transformational change.

Additional research should occur on the impact of centralization on boundary spanning leadership in school systems. For example, does boundary spanning leadership become more difficult if central offices move geographically further away from the schools they govern? Do schools become more isolated and less innovative when districts reduce or eliminate positions such as senior education officers at the central office? As

boards grow in size, do principals and teachers feel more disconnected from educational decisions about policies, practices, and procedures?

Another question to pursue is the efficacy of the families of schools' arrangement as a platform for school system interaction. Does the family of schools' model need to change to promote more boundary spanning interactions between central office leaders and principals; between principals and other principals; between schools and the community?

The connection between distributed leadership or other forms of leadership and boundary spanning leadership should be further explored perhaps in an ethnographic study that includes observations of what really occurs in school and school systems over a series of months or years. The relationship of boundary spanning leadership practices and innovation in school systems also merits further research.

Limitations of the research. My study includes interviews with five central office leaders and eight principals in one school system in an urban location in Atlantic Canada. While the interviews, surveys, and document analyses yield valuable information about boundary spanning leadership practices at the central office, in two families of schools, and at eight schools within one school system, the sample is too small to provide generalizable results to the research questions. It is important to note that the purpose of a multi-case study is to limit the object of inquiry to explore in depth the experiences of a select few within a bounded context (Denzin, 2004; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006). In addition, the interview answers provided by the central office leaders and school principals are their own perceptions of their own actions and not the dispassionate

observations of neutral observers. The annual reports are public documents produced by the district and the schools and may not include data that casts the schools or the district in a negative light. The surveys of teachers were anonymous and revealed that all those who completed them reported average or above average confidence in their schools on measures of climate and organizational citizenship. However, the surveys did not specifically probe teachers' perceptions of boundary spanning leadership practices which may have provided more interesting information. And one school in the sample did not complete the teacher surveys.

As qualitative research, my study furthers our understanding of how central office leaders and principals practice boundary spanning leadership in one school system at a particular point in time. My research in the context studied, suggests the existence of a positive relationship between boundary spanning leadership and distributed leadership. Boundary spanning leadership also appears to support systemic change and innovation. The individual stories and experiences of the participants add to the body of knowledge about boundary spanning leadership practices in school systems.

Summary. The study of boundary spanning leadership among formal leaders in a school system represents an important avenue of research for extending our understanding of current theories of organizational leadership (Cross et al., 2013; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Ernst & Yip, 2009; Riley, 2014; Robertson, 2009; D. Williams, 2015; P. Williams, 2011; 2013). Organizational leaders in the twenty-first century encounter professional, personal, hierarchical, organizational, political, cultural, geographical, ideological, and other boundaries that serve to enhance or impede

organizational growth and development (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams, 2015). Scholars observe that leaders of successful organizations in the twenty-first century promote respectful and open dialogue in a trusting environment where constituents feel safe to voice diverse perspectives and insights (Ernst & Yip, 2009; Fleming & Waguespack, 2007; Hogg, 2009; Kramer, 2009; Krochik & Tyler, 2009; Miller, 2008; Robertson, 2009; Stein & Coburn, 2010).

The study of boundary spanning practices of central office leaders and school principals reveals that the routine actions of *making meaning* and *administering* served to span boundaries when leaders enlisted the participation of their constituents. Central office leaders and school principals who *created conditions* for effective interactions spanned boundaries to generate trust, honour differences, create a sense of belonging, and build a culture of collaboration. In the Prism District the five central office leaders and the eight principals in two families of schools also offered evidence that leading across multiple boundaries to enlist the support of multiple sources of expertise and insight helped them to *transform* perspectives, practices and policies in the school system, and bring about systemic change and foster innovation. My study and similar research contribute to a deeper understanding of boundary spanning leadership practices in school systems.

In the Year after the Study

The on-going pressure to centralize school authorities across Canada creates challenges for formal leaders who must find ways to enlist the support and participation of a wider and more disparate range of constituents to improve school systems (Sheppard

et al., 2009; Sheppard et al., 2013; Young et al., 2007). As part of the trend to centralize school system authority, in the year following my research, the governmental authorities dissolved the Prism District and merged it with other districts to form a super board. None of the central office leaders in the study continued in the same roles in the new configuration. Two central office leaders who were eligible to retire chose to resign their positions, and one leader left his job rather than continue in the new larger school system. The two remaining central office leaders found themselves in new central office assignments unrelated to their previous roles. Of the eight principals, in the reconfiguration, one principal changed schools because of a school closure; another principal took a scheduled retirement and six remained in the same schools where they continue in their positions. It is unknown to what extent the relationships and trusting interactions changed as a result of the major changes in the school districts.

The five central office leaders and the eight principals in the two families of schools in the Prism school district offer evidence in their practices and experiences suggests that major organizational changes destabilize connections, jeopardize shared leadership, disrupt relationships, and create new and wider boundaries to span. Centralization of authority may appear to enhance efficiency, but unless properly managed, may reduce the system's effectiveness, fracture its professional leadership, diminish its organizational learning, and stymie efforts to achieve innovation and change.

References

- Adams, C.M., Forsyth, P. B., & Mitchell, R. M. (2009). The formation of parent-school trust: A multi-level analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45, 4-33. doi: 10.1177/0013161X08327550
- Adams, J. S. (1976). The structure and dynamics of behavior in organizational boundary roles. In M. D. Dunnette, (Ed.). *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 1175-1199). Chicago: Rand, McNally College.
- Akkerman, S. F., & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary crossing and boundary objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 132-169. doi: 10.3102/00345431404435
- Aldrich, H., & Herker, D. (1977). Boundary spanning roles and organization structure. *Academy of Management Review*, 2(2), 217-230. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/pss/257905>
- Ancona, D. G., & Caldwell, D. F. (1992). Bridging the boundary: External activity and performance in organizational teams. *Administration Science Quarterly*, 37(4), 634-665.
- Anderson, G. L. (1990). Toward a critical constructivist approach to school administration: Invisibility, legitimation, and the study of non-events. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 26, 38-59. doi: 10.1177/0013161X90026001003
- Argyris, C. (1999). *On organizational learning* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Business.
- Ball, S. (1987). *The micro-politics of the school: Towards a theory of school organization*. London: Methuen.
- Balogun, J. (2003). From blaming the middle to harnessing its potential: Creating change intermediaries. *British Journal of Management*, 14, 69-83. Retrieved from <http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2005/proceedings/flexibility/Parris.pdf>
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership*, (2nd ed.). Mahwah: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bennis, W., Goleman, D., & O'Toole, J. (2008). *Transparency: How leaders create a culture of candor*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bishop, P., & Mulford, B. (1999). When will they ever learn: Another failure of centrally-imposed change. *School Leadership and Management*, 19(2), 179-187. doi: 10.1080/13632439969186

- Blau, P., & Scott, R. W. (2011). The concept of formal organization. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 206-210). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklin, S.K. (1998) *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1991). *Reframing organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brundrett, M. (2010). Developing your leadership team. In B. Davies, & M. Brundrett (Eds.), *Developing successful leadership* (pp.99-114). London: Springer,
- Bryant, S. E. (2003). The role of transformational and transactional leadership in creating, sharing, and exploring organizational knowledge. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 9, 32-44. doi: 10.1177/107179190300900403
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bryman, A. (2001). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Burns, T., & Stalker, G. M. (2011). Mechanistic and organic systems. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 201-205). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Caldwell, B.J. (2010). Developing leadership capital. In B.Davies & M. Brundrett (Eds.), *Developing Successful Leadership* (pp.155-175). London: Springer.
- Callahan, R. E. (1962). *Education and the cult of efficiency*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2004). Grounded theory. In M. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. Liao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 441-445). Thousand Oaks : Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781412950589.n38.
- Charmaz, K. (2008). Grounded theory. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*, (2nd ed., pp. 81-110). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Chhuon, V., Gilkey, E. M., Gonzalez, M., Daly, A. J., & Chrispeels, J. H. (2008). The little district that could: The process of building district-school trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(2), 227-281. doi: 10.1177/0013161X07311410.2.
- Chrispeels, J. H., Brown, J. H. & Castillo, S. (2000). School leadership teams: factors that influence their development and effectiveness. In K. Leithwood, (Ed.), *Understanding schools as intelligent systems* (pp. 39-73). Stamford: JAI Press.

- Coffin, G., & Leithwood, K. (2000). District contributions to principals' situated learning. In K. Leithwood. (Ed.) *Understanding schools as intelligent systems*. (pp. 19-38). Stamford: JAI Press.
- Collins, J. (2007). Level 5 leadership. In *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership: Introduction by Michael Fullan* (2nd ed., pp. 17-26). San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. (Reprinted from *Good to Great; Why some companies make the leap...and others don't*. New York: Harper Business).
- Connaughton, S., Shuffler, M., & Goodwin, G. F. (2011). Leading distributed teams: The communicative constitution of leadership, *Military Psychology*, 23(5), 502-527. doi: 10.1080/08995605.2011.600147.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Cross, R., Ernst, C., & Pasmore, B. (2013). A bridge too far? How boundary spanning networks drive organizational change and effectiveness. *Organizational Dynamic*, 42, 81-91. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2013.03.001>
- Cullen, K. L., Palus, C. J., Chrobot-Mason, D., & Appaneal, C. (2012). Getting to "We": Collective leadership development. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 5(4), 428-432. doi:10.1111/j.1754-9434.2012.01475.x.
- Denzin, N. K. (2001). The reflexive interview and a performative social science. *Qualitative Research*, 1, 23-46. doi: 10.1177/1468794101001001002.
- Denzin, N. K. (2004). The art and politics of interpretation. In S. N. Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy, (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 447-469). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- DiPaola, M. F. & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2001). Organizational citizenship behavior in schools and its relationship to school climate. *Journal of School Leadership*, 11, 424-447.
- DuFour, R. (2004). Leadership is an affair of the heart. *Journal of School Development*, 25(1), 67-68.
- Dunlap, D., & Goldman, P. (1991). Rethinking power in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 27(1), 5-29. doi: 10.1177/0013161X91027001002.

- Enosh, G., Adital, B., & Buchbinder, E. (2008). Sense of differentness in the construction of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 450- 465. doi 10.1177/1077800407311962.
- Ernst, C., & Chrobot-Mason, D. (2011). *Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Ernst, C., & Yip, J. (2009). Boundary-spanning leadership: Tactics to bridge social identity groups in organizations. In T. L. Pittinsky. (Ed.), *Crossing the divide: Intergroup leaders in a world of difference* (pp. 87-99). Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Evans, R. (2001). *The human side of school change: Reform, resistance and the real-life problems of innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fayol, H. (2011). General principles of management. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp.52-64) Boston: Wadsworth.
- Fenwick, T. J. (2004). Teacher learning and professional growth plans: Implementation of a provincial policy. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 19(3), 259-282. Retrieved from <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=905736f7-9418-494f-9dc7-fe66ecc6576d%40sessionmgr4004&vid=1&hid=4204>
- Fiedler, F. E. (1981). Leadership effectiveness. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 24(5), 619-632. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/docview/1306743007?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo
- Fleming, L., & Waguespack, D. M. (2007). Brokerage, boundary spanning, and leadership in open innovation communities. *Organization Science*, 18(2), 165-180. doi 10.1287/orsc.1060.0242
- Flick, U. (2007). *Managing quality in qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Follett, M.P. (2011). The giving of orders. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp.156-161). Boston: Wadsworth
- Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N.E. (2006) *How to design and evaluate research in education, sixth edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2003). *Change forces with a vengeance*. London: Routledge Falmer.

- Fullan, M., Bertani, A., & Quinn, J. (2004). Lessons from district-wide reform. *Educational Leadership*, 61(6), 42-46. Retrieved from <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/media/13396058360.pdf>
- Gadja, R., & Koliba, C. J. (2008). Evaluating and improving the quality of teacher collaboration: A field-tested framework for secondary school leaders. *NAASP Bulletin*, 92, 133-153. doi: 10.1177/0192636508320990.
- Getha-Taylor, H. (2008). Identifying collaborative competencies. *Review of Public Personnel*, 28(21), 103-119. doi: 10.1177/0734371X08315434.
- Getha-Taylor, H., Silvia, C., & Simmerman, S. (2014). Individuality, integration: Leadership styles in team collaboration. *Public Manager*, 43(2), 38-43. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1539537677?accountid=12378>
- Giles, C., & Hargreaves, A. (2006). The sustainability of innovative schools as learning organizations and professional learning communities during standardized reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(1), 124-156. doi: 10.1177/0013161X05278189.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.
- Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2007). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Goldstein, J. (2003). Making sense of distributed leadership. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25(4), 397-421. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3699584>
- Greene, J. C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gronn, P. (2009). Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership. In F. English, (Ed.), *Educational Leadership and Administration* (Vol. 2, pp. 51-76). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2004). Competing paradigms in qualitative research: Theories and issues. In S. N. Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy, (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 17-38). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gulick, L. (2011). Notes on the theory of organization. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 83-91). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Hall, R. (2009). *Qualitative research methods*. Sydney, New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press.

- Halverson, R. R. (2007). Systems of practice and professional community: The Adams case. In J. P. Spillane & J.B. Diamond, (Eds.). *Distributed leadership in practice* (pp. 35-62). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hammersley, M. (2004). Case study. In M. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. Liao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 93-95). Thousand Oaks: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781412950589.n92.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Harris, A. (2004). Distributed leadership and school improvement: Leading or misleading. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 32(1), 11-24. doi: 10.1177/1741143204039297.
- Harris, A. (2009). Distributed leadership and school improvement. In F. W English, (Ed.), *Educational leadership and administration* (Vol. 3, pp. 20-33). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Harris, A. (2011). Distributed leadership: Implications for the role of the principal. *Journal of Management Development*, 31(1), 7-17. doi: 10.1108/026217111211190961.
- Harvey, S., Peterson, R. S., & Anand, N. (2014). The process of team boundary spanning in multi-organizational contexts. *Small Group Research*, 45(5), 506-538. doi:10.1177/1046496414534474.
- Heifetz, R. (2009). Operating across boundaries: Leading adaptive change. In T. L. Pittinsky. (Ed.) *Crossing the divide: Intergroup leaders in a world of difference* (pp 127- 140). Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2006). *The practice of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hogg, M.A. (2009). From group conflict to social harmony: Leading across diverse and conflicting social identities. In T. L. Pittinsky, (Ed.), *Crossing the divide: Intergroup leaders in a world of difference* (pp. 17-30). Boston: Harvard Business Press
- Hogg, M.A., van Kippenberg, D., & Rast III, D. E. (2012). Intergroup leadership in organizations: Leading across group and organizational boundaries. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(2), 232-255. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amr.2010.0221>

- Honig, M. I. (2003). Building policy from practice: District central office administrators' Roles and capacity for implementing collaborative education policy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3) 292-338. doi: 10.1177/0013161X03253414.
- Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2013). *Educational administration: Theory, research and practice* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Janis, I. L. (2011). Groupthink: The desperate drive for consensus at any cost. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 383-394). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Kanter, R. M. (2009). Creating common ground: Propositions about effective intergroup leadership. In T. L. Pittinsky, (Ed.), *Crossing the divide: Intergroup leaders in a world of difference* (pp. 73-83). Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (2011). Organization and the system concept. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 407-418). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Kislov, R. (2014). Boundary discontinuity in a constellation of interconnected practices. *Public Administration*, 92(2), 307-323. doi:10.1111/padm.12065.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Pozner, B. Z. (2007). The five practices of exemplary leadership. In Jossey-Bass, *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership*. (2nd ed., pp. 63-74). San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- Kramer, R. M. (2009). Trust building in intergroup negotiations: Challenges and opportunities for creative leaders. In T. L. Pittinsky, (Ed.), *Crossing the divide: Intergroup leaders in a world of difference* (pp. 101-112). Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Krochik, M., & Tyler, T. R. (2009). United pluralism: Balancing subgroup identification and superordinate group cooperation. In T. L. Pittinsky, (Ed.), *Crossing the divide: Intergroup leaders in a world of difference* (pp. 43-55). Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Lambert, L. (2005). What does leadership capacity really mean? *Journal of Staff Development*, 26(2), 39-40. Retrieved from <http://www.plcWASHINGTON.org/cms/lib3/WA07001774/Centricity/Domain/44/leadership-in-the-school.pdf>

- Leithwood, K. (2007). Transformational school leadership in a transactional policy world. In Jossey-Bass, *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 183-196). San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- Leithwood, K. (2010). Characteristics of school districts that are exceptionally effective in closing the achievement gap. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 9(3), 245-291. doi: 10.1080/15700761003731500.
- Leithwood, K., & Duke, K. (1999). A century's quest to understand school leadership. In J. Murphy, & K. Louis, K. (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational administration*, (2nd ed., pp. 45-72). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lieberman, A., & Pointer Mace, D. (2010). Making practice public: Teacher learning in the 21st century. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61, 77-88. doi: 10.1177/0022487109347319.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Lockyer, S. (2004). Coding qualitative data. In M. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. Liao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 138-139). Thousand Oaks: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781412950589.n130.
- Louis, K. S. (2007). Trust and improvement in school. *Journal of Educational Change*, 8, 1-24. doi 10.1007/s10833-006-9015-5.
- Louis, K. S., Mayrowetz, D., Smiley, M., & Murphy, J. (2009). The role of sense-making and trust in developing distributed leadership. In A. Harris, (Ed.), *Distributed leadership* (pp. 157-180). New York: SpringerScience+Business Media B. V.
- Marks, H.M., & Printy, S. M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: An integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 370-397. doi: 10.1177/0013161X03253412.
- Marrone, J. A. (2010). Team boundary spanning: A multilevel review of past research and proposals for the future. *Journal of Management*, 36(4), 911-940. doi: 10.1177/0149206309353945.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Martins, L.L., Gilson, L.L., & Maynard, M.T. (2004). Virtual teams: What do we know and where do we go from here? *Journal of Management*, 30(6), 805-835. doi:10.1016/j.jm.2004.05.002.

- Mascall, B., Leithwood, K., Strauss, T., & Sacks R. (2009). The relationship between distributed leadership and teachers' academic optimism. In A. Harris, (Ed.), *Distributed leadership* (pp. 81-100). New York: SpringerScience+Business Media B. V.
- Maslow, A. H. (2011). A theory of human motivation. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp.171-182). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Mayo, E. (2003). The human problems of an industrial civilization. In K. Thompson (Ed.), *The Early Sociology of Management and Organizations* (pp. 168-188). New York: Routledge.
- Mayrowetz, D. (2008). Making sense of distributed leadership: Exploring the multiple usages of the concept in the field. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(3), 424-435.
- McGregor, D. (2011). The human side of enterprise. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp.183-188). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, J.W., & Rowan, B. (2011). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp.433-448). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Miller, P. M. (2008). Examining the work of boundary spanning leaders in community contexts. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 11(4) 353-377. doi: 10.1080/13603120802317875.
- Millward, P., & Timperley, H. (2010). Organizational learning facilitated by instructional leadership, tight coupling and boundary spanning. *Journal of Educational Change*, 11(2), 139-155. doi: 10.1007/s10833-009-9120-3.
- Mintzberg, H. (1980). Structure in 5's: A synthesis of the research on organizational design. *Management Science*, 26(3), 322-341. doi: 10.1287/mnsc.26.3.322.
- Morse, J. (2004). Sampling in qualitative research. In M. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. Liao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 994-997). Thousand Oaks: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781412950589.n885.
- Muijs, D. (2011). Leadership and organisational performance: from research to prescription? *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(1) 45-60. doi 10.1108/09513541111100116.

- Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2007). Teacher leadership in (in)action: Three case studies of contrasting schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 35(1), 111-134. doi: 10.1177/1741143207071387.
- Murphy, J. (2005). Unpacking the foundations of the ISLLC standards and addressing concerns in the academic community. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(1), 154-191. doi: 10.1177/0013161X04269580.
- Newcombe, G., & McCormack, J. (2001). Trust and teacher participation in school-based financial decision making. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 29(2), 181-195. doi: 10.1177/026211X010292004.
- NVivo Version 10 [Qualitative data analysis software]. QSR International Pty Ltd. 2012.
- O'Donoghue, T. (2007). *Planning your qualitative research project: An introduction to interpretivist research in education*. London: Routledge.
- O'Toole, J. (1995). *Leading change: Overcoming the ideology of comfort and the tyranny of custom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ouchi, W. G. (2011). The Z organization. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 383-394). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Parker, K., & Lafleur, C. (2004). Extending our understanding of collaboration: building professional learning communities. *Orbit* 34(3), 21-25. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/docview/213738322?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo
- Parsons, T. (1949). *The structure of social action: A study in social theory with reference to a group of recent European writers*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Penuel, W. R., Riel, M., Joshi, A., Pearlman, L., Min Kim, C., & Frank, K. A. (2010). The alignment of the informal and formal organizational supports for reform: Implications for improving teaching in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(1), 57-95. doi: 10.1177/1094670509353180.
- Pfeffer, J. (2011). Understanding the role of power in decision-making. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 277-290). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.
- Platow, M.J., Reicher, S. D., & Haslam, S. A. (2009). On the social psychology of intergroup leadership: The importance of social identity and self-categorization processes. In T. L. Pittinsky (Ed.), *Crossing the divide: Intergroup leaders in a world of difference* (pp. 31-42). Boston: Harvard Business Press.

- Power, J. M. (1973). The reticulist function in government: Manipulating networks of communication and influence. *Public Administration*, 32(1), 21-27. Retrieved from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8500.1973.tb00760.x/abstract>
- Printy, S. M. (2008). Leadership for teacher learning: A community of practice perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(2), 187-226. doi: 10.1177/0013161X07312958.
- Rank, M. R. (2004). Distinguishing qualitative research. In S. N. Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy, (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice* (pp. 81-96). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rapley, T. (2007). *Doing conversation, discourse and document analysis*. London: Sage.
- Riley, P. (2014). The complexities of school leadership: Many boundaries to cross. In J. Langan-Fox & C. L. Cooper, (Eds.), *Boundary spanning in organizations: Network, influence, and conflict* (pp. 266-294). New York: Routledge.
- Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). *Globalizing educational policy*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Robertson, J. (2009). Coaching leadership learning through partnership. *School Leadership and Management*, 29(1), 39-49. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13632430802646388>
- Robinson, V. (2009). Fit for purpose: An educationally relevant account of distributed leadership. In A. Harris, (Ed.), *Distributed leadership* (pp. 219-240). New York: SpringerScience+Business Media B. V.
- Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd C. A., and Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: an analysis of the different effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635-674. doi: 10.1177/0013161X0821509.
- Sandelowski, M. (2008). Member check. In L. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 502-503). Thousand Oaks: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781412963909.n257.
- Schein, E. H. (2011). The concept of organizational culture: Why bother? In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 349-360). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.
- Sergiovanni, T. (2000). *The lifeworld of leadership: Creating culture, community and personal meaning in our schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shafritz, J. M., Ott, J. S., & Jang, Y.S. (2011). Introduction. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 1-9). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Sheppard, B., & Brown, J. (2000). The transformation of secondary schools into learning organizations. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), *Understanding schools as intelligent systems*. (pp. 293-314). Stamford: JAI Press.
- Sheppard, L., Galway, G., Brown, J., & Wiens, J. (2013). *School boards matter: Report of the Pan-Canadian study of school district governance for Canadian School Boards Association*.
- Sheppard, B., & Dibbon, D. (2011). Improving the capacity of school system leaders and teachers to design productive learning environments. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*. 10(2), 125-144. doi 10.1080/15700763.2010.502610.
- Sheppard, B., Brown, J., & Dibbon, D., (2009). *School district matters*. New York: Springer Science+Business Media B.V.
- Sheppard, B., Hurley, N., & Dibbon, D. (2010). *Distributed leadership, teacher morale and teacher enthusiasm: Unravelling the leadership pathways to school success*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Denver.
- Sheppard, B., Seifert, T., & Wakeham, M. (2012, November). *Teaching and learning in today's public school classrooms: A 21st century leadership challenge*. Paper Presented at Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management, Limassol-Cyprus.
- Shortall, B., Greene-Fraize, N., & Harnett, C. (2007). Education our future: A road map to innovation and excellence. Retrieved from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education website:
<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/publications/k12/TACReport.pdf>
- Simon, H. (2011). The proverbs of administration. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp.383-394). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Somech, A. (2010). Participative decision-making in schools: A mediating-moderating analytical framework for understanding school and teacher outcomes. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(2), 174- 209. doi: 10.1177/1094670510361745.

- Spillane, J. (2009). Managing to lead: Reframing school leadership and management. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 9(3), 70-73. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40345094>
- Spillane, J. P., Camburn, E.M., Pustejovsky, J., Pareja, A. S., & Lewis, G. (2009). Taking a distributed perspective in studying school leadership and management: The challenge of study operation. In A. Harris, (Ed.), *Distributed leadership* (pp. 47-80). New York: SpringerScience+Business Media B. V.
- Spillane, J. P., & Coldren, A. F. (2011). *Diagnosis and design for school improvement: Using a distributed perspective to lead and manage change*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spillane, J. P., & Diamond, J.B. (2007). Taking a distributed perspective. In J. P Spillane & J.B. Diamond, (Eds.), *Distributed leadership in practice* (pp. 1-15). New York: Teachers College Press.
- SPSS for Windows (Version 16.0) [Computer software]. Chicago: SPSS.
- Stake, R. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Steele, L. L. (2010). *Boundary crossing in rural districts: Re-conceptualizing the roles of rural midlevel leaders*. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, Order No. NR64123.
- Stein, M.K., & Coburn, C. E. (2010). Reframing the problem of research and practice. In C.E Coburn, & M.K. Stein, (Eds.), *Research and practice in education: Building alliances, bridging the divide* (pp. 1-13). Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Stogdill, R. M., (1948). Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature, *Journal of Psychology*, 25, 35-71. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/docview/1290571003?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:primo&accountid=12378>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Taylor, F. W. (2011). The principles of scientific management. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp. 65-91). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Timperley, H.S. (2005). Distributed leadership: Developing theory from practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 37(4), 395-420. doi: 10.1080/00220270500038545.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2009). Fostering teacher professionalism in schools: The role of leadership orientation and trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 217-247. doi: 10.1177/0013161X08330501.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., Parish, J., & DiPaola, M. F. (2006). School climate and state standards: How interpersonal relationships influence student achievement, *Journal of School Leadership*, 16, 386-415.
- Tushman, M.L., & Scanlan, T. J. (1981). Boundary spanning individuals: Their role in information transfer and their antecedents. *Academy of Management Journal*, 24(2), 289-305. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/stable/255842?sid=primo&origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- Tyler, T. R., & Kramer, R. M. (1996). Whither trust? In R. M. Kramer, & T. R. Tyler, (Eds.), *Trust in organizations: Frontiers of theory and research* (pp. 1-15). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Weber, M. (2011). Bureaucracy. In J. M. Shafritz, J. S. Ott, & Y.S. Jang, (Eds.). *Classics of organizational theory* (7th ed., pp.77-82). Boston: Wadsworth.
- Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21, 1-19. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/stable/2391875?sid=primo&origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7(2), 225-246. doi: 10.1177/135050840072002.
- Williams, D. (2015). *Leadership for a Fractured World*. Oakland, US: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com>
- Williams, P. (2011). The life and times of the boundary spanner. *Journal of Integrated Care*, 19(3), 26-33. doi: ttp://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14769011111148140.
- Williams, P. (2013). "We are all boundary spanners now?" *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 26(1), 17-32. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513551311293417>
- Wisker, G. (2008). *The Postgraduate Research Handbook*, (2nd ed.). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Woods, P. A., & Gronn, P. (2009). Nurturing democracy: The contribution of distributed leadership to a democratic organizational landscape. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37(4), 430-451. doi: 10.1177/1741143209334597.

- Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation, 19*(3), 321-332. doi:10.1177/1356389013497081.
- York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255-316. doi: 10.3102/00346543074003255.
- Young, J., Levin, B., & Wallin, D. (2007). *Understanding Canadian schools: An introduction to educational administration* (4th ed.). Toronto: Nelson.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Ethics Approval



**Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)**

Office of Research - IC2010C
St. John's, NL, Canada A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 864-2561 Fax: 709 864-4612
www.mun.ca/research

ICEHR Number:	20131487-ED
Approval Period:	February 4, 2013 – February 28, 2014
Funding Source:	
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Bruce Sheppard Faculty of Education
Title of Project:	<i>Boundary Spanning Leadership in Families of Schools in a School System</i>

February 4, 2013

Ms. Margaret Wakeham
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Ms. Wakeham:

Thank you for your email correspondence of January 29, 2013 addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) concerning the above-named research project.

The ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarification and revisions submitted and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* to February 28, 2014.

If you intend to make changes during the course of the project which may give rise to ethical concerns, please forward a description of these changes to Theresa Heath at icehr@mun.ca for the Committee's consideration.

The *TCPS2* requires that you submit an annual status report on your project to the ICEHR, should the research carry on beyond February 28, 2014. Also to comply with the *TCPS2*, please notify us upon completion of your project.

We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Gail Wideman, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research

GW/th

copy: Supervisor – Dr. Bruce Sheppard, Faculty of Education

Associate Dean, Graduate Programs, Faculty of Education

Appendix 2

District Permission

March 11, 2013

Ms. Margaret Wakeham
37 Elizabeth Drive
Paradise, NL
A1L 1E5

Dear Ms. Wakeham:

RE: *Boundary Spanning Leadership in Families of Schools in a School System*

Thank you for your correspondence dated February 21, 2013 requesting approval to proceed with the above named research project within the Eastern School District.

Please be advised that permission has been granted to conduct your research study during the 2012-2013 school year. Please ensure the following:

1. Informed consent must be obtained from parents when students are involved.
2. Permission is obtained from school administrators prior to you contacting their students and/or staff.
3. Provide a copy of this letter to school administrators prior to commencing this research project.
4. Upon completion of your study, a copy of your findings must be provided to the Eastern School District.

Thank you for involving Eastern School District in what appears to be a very worthwhile study. Our District looks forward to receiving a copy of the final results.

Please feel free to contact this office should you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Appendix 3

Permission to use Survey Organizational Citizenship Measure

You have my permission to use the Organizational Citizenship Measure that I helped to develop. You can download the measure as well as scoring directions at my web site at <http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch>.

The proper citation for the measure is:

DiPaola, M. F. & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2001). Organizational citizenship behavior in schools and its relationship to school climate. *Journal of School Leadership*, 11, 424-447.

I have also attached directions through which you can access my password protected web site, where you will find supporting articles. Please feel free to write back with any specific questions. I would love to receive a brief summary of the results of your study.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran

The College of William and Mary
School of Education
PO Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795
Telephone: [757-221-2187](tel:757-221-2187)
<http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch>

Appendix 4

Permission to use the School Climate Index

You have my permission to use the School Climate Index that I helped to develop. You can download the measure as well as scoring directions at my web site at <http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch>.

The proper citation for the measure is:

Tschannen-Moran, M., Parish, J., & DiPaola, M. F. (2006). School climate and state standards: How interpersonal relationships influence student achievement, *Journal of School Leadership*, 16, 386 - 415.

I have also attached directions through which you can access my password protected web site, where you will find supporting articles. In addition to the 2006 JSL article, I would point you to the Tschannen-Moran, Parish, and DiPaola article as well as the Hoy, Hannum, and Tschannen-Moran article.

Please feel free to write back with any specific questions. I would love to receive a brief summary of the results of your study.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran

The College of William and Mary
School of Education
PO Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795
Telephone: [757-221-2187](tel:757-221-2187)
<http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch>

Appendix 5

Informed Consent Form - Central Office Leaders

Dear xxxx:

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled, “Boundary-Spanning Leadership in Families of Schools in School Systems”. This form is part of the process of informed consent. It is intended to give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you need to understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact me, Margaret Wakeham, the researcher, if you have any questions or need more information about the study.

It is entirely up to you to decide if you want to participate in the research. If you decide not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

I have received approval from the CEO of your School District to contact senior educational officers and formal leaders at your central office who have professional responsibilities for families of schools, to invite them to participate in this research project. I am a Ph. D student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and I have worked as a teacher, a school district program coordinator, a curriculum development specialist and as a researcher. I will be conducting the research, and analyzing and reporting the collected data as part of my doctoral thesis on educational leadership under the supervision of Dr. Bruce Sheppard. This study will focus on the boundary spanning leadership practices of school district leaders and school principals as they interact in the normal course of their work

The study of boundary spanning leadership is emerging as a new strand of literature in education (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Boundary spanning leadership has been identified as important in the evolution of organizational and leadership models that distribute leadership, recognize and value diversity, respect identities, and honour multiple perspectives (Akkerman & Bakker, Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harris, 2009; Hogg, 2009; Hogg, van Kippenberg & Rast, 2012; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard, Brown & Dibbon, 2009). Boundaries influence interactions between individuals, groups, networks, systems, and communities. Boundaries affect how members of school systems engage in distributed leadership (Harris, 2009, Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011), and work with one another through communities of practice (Wenger, 2000) and professional learning communities (Fullan, 2001; DuFour, 1997). We do not have adequate understanding of what boundary spanning leaders do, how and why they do it, and how they create the desired conditions for effective interactions across roles, ranks and settings to occur (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Connaughton, Shuffler, & Goodwin,

2011;Getha-Taylor, 2008; Hogg, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009; Williams, 2011).

This study is qualitative and will use a multi-case study design that involves individual interviews, document analysis and a brief survey. You are being invited to participate in a face-to-face individual interview. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with a selection of central office formal leaders, and school principals. The teachers of the schools in the sample will be asked to complete a brief written survey on school climate and organizational citizenship to provide contextual information for the study. Current publically available school district strategic plans and reports, and school development plans and reports will also provide data for the research.

Purpose and Publication

The purpose of this study is to explore the boundary spanning leadership of school district office leaders and school principals as they interact within a family of schools' model. The findings of this study will form an integral part of my doctoral thesis and may lead to journal publications and conference presentations. Any publications resulting from this study will be made available to participants.

Interview, Time Required and Voluntary Participation

I am asking you to participate in **one** face-to- face interview based on a series of questions (that I will supply to you in advance of the interview) at a time and place convenient to you. The interview will last approximately 40 minutes and will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. When the written transcription of the interview is complete I will ask you to approve its contents before I continue further. The contents of the interview will be confidential and the data will be stored as per the regulations and policies of Memorial University. Your participation is entirely **voluntary**. You will not be required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

As part of the research I will also be inviting the principals of families of schools to participate in similar face-to-face interviews at a time and place convenient to them. The teachers in these schools will be invited to complete a paper and pencil school climate and organizational index survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. The publically available school district strategic plans and reports and the school development plans and reports of the current year will provide contextual information for the study. If at any point you decide to withdraw from the study the data already collected will not be used for the project. Participation is voluntary and there will be no negative consequences for you if you or any participant decides to withdraw.

Possible Benefits

There are no immediate benefits to you directly as part of this research but it is hoped that the findings will help to deepen our understanding of leadership practices that span

organizational boundaries to help achieve systemic goals. As well it is hoped that these findings will help inform recruitment processes and professional development for district and school leaders.

Possible Risks

There are minimal possible risks to your involvement in this study. The data from your interview will be known only to you and the researcher. Your decision to participate or not to participate will have no influence on your current or future employment status.

Information is Confidential

Any information provided by participants, including their identity, and that of any individuals who might be identified through the confidentiality of the data gathered through the interview will be maintained to the extent possible (and within the bounds of Canadian and provincial laws), and will not be seen by anyone except the researcher and her supervisor. The information including any recordings will be stored for a five year period in a secured locked storage cabinet in the principal researcher's office at Memorial University. Following the five year period, all collected original data including any recordings will be destroyed.

Please note that while every reasonable effort will be taken to keep your participation in the study anonymous and confidential, it is possible given the small size of the sample, that your CEO and senior administrators, because they have recommended you for the project, may be able to discern the identities of those who do or do not partake in the study. Likewise, because of the small sample, district leaders, principals and teachers in the course of their interactions with one another, may learn about each other's participation in the project.

No mention will be made in any publication or presentation of a specific school board, schools, or individuals. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the identity of participants within the bounds of Canadian and provincial laws.

For Further Information or Complaints

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of ICHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709 864-2861.

Consent

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research
- You have been able to ask questions about the research
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature

I have read and understood what this study is about and appreciate the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.

☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview

☐ I agree to the use of quotations but do not want my name to be identified in any publications resulting from this study. A copy of this informed consent has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's signature

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study

Signature of the Principal Investigator

Date

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Margaret Wakeham

Ph. D Candidate

Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland

(709) 782-1145, mmcwakeham@mun.ca

Appendix 6

Informed Consent - Principals

Dear Principal:

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled, “Boundary-Spanning Leadership in Families of Schools in School Systems”. This form is part of the process of informed consent. It is intended to give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you need to understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact me, Margaret Wakeham, the researcher if you have any questions or need more information about the study.

It is entirely up to you to decide if you want to participate in the research. If you decide not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

I have received approval from the CEO of your School District to contact principals within your family of schools to invite you to participate in this research project. I am a Ph. D student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and I have worked as a teacher, a school district program coordinator, a curriculum development specialist and as a researcher. I will be conducting the research, and analyzing and reporting the collected data as part of my doctoral thesis on educational leadership under the supervision of Dr. Bruce Sheppard. This study will focus on the boundary spanning leadership practices of school district leaders and school principals as they interact in the normal course of their work

The study of boundary spanning leadership is emerging as a new strand of literature in education (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Boundary spanning leadership has been identified as important in the evolution of organizational and leadership models that distribute leadership, recognize and value diversity, respect identities, and honour multiple perspectives (Akkerman & Bakker, Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harris, 2009; Hogg, 2009; Hogg, van Kippenberg & Rast, 2012; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard, Brown & Dibbon, 2009). Boundaries influence interactions between individuals, groups, networks, systems, and communities. Boundaries affect how members of school systems engage in distributed leadership (Harris, 2009, Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011), and work with one another through communities of practice (Wenger, 2000) and professional learning communities (Fullan, 2001; DuFour, 1997). We do not have adequate understanding of what boundary spanning leaders do, how and why they do it, and how they create the desired conditions for effective interactions across roles, ranks and settings to occur (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Connaughton, Shuffler, & Goodwin, 2011; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Hogg, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009; Williams, 2011).

This study is qualitative and will use a multi-case study design that involves individual interviews, document analysis and a brief survey. You are being invited to participate in a face-to-face individual interview. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with a selection of central office formal leaders, and school principals. The teachers of the schools in the sample will be asked to complete a brief written survey on school climate and organizational citizenship to provide contextual information for the study. Current publically available school district strategic plans and reports, and school development plans and reports will also provide data for the research.

Purpose and Publication

The purpose of this study is to explore the boundary spanning leadership of school district office leaders and school principals as they interact within a family of schools' model. The findings of this study will form an integral part of my doctoral thesis and may lead to journal publications and conference presentations. Any publications resulting from this study will be made available to participants.

Interview, Time Required and Voluntary Participation

I am asking you to participate in **one** face-to- face interview based on a series of questions (that I will supply to you in advance of the interview) at a time and place convenient to you. The interview will last approximately 40 minutes and will be audio-recorded and later transcribed in writing. When the written transcription of the interview is complete, I will ask you to approve its contents before I continue further. The contents of the interview will be confidential and the data will be stored as per the regulations and policies of Memorial University. Your participation is entirely **voluntary**. You will not be required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

The teachers in your school, with your permission, will be invited to complete anonymously a paper and pencil school climate and organizational index survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. I am asking you to set up a brief meeting for me with your staff so that I may discuss this research and their possible participation with them. The publically available school district strategic plans and reports and the school development plans and reports of the current year will provide contextual information for the study. If at any point you decide to withdraw from the study, the data already collected will not be used for the project. Participation is voluntary and there will be no negative consequences for you if you or any participant decides to withdraw.

Possible Benefits

There are no immediate benefits to you directly as part of this research but it is hoped that the findings will help to deepen our understanding of leadership practices that span organizational boundaries to help achieve systemic goals. As well it is hoped that these findings will help inform recruitment processes and professional development for district and school leaders.

Possible Risks

There are minimal possible risks to your involvement in this study. The data from your interview will be known only to you and the researcher. Your decision to participate or not to participate will have no influence on your current or future employment status.

Information is Confidential

Any information provided by participants, including their identity, and that of any individuals who might be identified through the confidentiality of the data gathered through the interview will be maintained to the extent possible (and within the bounds of Canadian and provincial laws), and will not be seen by anyone except the researcher and her supervisor. The information including any recordings will be stored for a five year period in a secured locked storage cabinet in the principal researcher's office at Memorial University. Following the five year period, all collected original data including any recordings will be destroyed.

Please note that while every reasonable effort will be taken to keep your participation in the study anonymous and confidential, it is possible given the small size of the sample, that your CEO and senior administrators, because they have recommended you for the project, may be able to discern the identities of those who do or do not partake in the study. Likewise, because of the small sample, district leaders, principals and teachers in the course of their interactions with one another, may learn about each other's participation in the project.

No mention will be made in any publication of a specific school board, schools, or individuals. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the identity of participants within the bounds of Canadian and provincial laws.

For Further Information or Complaints

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of ICHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709 864-2861.

Consent

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research
- You have been able to ask questions about the research
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature

I have read and understood what this study is about and appreciate the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.

☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview

☐ I agree to the use of quotations but do not want my name to be identified in any publications resulting from this study.

A copy of this informed consent has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's signature

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study

Signature of the Principal Investigator

Date

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Margaret Wakeham

Ph. D Candidate

Faculty of Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland

(709) 782-1145, mmcwakeham@mun.ca

Appendix 7

Informed Consent - Teachers

Dear Teacher:

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled, “Boundary-Spanning Leadership in Families of Schools in School Systems”. This form is part of the process of informed consent. It is intended to give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you need to understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact me, Margaret Wakeham, the researcher if you have any questions or need more information about the study.

It is entirely up to you to decide if you want to participate in the research. If you decide not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

I have received approval from the CEO of your School District to contact teachers within your school to invite you to participate in this research project. I am a Ph. D student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and I have worked as a teacher, a school district program coordinator, a curriculum development specialist and as a researcher. I will be conducting the research, and analyzing and reporting the collected data as part of my doctoral thesis on educational leadership under the supervision of Dr. Bruce Sheppard. This study will focus on the boundary spanning leadership practices of school district leaders and school principals as they interact in the normal course of their work

The study of boundary spanning leadership is emerging as a new strand of literature in education (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Boundary spanning leadership has been identified as important in the evolution of organizational and leadership models that distribute leadership, recognize and value diversity, respect identities, and honour multiple perspectives (Akkerman & Bakker, Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Harris, 2009; Hogg, 2009; Hogg, van Kippenberg & Rast, 2012; Robertson, 2009; Sheppard, Brown & Dibbon, 2009). Boundaries influence interactions between individuals, groups, networks, systems, and communities. Boundaries affect how members of school systems engage in distributed leadership (Harris, 2009, Mayrowetz, 2008; Spillane & Coldren, 2011), and work with one another through communities of practice (Wenger, 2000) and professional learning communities (Fullan, 2001; DuFour, 1997). We do not have adequate understanding of what boundary spanning leaders do, how and why they do it, and how they create the desired conditions for effective interactions across roles, ranks and settings to occur (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Connaughton, Shuffler, & Goodwin, 2011; Getha-Taylor, 2008; Hogg, 2009; Marrone, 2010; Millward & Timperley, 2010; Robertson, 2009; Williams, 2011).

This study is qualitative and will use a multi-case study design that involves individual interviews, document analysis and a brief survey. You are being invited to anonymously complete a brief survey. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with a selection of central office formal leaders, and school principals. The teachers of the schools in the sample will be asked to complete a brief written survey on school climate and organizational citizenship to provide contextual information for the study. Current publically available school district strategic plans and reports, and school development plans and reports will also provide data for the research.

Purpose and Publication

The purpose of this study is to explore the boundary spanning leadership of school district office leaders and school principals as they interact within a family of schools' model. The findings of this study will form an integral part of my doctoral thesis and may lead to journal publications and conference presentations. Any publications resulting from this study will be made available to participants.

Survey, Time Required and Voluntary Participation

I am asking you to participate in a **short survey on school climate and organizational citizenship** that will take approximately **15 minutes** to complete. The contents of the survey will be anonymous and confidential and the data will be stored as per the regulations and policies of Memorial University. Your participation is entirely **voluntary**. You will not be required to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

The publically available school district strategic plans and reports and the school development plans and reports of the current year will provide contextual information for the study. If at any point you decide to withdraw from the study the data already collected will not be used for the project. Participation is voluntary and there will be no negative consequences for you if you or any participant decides to withdraw.

Possible Benefits

There are no immediate benefits to you directly as part of this research but it is hoped that the findings will help to deepen our understanding of leadership practices that span organizational boundaries to help achieve systemic goals. As well it is hoped that these findings will help inform recruitment processes and professional development for district and school leaders.

Possible Risks

There are minimal possible risks to your involvement in this study. The data from your survey will be known only to you and the researcher. Your decision to participate or not to participate will have no influence on your current or future employment status.

Information is Confidential

Any information provided by participants, including your identity, and that of any individuals who might be identified through the confidentiality of the data gathered through the survey will be maintained to the extent possible (and within the bounds of Canadian and provincial laws), and will not be seen by anyone except the researcher and her supervisor. The information will be stored for a five year period in a secured locked storage cabinet in the principal researcher's office at Memorial University. Following the five year period, all collected original data including any recordings, will be destroyed.

Please note that while every reasonable effort will be taken to keep your school's participation in the study anonymous and confidential, it is possible given the small size of the sample, that your CEO and senior administrators, because they have recommended your family of schools for the project, may be able to discern the identity of the schools that do or do not partake in the study. Likewise, because of the small sample, district leaders, principals and teachers in the course of their interactions with one another, may learn about your school's participation in the project.

You are asked to complete the survey anonymously and put it in a sealed envelope and deposit it along with a stapled copy of your consent form in a designated drop box located in a designated place in your school. Any information provided by you will be confidential to the extent possible (and within the bounds of Canadian and provincial laws), and will not be seen by anyone except the researcher and her supervisor. The information, including any recordings will be stored for a five year period in a secured locked storage cabinet in the principal researcher's office at Memorial University. Following the five year period, all collected original data will be destroyed.

No mention will be made in any publication or presentation of a specific school board, schools, or individuals. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the identity of participants within the bounds of Canadian and provincial laws.

For Further Information or Complaints

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of ICHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709 864-2861.

Consent

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research
- You have been able to ask questions about the research
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature

I have read and understood what this study is about and appreciate the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.

A copy of this informed consent has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's signature

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study

Signature of the Principal Investigator

Date

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Margaret Wakeham

Ph. D Candidate

Faculty of Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland

(709) 782-1145

mmcwakeham@mun.ca

Appendix 8

Interview Protocol for Central Office Leaders and Principals

Boundary Spanning Leadership in Families of Schools in School Systems

1. Briefly describe your background and how you came to be in your current position – you might think about your education and experiences.
2. How do you see your role, if you had to describe your job, in terms of interactions:
 - a. With central office professional leaders
 - b. With school principals
 - c. With teachers
 - d. With others
3. Please describe the kinds of interactions you engage in during the normal flow of your job
 - a. Planned or unplanned meetings, technological interactions, phone calls, other
 - b. Professional development and growth
 - c. District and school development
 - d. Building leadership capacity
 - e. Other?
4. Please think about three or four specific interactions you have experienced in the last few weeks. Who was involved in each interaction (central office formal leaders, principals, teachers, others)? Describe the purpose and nature of each of these encounters one at a time. Think about to what extent the interaction involved the following:
 - a. Managing, coordinating or planning
 - b. Gathering or exchanging data or information
 - c. Implementing directives
 - d. Evaluating performance of people or programs
 - e. Mentoring
 - f. Engaging in professional development
 - g. Developing leadership capacity
 - h. Creating conditions for change
 - i. Supporting organizational learning

- j. Exchanging perspectives
 - k. Developing professional relationships
 - l. Developing systemic change
 - m. Other
5. With which group do you work most frequently – central office formal leaders; principals or teachers?
 6. What are the challenges of working across settings, roles and ranks – with the school district; from one school to another; within schools?
 7. Describe and comment on the boundaries you encounter during the course of your professional interactions?
 - a. Professional
 - b. Personal
 - c. Ideological
 - d. Hierarchical
 - e. Organizational
 - f. Geographical
 - g. Cultural
 - h. Other
 8. How do these boundaries help you work with others; how do boundaries get in the way of working effectively with others?
 9. How do you go about creating conditions that help people work together effectively as peers, as part of a family of schools, or as part of the district within and across groups?
 10. Within the family of schools how are ideas, perspectives and innovations shared?
 11. How do your interactions help you and others engage in leadership?
 12. Can you think of examples where the combined efforts of individuals or groups helped support or create an innovative idea in this school system? How would you describe the innovation?
 13. How often does the family of schools' membership change? Can you comment on how this affects the continuity of your work?
 14. In an ideal world how would you like to see central office formal leaders, principals and teachers interact with one another?

15. Comment on the kind of professional development support you get or that you need to provide leadership within and across groups within a family of schools?
16. Have your experiences made you think about what it takes in terms of dispositions, skills and practices to provide leadership in your role? Can you comment on that?
17. Would you like to add any further comments on anything discussed in this interview?

© Margaret Wakeham

Appendix 9

School Climate and Citizenship Index

Available at <http://wmpeople.wm.edu/asset/index/mxtsch/scioc>

Appendix 10

Scoring the School Climate Index and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Available at <http://wmpeople.wm.edu/asset/index/mxtsch/directionsforsciob>