Principal traits and school climate: Is the Invitational Education Leadership Model the right choice?

Ingrid Legros and Thomas G. Ryan
Nipissing University, Canada

Abstract
This review is grounded in the belief that the principal is integral to the creation and sustainment of a school's climate. The existence of a positive school climate is no longer a bonus of good leadership. It is the product of conscious leadership choices. We argue that the way in which a principal chooses to lead determines whether or not a positive school climate will arise. Today's principal can no longer be a hierarchal leader. Leadership must be inclusive and provide all with a voice that is authentic and valued. Invitational Leadership exists as a model that encompasses the need to establish a positive school climate and the need to effectively address student achievement. Choosing to lead from an invitational stance enables principals to be inclusive, involving staff, students and parents in a shared school vision. This active participation of all involved sets a respectful, trustworthy and meaningful climate in a school.

Keywords: *Leadership; principal; invitational leadership; school climate*

Introduction

The purpose of this review is to examine the concept of school climate development and sustainment through the lens of leadership, specifically, Invitational Education Theory (IET). In doing so, we determine the leadership traits necessary for a principal to build a positive climate within a newly constructed school. As well, we establish how Invitational Leadership exists as an encompassing model for principals to embrace in order to build positive climate.

Background

Over the last 30 years, the importance of developing a positive school climate has been increasingly recognised (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009a; National School Climate Council, 2012; Preble & Taylor, 2009; Thapa, 2013; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Through established research findings, positive climate has been inextricably linked to school efficacy (Black, 2010; Cohen, Pickeral & McCloskey, 2009b; Preble & Taylor, 2009; Price, 2012; Thapa, 2013) and has profoundly impacted student experiences (Cohen et al., 2009b). While research, both qualitative and quantitative, has demonstrated an influential link to many aspects of school climate, Cohen et al. (2009b) consolidated the research into four distinct dimensions of climate: safety (social-emotional, physical); relationships (inclusivity, equity, engagement, student-teacher, student-student); teaching and learning (support, professional, social and ethical); and school environment (physical space).

The recognition of school climate's importance in relation to school efficacy is well documented (Black, 2010; Preble & Taylor, 2009; Price, 2012; Thapa, 2013). Once school climate is established, it must be sustained (Cohen et al., 2009b; Hughes & Pickeral, 2013; Lehr, 2004). The National School Climate Council (2012) suggested the cultivation of such an environment should democratically engage all stakeholders, ultimately infiltrating all sectors involved in its implementation. Staff, students and parents are equally responsible for developing and sustaining a positive school climate. Each school community is unique and the "ingredients for promoting a positive school climate vary from school to school; that is each recipe must be tailored to meet the

needs of the students, staff, parents and community members who are key stakeholders" (Lehr, 2004, p. 2). This process, however, doesn't occur without intent and direction. While the contributions of staff, students and parent community are integral components in building a positive school climate, it is the role of the principal that stands out as most crucial (Black, 2010; Frascone, 2011; Price, 2012).

The significance of the principal's role in the development or sustainability of school climate began in the 1980s (Fullan, 2002). Much of the research on the principal's contribution has focused on leadership traits that contribute to a positive climate. Within that research, recurring themes of shared leadership, collaboration, relationship building, intentionality and improving practice have emerged. Studies have demonstrated the importance of collaboration amongst parents, students, teachers and administration in the learning community to resolve problems (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013; Singh, 2012). Researchers have focused on a principal's emotional intelligence or their ability to foster, develop and sustain relationships within the school community (Black, 2010; Fullan, 2002; Harris & Chapman, 2002). Scholars have demonstrated that when leadership is distributed or shared it promotes a climate that embraces and nurtures growth (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Moore-Steward & Whitney, 2000; Singh, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Also identified in the research is the role of intentionality and organising the learning community to best suit the overall vision of the school and its effects on building a nurturing climate (Cohen et al., 2009b; Fullan, 2002; Kelley, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005; Levin, 2008; Thapa, 2013; Westheimer, 1996). Lastly, the idea of principals as instructional leaders and supporters of teacher learning is also a well-documented theme in the positive school climate research (Drago-Severson, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2004; MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009; Nettles & Herrington, 2007).

Identification of specific leadership traits that build a healthy and positive organisation is of interest to all stakeholders in a school's community. The blank slate of a new school makes this identification increasingly important. The principal's role when opening a new school, therefore, becomes increasingly significant (Egley, 2003). Numerous leadership models have been developed to exemplify the essential leadership traits necessary for successful principalship. Servant leadership, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, moral leadership have all been identified as effective models (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Black, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2004). The emergent leadership traits that affect school climate, however, appear to align with a relatively new leadership model referred to as invitational leadership. Invitational leadership, outlined by William Purkey and Betty Siegel in 2002 (Burns, 2007; Egley, 2003) is "a theory of practice that offers a systematic approach to the educational process and it provides strategies for making schools more inviting" (Egley, 2003, p. 58). The end goal of invitational leadership is "to create schools with a climate that invites everyone in the school to experience success" (Egley, 2003, p. 58).

We illuminate leadership traits of principals who have developed and/or sustained a positive climate in schools and explore the theory of Invitational Leadership. We intend to establish that the Invitational Education Leadership Model is a best-fit practice for leaders to create a positive climate in a new school.

Research Questions
We ask: What leadership traits do principals value in building positive school climate in a newly constructed school? Second, we query: Does the Invitational Leadership Theory appropriately represent the necessary principal leadership traits required to build positive school climate in a brand new school?

School Climate
The definition of Positive School Climate is a contentious one, and one that has evolved over the years. When the discussion of school climate's influence on school efficacy began in the 1960s and 1970s, school climate

was used "in relation to the environment of a school" (Black, 2010, p. 444). Essentially, school climate was merely the atmosphere of the school as experienced by the teachers and administrators (Black, 2010). At that time, atmosphere referred to "perception of routine behaviour that affected the attitudes and behaviour in the school" (Black, 2010, p. 444). As the importance of school climate developed, and research into its impact on student achievement ("an improvement in learning that develops both the individual and the individual's ability to contribute to society") (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 9) and wellbeing expanded, a new definition emerged. School climate became far more than just attitudes and behaviours. Through extensive research Cohen et al. (2009a) have defined school climate as:

> the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. (p. 182)

Invitational Education Theory (IET)

The theoretical basis for Invitational Leadership is Invitational Education Theory (IET). IET is "a theory of practice that offers a systematic approach to the educational process (Egley & Jones, 2005, p. 14). Additionally, IET is understood as:

> an ethical theory of practice based on a set of congruent assumptions, descriptions about human thinking and behaviour that intentionally addresses the total culture/environment of an organization to provide a more welcoming, satisfying and enriching experience for all involved. (Shaw, Siegel & Schoenlein, 2013, p. 34)

Invitational Leadership is a theory of practice that is "a powerful process of communicating caring and appropriate messages intended to summon forth the greatest human potential as well as for identifying and changing those forces that defeat and destroy potential" (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, p. 1).

Framework

The identification of a static list of leadership characteristics that ensure effective management of an educational organisation remains contentious. Experts do agree however, that effective leadership is integral to leading an organisation successfully (Fullan, 2010; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Nettles & Herrington, 2007; Robinson, 2010; Ryan & Soehner, 2011). As a result, understanding the commonalities amongst leadership traits and successful organisations is important if we want to promote excellence (Burns & Martin, 2010). Stakeholders: teachers, students, parents, superintendents and principals have a vested interest in quality leadership. While there is no precise formula that guarantees a leader's success, developing a common understanding of the term 'quality leadership' is a necessary first step (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004).

Feeling safe and supported "socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically – is a fundamental human need" (Cobb, 2014, p. 14). But feeling safe must go beyond prevention of violence and crime. Students "need to feel like they are valued and belong and be in a good emotional and psychological state to learn" (p. 14). The most advantageous "way to ensure that schools are safe … is to focus on creating, supporting and sustaining a positive school climate" (p. 15). In light of today's growing commitment to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of our students, delving into school climate and its effect on the overall success of a school to meet these needs has come to the forefront of educational policy. Province and State educational legislation is beginning to contain policy regarding the creation and maintenance of school climate as a necessary component of a student's

education. Many educational jurisdictions have school climate divisions that communicate with school level teams to ensure that a school's climate remains a focus of school improvement plans and everyday vision. A positive school climate has become an important indicator of school excellence (Allen, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004; Price, 2012; Thapa, 2013).

Inherent in the achievement of a positive school climate is principal leadership (Cohen, 2010; Drago-Severson, 2012; Pepper & Hamilton-Thomas, 2002). Research suggests, "principals need to be explicit and ongoing leaders in school climate reform efforts" (Cohen, 2010, p. 29) and "ultimately drive the direction of school climate" (Cobb, 2014, p. 16). A newly opened school is analogous to a blank slate. The school's potential will be shaped by the actions and behaviours of the building principal (Kelley et al., 2005). Subsequently, the identification of leadership traits that best support the competent development of that potential becomes paramount (Ryan & Gottfried, 2012). The leadership behaviour of new school principal is an example of how "the contribution of effective leadership is largest when it is needed most" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 17). Understanding the necessary leadership traits to build a positive climate in a new school supports the best selection of principal. While Leithwood et al. (2004) contend there is no set of traits that are applicable in all situations, previous research has identified common threads of successful educational leadership.

This integrative review focuses on themes occurring within existing evidence which suggests an indirect connection between climate and principalship; whereby a positive climate is achieved through specific behaviours and not a direct effect of leadership style (Drago-Severson, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2004; MacNeil, et al., 2009). These behaviours include: 1) Relationship Building), 2) Shared Leadership, 3) Intentionally Planned Structure, 4) Collaboration and 5) Improving Practice. Each of these behaviours will be discussed separately in relation to relevant research and documentation.

Relationship building

Although pedagogical and instructional knowledge are important components of effective leadership (Goodwin, 2013), our ability to develop and maintain relationships is our most valuable currency (Scott, 2009). A principal's interactions with staff, students and parents say a great deal about his/her leadership priorities. Cohen et al., (2009a) concluded "one of the fundamentally important dimensions of school climate is relational and involves how 'connected' people feel to one another in school" (p. 185). This connectedness has become a growing area of research (Cohen et al., 2009a). Principals who have the capacity to foster student-student, teacher-student, and teacher-teacher relationships possess the necessary attributes for building a positive school climate. The Institute for Education Leadership (2012) contended one of the key indicators of an effective leader is the ability to build relationships and develop people within the school community. In a research study by Price (2012), the affective relationship between teachers and principals was examined to explain the variance in school professionals' satisfaction, cohesion and commitment levels. The importance of exploring these variables is their positive link to staff morale and, in turn school climate (Cohen, 2010; Goodwin, 2013; Scott, 2009).

Price's (2012) study examined nationally representative data from the United States' School and Staffing Survey, (SASS) 2003-04. This research occurs every four years and assesses a variety of domains linked to school effectiveness. The sample of principals and teachers came only from elementary schools because secondary school staff indicated that department heads were seen as more influential than principals on affective relationships (Price, 2012). The researchers focused particularly on the principal as architect of the relationship because the principal is "in a structural position to initiate and sustain relationships with teachers" (Price, 2012. p. 41). The initiative for this study developed out of the lack of research relating "worker attitude characteristics" (p. 41) and its effect on school climate.

The results of this study demonstrated that "teacher attitudes improve when principal–teacher relationships in schools create positive, intrinsic affective responses among the staff" (Price, 2012, p. 66) and that "principals

are central to this process" (p. 66).   The limitations of this study are many. Firstly, it is of concern that only elementary school principals are involved. This limits the applicability of research into principal relational behaviour on school climate to only the elementary panel. Further research should focus on the relational role of secondary school principals to determine any commonalities in the findings. Secondly, the survey used doesn't take into account the considerations of a teacher's intrinsic motivation and how this motivation contributes to the development of a positive school climate. Investigation into this variable should be included in prospective research.

Relationships matter and have a profound effect on school climate (Cohen et al., 2009a; Fullan, 2002; Price, 2012; Schaps, 2003). Schools with positive school climates have principals that have the capacity to foster authentic relationships within the school community. Ryan & Soehner (2011) stated, "the principal is the key player when fostering trust among staff. In fact, effective principals display caring attitudes toward staff members, students and parents" (p. 286). Furthermore, "supportive administrators enhance collegial support and cohesion among staff, a process that feeds back to form even stronger trusting relationships" (Price, 2012, p. 46). Essentially, fostering relationships is a gift that keeps on giving. As Price concluded, while relationship building is a key component of developing a positive school climate, it is only one part of the school climate recipe and its significance to positive school climate should be considered accordingly.

Shared leadership
Harris & Spillane (2008) in their article on management in education, recognised "the model of a singular, heroic leader is at last being replaced with leadership that is focused upon teams rather than individuals" (p. 31). It is through this shared leadership that different stakeholders develop "ownership in the mission of the school and a vital interest in its effectiveness" (Terry, 1995, p. 5). Those schools that depend on the principal as the traditional hierarchical leader and decision maker foster a "culture of isolation" (Allen, 2003, p. 3). Wahlstrom & Louis (2008) maintained, "there is broad support for expanding teachers' participation in leadership and decision-making tasks. These discussions are given additional weight by research suggesting that increased teacher influence in schools has the potential for significant positive effect on school improvement" (p. 461). In a brief based on the latest research and informed best practice, Hughes & Pickeral (2013) outlined five strategies to assist principals' engagement in the effective practice of shared leadership, specifically to foster the development of a positive school climate. They discovered the following actions regarding shared leadership: 1) leadership be seen as a partnership amongst all stakeholders, 2) participants have a shared vision, 3) with shared responsibility comes shared accountability, 4) all ideas (not personalities) are recognised, and 5) inner strength of all participants is valued.

Researchers, Hughes & Pickeral (2013) suggested administration model the balance of power. This act of leading by example empowers all participants and offers them a voice in the decisions of the school. Creating a shared vision allows participants to keep the target of a positive school climate in clear focus. Committing to shared leadership conveys that all participants follow through and take responsibility for the completion of their role (Ryan & Gallo, 2011). Recognising diverse ideas and opinions respectfully, and with authentic engagement, develops cohesion amongst participants and builds a strong sense of team. Lastly, Hughes & Pickeral (2013) reported shared leadership provides participants with "the strength, leadership skills and belief in collaboration to handle the adversity that comes to us all" (p. 3).

Moore-Steward & Whitney (2000) claim that when stakeholders "are encouraged to exercise leadership, they help create a strong professional culture that embraces and nurtures growth" (p. 1). Having an administrator that trusts, values and acknowledges the individual expertise of the entire school community demonstrates a commitment to the greater good of the school and creates an environment

absent of micromanagement. The Institute for Education Leadership (2012) noted that principals should "provide staff with leadership opportunities and support them as they take on these opportunities" (p. 12).

Shared leadership builds team and engages teachers in collectively developing the school purpose and focus. Research has demonstrated that shared leadership practice equates "with improved organizational performance and outcomes" (p. 32). Hughes & Pickeral (2013) suggested "the skilled principal nurtures and capitalizes on the leadership in everyone in the school community – making them better as a team than as individuals" (p. 2). Positivity is contagious. Content, motivated and satisfied staff encourage other members of the learning community (students and parents) to model this behaviour as well (DuBrin, 2014). Singh (2012) concluded: "When formal leaders create a distributed leadership model, they demonstrate that the organization values the contributions of its members and affirm their belief that all individuals should have a voice" (p. 2). This commitment to, and affirmation of balance of power influences the development of an enduring positive climate. Harris & Spillane (2008) advocated, "for those genuinely seeking transformation and self-renewal, this is a risk worth taking" (p. 33).

Planned, intentional structure

Organising the learning community to best suit the overall vision of the school is important to building a nurturing climate. While establishing the group is important, Westheimer (1996) argues that intentionally conceptualising community isn't sufficient. The leader must also develop "the specific values and commitments that such a conceptualisation embodies" (para. 22). Levin (2008) specified the establishment of an organisation's vision and goals is an essential practicality for all leaders. While it was difficult to find one study that focused directly on planning and intentional structure, many different studies included this determinant as integral to developing a positive school climate. Cohen, et al. (2009b) concluded, "school improvement requires coordinated, sustained and intentional efforts to create learning climates that promote students' social, emotional, ethical and intellectual abilities" (p. 4). Fullan (2002) acknowledged while principals appreciate diverse ideas, they need to focus these ideas to achieve alignment with school vision. Thapa (2013) cautioned that principals must "focus on long-term programming, impacts, infrastructure and support to ensure school climate reform is sustainable" (p. 3). Sustainability of school climate can outlast any individual leader if all stakeholders embrace collective school norms and vision (Kelley et al., 2005; National School Climate Council, 2012).

The consistency amongst the research outcomes suggests school goals, vision and direction need to be intentional, planned and shared. Principals must make their expectations and all goals clear (Allen, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004; Price, 2012) to ensure all stakeholders understand and collectively support their implementation. One area for further consideration is the importance of shared and planned vision to overall school climate. If disaffected teachers don't share a principal's proposal for school direction, what then? Fullan (2002) indicated motivating and swaying these disconnected teachers "can have a profound effect on the overall climate of the organization" (p. 18), but the question remains: how is this accomplished? Does the lack of adoption or 'buy in' by all stakeholders into the shared and planned vision have the potential to thwart the whole process? Are all other leadership strategies moot points? Fullan (2002) said no, that if principals work as change agents and not solely instructional leaders, they can transform the climate of the school. MacNeil et al. (2009) clarified the issue explaining:

> When an organization has a clear understanding of its purpose, why it exists and what it must do and who it should serve the culture will ensure that things work well. Successful school principals comprehend the critical role that the organisational culture plays in developing a successful school. (p. 74)

Principal autonomy allows for the determination of specific and intentional school vision and goals. Sharing these goals with the school community adds another piece to the positive school climate puzzle.

Improving practice

Supporting teacher learning is critically important in the process of building a positive climate (Drago-Severson, 2012). When schools have positive climates, teachers are better motivated and in turn "highly motivated teachers have greater success in terms of student performance and student outcomes" (MacNeil et al., 2009, p. 77). Further, promoting adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities promotes "collective efficacy and staff skills in providing whole child education" (National School Climate Council, 2012, p. 2). As teachers' self-efficacy perceptions develop, their teaching abilities are influenced (Price, 2012). Although many factors affect whether professional community will exist in a school, one of the most significant factors is strong principal leadership (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). It is integral, therefore, for principals to focus attention on the development and sustainment of improving the adult learning environment by providing opportunities for teachers to improve their practice. By doing so, the direct effect is improved school climate (Fullan, 2002; MacNeil, et al., 2009).

Drago-Severson (2012) investigated the strategies that principals employ to support adult learning and shape school climate. While her study was part of a larger study that focused on other dimensions of principal leadership, her focus of inquiry was on how "specific leadership practices can build school climates that support teacher growth" (Drago-Severson, 2012, p. 9). The research focused on 25 principals with at least five years' experience from independent, Catholic and public schools. The sample was diverse. Experience, gender, race, ethnicity and educational background were all acknowledged variables. Another variable in the research was that the schools varied in their financial resources. The data collection detailed qualitative interviews with principals and included field notes from school tours and a document analysis of 60 varied artefacts.

One of the key results that supported the hypothesis that improving teacher practice fosters a positive school climate came when 21 out of 25 principals believed it essential to model the desire to learn (Drago-Severson, 2012). The learning while leading model, "was essential to them, in their specific role as climate shaper" (p. 20). In addition, 24 out of the 25 principals expressed the view that encouraging learning and growing makes teachers "more effective in their complex work, increases their satisfaction, builds community, and decreases isolation" (p. 23). Several principals described promoting teacher learning as a balancing act. They didn't want to overwhelm the teachers and make it seem like they were adding to the workload, especially for those staff that have a negative connotation with change. While 19 out of the 25 acknowledged that difficult conversations provide opportunity for growth and development, most wanted to be viewed as a supporter and facilitator of teacher learning and not an autocratic leader (Drago-Severson, 2012).

The findings of this study suggested principals, regardless of employer (independent, Catholic or public), invested in developing their teachers' learning opportunities (Drago-Severson, 2012). This investment helped shape school climate. Other research has demonstrated similar connections between improving practice and developing a positive school climate (Fullan, 2002; MacNeil et al., 2009; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Thapa, 2013). Moving forward with these conclusions suggests that continued support and facilitation of improving practice is essential in the role of principal if they wish to be shapers of positive school climate.

Collaboration

While improving practice has been discussed as an avenue to create positive school climate, it cannot occur in isolation. One of the basics of effective leadership outlined by Leithwood et al. (2004) is the "building of collaborative processes" (p. 9). According to DuFour, DuFour, Eacker, & Many (2006), "the collaborative team is

the building block of a professional learning community" (as cited in Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 5). Creating a collaborative community is important to the establishment of a school's positive climate and developing its affective nature.   It is integral that a principal models collegial collaboration with all members of the staff and students to promote "the attitude that working together effectively is an expected norm" (DuBrin, 2014, p .361). Further, "that under any circumstances, a principal today needs very solid team building skills – skills that build teacher capacity to work together collaboratively" (Ministry of Education of Ontario, 2013, p. 4). We are all members of a team, regardless of school role. Each person's contribution is valued and acknowledged as vital to school efficacy and well-being (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013; Mendel, Watson & MacGregor, 2002; Pepper & Hamilton-Thomas, 2002; National School Climate Council, 2012; Thapa, 2013).

In their autoethnographical study, Pepper & Hamilton-Thomas (2002) investigated the effects of leadership on school change. Data collection was carried out through the examination of personal journals documenting the journey through first year principalship. Much of the researcher's conclusions regarding leadership style and positive school climate materialised from collaboration as a vehicle for staff morale development. Pepper & Hamilton-Thomas (2002) discovered "uniting the staff through a 'we' approach, rather than a hierarchical approach, helped teachers to feel esteemed as well as committed to and satisfied with their jobs" (p. 157). They also concluded "the collaborative relationship…empowers those who participate in it" (p. 157).

The limitations of this study stemmed from the inclusion of only a single principal's experiences in a very specific situation. Applicability across contexts becomes impractical. Linking documentation with other subjects' experiences would have added credit to the conclusions and postulations presented by the researchers. A positive element within this study was the challenging context of the experience. There was a problem to solve from the beginning and the documented evidence through which conclusions were based was authentic. The outcomes of the principal's decisions were presented in a meaningfully representative manner.

Through analysis of the documentation, Pepper & Hamilton-Thomas (2002) discovered that an organisation that is collaborative in nature effectively capitalises on the strengths inherent in its members. This emphasis develops collective meaning and builds cohesion amongst staff members and adds to the knowledge base of all participants (Fullan, 2010). Moreover, "when teachers work together, led by an instructionally-focused principal, they are much more successful than when they work alone" (p. 26). Additionally, when principals involve staff collaboratively regarding matters that affect them, whereby their expertise is critical, it helps "to shape the school in ways that can accomplish shared goals and address individual concerns as well" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 7). This staff cohesion boosts staff morale and, in turn, provides the environment to build a positive school climate. Drago-Severson (2012) acknowledges one way to change the school's climate is by encouraging teachers to collaborate. Principals need, therefore, to provide the necessary structures, allocate resources and provide sufficient time to support authentic collaboration (Drago-Severson, 2012). This collaboration cannot be contrived however, it is only through authentic cooperative opportunities will stakeholders be convinced of its value (Pepper & Hamilton-Thomas, 2002).

Theoretical Context

Educational leadership "is possibly the most important single determinant of an effective learning environment" (Kelley et al., 2005, p. 18). Existing leadership models such as servant leadership, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and moral leadership are all effective models of the essential leadership traits of successful principalship (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Black, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2004). For the past few decades these models of leadership have adequately encompassed leadership needs. The debate to assess which one is most effective remains ongoing and uncertain. Therefore, principals must choose a leadership style that "will enable them to lead the organisation to new pinnacles of excellence" (Egley & Jones, 2005, p. 13).

As a school's climate becomes integrally linked to student and staff wellbeing and student achievement, the importance of identifying specific leadership traits that build a healthy and positive organisation becomes paramount. Relying on previous models of leadership may no longer be sufficient to creating safe and successful schools. Burns & Martin (2010) suggested "since Invitational Leadership is comprehensive in nature, consisting of many positive and essentially sound educational components, it may well serve as a model of leadership that will positively impact the diverse and changing needs of today's educational organisations" (p. 30).

Purkey & Seigel (2013) define Invitational Leadership as a shift "from command and control to cooperation and communication, from manipulation to cordial summons, from exclusiveness to inclusiveness, from subordinates to associates" (chapter 1, para. 3). Invitational Leadership, based on Invitational Theory, "is a collection of assumptions that seek to explain phenomena and provide a means of intentionally summoning people to realise their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor" (Purkey, 1992, p. 5). Invitational Leadership is a practice that encourages everyone in the building to succeed. Invitational Leadership is constructed on four tenets: respect, trust, optimism and intentionality (Egley, 2003; Purkey & Siegel, 2013; Shaw & Seigel, 2010). These tenets cannot exist in isolation, but require an inter-dependent application to be successful. Defining each of these four tenets is essential before any relationship to principal leadership traits and school climate can be identified. Respect: "is measured by how we treat ourselves and others" (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, chapter 1, para. 67). People are valuable, able, and responsible and should be treated accordingly (Purkey & Novak, 2008, p. 12). Trust: "encourages collaborative risk taking and creative problem solving" (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, chapter 1, para. 67). To develop and sustain a cooperative stance requires the time and effort to establish trustworthy patterns of interaction. Optimism: "is evidenced by positive and realistic expectations" (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, chapter 1, para. 3). Invitational educators are optimistic about, and committed to, the continuous appreciation and growth of all involved in the educative process (Cain, 2013). Intentionality: "gives direction and purpose to our decisions and makes actions possible" (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, chapter 1, para. 67). It "pulls together the optimism, trust, respect, and care that are essential to being a proficient professional" (Cain, 2013).

Further to the four tenets of respect, trust, optimism and intentionality, Invitational Leadership focuses on a framework of five domains that "are highly significant for their separate and combined influence on Invitational Leadership" (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, chapter 5, para 2). These five areas are referred to as The Five P's (Purkey & Siegel, 2013). Purkey (1992) describes these five "P's" as the community "in which individuals continuously interact" (p. 9). The 5 P's provide a framework to collaboratively address, evaluate, modify, and sustain a positive total school environment (Purkey & Novak, 2008). The graphic in Figure 1 succinctly summarizes the individual elements of the 5 P's.

Purkey and Novak's Starfish analogy suggests that steady and continuous pressure from a number of points can allow a school to overcome even the most daunting problems. The Starfish Drawing illustrates the comprehensive transformation process of Invitational Education (Purkey & Novak, 2008, p. 20). Invitational Leadership "furnishes educators with principles of practicing behaviours that seek to integrate, in creative and ethical ways, research, theory, and practice" (Egley & Jones, 2005, p. 14). The intention of Invitational Leadership is to ensure that a positive climate exists in a school so that everyone has the opportunity to experience success.

Five aspects of effective principal leadership traits and their effect on school climate in a brand new school emerged from the literature review. Building relationships, shared leadership, collaboration, intentionality and improving practice became apparent as dominant traits to contemplate when examining leadership models and theories. The theory of Invitational Leadership exists as a consolidation of these themes into a model of leadership that will provide guidance for others. This theoretical framework "addresses the total environment and culture of the school" (Stanley, Juhnke & Purkey, 2004, p. 302). The ensuing consolidation intends to demonstrate how the Invitational Leadership model adequately encompasses the five principal leadership traits necessary to effectively build school climate in a brand new school.

POLICIES:
Inclusive
Fair
Equitable
Tolerant
Defensible
Consistent Just

PROCESSES:
Academic
Interdisciplinary
Encouraging
Democratic Cooperative
Collaborative
Evaluative

PROGRAMMES
Enriching
Stimulating
Healthful
Interactive
Constructive
Developmental
Engaging

PEOPLE:
Trusting
Respectful
Optimistic
Caring
Accessible
Courteous
Intentional

PLACES:
Functional
Attractive
Clean
 Efficient
Aesthetic
Personal
Warm

Figure 1. The Five P's of Leadership. Purkey & Novak, 2008, p. 20

Consolidation

In this era of multi-faceted principalship, leaders are "now responsible for meeting expectations unparalleled to that of previous decades" (Burns & Martin, 2010, p. 29). In response to these increased expectations, principals must "choose a leadership style that will enable them to lead the organisation to new pinnacles of excellence" (Egley & Jones, 2005, p. 13). Creating a positive school climate where every individual feels safe, recognised and valued stands as an integral component of school efficacy. While school efficacy is a measure of principal competency, principals must make school climate a top priority. (Black, 2010; Burns & Martin, 2010; Egley & Jones, 2005). It is essential therefore, for principals to actualise a leadership style that both combines the needs for academic excellence as well as developing the school's climate.

In order to adequately connect theory to practice and conclude that Invitational Leadership Theory encompasses the leadership traits necessary to build a positive climate in a new school, it is necessary to examine how each of the five identified leadership traits coincide with the four tenets and the five critical components of Invitational Leadership Theory. Table 1 organises the information already presented in the Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework sections into a format that allows for easy consolidation and comparison.

The connection between the theory of Invitational Leadership and positive climate research demonstrates that an invitational principal has the capacity to both develop a positive working and learning environment and foster academic achievement, both of which are essential to school efficacy. Changing the mindset of what

traditionally necessitates an effective leadership model and incorporating Invitational Leadership as a viable option, is within the system's grasp. Goldman (1998) contended that leadership is adaptable and "school leaders are not prisoners of the past; they do have the power to consciously alter their approach to education" (p. 22).

Table 1: Relationship between Principal Leadership Traits and Invitational Leadership Theory

Leadership Traits	Invitational Leadership Tenets	Invitational Leadership Principles	Key points connecting theory to practice
Relationship Building	Respect	People	The essence of this point is how we interact with and treat people is key. Building trustworthy, respectful, caring relationships with all stakeholders in the school and fostering those relationships through meaningful interactions is essential. It is not only the relationships between leader and stakeholders but modelling behaviours that inspire others to interact in the same way. (i.e. teacher-teacher or teacher-student). These relationships improve stakeholders' satisfaction, cohesion and commitment levels to the school. This in turn fosters the development and sustainment of positive climate.
Shared Leadership	Trust	People	Distributing leadership opportunities across staff, students and parents nurtures a community of trust and demonstrates the principal's commitment to developing people. The principal is demonstrating a willingness to partner with stakeholders to share the school's vision and recognising the strengths of all participants. Shared leadership values the voice of participants and places trust in their skills. It builds cohesion and a sense of team and fosters school climate.
Improving Practice	Optimism	Programmes Policies Places	Supporting adult learning through multiple opportunities to develop and improve practice. The principal exhibits an expectation of realistic and positive outcomes for staff and students. This behaviour is also modelled through a commitment to self-improvement. Ensuring a functional, aesthetically pleasing and warm working and learning space (place), developing the processes of improving instructional and collaborative practice at the student and teacher level (processes) and supporting fair and equitable policies encourages a positive school climate.

| Collaboration | Trust | Processes | The building of collaborative processes removes the teacher from working in isolation. Developing the collective community builds trust among participants and helps the principal build cohesion, boost morale and in turn fosters a positive learning and working environment. Collaboration goes beyond working cohesively. If we have an authentic collaborative collective, we trust that when our colleagues challenge our thinking and practice it is from a non-evaluative /confrontational stance. Their ideas are respectfully presented and come from a place of positive intention. |
| Planned intentional structure | Intenionality | Processes
Policies
Programmes
Places
People | Intentionality links all of the other four leadership traits, tenets and principles. Without intentionality and planning it would be difficult for a principal to properly practice the necessary components of invitational leadership. Everything branches from a principal's commitment to conceptualising the necessities of the community and embodying those practices. |

Conclusion

A positive school climate focuses on "the essential social, emotional, ethical, and civic dimensions of student learning" (Cohen, 2010, p. 28). It ensures that the school is a place where everyone feels safe and secure and has the right and potential to succeed. The principal is an integral component of the creation and sustainment of a school's climate. The existence of a positive school climate is no longer a bonus of good leadership. It is the product of conscious leadership choices. Essentially, the way in which a principal chooses to lead determines whether or not a positive school climate will ensue.

Today's principal can no longer be a hierarchal leader. Leadership must engage all stakeholders and provide them with a voice that is authentic and valued. Invitational Leadership exists as a model that encompasses the need to establish a positive school climate and the need to effectively address student achievement. Choosing to lead from an invitational stance enables principals to involve staff, students and parents in a shared school vision. This active participation of all involved sets a respectful, trustworthy and meaningful climate in the school.

In comparison to other leadership models, Invitational Leadership is in its relative infancy. Research into its validity as a reliable model, while limited, is growing. Further research will provide the necessary leverage for leaders to recognise its value as a viable option to traditional methodologies. Invitational Leadership has the potential to be regarded as a respected model of successful principalship that goes beyond administrative leadership. It is a model that affords principals the opportunity to create and participate in affective and successful educational organisations.

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Authors

Ingrid Legros is a Literacy Mentor Teacher and Positive Climates for Learning and Working Lead Teacher. She is passionate about school climate and its role in the success of all stakeholders. She holds here MEd from the Schulich School of Education, Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario, Canada.

Email: ingridlegros@rogers.com

Thomas G. Ryan is Professor in the Schulich School of Education, Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario, Canada. He has been leading and teaching since 1985 and began teaching online in 2002 with Campus Alberta. Currently he is teaching graduate students online via Blackboard and looks forward to new innovations in leadership and e-learning.

Email: thomasr@nipissingu.ca