

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement



Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies

University of Pretoria
Department of Humanities

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in
Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement.

Thesis

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Adult and
Community Education and Training in the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Professor Irma Eloff

Submitted: November 2019

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DEDICATION

With a grateful and thankful heart, I dedicate this work to men and women who daily lead public and private schools and educational organizations. Education shapes the future of every country and provides opportunities to grow, learn and lead.

To my California Association of School Business Official's family, this work reflects your leadership, your passion and your dedication to the profession and to the students we serve.

To my husband Peter and my children, you have given me the freedom to be who I am. For this, I cannot adequately express my love and thanks. You are my first example of an effective team!

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In my professional life, I have had the privilege of serving in many capacities. These have included working as a classroom teacher, a district level administrator, an elected school board member, an association professional, a facilitator, and a trainer. Each experience has enriched my life and taught me great lessons. To all my former students, parents, and colleagues- thank you for the lessons you have taught me.

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ABSTRACT

As education evolves, leadership processes change. The concept of a single senior leader, with siloed divisions often providing direction, is transforming into a team-based culture. While there is substantive research on school-site leadership, research is limited on how the central organization impacts the system. It identified individual leadership characteristics but had not adequately addressed impact of a senior leadership *team*. This study addresses the concept of senior leadership teams with divisions and executives working collaboratively. It identifies characteristics of effective leadership teams to explore how they can be successfully created and sustained; and it investigates the senior leader's role in, and what factors and methods can be replicated to sustain, team effectiveness. Four organizations participated: one school district, one government agency and two for-profit organizations. Twenty-five senior leaders and team members completed a DiSC and Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team assessment; a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis; and a hiring values survey. All were interviewed individually and as a group, and the structured and semi-structured instruments were chosen to explore group characteristics in such a way that the data would point to replicable information. Study elements, coupled with my expertise in team development and leadership, allowed me to critically consider data and identify three emerging themes. While aspects of these themes have been previously identified, they have not been linked as a pathway to creating and sustaining effective teams as a route to organizational excellence leading to student achievement. First, there is a strong relation between the factors of team culture, membership, and expectations and engagement as a foundation of an effective team. Second, crucial team management and engagement methods were identified as key to long-term sustainability. Third, the senior leader's impact is significant to team success based on team leadership style and methodology. A paradigm emerged changing traditional leadership hierarchy to a new dynamic of leading from the center. The research indicates that deliberately designing teams may have greater potential for success and long-term effectiveness. Further research is encouraged to address issues relating to virtual teams and identify successful strategies in team building and implementation.

Keywords: Leadership Teams, Leadership Team Effectiveness, Senior Leadership Teams, Team Culture

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR STUDY

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision.

The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives.

It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results"

Andrew Carnegie, American Industrialist

1.1 Introduction and Rationale for Study

The objective of this research is to study and identify the characteristics of effective leadership teams in business and educational organizations and to provide a framework for education leaders to develop the capacity to replicate these characteristics in their organizations.

There is a significant amount of research focused on classroom or school site leadership as well as corporate leadership (Al-Safran, Brown, Wiseman, 2014; Anderson, 2016; DuFour & Fullan, 2013; Dumay, Boonen, & Damme, 2013; Lambert, 2003; Laloux, 2014). Much of this is focused on the development of effective and productive teams (Groysbery & Slind, 2012; Laloux & Wilbur, 2014; Lee & Edmondson, 2017; Törnblom, 2018). La Fasto and Larson's (2002) study with over 6,000 team members and leaders identified the connection between what leadership behaviors contribute to team effectiveness. In school systems, school site teams have become interested in the team approach as pioneered in the movement for Professional Learning Communities (Cho, Caleon, & Kapur, 2015; DuFour & Eaker, 2009; DuFour & Fullan, 2013; Voelkel & Chrispeels, 2017). While the research is extensive for the corporate environment and the school site, there is little study of the universality of leadership and team effectiveness in relation to education organizations and school systems with a specific focus on education *administration*.

In this study, the identification of effective schools has been determined by student achievement, parent satisfaction, employee satisfaction, standardized test scores, and fiscal solvency. Effective educational organizations incorporate multiple divisions and units designed to support the classroom and the student. In a large urban school district, the organization employs a central administrative team of executives and managers that handle services ranging from transportation, child nutrition and food services, facilities and maintenance, finance and accounting, technology, human resources, purchasing and procurement, student health and safety, instruction, assessment and governance. If the school district is to be effective in supporting the classroom and school sites, these services should operate with efficiency and effectiveness. If individuals or divisions operate as independent silos, they are independent and

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do not create an interdependent team that works cooperatively and cohesively to meet the needs of the students.

Due to collective bargaining/union issues, lack of public support, staff turnover at the executive and management levels, and the scarcity of resources, school systems around the globe are being forced to examine their leadership practices and central administration functions. Funding that could be used to support student achievement may be siphoned off to address issues relating to litigation, employee turnover, and inefficient or costly business and professional practices. This study will endeavor to identify key performance indications and core principles that can be replicated in school districts to build strong executive and leadership teams that will support student achievement and efficiencies in management.

Determining methods and strategies to create effective schools and educational organizations is an important concept in today's world. With resources limited both financially and in human resources, the need to maximize our efficiency and effectiveness is a continual struggle. The rationale for this study is based on the concept that by creating and sustaining effective teams, organizations will be better able to manage their operations and continue to focus their priorities on students and student achievement. While the cost of these inefficiencies has not been characterized, the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team, FCMAT, addresses these issues in their process of Extraordinary Audits. Over 50 Extraordinary Audits have been conducted on California schools and the reports indicate that financial and human resources were expended on litigation and issues related to school district management (FCMAT, 2019). If, we can improve the leadership and team practices of schools, it can be argued that these resources could be used to further student achievement and progress.

To stay relevant and current, organizations are evolving (Anderson, 2012; LaLoux & Wilbur, 2014). In the education world, this evolution includes creating effective schools and learning environments for students. While talented administrators or leaders may help to identify gaps in organizational process, only skilled and knowledgeable teams are equipped to fill these gaps (Sperber & Linder, 2018). This shift from a single leader to a team of leaders, is a new phenomenon in schools. This new management approach can be identified as transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a vertical leadership style emanating from the formal leader of a team and contributes to team output effectiveness (Choi, Suk Bond, Kim, Kihwan, & Kang 2017).

In this study, I hope to contribute to the field of research by linking effective team practices to the improvement of student achievement and success. By studying the issue of effective teams, I hope to add to the knowledge of what makes and what sustains effective teams.

1.2 Research Questions and Problem Statement

Despite the growing interest in society of developing effective teams in the public and private sectors, research into the development of key performance indicators/characteristics and best practices that support effective team development in education administration is sparse. In the literature review for this study, it is notable that very little scholarly research exists in this area.

To address this issue, I have relied on a combination of literature that discusses not only the role of the superintendent or senior leader, but also of effective teams. Effective teams exist, but they often exist in vacuums and are also often considered the exception rather than the rule in educational governance. The success of district administrative teams is normally attributed to the leadership of the superintendent rather than the leadership of the management team. Since most superintendents in school systems rise to their positions from the instructional arena, many have limited knowledge or expertise in organizing or directing complex organizations with multiple units, divisions, or school sites. They may have been chosen for their instructional or curriculum expertise or political acumen, with little regard for their management or executive leadership skills. The result is often a dysfunctional organization with silos or groups working in opposition or isolation from each other. In the worst-case scenarios, the central administration can be an enemy to the school sites and the school sites operate as individual organizations with little regard or respect for the efforts of others. This can cause organizational chaos as well as costly problems in serving the business needs of school systems and negatively impact student performance.

To better understand how effective team leadership can impact the educational administration of schools, research is needed to identify specific characteristics and key performance indicators that are essential in the development of a productive and cohesive administrative team in education. Once identified, these characteristics and best practices could be used to assist school systems to improve leadership and governance. The purpose of this study is to investigate how leadership team effectiveness can be created and sustained in educational organizations.

The objectives of this thesis are threefold. First, I will examine four organizations that operate with a high level of team effectiveness in education. This examination will enable me to determine how they create, develop, and maintain team effectiveness as well as what are the defined characteristics of their teams. Second, by investigating the linkages between the organizations as well as the current field of research, I will determine emerging issues, key characteristics and identified best practices. Third, this study will present the preliminary

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development of a model that could be replicated in school systems and provide a roadmap for utilization by other educational organizations.

My primary research question will be: How can leadership team effectiveness be created and sustained in educational organizations?

The specific research sub-questions for this study are:

- How do organizational factors or leadership methods contribute to creating or sustaining effective teams?
- How does the senior/executive leader impact team success?

During the study, I will also briefly explore factors such as leadership stability, culture, demographics, employee satisfaction, strategic planning, staff development, mentoring and coaching, reputation, and customer satisfaction and the roles they play in these organizations.

1.3 Role of the Researcher

In my position as the CEO and Executive Director of the California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), I am in a unique position to witness the challenges and issues impacting public education in California and nationally. My work includes providing trainings for educational organizations, writing and publishing a quarterly journal and multiple publications, developing staff development and training programs for all levels of school leadership and the development and administration of professional certification programs. CASBO is the "face" of school business in California and endeavors to be the foremost authority on school business and leadership. I have a professional obligation to the profession and our overarching goal of promoting student achievement and success.

Too often, I witnessed inefficiencies and leadership ineffectiveness that takes time, resources and attention away from a student focus. I was drawn to this research because I wanted to identify ways that educational administrative teams can develop a high level of team effectiveness and efficiencies and to provide models and materials that promote quality and replicable leadership strategies and behaviors that will promote student achievement and success. I believe that strong educational organizations need world class teachers and a world class support system that promotes collaboration and cooperation. My role allows me access to a variety of organizations and their executive level teams and administrators. I believe this history will enhance the quality of my research and this study.

Since 1976, I have been utilizing a variety of assessment tools and instruments as a facilitator and trainer in my roles as a school administrator and governance consultant to administrative teams and publicly elected school boards and officials throughout the United

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States. Each of the tools mentioned in this thesis has been used for a variety of purposes and outcomes. I recognize the validity and limitations of each type of instrument.

In 2012, after completing multiple courses, I became certified to administer the DiSC instruments and to facilitate training sessions. I chose this certification because I felt the DiSC instruments were well suited to the variety of groups who compose educational administrative and management teams. I have attended numerous trainings and programs to gain certification as a facilitator for the DiSC instruments, including the DiSC Work of Leaders Assessment, the Everything DiSC Assessment, the DiSC Management Assessment, and the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team Assessment. Each of these certifications enables me to purchase and conduct the assessment processes. In seven years, I have facilitated assessments and held subsequent training programs for 1300+ professionals in the United States.

During the trainings leading to my certification, I learned the history, methodology, statistical validity and research basis for each of the instruments and the recommended methods for administration and analysis. With my training, my conclusion was that the instruments provided insight into organizational and team development and provided the participants with greater personal knowledge through which to identify a common language to use in problem-solving and day-to-day management.

In preparation for this thesis, I updated and received additional training by Inscape Publishing. I utilized these instruments with my staff and other educational groups for the past four years. This certification, my training, and my experience with the instruments enabled me to utilize them in my research and provided another dimension to analyzing team effectiveness.

In the education world, I have held a variety of positions that include: classroom aide, public information officer, classroom teacher, site level administrator, district level administrator, school board member, education association professional and currently CEO and Executive Director of the California Association of School Business Officials. I have worked in a variety of educational agencies and organizations with varied demographics and effectiveness. With this history, I have also witnessed the value of effective leadership and effective leadership teams and the impact of dysfunctional teams.

As a part of my position with CASBO, I routinely train and speak at forums that promote leadership and team building. I regularly write for educational publications about leadership, communication, team building, and ethics. I teach introductory sessions on leadership styles and communication for the following programs: CASBO's Business Executive Leadership Trainings, The Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), Chief Business Official

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Mentor Program, and the University of Southern California Chief Business Official certificate program.

In my current position as CEO and Executive Director of the California Association of School Business Officials and my past work as a Director with the California School Boards Association, most of my professional work and career has been involved in organizational development and in leadership teams at a variety of levels. Daily, I am the senior leader of a senior executive team and lead a variety of employee groups and teams within the association. I also serve as the direct link between the Executive Team and Board of Directors of the Association. In my position, I participate in and play major roles in multiple teams. Teams are a daily way of life for me. This experience has given me a unique perspective on teams and a desire to understand them and to create effective and efficient structures.

In public education, teams are a way of life for most agencies. We use professional teams, volunteer teams, elected teams, and a variety of team methods including committees, boards, task forces, advisory groups or councils. I have witnessed these teams waste time or resources and fail to focus their attention on pressing issues that support students and student achievement. These inefficiencies can negatively impact leadership, group progress and derail good leadership.

1.4 Literature Review

This thesis entered a subject area that is under scholarly research. Journals including the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *The Journal of Management Issues*, *the Journal of Educational Technology and Society* and the *Academy of Management Journal* include a multitude of articles about team effectiveness, team development and leadership development. Over 60 doctoral studies across the globe were preliminarily identified that addressed leadership and team development in a variety of organizations and professions. Popular management books included over one hundred titles dealing specifically with leadership development and team dynamics. Many of these are considered standards in management training and leadership development. It includes publications such as *Handbook of Leadership Development* from The Center for Creative Leadership, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins, *The Leadership Challenge* by James M. Kouzes, and books by authors such as John. C. Maxwell's *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* and *The 360 Degree Leader*. While I recognize that not all management books are considered scholarly research, they are referred to and utilized by many educational organizations and required review for this study. The depth and breadth of the literature and research in this study was extensive. Teams are a basic structure of all human organizations and these studies reflect

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many industries and organizations including professional sports, business, military operations, medicine, the arts and education.

Teams are a basic structure of human organizations. Studies utilized in this research reflect how these teams are utilized in a variety of organizations including public education, private business, medicine and military organizations among others. For the purpose of this study, we excluded sports teams from our research. An organizational team are often designed to meet and lead an organization's plan for innovative performance (Sperber & Linder, 2016). This thesis examines four specific senior executive teams and their senior leaders. Literature supports the concept that teamwork is a definitive and powerful advantage in today's competitive markets, and it is argued that effective teaming is necessary for organizations to thrive (Garmston & Wellman, 2009; Jones & Bearley, 2001; LaFasto & Larson, 2002).

The research for this thesis indicates that most of the research has been focused on the development of teams rather than the factors, methods and strategies that create and sustain effective teams. In Chapter 2, the study illustrates a variety of concepts presented to develop teams. In this analysis, the literature often explores the stages of team development and provides insight into the development of new teams rather than the development and improvement of existing teams. It is the intention of this study to begin to present data that could potentially provide insight to creating and sustaining existing teams as well as in the development of new teams.

The term teams and groups are often used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, we used the definition that a team is a group of people united by a common purpose (Block, n.d.). Another definition is that teams are groups of two or more people who interact and influence each other. They may be mutually accountable for achieving goals and find their work associated with and aligned to organizational objectives. They also perceive themselves as a social entity within an organization (McShane & Von Glinow, 2018). For this study, the focus was on the senior executive team. These individuals include the senior leader and top senior executive management personnel in each case study organization.

Often quoted in this literature is the work of Bruce Tuckman in the identification of the stages of team development: forming-storming-performing and norming (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). His research identified specific stages of group dynamics that all teams experience. His assertion is that once a team successfully navigates these stages, a united team with a common purpose can emerge. This research includes the development of these groups and explores the role that leadership plays in each stage of development and activity.

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Other researchers, such as Jones, 2019, Lunenberg and Lunenberg, 2015, and Belbin, 1981, 2010, among others identified in Chapter 2 further elaborated on the work of Tuckman and Jensen. The Tuckman Model has become one of the most influential and well recognized. It was first published in 1965 and later updated to the Tuckman, Jensen Model in 1977 (Miller, 2009, p. 23). The Jones LSI model was identified as another approach that could be used with smaller groups (Jones, 2019). The Belbin model studied the nature of teams and teamworking and identified different roles which people could adopt as a part of working members of a team. Tuckman identified stages of team development and Belbin identified nine distinct behavioral roles for a team that could be used to predict an effective and successful team (Block, n.d.).

1.5 Data Analysis

Author and management expert Patrick Lencioni, and Insight Publications of the Wiley and Sons Corporation, developers of the DiSC personal assessments, stress the need for teams to understand and appreciate the workstyles, job duties, behaviors and personalities of team members (Lencioni & Wiley and Sons, 2014, p. 5). Lencioni's work (Lencioni, 2012, p. 188) includes a review of the five common characteristics/behaviors of dysfunctional teams and their impact on organizational effectiveness as well as the identification of five behaviors that promote team effectiveness and cohesiveness. The five behaviors of a cohesive team are identified as results, accountability, commitment, conflict, and trust. The five behaviors are presented as a pyramid with the concept of trust as the base of the structure. Trust is the most significant building block for a cohesive team. The remaining concepts are used the next building blocks of the team. The second concept is conflict. Conflict allows the team to address issues and deal with challenges by utilizing the best minds of the team. Conflict is viewed as productive and necessary. The remaining building blocks for the structure (in order) are commitment accountability and results. These are addressed further in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. His work promotes the concept that these five distinct and acknowledged behaviors form an interrelated model that promotes effective leadership and enhances team effectiveness (Lencioni, 2012, p. 189).

The work of Lencioni as well as that of Tuckman (Lencioni, 2019; Tuckman & Jenson, 1977) refer to teams that are designed. Many of the teams in education are brought together for a purpose but are not intentionally developed or selected. In this study, I intend to assess whether teams that are already in place or brought together without specific design can be successful using these practices. I strongly align myself with the five behaviors of cohesive teams as developed by Lencioni, because I subscribe to the notion that results, accountability,

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commitment, conflict and trust, as defined by Lencioni (Lencioni, 2012) when utilized with leadership and good communication can improve team effectiveness.

The Lencioni research (Lencioni, 2012, p. 200) indicates that knowledge plus continuous professional development, communication, and conflict resolution and training opportunities can promote trust and team success. While the Lencioni research is widely accepted internationally in the corporate world (University of Saint Mary, 2019) it is not generally incorporated or accepted in educational organizations. Determining how and if these characteristics and research can be integrated into educational organizations was a part of the literature review for this study.

Many California schools are often heavily involved in the work of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) (Dufour, 2007). While the team has been replaced with community, the literature (Dufour & Eaker, 2009; Dufour & Fullan, 2013) addresses the values of collaboration, cooperation, communication, and collegiality in the development of these communities. A PLC is a site-level effective educational team of professionals.

After the assessment of literature in this field, my goal was to utilize the extensive body of current research, (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2000; Cohen & Levesque, 1991; Cookie, Salas, Cannon-Bowers, & Stout., 2004; Zsombok, 1997), to then add empirical research about *educational* organizations specifically and to translate it into conceptual parameters that could be used to create effective *educational* teams. The assumption was that since educational executives are primarily educated on topics relating to student achievement and instruction, they may have little expertise in the operation of successful team development.

This review of literature suggests that teamwork, both inside and outside the classroom has become an increasingly popular method of work. Teachers and Business leaders have found that although team-based structures may take more time to complete a project, their synergy and mental diversity reaps significant and sustainable results (Lemons & Strong, 2016, p. 1). This information, when utilized, can potentially impact employee job satisfaction, improve management practices, reduce turnover, and eliminate activities that do not promote good leadership and support student achievement.

A challenge to this study was to incorporate both scholarly research and popular management theory and publications in the review. It was my goal to incorporate both and to identify emerging themes and linkages. While recognizing that the use of popular or management theory is not normally included in a thesis, careful attention was paid to the use of both.

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The assessment instrument, DiSC and Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team and the work of Patrick Lencioni were key considerations of this study. Lencioni is not a scholar and his work is based on his consultancy work as a management consultant. Despite his graduate level education, his work is designed for the corporate world and does not follow conventional research guidelines. Much of his work is based on his direct and personal experience rather than graduate level research. He is a best-selling author and speaker, with a large organization serving organizations around the world (TableGroup, 2019). He is used for this study due to the linkages and connections of his work with the literature review and the utilization of the DiSC and Five Behaviors instruments. This assessment has been developed and incorporates the elements of approved research practices in its development and implementation. It was also used since research in the study of teams was limited. It should be noted that his work is widely used in universities in business schools and is required reading and study for 10 graduate school programs (TableGroup, 2019).

1.6 Conceptual Framework

My approach to this thesis included a meta-management theoretical framework with an emphasis on and underpinning of leadership theory (Northouse, 2019, p. 111). I identified meta management as a holistic approach to the organization which includes all aspects of leadership and management, including and not limited to the leadership team, their skills, expertise, values, vision and characteristics. The leadership theory for this study (Northouse, 2019, p. 113) explores leadership by determining distinctions among management, leadership and power and included a review of multiple theories including Situational Leadership Theory (Northouse, 2019 p. 119). This thesis is centered on management and what contributes to sustainable leadership team effectiveness in educational organizations. In selecting this approach, differing theories and approaches were used to understand leadership and define effective approaches. In the models in review, I examined traits, behaviors and a range of models of leadership and team building.

In October 2015, at the Post Graduate Research Support Programme, Dr. Jan Nieuwenhuis (Nieuwenhuis, 2015) used an analogy in his presentation that stated that quantitative research is like a trench, long and shallow. Qualitative research is like a well, narrow but deep. As I determined my conceptual framework and methodology, I created a mixed methods approach that would be complimentary to my framework and would enable me to bridge both types of research and utilize the best of each to complete my research.

I chose to base my study on an axiological assumption with a transformative framework of pragmatism. This assumption allowed me to explore the role of values and enables me to

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acknowledge that my research is value-laden and that biases may exist (Creswell, 2010, p. 21). Pragmatism also allowed my approach to inquiry to include both quantitative and qualitative approaches to my data collection and subsequent analysis.

The transformative framework of pragmatism enabled me to have more freedom in my analysis and to explore multiple approaches. It also allowed me to focus on the outcomes of the research, the actions, situations and consequences of my inquiry (Creswell, 2014, p. 28).

In determining this conceptual framework, I was also strongly drawn in this research to social constructivism and the role it plays in leadership. As a researcher, I am drawn to seeking an understanding of the world in which I live and work. I am interested in a complexity of meanings that are varied and multiple as well the social and historical constructs (Creswell, 2014, p. 24). I am also aware that social constructivism is also often described as interpretivist. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 11). How my research will be interpreted will lead to its recognition and value. During my research, I felt the validity of the study would be enhanced by linking elements of social constructivism to the framework of pragmatism. This enabled me to use the best of both methodologies to identify information that will be applicable in both a scholarly approach and provide real world examples that would help to increase understanding and utilization of the concepts.

While the conceptual framework of this study has been outlined above. The paradigm that was utilized to accomplish this research was a mixed methods approach that was both qualitative and quantitative in approach. While qualitative and quantitative research can be viewed as representing two different and distinct paradigms, in this study it was utilized as a methodology to link the research, the literature, and the data to illustrate the research and develop the analysis.

As a researcher, it is important to acknowledge that in determining the methodology, philosophy, and paradigm for this study, I encountered great difficulty. As outlined in the previous section and explored in the next section on Proposed Methodology, the variety of choices was extensive. It forced me to explore my own philosophy as well as to explore others to determine what I believed would best address the primary question and focal point of this study.

1.7 Proposed Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate how leadership team effectiveness can be created and sustained in educational organizations. By identifying the key characteristics of effective teams and exploring the factors, strategies and methods utilized by the case study teams, key performance indicators and methodologies should emerge. To accomplish this, I

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approached the project with a mixed methods methodology that included a combination of qualitative and quantitative research strategies. The qualitative phase was exploratory and helped to frame the approach to the issues. The quantitative research enabled me to identify and quantify the problem and search for results that would impact the larger educational community and population.

1.8 Data Collection

During the qualitative portion of the research, I utilized the following data collection strategies:

- Focus Groups
- In-Depth Interviews
- Personal Observations

These activities were done during multiple on-site visitations, Skype meetings and conference calls. Each senior leader and case study participant were involved in group focus meetings as well as individual and personal interviews. The focus group meetings were used to explain the study and purpose and to review the assessment instruments and gain group insight into the process and outcomes. The individual meetings and calls were used to conduct structured and semi structured interviews. These interviews questions were used to secure additional data and insight in to the organization and the team. A research journal was kept that including insights into the meetings, people involved, and to include observations and identify potential questions. Careful attention was taken to note taking during the calls, interviews and focus groups.

During the quantitative portion of my study, I collected data in my case studies that involved:

- Surveys
- Assessments

This included utilization of the DiSC assessment instruments for identifying management leadership, the behaviors of a cohesive team, and team development. I also employed the use of a SWOT analysis.

A SWOT analysis involved executive level focus groups from each organization completing an analysis that identified the strengths of the organization leadership, self-analysis of their perceived weaknesses, potential opportunities for improvement and the identification of threats to their effectiveness and success. SWOT analysis is common in the corporate world and enables organizations to conduct a review of their leadership and to identify perceived challenges and opportunities. Other instruments incorporated in my research include the

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utilization of DiSC Assessment tools (The DiSC Classic Research Report, 2012). These instruments are utilized in the corporate world to identify and enhance individual and group understanding of styles, behaviors, personalities, and the roles these play in organizational development.

The DiSC Assessment tools are based on the work of William Mouton Marston, a psychologist from Harvard University who pioneered this work with his 1928 book, *Emotions of Normal People* (Marston, 2014). His goal as an industrial psychologist was to enable people to understand (using practical applications) how their personality and behaviors impacted relationships and productivity in the workplace. Marston's model was a two-axis, four-dimensional model that divides behavior into four dimensions: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness.

In 1972, the DiSC model and tools were created by Inscape Publishing with assistance from the University of Illinois faculty. It incorporated Marston's early work with modern research methodologies. It has been continually updated every ten years. In 2012, Patrick Lencioni joined Inscape Publishing to create a new assessment that incorporated the DiSC and his research to identify team effectiveness. For this study, executives from my case studies completed the DiSC assessment instruments, The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team.

There are a variety of assessment tools and instruments which could have been used to identify behaviors, styles, and leadership preferences. In addition to the DiSC, the most popular include the Myers-Briggs Instrument and the Strong Campbell Assessment (Donnay & Borgen, 1996; Briggs-Meyers, Hammer, McCauley, & Quenk, 2003).

The DiSC instrument has a variety of tools that have been developed for multiple aspects of the workforce from management and executives to middle managers and office workers. Each instrument is still based on the original guiding principles but has been developed to meet a variety of workplace situations and needs. It is written in up to date, easy to understand language and provides simple analysis and materials for immediate use.

In selecting the assessment instruments for this study, I explored the use of the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (Donnay & Borgen, 1996) and the Myers-Biggs Type Indicator (Katz, Joyner, & Seaman, 1999). While both of these instruments as indicated above, offer insight into leadership personalities and leadership styles, they did not provide the framework specifically directed at the team creation and sustainability or the research questions posed in this study. They were not deemed relevant to this study.

The Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (Donnay & Borgen, 1996) is primarily used as an interest assessment and is used primarily in vocational coaching. It was created by Edward

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K. Strong, Jr., and David Campbell to create an interest assessment tool. The premise is that understanding the differences in likes and dislikes of people can be of help to them personally and improve workplace satisfaction and productivity (Strong, 1969, p. 48).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was first developed by researchers Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers in 1917 using the work of psychiatrist Dr. Carl Jung. The MBTI is widely used in both education and the corporate world as well as in private psychological practice.

It is a psychometric questionnaire that measures the psychological preferences of how people perceive the world and make decisions. It is based on an identification that causes one to identify one's type from four pairs of traits. The traits are opposing:

- Extroversion (E) – Introversion (I)
- Sensing (S) – Intuition (N)
- Thinking (T) – Feeling (F)
- Judging (J) – Perception (P) (Katz et al., 1999)

It should be noted that each of the instruments are indicators of personality/behavior/interest and are only as valid and reliable as the individuals completing the assessments. For the purpose of this study, these instruments, while valid and appropriate for personality/behavior/ interest data collection, were not aligned to the needs of this study and to the research questions. They are centered around individual behaviors and actions and not team or organizational behavior. They are all perception-based and subject to questions of validity. Each instrument is valid and useful when administered in the appropriate context and used in organizational development.

The DiSC assessment tools were chosen for this study for four reasons:

1. Each could be completed online. Results were delivered electronically in an easy to use format. Those participating were able to access their information quickly for their personal use as well as for the use of the researcher.
2. The instrument is based upon research and has been recently updated.
3. The DiSC incorporated the work of author and management expert Patrick Lencioni.
4. I have continuing access and training in the DiSC instruments and had the ability to use them as needed in the research.

While I recognize that researchers who have a bias or preference for the MBTI or the Strong-Campbell Interest Tool may question the validity of the DiSC and its use in the study, I find that the DiSC performs the functions most needed by my research and provided those taking the assessment tool with an easy to use and understandable tool that provides

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immediate information and allows for personal and professional use without the need for facilitation.

Since this study was constructed using the Case Study methodology, the use of assessment instruments as well as notes, personal observations, focus group information, in-depth individual interviews, audits, focus groups and historical and current research of the organization was used in the data analysis.

The assessment instruments are a valued portion of the quantitative research that allowed me to have empirical evidence that was free of researcher bias and that enabled me to accurately compare leadership styles and characteristics of top performers.

1.9 The Case Study Methodology

I utilized the case study approach to research four educational organizations. While they are a combination of public and private sector agencies, each one is a recognized leader in their areas of expertise.

In choosing the case study method and the organizations, I chose to focus this study on organizations that were currently effectively utilizing senior executive teams. My criteria were based on successful groups. It was my intention to study organizations who were mastering team effectiveness and learn from their success and strategies. Rather than identify why groups were not being successful, the goal of this thesis is to identify factors, methods and strategies that can sustain and promote team effectiveness. By using a combination of educational organizations, I hoped to link whether a public-school system, public agency and for-profit groups could identify and replicate strategies to answer my primary and additional research questions.

My selection was based on:

- Their established history: They are widely respected and known as a leader in their field for at least ten years.
- Their leadership: Each organization has a history of stable leadership in all top levels of administration and management.
- Market Share: Each of the three for-profit organizations is recognized for their large share of business in the market place. Each group is the predominant agency doing business in California education. The school district, since it is a public-school district, cannot compare market share in the same vein as those with entrepreneurial interest. It can use enrollment numbers and transfers from other local school districts as an indicator of their market share.
- Success: Each of the four groups has a history of success that can be identified by profit, public recognition, test scores, industry recognition, and student performance.

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- Reputation: Each of the four groups has a strong, solid reputation in the educational industry. They are called upon frequently as thought leaders and key players in education. Their reputations can be measured by their presence and participation in conferences, publications, and by their consultations to other organizations.
- Value to the educational community: Each organization continues to play a unique role in public education in California. The school district is a recognized leader in all aspects of administration, management, and student success. Each of the for-profit groups not only provides services to most school districts, but also provides additional free services and professional consultations to assist the educational community.

By combining the public and private sector, my study enabled me to research and integrate best practices in both the public and private sector. It also enabled me to identify strengths in the private sector that would enhance the leadership of public schools.

My selection criteria were purposeful and based on the leadership team dynamic. Each of the organizations is known for their team approach as well as for having a strong value-centered leadership approach. They also have had a history of stability in top levels of leadership that includes low turnover of employees and defined succession practices. My study explored how they have established this culture of leadership and management and how they sustain it over a period. My goal was to do a collective case study, which looked at one issue or concern and used multiple case studies to illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2014, p. 99). I used purposeful sampling to explore a variety of organizations in one industry that exemplified success and leadership through strong management and team development.

1.10 Introduction to The Case Studies

A consideration in this research was the ability to create linkages between the outcomes of the study and the enhancement of student achievement. There is currently not an empirical link that identifies that student achievement as reported by test scores and standardized testing is impacted by leadership at the executive or central level administration. In the four case studies, each organization has demonstrated success in the continuation of a successful organization. The outcomes of the study identify what those case studies have in common or what sustainable practices they use to provide leadership, continuing, and to avoid issues that waste time, resources and focus. The variables that impact student resources and educational outcomes, however, need further investigation. As mentioned previously, monies spent on unnecessary litigation, continual employee turnover and dissatisfaction may be some of the factors that impact schools and students directly. This study provides insights into the ways into which some of these factors may be mediated at the leadership level.

1.10.1 Case Study One - The Clovis Unified School District

In selecting a mixed methods approach to this study that incorporated case studies, I believed that this approach would enable me to effectively address the research question and additional questions with great depth. I believed it would give me the best of quantitative and qualitative research.

Case study methodology, while widely used in graduate research, has both strengths and weaknesses. While case study methodology as well as statistical methods are complimentary- they both have identified strengths and weaknesses. Case studies may have a greater depth, a high conceptual validity, as well as an understanding of context and process. It allows me, as a researcher to understand what causes a phenomenon and link causes and outcomes. It also can foster new hypotheses and research questions. Its weaknesses include issues where selection bias may overstate or understate relationships, a potential weak understanding of an occurrence in population or phenomenon under study, a statistical significance that may be unknown and unclear (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 314; Stake, 2005, p. 27).

The Clovis Unified School District (CUSD) is a large suburban school district located in central California. It has an impressive track record of leadership stability, low employee turnover, exceptional student achievement, fiscal stability, and public support. They are recognized throughout the education community for their ongoing dedication to innovation and management expertise.

CUSD is comprised of 32 elementary schools, five intermediate schools, five high schools, one adult school and six alternative education campuses. Clovis is a growing district with a staff of 5,000+ full and part-time certificated (teaching) and classified (management and support) employees serving a population of 41,000 students.

Clovis was selected because of its size, history, prominence in the education community, and recognized success. They have been named multiple times to the National Blue-Ribbon Schools Program (formerly the National Exemplary Schools Program) and have been honored more than ten times as a California Distinguished School or California Blue Ribbon School by the State of California, Department of Education, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The District's Title I schools (schools serving economically disadvantaged students) have also achieved distinction through multiple recognitions as the California Academic Achievement Award winners (CUSD website, 2019).

They have also been named as an Honor Roll School District by the California Business for Excellence in Education. It is also the only school district in the United States to

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have all five of their intermediate schools designated as Taking Center Stage — Schools to Watch by the US Department of Education (CUSD website, 2019).

For over twenty years, they have identified and refined the following values for their organization, and these are communicated to their employees, students, parents, and communities via their website, district staff, district publications, and are incorporated in all staff development and public relations activities. They are refined annually but have formed the foundation of their culture.

As a researcher, I explored these foundational elements which include vision and values as well as the expectations of the Superintendent to determine how they impact the district. Are the values, as stated, placed in daily operation? Are they used in district decision-making? Is there evidence of their value? Can I show a correlation between their articulated statements including their vision and values with their management and leadership? These are the questions I attempted to address.

1.10.2 Case Study Two - American Fidelity Assurance Company

This is a national for-profit corporation that provides a variety of financial and administrative products to school systems. In this case study, I focused on the educational division only. They are a successful and mature organization that has a sterling reputation, fiscal stability, and an established management culture.

Founded in 1960, American Fidelity provides supplemental health insurance benefits and financial services to education employees, auto dealerships, health care providers, and municipal workers across the United States. Their work is tailored to providing customized insurance solutions to specific employee groups (American Fidelity website, 2019).

American fidelity has a 50+ year record of success in their industry. They are a third generation, family-run business that has consistently performed with solid financial stability. Since 1982, American Fidelity has been rated "A+" by A.M. Best Company, one of the nation's leading insurance rating services (American Fidelity annual report, 2018).

In addition to financial stability, American Fidelity was also named one of *FORTUNE* magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For" in America for the last nine years.

American Fidelity serves more than 1 million customers in 49 states and in 23 countries worldwide. In 2014, they had \$1 billion total in consolidated revenues and \$106 million total in consolidated net income (American Fidelity website, 2019).

Founded in 1960 by CEO and Chairman Bill Cameron's father and grandfather, the corporation continues to adhere to their founding principles of fairness and financial security. As the company developed, they continued to surround themselves with the kind of people who

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were not only looking for a place of employment, but a place that felt like family. The culture they set into motion is still evident today.

American Fidelity Educational Services (AFES) provides supplemental insurance, investment products, and important financial and administrative services to over 60% of the school districts and community colleges in California (AFES annual report, 2018). Their services include eligibility studies and a variety of management audits that enable educational organizations to monitor their insurance utilization and adherence to federal guidelines. In 2015, they introduced staff development for educators in financial planning (AFES annual report, 2018).

AFES was selected as a case study for multiple reasons. First is their visibility in California schools. They are a preferred provider of services both fiscal and administrative. They are known for their dependability and strong leadership. Other factors for their inclusion were their established history, their long-term leadership team, their market share, and their value to the educational community.

By using them in the research, I was able to determine that their leadership and management strategies are replicable and usable in other educational agencies. I also studied their team-building strategies to understand how they sustain their influence and success. They provided a corporate perspective that has large organizational overtones and information.

Since they are not an educational agency composed of employees paid from taxpayer dollars, the influence of financial compensation or incentives may be a negative to the study. They operate under the rules of the private marketplace as opposed to the public arena. These differences may be viewed as detrimental to the research. Yet, rather than view the differences as such, I believe that these differences added to the richness and vitality of the study. Leadership and successful leadership teams are not limited to the public or private sector and I believe much knowledge was gained by studying their organization.

1.10.3 Case Study Three - FCMAT — The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

Case study three is an agency of the State of California that is charged with addressing the issues of economically failing public school districts and aiding those unable to manage their financial operations. They have an exceptional reputation for ethical leadership, fairness, transparency, and a history of strong leadership.

The mission of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) is to help California's local educational agencies fulfill their financial and management responsibilities by providing fiscal advice and guidance, management assistance, training, and other services related to school business. FCMAT also provides a variety of management studies on topics for

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school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and community colleges that request them. FCMAT also coordinates statewide professional development efforts for school business officials (FCMAT website, 2019).

FCMAT has contracted to assist more than 600 local education agencies, including school districts and county offices of education. Some of these organizations were experiencing severe fiscal crises that took years to develop. Some made direct requests to FCMAT for assistance with management or organizational issues. Through targeted communications and by making presentations on FCMAT services throughout the state, they have called attention to the need to comply with state and federal regulations and they have educated all levels of school business officials about the ramifications. The team has an established website and free electronic bulletin board system to provide information and resources (including state budget development software) that assists all public-school organizations statewide. Finally, FCMAT works with public and private organizations like CASBO to develop and support specific professional development training programs including their renowned Chief Business Official (CBO) Mentor program (FCMAT annual report, 2015).

They were included in the study because of the major role they play in the business of California public schools. FCMAT is an organization that maintains a small workforce that has a track record of success. They operate with integrity, transparency and have a proven track record of assistance. Their leadership team includes experienced educational and finance experts who are committed to service. Their success is determined by their acceptance in the educational community, their status as a thought leader and industry expert, as well as their acknowledged role as a state agency. Whether it is in helping districts in fiscal crisis secure funding and address immediate concerns or assisting others to avoid potential dangers, FCMAT operates at a high level of professionalism and trust.

Due to the nature of the political power they possess, FCMAT could be considered an enemy or a detriment to schools. Schools in financial distress who require a state bailout loan, can lose all local control and autonomy if FCMAT is called in. Despite the role they play, rather than being an enemy, they have established themselves as a partner with public education organizations. The work they do with schools is almost always as requested by the schools rather than an assignment from the state for remediation.

Since they are a state agency, they may be viewed as a bureaucratic agency that is controlled by the government. While it is true that their charter and authority is given to them by the State of California, they operate as an independent agency with state oversight. They report directly to the Governor and to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Their inclusion in

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this study is important due to their reputation and influence of schools. They meet the criteria as established earlier and fill a unique role in the study. They are also composed of public employees much like other educational organizations and operate under similar constraints and rules.

1.10.4 Case Study Four - School Services of California

This is a for profit service company that is employee-owned and managed and is dedicated to providing services to educational organizations in California. They provide fiscal and management consulting, legislative advocacy, collective bargaining assistance, and financial services to school organizations. They are the recognized authority in California on all issues related to school business and finance. They have a strong leadership history, a profitable track record, low employee turnover, a high employee satisfaction rating as well as a reputation that has earned them the business of over 90% of the school organizations in the state (SSC website, 2019; CASBO Newsletter, 2017).

School Services of California, Inc. (SSC) was founded in 1975 by Ken Hall, a former Deputy Director of the Department of Finance under the Reagan administration. It has since evolved into the premier business, financial, management, and advocacy resource for educational agencies in California. During its history, it has been led by three CEOs including its current leader, John Gray (SSC website, 2019).

During its evolution from a small sole proprietorship to a full-service diversified company of more than 30 dedicated professionals, SSC became employee-owned and is an award-winning Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Company. Much of the strength of the company comes from the active participation of every staff member in providing the highest quality, value, and service to each client (SSC website, 2019).

The SSC leadership team and staff members come from the working ranks of the public schools and California state government. They hire only seasoned professionals who will embrace their vision and values. They pride themselves on their technical skills and their expertise, including their intimate knowledge of educational organizations. They require their employees to actively participate in professional organizations and to regularly write and publish journal articles and professional publications. They daily produce the *Fiscal Report* which boasts of having readership from superintendents, elected school board members and government officials, as well as executive members of educational management. They report a daily readership of 8,000 to 15,000 readers (SSC website, 2019).

Their programs include providing information services, legislative or governmental advocacy, financial and business consulting, executive searches for key business positions, and

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innovative workshops and trainings that are designed to solve problems and improve student performance.

They were chosen for this study because of the major role they play in educational leadership in California. They are the recognized "gurus" in multiple aspects of educational leadership. Their workshops and trainings are regularly sold out and they are quoted regularly in the educational media. At CASBO conferences and conventions, they have the highest attendance and evaluations of any speakers or organizations (CASBO conference evaluation report and assessment, 2013, 2014, 2015). They represent thought leaders and they are a key information source for all things relating to school finance, collective bargaining, and fiscal issues. They have maintained their leadership and their market share in school business for over 40 years (SSC website, 2019).

A perceived drawback to their participation in the study could be they are a for-profit corporation in education. They do not have to follow the same rules or protocols of public agencies and operate with an entrepreneurial spirit and direction. This perceived drawback was not regarded as an obstacle to my study. This organization meets the criteria, in the established areas of history, leadership, market share, success, reputation, and value to the educational community. They are key players in the California educational community and have earned the respect of their clients as indicated by their market share and client listings.

1.10.5 About the Case Studies

These groups were selected because they have a demonstrated and verifiable history. They have also managed to weather and survive the economic and political storms of the last ten years and still have a strong and viable leadership structure. The leadership of each group willingly and gladly gave permission for their inclusion in this research study and offered full access and support. This included access to key leadership and organization resources including personnel, reports, and financial data. They understood and welcomed onsite visits and provided open access and acknowledgement.

1.10.6 Limitations of the Study

While the organizations selected for the case studies were carefully chosen, they do not reflect all the sizes and types of organizations in public education. Only one school system was chosen and while it is a large urban school district, it does not reflect 60% of the California public schools that have 10,000 students or less. Another drawback is the lack of a minority majority school district or a county office of education. These limitations have been taken into consideration and are reflected in the research and findings.

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The state agency selected is a unique organization and does not conform to the public perception of state agencies such as the California Department of Education. It could be argued that the size, role, and nature of FCMAT is an exception and does not truly reflect all state agencies. I acknowledge this difference and contend that is why this agency was selected.

The two for-profit organizations were specifically chosen for their contributions to public education and their leadership reputations. They are limited in their scope: one is a professional consulting and service provider and one is a fiscal and administrative services provider. They are only a small sample of the many for-profit organizations that provide services and products to school districts.

While each of the case study subjects and the subjects in total could provide a limitation to the study due to their applicability in different contexts, I feel they each embody the spirit and nature of the study and provided valuable insights into leadership and team development. This is evident in the background information described in the preliminary presentations of the selected case studies. Each organization in the study is tied to the public education system and interacts directly with educational agencies.

Another limitation to this study could have been the potential of researcher bias. Since these groups have been personally and purposefully selected, I do have a great deal of knowledge of their leadership, their team and organizational structure, and their organizational history. By using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and member-checking, I strove to avoid this bias and to use the research gained from the study as well as the literature review to create a meaningful and valid study.

While I began this study with the notion that there are replicable and identified strategies, key performance indicators, and best practices that will be found in each case study, it was only a notion. The data and research drive this study and the outcomes are determined by the information gained and not from my personal prejudice or bias.

1.10.7 Potential Contributions of the Study

What excited me most about this thesis and my research was the ability to provide comparative insights that explored the sustainability of leadership team effectiveness. My focus was to provide school leadership with information that could assist them in developing, creating, and sustaining effective teams that promote effectiveness and efficacy. This study has the potential to assist organizations in building strong teams that will ensure that the business operations of the school organization as well as the instructional units will operate effectively to promote student achievement. By using a variety of agencies, the different organizations provided

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a unique insight into leadership and team development that has not been addressed in education before.

1.10.8 Presentation of the Data

Data will be presented in case study format. Key themes have emerged about sustainable leadership team effectiveness and are presented by extracting data from both the quantitative and qualitative data basis in the study. It is also connected to existing literature in the field.

1.11 Adherence to Ethical Considerations

I recognize that the outcomes of this study, to be respected and valued, must be conducted to high ethical standards and practices. As a researcher, it continues to be my responsibility and duty to be diligent when gathering data and in research. I endeavored to be critically reflective in the process and to challenge my assumptions or preconceived opinions.

I recognize that my personal history, professional experience, and education were of value to the study but must not prohibit me from critical reflection. Preliminary permission has been obtained from each of the four case study participants proposed. Following approval for the study, I carefully followed and adhered to the University of Pretoria's Ethics Guidelines and approval of the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Education.

Case study participants were briefed on the research study and are aware of the process and gave informed consent to participate. I have done my best to accurately explain the nature of the study and to explain the research proposed. They also understood the nature of the mixed methods approach to this research and understood the roles they played and the activities that were to be involved. They understood that while individuals in their organizations would have anonymity in the DiSC assessments, the organization would be named in the study, data analyzed from the assessments and information about their leadership and team structure would be used. They have agreed to voluntarily participate and will maintain their right to withdraw if circumstances prohibit their involvement.

Comparing different types of educational organizations or organizations that serve educational agencies can provide challenges in research. These challenges are acknowledged and were addressed by practicing transparency in the process. Clearly defined protocols and procedures for the site visits, questions, focus groups, and review of organizational materials and assessment instruments were developed and utilized.

Another ethical consideration is the management of South African and United States of America contexts. Because it is my hope that this research will potentially have international impact, the value of this research with the University of Pretoria is significant. Whenever possible,

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I utilized research from the University of Pretoria in my study and worked with my advisor to ensure that contextual differences were addressed.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Dynamic

As I began my research, I reviewed a broad range of literature to develop a conceptual framework for this study (Maxwell, 2005). My research focused on reviewing literature that could answer, in addition to the primary research question, also the underlying questions of my study: What does it mean to sustain leadership? What does it mean to sustain leadership teams? What contributes to and enhances leadership team effectiveness? What is an effective team? And finally, how does sustaining leadership team effectiveness support student achievement? This chapter is designed to provide an overview of the current research as well as to identify emerging trends and issues within this field. It will explore what prior research has concluded and test if these conclusions are still relevant today.

To create this literature dynamic, I reviewed multiple sources of information that included: The Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), ProQuest, Lexis-Nexis, AERA, and other search engines available through the University Library. I reviewed multiple bodies of literature such as journals and scholarly publications, and also incorporated popular writings on leadership and leadership teams. While the use of non-scholarly publications in a thesis is unconventional, for the purposes of this study they provided relevant and necessary insight and information to create the pathway for a comprehensive literature review and for connecting the study to the dynamic leadership literature in the public domain.

Leadership research during the last five decades has proliferated. Current scholarly study of leadership *teams or collaborative leadership* was limited. From the literature review in this study, it seemed that the subject was studied in the 1960-1990s with great interest but has declined in the last thirty years. Leadership broadly continued to be a significant topic of research, but, as evidenced by my research, the world of educational scholarship changed its focus. In the nineties and beyond, there was a distinct change in the literature to individual leadership and leadership styles. In the last five years, the shift is recurring, and the emphasis is returning to teams, top management teams, global virtual teams and the transformational leadership that is team based. "In part, the prevalence of teams within organizations is due to the complex problems that the organizations often face and the synergistic benefits that the use of teams can provide to the organizations – that is teams offer the capability to achieve what cannot be accomplished by one individual acting alone" (Hackman, 2011, p. 1). The complexity

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of the world and of the education world is indeed expanding and this may be the harbinger of a renewed interest in teams.

Six types of scholarly literature in particular were used in this literature review:

1. Management/leadership teams and organizational behavior (e.g. Anacona & Nadler, 1989; Eisenhardt, Kahwhay, & Bourgeois III, 1997; Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2009; Hollenbeck, Derue, & Nahrgang, 2015; Huges, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2019);
2. social psychology, emphasizing teams and senior leadership teams (e.g. Druskat & Wolff, 2001, 1997; Hackman, 2006; Posner & Kouzes, 2017; Lencioni, 2018; Meuser et al., 2016; Wageman, Nunes, Burruss, & Hackman, 2008);
3. Educational leadership (e.g. Allio, 2012; Kotter, 1996; Johnson, 1996; Northouse, 2019; Wageman et al., 2008);
4. The role of the district office team (e.g. Childress, Elmore, Grossman, & Johnson, 2007; Elmore, 2007; Corcoran, Fuhrman, & Belcher, 2001);
5. The American Education Research Association (AERA) task force report on Developing Research in Educational Leadership (e.g. Leithwood & Riehl, 2003);
6. Ways in which leaders impact student learning (e.g. Kowalski & Bjork, 2005).

All of this research together creates the foundation for this study. They address why sustaining leadership team effectiveness is important and offer insight into how leadership educational teams are best created and led.

In Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, I reviewed both my conceptual framework and research paradigm. In selecting the literature for this study, the framework was a pivotal piece of the dynamic of this study. This study attempts to employ a meta-management theoretical framework with an underpinning of leadership theory (Northouse, 2019, p. 11). As stated previously it is also based on an axiological assumption with a transformative framework of pragmatism. While it may be an unusual framework that incorporates such elements, it does allow this literature review to explore many dimensions.

These are some of the questions that informed the direction of the inquiry: What does it mean to sustain leadership? Does longevity of leadership matter? Does sustaining leadership positively impact the success of school districts or organizations or does it hinder their effectiveness by discouraging new ideas and new opportunities? Does sustaining leadership stagnate promotions?

What does it mean to sustain leadership teams? Does the length of time a team serves together (or their tenure) in the organization matter? Do teams that have a longer history

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perform better than newly formed teams? Does familiarity breed contempt or promote success within an educational organization?

What does it mean to sustain leadership team effectiveness? How do you measure the effectiveness of a team and does the duration of a team impact their effectiveness? Is the team effective or are they predictable? Do they handle change well or do they rely on history for perspective?

What is an effective team? What constitutes effectiveness? Is it effective in mentoring, onboarding, and encouraging excellence? Does the team use time, resources, finances, and personnel wisely? Does an effective team consistently get positive results?

How does sustaining leadership affect and support student achievement? If leadership teams are effective, how do they impact positive student achievement and is it measurable? Does an effective team save a district or organization money, are there fewer lawsuits, less costly turnover of personnel, more efficient use of resources? Does the size of the team, the composition, core skills, emotional intelligence, diversity, knowledge of education and pedagogy, roles and position and management of the senior team play a role in their success?

While all these questions are the basis for the literature review, not all are answered in this study nor is it appropriate given the scope of the questions of this study. They are mentioned here to inform the reader of the dynamics of this project and the rationale for the study.

For the purpose of this study, the term “sustaining” in the title is a significant concept. To create an effective team that is not sustainable impacts the organization. In my selected case studies in Chapter Four, it is indicated that each team is composed of the senior leaders of the organization with one team member identified as the leader.

2.2 Key Definitions

In reading this chapter and this study, having a common understanding and definition of key concepts is essential. These definitions have been developed by the researcher and impact the organization and direction of this literature review and thesis. For the purpose of this study, these terms will be defined as:

Sustaining: Ongoing, continual, with little interruption, long term, stable, and expected to last for the long term. “In conclusion, the trust that leaders place in those they lead allows both the leader and her/his followers to excel. It is not a momentary event, but a series of investments over time that truly allows success (Mineo, 2014, p. 4). Sustaining is the concept that allows a team to invest in continuing success.

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Leadership: Providing focus, direction, administration, and clarity to the organization and the students it serves and its employees. Leadership lights the way for the organization in every aspect of its operations. It provides clear direction and communication and establishes priorities and expectations. Leaders often inspire team members through reinforcing the sense of belonging, empathy, bonding and mutual respect. They can also use their leadership to give people choice and power in their work. This leadership and support are a foundation of leadership that promotes success and creativity (Molnau, 2013).

Sustainable Leadership: To create a leadership dynamic with continuing and long-term success, that is stable and focused. This leadership tenet is known and understood. To understand and measure team efficacy, the referent of self-efficacy roles shifts from the “I” to “team” and reflect the same phenomenon at the team level (Goolamally & Ahmad, 2014). This supports the sustainability of leadership.

The Leadership Team: For the purpose of this study, this definition is for the senior executive management team. It would include the highest-level managers and leaders who directly report to the superintendent or CEO or designated organizational leader. They may be referred to as the senior team or the executive leadership team or the senior leadership team. Effective leadership teams characteristically evolve out of groups, resulting in increased creativity, innovation, job satisfaction and leads to greater productivity (Demirci, 2018; McLeod et al., 1999; Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006). My defined leadership team has evolved from the top-level executives or managers into this definition of leadership team.

Senior Leader: The leader of the senior executive leadership team and the organization. In a school system, this would be the superintendent, in a company, the CEO or corporate leader. This person has authority for the day-to-day operation of the organization and serves as its key executive. He or she has decision-making authority and is the identified public leader of the organization. “Truly, great leaders serve, rather than rule, because they recognize that those, they lead entrust them with leadership responsibilities” (Hackman & Johnson, 2013, p. 21). The senior leaders in this study are viewed as transformational leaders. This transformational leadership is a vertical leadership style that emanates from the senior leader of the team. Transformational leadership contributes to team output effectiveness (Choi et al., 2017).

Effectiveness: Effectiveness and success are terms used in this study to define outcomes and results. Effectiveness indicates an appropriate use of authority, resources, personnel, time, and ethical decision-making. It indicates focus in an organization and the ability to meet goals and objectives that may include profit or increased student achievement. Peralta,

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Lopes, Gilson, Lourenco, and Pais (2014) expressed that team performance and reputation may be increased by team innovation processes and increased effectiveness. This effective teaming is also an advantage. Team work can provide a powerful advantage in today's competitive markets and many would argue that effective teaming is necessary for organizations to thrive (Garmston & Wellman, 2009; Jones & Bearly, 2001).

Leadership Team Effectiveness: This term is used to describe a senior executive leadership team that operates with honesty, transparency, focus, and clearly communicates with each other and the organization. The group works independently in their own responsibilities but is interdependent as a senior executive leadership team. They have positive professional relationships and the ability to disagree and debate key issues with respect and cooperation. They can show demonstrated evidence of their success or effectiveness by the outcomes of their actions and the caliber of the organizations they serve. "Working with others can enhance creativity, improve reflection, increase respect for others, promote team celebration and enhance self-efficacy" (Morel, 2014, p. 47).

Education Agencies: School districts, county offices of education or any groups that serve school districts and impact students. In California, these are often referred to as LEAs: local education agencies.

Student Achievement: Student achievement is defined in multiple ways in this study. Student test scores, graduation rates, attendance, and support of the education agencies are among the indicators of student achievement.

In reading these definitions, you will see examples of how they connect my research questions with my framework and with my study. In defining these terms, the three-dimension puzzle starts to emerge, and I see connections. In the remainder of this chapter, each of these aspects is explored in greater detail.

2.3 The Leadership Team

As I begin to examine the literature, it is prudent to again clarify the composition of a leadership team. For the purposes of this study, I am examining senior or executive level leadership teams. This concept allows me to focus on senior level leadership and will help to clarify the criteria for measuring their effectiveness as well.

"Teams" exist in almost all organizations. Some are permanent parts of the leadership, while some are created for specific purposes. They may vary greatly by size, scope of authority, and influence. Teams exist in a variety of forms, for different purposes, and they differ from groups. Clark (2007) distinguishes between the characteristics of a team and a group. These distinctions center on roles and responsibilities, identity, cohesion, facilitator use,

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communication, flexibility, and morale. The team elevates their behaviors in these areas above those of the group.

Cohen and Bailey (1997) characterized teams as groups of individuals who operate independently but share organizational outcomes. Rasmussen and Jeppesen (2006) described them as a formally established group that operates with some autonomy and performs tasks that require interdependence among team members. NSBA, the National School Board Association (n.d.) defines a team as: “A team is a group organized to work together to accomplish a set of objectives that cannot be achieved effectively by individuals: (NSBA, 2018).

Orasanu and Salas (1993) and Dyer (1985) suggests that a team includes two or more people, a common goal, specific role assignments, and interdependence among the members. They are also empowered to make decisions in the context of a larger task and have specialized knowledge and skills relevant to the task and decision, and task conditions under which teams operate often include a high workload and time pressure.

Katzenbach and Smith (2015) assert that a team is comprised of a small number of people with complementary skills who are mutually accountable for achieving a common set of performance goals through a common purpose and a common approach. These complementary skills provide synergy with the common purpose as the driving force; performance goals are the energizing force. Common approaches allow for expected behaviors and mutual accountability in the sharing of the team’s outcomes. Talented leaders may often identify gaps in organizational processes with the organization’s mission, but only skilled and knowledgeable teams are equipped to fill these gaps (Sperber & Linder, 2016).

Posner and Kouzes (2017), in their Leadership Challenge series of books, highlight the ability of the leaders to build teams, recognize the contributions of others, and celebrate the success of individuals and teams as an important dynamic that is required for leaders to be successful.

In describing a school management team, Duvall and Erikson (1981), define: “a group whose role is formalized and legitimized and whose purpose is problem solving and/or decision making” (p. 63). Hadderman (1998) emphasized these characteristics by stating: “The school management team includes a cross-section of experienced central office and building level administrators committed to a structured decision-making process endorsed by the school board and the superintendent” (p. 89).

Teams can be described in multiple ways. Sherer (1995) established four categories of teams: “work teams, integrating teams, management teams, and improvement teams” (p. 2). Cohen and Bailey (1997) reviewed the literature on teams in organizations and also identified

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four team types: “work teams, parallel teams, project teams, and management teams” (p. 241). Ratliff, Bedstead and Hanks (1999) also described four team types; “simple work teams, relay teams, integrated work teams, and problem-solving teams” (p. 32). Sundstrom, McIntyre, Halfhill, and Richards (2000) identified six categories for teams in their review of work teams’ literature. These categories are “production groups, service groups, management teams, project teams, action or performing groups, and advisory groups are created based on the type of work to be accomplished by the group” (pp. 46-47).

Oswald (1996) described the district level team as one that contains central office staff and building level principals. Their function is to provide structure and guidance for the district through decision-making and policy implementation. She also described the district team as a vertical team, given the inclusion of administrators from different levels of the corporation. She stated that a vertical team benefits from communication with others at different levels, resulting in better understanding. Cunningham and Gresso (1993) specifically stated that “vertical teams facilitate the formation of bonds and cohesion, which are essential to a district wide culture” (p. 154).

In the literature review, it is noted there are many terms used to explain leadership theories and styles. Odmeru & Ogbonna (2013), present an analysis of the differences between transformational vs. transactional leadership. They acknowledged that these two theories are prominent. While they are different in both practice and concept, they are easily identified styles. “A transformational leader is a person who stimulates and inspires (transforms) followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes (Robbins and Coulter, 2007), These leaders create an atmosphere where motivation, morale and accomplishment are highlighted. It may also be viewed as a personal characteristic rather than a team attribute.

Transformational leadership, (Bush, 2015) also indicates that this type of leadership “assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capabilities of organizational members (p.37). This theory supports the concept that while a charismatic leader or group has the ability to motivate and inspire, they must also share a commitment to the organization and the professional skills and abilities to perform and meet expectations.

Odmeru & Ogbonna (2013), identify transactional leaders as managerial leaders. They view their roles as functionaries and focus on issues such as management, supervision, resource allocations, and compliance. They may also use a system rewards and punishments to motivate their teams. While in all organizations, there is a level of bureaucracy of routine management needs, they are done to support the mission of the organization. The organization does not exist to comply with their requirements.

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In describing leadership styles, Bush (2015) also identifies different organizational theories. These include: Managerial Leadership, Managerialism, Transformational Leadership, Moral Leadership, Participative Leadership, Distributed Leadership, Teacher Leadership, Post-Modern Leadership and Contingent Leadership. An exploration of these identified styles enhances the literature by bringing to light a combination of new and existing concepts.

Like Bush and other experts, Sergiovanni also promote the concept of moral leadership. This morality can motivate and promote leadership and when seen as a professional virtue. It can help to build a leadership team centered on a “covenant of shared ideas”, (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Sergiovanni (2000), also recognizes leadership styles and leadership in education. He promotes the concept that schools are unique places that require their own theories and practices. He promotes a framework for school leadership that promotes collegiality and avoids divisions with a common goal or commitment to the common good.

Bush, Joubert, Kiggaundu, and van Rooyen (2019). In a study of managing teaching and learning in South African schools, identified management issues that can negatively impact school managers and thus children in schools. He notes that “managers have to grapple with difficult issues rising from unpromising school contexts, weak inherited infrastructures and underqualified educations” (p. 167). These issues are directly tied to the leadership abilities, styles and understanding of the school managers and leaders. They concluded that for leadership to occur, places of learning must develop a vision for the school that “places learning and teaching at the center” (p.167).

In reviewing the literature as presented, one can see common threads and definitions of what a team is, but the variety of team models do not form naturally to produce an effective team. Collins (2001) emphasized how important the right team is to a company by devoting an entire chapter to the topic. Collins (2001) states “if we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats and the wrong people off the bus, then we’ll figure out how to take it someplace great” (p. 41). Organizational teams are often designed to meet and lead an organization’s plan for innovative performance (Sperber & Linder, 2016). Knowing the purpose and design of the team can influence its impact.

Leadership literature in the last five years has included an emphasis on Teamwork. West (2012), updated his work the third edition of *Effective Teamwork*, to update and focus a greater emphasis on creating and sustaining leadership teams and teamwork. He remains committed to the concept that it is possible to create conditions for teams to work successfully.

Another approach to teamwork is centered around managing the process rather than

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leading the process (p. 3). Kerns (2019) looks at the key leadership practices in managing teamwork. His approach is one of management rather than leadership. “Leaders use linking skills to help coordinate and manage organizationally resources, especially people” (p. 40). His premise is that being able to manage teamwork is a fundamental practice that is required for leadership team effectiveness (Kerns & Ko, 2014.) He expands his research to include seven steps:

- Step 1: Positioning Managing Teamwork
- Step 2: Assessing and Collaborative Learning
- Step 3: Prioritizing and Targeting
- Step 4: Accountability Action Planning
- Step 5: Team Performance Huddling and Action Learning
- Step 6: Team Storytelling
- Step 7: Indexing and Leveraging Outcomes

In these seven steps, he attempts to create a formula that would allow managers to create effective teamwork in multiple organizations and industries.

In addressing the fragmented and sometimes multi-tiered systems, theories and strategies surrounding the subject of teamwork, Salas, Sims, and Burke (2004) explored team-based structures and endeavored to identify core components of team leadership. Their research concluded that “although a remarkable amount of research has been conducted to determine how to make teams function maximally, no one has been able to clearly define exactly what is teamwork” (p. 591). In their research they agreed that a team requires a “complex mixture of variables that include not only organization support and individual skills, but also teamwork” (p. 591). While providing a theoretical model and additional research to the field, they concluded that there exists a huge gap between academicians and practitioners in understanding of team development and that there is a “glaring need” (p. 591) for additional longitudinal research.

In continuing to explore the subject of leadership teams and teamwork, a dynamic in the literature addressed a universal concern: managing diverse teams. In our educational or business worlds, our teams today may be composed of multigenerational, multiethnic and diverse groups of people. Shemla and Wegge (2019) addressed this issue by exploring the role of perceived diversity. They conclude that an important role of collective team identification unlocks the potential for objective educational teams (p. 1). Their research also shows that by utilizing the diversity of team members, the team will have a greater access to knowledge and perspectives that can enhance their team

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performance and success. “Our results show that high collective team identification and the link between objective and perceived diversity are key to tapping the benefits inherent in diverse teams” (p. 778).

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) is often viewed as the leading association for superintendents and executive level administrators who serve American public schools. They rely on the title/role to define what a senior executive team is. AASA defined district level administrator teams as being composed of central office leadership. These leadership teams are a composition of both instructional/curriculum and business services leadership. The team may include Deputy Superintendents, Associate or Assistant Superintendents, Directors, Coordinators and those with senior/executive level titles in curriculum design/ delivery, instructional support, business, financial services, human resources, facilities. The larger the organization, the more complex or extensive the senior team (Joint-AASA-NSBA Committee, 1979, 1981). There has been no further study by AASA on this issue over the last 38 years.

Lencioni (2002) characterized an effective team by first identifying the five dysfunctions of a team. The five dysfunctions are: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. These five dysfunctions do not exist singularly; rather Lencioni connected the five of them together as they form a model for effective team traits.

Lencioni (2014) identified a pyramid that turns team dysfunction into a cohesive team. The base of the pyramid is the structural foundation of these concepts and it begins with trust in one another. “When team members are genuinely transparent and honest with one another, they are able to build vulnerability based trust” (p. 2). The subsequent levels from the bottom up include: engage in conflict around ideas, commit to decisions, hold one another accountable and focus on achieving collective results. Collins (2001) reinforces this necessary team building when he wrote that “good-to-great management teams are those consisting of people who debate vigorously in search of the best answers, yet who unify behind decisions, regardless of parochial interests” (p. 63).

Team empowerment is learned through team-building techniques and leaders who are willing to empower their teammates (Jiang, Flores, Leelawong, & Manz, 2016). Leaders who provide team empowerment increase knowledge sharing and group conflict resolution in working teams (Jiang et al., 2016, p. 138). Lencioni (2012) described, “More than any policy or system, there is nothing like the fear of letting down respected teammates that motivates people to improve their performance” (p. 212).

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In literature that addressed the issue of team effectiveness, Levi (2017) found that teams face the issues of managing conflict, power and social influence, decision-making, leadership, problem-solving, creativity, and diversity, as they work to operate effectively. Teams that operate effectively are those that possess clear goals, appropriate leadership, organizational support, suitable risks, and accountability. These are the same characteristics identified by Fowler (1995) as the common characteristics of an effective team. He stated those as:

- A common sense of purpose and a clear understanding of the team’s objectives.
- The team has, or can obtain, all the resources it needs to achieve its objectives.
- Among team members, there is a range of the skills and know-how needed to deal effectively with the team’s tasks.
- There is a range of team types within the team, i.e., team members have different aptitudes for the various team roles required for effective teamworking.
- Team members have respect for each other, both as individuals and for the contribution each makes to the team’s performance (p. 40).

Fowler concluded that “teams fail if their members cannot work together effectively, and this is a function of personality and attitude, not of specialist know-how” (p. 41).

“Strong leadership at the organizational level is imperative for organizational strategy and change to be effective” (Burke, 2018, p. 138). In creating a strong leadership structure, literature suggests that the productivity and energy generated by the team can impact its performance. Morel (2014) concluded, adding “Working with others can enhance creativity, improve reflection, increase respect for others, promote team celebration and enhance self-efficacy” (p. 47). Morel (2014) went on to identify the following skills to promote a positive collaborative environment (p. 38):

- Read the emotional climate of a situation and improve emotional safety for others
- Apologize
- Focus on the project and not on individual personalities
- Listen
- Express and advocate for one’s own point of view; the other person’s perspective and
- Define mutual goals

In 2009, international executive recruiting firm Korn Ferry, through their Korn/Ferry Institute, published a white paper called “Driving Team Effectiveness.” The white paper was written by Dr. Kenneth P. De Meuse, their Associate Vice President of Research. In the paper, the concept of the T-7 Model of Team Effectiveness was introduced. The research was

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validated using 303 teams with 3,238 participants in 50 organizations across a variety of industries (De Meuse, 2009).

In their research, De Meuse concluded that two considerations were apparent, team functioning can be measured in a variety of ways and models, and that their T-7 model worked across all industries. The T-7 model identifies five internal team factors that include:

- Thrust: a common purpose about what needs to be accomplished or team goal(s)
- Trust: in each other as teammates
- Talent: in the collective skills of the team members to get the job done
- Teaming Skills: operating effectively and efficiently as a team
- Task Skills: executing successfully or getting the job done
 - Two external team factors were identified (De Meuse, 2009, p.4):
- Team Leader Fit: The degree to which the team leader satisfies the needs of team members
- Team Support: From the organization

In truth, it is impossible for leaders at the top of an organization (large or small) to provide the leadership necessary for an organization to become high performing if they have not defined how they will work together. “Everything in a company is determined by the quality of team dynamics, and the ability to effectively lead teams is at the heart of managerial success” (Schouten, Dannals, Greer, & De Jong, 2018, p. 591).

Sevier (2003) addressed the issue of building a senior executive team in his paper directed to college presidents. He described effective team qualities as:

- Orbit a truly worthy vision
- Focus on fewer, more important goals
- Take the time to build trust
- Value conflict
- Collaborate
- Able to decide
- Execute
- Hold team members accountable
- Manage the middle managers
- Measure progress
- Reward right
- Celebrate success (pp. 4-9)

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Utilizing Belbin's (2010) eight team role models, Higgs (2007) used this as a basis for his study of successful senior management teams. While harmony can be a positive for a team, establishing harmony at the cost of debate and honest dialog may hinder a team's effectiveness. The Belbin model may yield higher performing teams when measured on performance outcomes such as member satisfaction, cohesiveness and attitude change, but it may not consistently result in improved accountability or results.

Higgs, Plewnia, and Ploch (2005) also examined team composition relative to task complexity and team performance. Their study found that teams faced with highly complex tasks have higher performance levels when the team is comprised of diverse individuals as measured by the Belbin (2000) Self-Assessment Questionnaire. The questionnaire is now called the Belbin Team Role Self Perception Inventory (BIRSPI) (www.belbin.com, 2014). It has increased from eight to nine models.

The study by Fisher, Hunter, and Macrosson (2001), took exception to the Belbin (1981) study as they examined team roles. They concluded that Belbin's eight roles may present a better model for psychometric measurement. In their study, they discussed the fit of Belbin's team roles to the Big Five personality traits of Goldberg (1990) and found the Big Five personality traits more beneficial.

Do personality and leadership styles and traits play a role in effective team development and performance? Studies of individual team member personality styles have demonstrated a relationship to team effectiveness. Mann (1959) reviewed studies conducted to ascertain the relationship between personality and performance. He measured seven personality traits on the dependent variables of leadership, popularity, total activity task activity, social emotional activity, and conformity. His studies determined that intelligence and adjustment were positively related to five of the six dependent variables.

Yukl (2013) conducted a review of leadership theory and practice and found that the personality of individuals can contribute to team effectiveness. In his work, Yukl (2013) recognized that the presence of goal orientation, emotional stability, and maturity will positively impact productivity. The cohesive or effective team, however, must guard against 'group think' that may produce poor decisions made to preserve group harmony.

Teams that engage in team building, innovation, and creative solutions may induce admiration, pride, and positive feelings that result in improved team reputations and commitment (Peralta et al., 2014). Effective leaders must motivate a team, facilitate change, define a culture, or overcome adversity. Great leaders must be great communicators. They have to create a vision that others will follow. Their words must be supported by strong and active

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intentions, and their objectives must be clearly defined, appealing to the aspirations and emotions of their team members. Without intention, employees will not understand a leader's ideas and will not champion their proposals. And teams will remain ineffective. Team effectiveness can broadly be defined as a combination of internal and external factors that determine how well a team works as a unit. Organizations that employ teams often find that the complexities of group dynamics make it difficult to ensure sustained high performance (Andrews, 2012). Members of a highly cohesive team focus on the process, not the person; they respect everyone on the team, assuming good motives, and they fully commit to team decisions and strategies, creating accountability among the team (Molnau, 2013).

Study of individual leaders, leadership traits, and the multiple dynamics of leadership are considered important areas of study, due to the depth of the subjects, there is a lack of universal understanding and agreement for clearly defined definitions (Northouse, 2019). Finding agreement in the world of scholars or professional communities is an ongoing challenge. The multiplicity of definitions, coupled with cultural differences, creates a research challenge. The topic of leadership has been and continues to be one of the most taught subjects at business schools throughout the United States and the world during the last fifty years (Tourish & Collinson, 2015).

Goodwin, Salas, O'shea, and Driskell (2006) and Stout, Salas, and Carson. (1994) all studied the behavior and characteristics of top performing teams. Goodwin et al. (2006) concluded that team membership or team member training can be improved by studying team processes relative to the team member personality traits. Stout et al. (1994) found that the behavior dimensions of mission, analysis, assertiveness, decision-making, adaptability/flexibility, situational awareness, leadership, and communication improves team effectiveness. While the results are very similar to Bass (1982), who found that team effectiveness is impacted by the degree that team members interacted with each other. The positive results and impact for the team occurred beyond the member's individual skill levels when interaction occurred.

First, as a shared belief, team potency is not only influenced by individuals' beliefs about their own competence but, more important, determined by others' perceived competence (Bandura, 1991). Leaders must inspire team members by reinforcing the sense of belonging, empathy in bonding and mutual respect, in addition to giving people choice and power over what they can do. Once that sense of support, or foundation, is created, the result is limitless creativity (Molnau, 2013).

Senior executive teams are normally characterized as being the top management team and assume that those who have particular titles or responsibilities are on this team. Finklestein,

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Hambick, and Cannella’s (2009) review of management literature expanded the definition to identify top team members as: (1) all managers identified by the CEO; (2) all managers at the vice president level or above; (3) the two highest executive levels; (4) inside board members; (5) all founders of the organization, and (6) the five highest paid executives. Since this study includes case studies of four organizations, only one of which is a school district, it is easy, in the corporate sense, to see these distinctions. It is also possible to adapt some of these to an educational agency. This summary is important to this study in that it spotlights a problem in the literature. There is a huge variance in the definition of teams, and secondly, the first definition on their list — all managers identified by the CEO — does not apply in most educational agencies. In most school districts all managers are not members of the senior executive team.

How a team is defined has to do with how the CEO or Superintendent defines the team, not just by their title or role, is supported and extended by Anacona and Nadler (1989) who suggest that well-defined senior teams are more than a group of individuals working together. They promote the theory that members of a senior executive team (1) have a sense of identity (they see themselves as a unit) (2) they are interdependent (they depend on each other to produce their output) and (3) they have joint outcomes (their rewards, successes, failures, and punishments are affected by each other). A senior executive team is defined not just as a function of role or title, nor selection by the CEO, but is strictly defined as a truly interdependent and interacting team.

Table 2.1 – Senior Leadership Team: Responsibilities Berman, 2016, p. 81. Copyrighted with permission.

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Coordinates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training and development (70%) • Talent Strategy (60%+) • Knowledge Sharing (60%) |
| 2. Coordinates in Part | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional/divisional projects (70%) • Succession planning (50%) |
| 3. Less likely to coordinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional/divisional planning • Cross-functional/divisional partnerships |

In another approach to defining teams in general, it can be assumed that teams have common goals (Tambe & Pynadath, 2002). A team is a group of people embedded in an

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organization who perform tasks that help them achieve their goals. They share their overall work goals and they have the power, independence, and ability to achieve those goals. The difference between a team and a successful team may be characterized as a successful team sharing the “common goals they are pursuing together.” Convergent perceptions of organizational efficacy among team members and positive work outcomes in organizational teams have their genesis in shared goals and shared decision-making (Du, Shin, & Choi, 2014). “One of the clearest signs of an experienced leader is the attention she pays to her people and her teams,” notes Lindred Greer, an associate professor of organizational behavior at Stanford Graduate School of Business. “Everything in a company is determined by the quality of team dynamics, and the ability to effectively lead teams is at the heart of managerial success” (Schouten, Dannals, Greer, & De Jong, 2018).

Katzenbach (2015) defines senior executive teams similar to Anacona and Nadler (1989) but differs in using a more restrictive definition and making distinctions in terminology. Katzenbach (2015) argues for three essential elements of a true performance team: (1) mutual accountability for results, (2) collective or joint work which are products of clear performance value, (3) a sharing and/or leadership role among the members.

Anaconda and Nadler’s (1989) definition includes the first two components but does not address the third component — sharing and/or shifting of leadership role among the members. Katzenbach (2015) argues for a very specific vision of what a “real” senior team looks and feels like. Secondly, Katzenbach (2015) calls for referring to the top team as the “senior leadership working group” and recognizes that these senior groups will “shift into and out of team modes of behavior to fit the performance tasks at hand” (p. 129). With this subtle shift in terminology, Katzenbach (2015) brings attention to both the need for traditional executive leadership in which senior leaders are held accountable individually for their functional areas of responsibility as well as the need for true team efforts in which creating joint team products will yield improved performance. Katzenbach notes that senior leadership working in groups needs to improve their ability to identify real team opportunities and should rely on the discipline of leadership to get things done. Katzenbach (2015) provides an integrative lens in discussing how senior executive teams/working groups are defined with respect to both individual leadership behaviors and team behaviors. His efforts to change the lexicon of how research and practitioners refer to the senior team have not gained significant traction as evidenced by the use of “top team” and “Senior team” by others in this review of the literature (Certo, Lester, Dalton, Dalton, & Berg, 2006; Finkelstein, Hambrick & Canella 2009; Wageman et al., 2008). Transformational leaders, or

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leaders who are adaptable to organizational change, often provide a flexible approach to teams and team building that enhance innovation (Sperber & Linder, 2016).

To address a methodology of measuring team effectiveness, Katzenbach and Smith (2015) provided a set of questions centered upon each element of their team definition to establish the level of team performance. A second set of indicators which differentiates between groups and teams are “themes and identification, enthusiasm and energy levels, event-driven histories, personal commitment and performance results” (pp. 105-107). The idea is that once the performance level for the team is established, the team will raise this level and achieve mutual accountability when individuals take risks involving conflict, trust, interdependence, and hard work.

Lencioni further asserted, “Great teams do not hold back with one another... They are unafraid to air their dirty laundry. They admit their mistakes, their weaknesses, and their concerns without fear of reprisal” (Lencioni, 2012, p. 44). Lencioni highlighted trust as a cornerstone of team building, contending trust is the foundation of real teamwork. And so, the first dysfunction is a failure on the part of team members to open up to one another... It is an absolutely critical part of building a team. In fact, it’s probably the most critical (pp. 43-44). Evidence has found that effective teams can realize higher levels of innovation and achieve much more than individuals alone (Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Hattie, 2015; Lambert, 2003; Love, 2008).

Belbin (1981) specifically studied effective management teams and identified eight team roles that should be filled for optimal team operations. Belbin proposed that a team with members who fill these roles should also consider the following principles to achieve effectiveness.

- Team members contribute to achieving objectives by performing a function role (professional/technical knowledge) and a team role.
- Optimal balance in other functional and team roles is needed depending on the team’s goals and tasks.
- Team effectiveness is elevated when members understand and adjust to the needs of the team based on their relative strengths to other team members
- An individual’s personality and mental abilities will play a large part in allowing that person to fill a particular team role.
- A range and balance of team roles will promote efficient teamwork and the best implementation of technical resources (pp. 132-133).

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A study of military teams by Halfhill, Nielsen, Sundstrom, and Weilbaeher (2005) found that, “Personality composition of military service teams correlates with group performance, and complementary, group-level traits may even interact to promote group synergy” (p. 50). The study indicated that both individual and group measures of conscientiousness and agreeableness correlated with group-level performance.

Another model, the Five Factor Model, proposed by McCrae and Costa (1992), studied personality traits and team effectiveness. The model is similar to the Big Five proposed by Goldberg (1990) with both models providing an effective approach to studying personality traits of individuals and groups. Neuman and Wright (1999) in their study of team effectiveness stated that, “The personality variables explained variance beyond that explained by the more traditional job-related skills and cognitive ability measures. This was true at both the individual and group level” (p. 385). Their study also suggests that different types of work teams and work tasks may require different personality traits to positively impact the team’s effectiveness. Teams drive organizational success, though developing and leading high-performance teams is one of the most complex tasks facing any leader in the current competitive work environment.

During this review, personality traits and team effectiveness yielded multiple sources and theories. While related, personality traits are however not the primary focus of this study. For the purpose of this study, the review of these models did present insight into leadership team effectiveness and dynamics. Do corporate executives or senior executive teams have the same team dynamics as educational senior executive teams? Can what works in the private sector be replicated in the public sector? As indicated by the research reviewed thus far, while industry needs may vary — the study of teams, team formation, team success, and team effectiveness are not bound by the constraints of the industry.

Wageman et al. (2008) captured Katzenbach’s distinctions between team and non-team behavior as well and provided an expanded definition of a real team. While I am using the term senior or senior executive teams for this study, the term “top team” is entrenched in both research and the popular press and publications. Wageman et al. (2008) identified four types of teams:

1. Informational
2. Consultative
3. Coordinating
4. Decision-Making

Informational teams are identified as the most basic leadership team. They are formed for the purpose of information exchange. Consultative teams are for the purpose of advising on

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key decisions. These teams may provide data, information, and recommendations, but do not have final authority for the decisions. Coordinating teams are constructed to coordinate each team member's individual activities as they execute organizational strategy. These teams have a shared purpose and need to work together interdependently and frequently. Lastly, decision-making teams "make the small number of critical decisions that are most consequential for the enterprise as a whole" (p. 38).

As Wageman et al. (2008) was careful to note, a decision-making team does not mean management by committee; the committee is still the CEO's team and gets authority for making certain decisions by the CEO.

The relevance of Wageman et al. (2008) to this study is twofold. One, the team's success and effectiveness are directly impacted by the CEO or leader. Two, the type and composition of the team impacts their effectiveness.

According to a survey of 102 hotel management teams by Srivastava, Bartol, and Locke (2006), combining leadership and knowledge-sharing and team effectiveness can complement performance levels. Strengthening leadership is characterized by a series of actions that are determined by the distribution of power within the team to enhance motivation (Srivastava et al., 2006).

They further believe that you can empower leadership in management teams by knowledge sharing, efficacy, and improve performance. Their study concludes that there are many different effects from team intervention on teamwork and team performance. Among them, time commitment may be most crucial effect.

Team leaders must understand the relationships between individuals and teams to develop and relate to team dynamics (Jia, Li, & Cai, 2016). The relationships between the senior leader to the senior executive team and the team members to each other is a component of effective teams. Understanding roles and responsibilities, styles of leadership, communication styles and personal knowledge contributes to these dynamics.

Lencioni (2012), has suggested that successful leaders guide their organization through six critical questions:

1. Why do we exist?
2. How do we behave?
3. What do we do?
4. How will we succeed?
5. What is most important right now?
6. Who must do what? (Lencioni, 2012, p. 77)

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Teaming is intentional and requires time, effort, discipline, and perseverance from leaders and team members alike (Garmston & Wellman, 2009; Gratton & Erickson, 2007; Jones & Bearley, 2001; Larson & LaFasto, 1999; Lencioni, 2012; Wellman & Lipton, 2012; Pearsall, Sims, & Lorinkova, 2013; Wageman et al., 2008).

It should be noted that finding scholarly research on senior level educational teams was limited. Classroom leadership and school site or principal level leadership studies exist. While they provide insight into the industry, they do not define the needs of a leadership team at a central office or school district headquarters. Doud and Keller (1998), and Shipman and Murphy (1998) looked at principal level leadership needs. Shipman and Murphy (1998) identified six characteristics for principal leadership. Their study asserts that the principal's role as an administrator and an instructional leader includes the person being able to:

1. Develop a vision for learning
2. Develop a school culture and instructional priority
3. Manage the school
4. Collaborate with community members
5. Promote student learning by acting in an ethical manner
6. Respond to the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context (Shipman & Murphy, 1998, pp. 1-33)

While this work mentions collaboration, it does not indicate or address the issue of team building, or team effectiveness. It merely gives a laundry list of leadership criteria for the principal. "Spending time together does not produce growth" (Wellman & Lipton, 2012, p. 3).

Leader as a title and leadership as an action verb seem to be reasonable concepts. It should be noted that during the last century, leadership evolved from a practice, or something people did, to a defined process of research that has produced numerous leadership theories and styles (Hobart & Sendek, 2014).

Just as the variety of leadership team models is extensive, as demonstrated in this literature review, so are the leadership styles of the leader. In public education in the United States, leaders may be identified most often as democratic. The democratic style was determined more effective for positive employee attitudes and morale, which was accomplished by collaborating with followers, delegation, and participation (Omilion-Hodges & Wieland, 2016).

Transformational leadership is a vertical leadership style emanating from the formal leader of a team, whereas shared leadership is a distributed leadership style that emanates from the team members. Transformational leadership contribute to team output effectiveness, whereas shared leadership improve the team's organizing and planning effectiveness (Choi et

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al., 2017). When leaders' behaviors are directed toward the team, there is a beneficial impact on team effectiveness. By contrast, when leaders pay special attention to a few individual members, it may have the unintended consequence of lowering team potency and team effectiveness (Li, Ullrich, Zhang, & Van Dick, 2013).

Andrews and Grogan (2002) examined the role of the superintendent and superintendent preparation programs to determine standards and training needs. In the education world, preparation for the superintendency or becoming the leader of the district senior executive team, starts with the classroom and advances through the principalship. Instructional leadership needs are the focus rather than overall leadership needs. Given the dynamics of the position, their study concluded that "superintendents must work with other stakeholders rather than manage them." The study did not address the leadership team or management of the complex organization.

For the purpose of my study, senior executive teams studied in this thesis are appropriately classified as decision-making teams from the perspective of Katzenbach's definitions of team modes (1998). Wageman et al. (2008) notes that these functions can overlap within a single team and in education — they almost always do. Katzenbach's descriptions of real team efforts as including joint products and joint accountability are also found in Wageman and colleagues' conceptualization of decision-making teams. From the perspective of Wageman et al. (2008) real senior leadership teams will sometimes engage in decision-making — what Katzenbach (1998) might call "real team efforts." These "real team efforts" include engaging in coordinating, consultative, and information-sharing activities at different times — these are what Katzenbach (1998) refers to as "non-team efforts."

Another definitional component of senior executive teams is team membership stability Wageman et al. (2008). Along with the definition of "real senior membership teams" as having interdependent work and clear boundaries/membership as described by Anacona and Nadler (1989), Wageman and his collaborators argue quite simply, "groups of people cannot become teams without stable membership for a reasonable period" (p. 49). While this finding is generally rooted in the literature on teams, it is not exclusive to senior executive teams. In reviewing literature on team member stability, Hackman and Katz (2010) conclude, "Research findings, both from laboratory and field studies, overwhelmingly support the proposition that teams with stable leadership have healthier dynamics and perform better than those that constantly have to deal with the arrival of new members and the departure of veterans" (p. 37).

The concept of time commitment was a continued discussion in my literature review. Time commitment, duration of meetings, regularity of meetings, and meeting effectiveness were

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addressed repeatedly in literature. The value of and productiveness of the use of time was an element identified as a stable influence on effective teams (Hackman & Katz, 2010; Srivatsa et al., 2006).

In both the public and private sectors, such leadership stability may be the exception and not the norm. Wageman et al. (2008) found that the disruption of the team caused by membership changes could be attenuated by paying careful attention to planned exit and planned entry approaches to the team. Succession planning and advanced planning are recommended.

As indicated by the literature review, there are a variety of definitions for a senior executive team in both the public and private sectors. For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of leadership teams by Wageman et al. (2008) has been amended with minor adjustments. Following my review of literature in terms of senior executive teams and team effectiveness, I offer this description/definition of a senior executive team in education as having the following characteristics:

- The superintendent is the defined leader of the team and holds final authority for decision-making
- It is the superintendent's discretion as to who serves on the senior leadership team
- Stability of membership is important to the effectiveness of the team
- There is clear and demonstrate evidence of team identity, roles, responsibilities and boundaries
- The team is interdependent and may at times be decision-making, but also is used in information-sharing, consultative, and coordinating modes

Wageman et al. (2008) points out that CEOs are not limited in creating just one type of senior level team. Depending on the needs of an organization, multiple team structures can be used to meet the needs of the organization. For the purpose of this study, I view the senior executive team as the primary team for the school district or educational agency.

2.4 Team Effectiveness

Thus far, the issue of team effectiveness has been addressed in the team models as presented. While this information from the literature review is valid, there are additional sources that add to this study. Hackman's (1987; 2002) three criteria for assessing team effectiveness are valid indicators for the creation, leadership, and development of senior executive teams. These criteria, while used in many industries other than education, can be used to evaluate effectiveness (Anacona & Nadler, 1989; Hill & Farkus, 2002; Larson, 2013). According to Hackman (2002), effective teams are characterized by:

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- Output (product, service, or decision) that “meets or exceeds the standards of quantity quality and timeliness of the team’s clients — the people who receive, review, or use the output”
- Social processes used in carrying out the work of the team that “enhances members’ capability to work together interdependently in the future”
- A group experience that “contributes positively to the learning and personal well-meaning of individual team members” (pp. 23-28).

In a school system or educational agency, while fiscal solvency is important, profit is not a goal — student achievement and success are. Measuring this student achievement is more complex than a profit and loss statement. So is the measurement of team effectiveness.

Effective district-level leadership can positively influence student achievement (Blankstein, 2010; DuFour & Eaker, 2009; DuFour & Fullan, 2013; Dumay, Boonen, & Van Damme, 2013; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012; Lambert, 2003).

2.4.1 The Impact of Team Effectiveness on Student Achievement

The long-term effects of professional capital that lead to systemic change can be an important component of schools’ effectiveness with students. The impact of professional capital on student achievement has been substantiated (Boonen, Damme, & Dumay, 2013). Research has continually shown that effective district and building leadership lead to improved student outcomes (Boonen et al., 2013).

Ogawa and Hart (1987) in a study of California superintendents limited to the standardized test scores of one grade level, Edwards (2007) studied superintendent instructional practices and their relationship to district performance outcomes. He found that instructional management and systems of practice contributed significantly to district performance outcomes.

The education senior executive team for this study has been identified as paid professional staff of the school district. In public school systems, there are a variety of stakeholder groups. For example, in California, the superintendent serves as an ex-officio member of the governance team. This team represents the elected leadership whose role is to govern the public schools in a policy-directed manner. The superintendent may also have other teams that include unions, parents, and other key stakeholders. For the purpose of this study, while I recognize the value of this and importance of these groups, the prime focus has been on the senior leadership team.

Davis Campbell, professor at the University of California, Davis, and former executive director of the California School Boards Association, says that it is the job of the school board

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and superintendent, together as a governance team, to transform the needs, wishes, and desires of the community into the educational priorities of the school system. It is the governance team's job to determine the "what," and the educational senior executive team's job to determine the "how" (Fullan & Campbell, 2019). Thus, for there to be success, the implementation of the how is paramount for the educational system.

Education researchers including Yee and Cuban (1996), and Heenan and Bennis (1999) promote a senior executive team for the district that includes the school board and key stakeholders. While this research is relevant, it should be noted that this may be considered one of the additional senior executive level teams as mentioned in Wageman et al. (2008).

The Connecticut State Board of Education (2002) issued a formal position statement on educational leadership entitled "Position Statement on Educational Leadership: A Collaborative Effort to Improve Student Achievement." This paper specifically outlines and advocates for a collaborative leadership team with key stakeholders in the community. Their definition and inclusion was extensive and included students, parents, graduates, employees, and community members. The idea was to expand the team to enhance communication and build community-wide accountability. This is another example of Wageman et al. (2008) other executive teams involved in education.

In a comparative case study of three Georgia districts with demonstrated improvement in student achievement over three years, Pajak and Glickman (1989) showed that superintendents and central office staff were leading facilitators of school improvement and increased student achievement. The study revealed that all three districts had three dimensions: (1) an instructional dialogue about improving instruction, (2) an infrastructure of support and of instructional leadership, and (3) resources and support from central office personnel. In each case study, the superintendent provided a strong organizational structure, ensuring that the correct staff were in the right roles for fostering discourse about curriculum and ensuring that students achieve (Pajak & Glickman, 1989).

Waters and Marzano (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of research on the influence of school district leaders regarding student performance. While these findings were not limited to the senior executive team, they present information relative to this study.

The authors found four major findings:

1. District level leadership matters — the research team found a positive correlation between district leadership and student achievement
2. Effective superintendents focus efforts on creating goal-oriented districts through collaborative goal setting, non-negotiable goals for student achievement and

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- instruction, board alignment and support of district goals, monitoring goals for achievement, use of resources to support achievement and instruction goals
3. Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement
 4. Defined autonomy

“Successful superintendents safeguard the necessary time and resources and materials aligned to accomplish the district's goals. A commitment to instructional leadership is absolutely essential to those superintendents that are devoted to the strategy of leadership teams as a means to instructional improvement” (Hoegh, 2008, p. 30). In conclusion, the trust that leaders place in those they lead allows both the leader and her/his followers to excel. It is not a momentary event but a series of investments over time that truly allows success (Mineo, 2014).

In my literature review, team effectiveness in educational senior executive teams revealed little research that specifically analyzed senior educational teams. While it is possible to apply findings from other disciplines to educational senior executive teams, this area remains understudied.

As the definitions for this study previously shared would indicate, the framework for this study and for this literature review are emergent. The amount of research on the subject of teams and team leadership does not present a consistent theory of the subject matter. While it reveals similarities and examples of key performance indicators, there seems to be a high degree of conceptual fluidity.

This research also serves as a precursor to the development of my conceptual framework and together creates the foundation for this study. For the purpose of this study, the conceptual framework is developed by using an analytical approach with an exploration of variations of theories, tools, contexts, and information. My goal is using this case study research to capture concepts that will be applicable to a variety of agencies and will be easy to use and to remember.

Early in this chapter, six types of scholarly literature were utilized in this literature review and along with other research, created the chapter and the conceptual framework. As I explored the subjects of management/leadership teams and organizational behavior, social psychology, emphasizing teams and senior leadership teams, educational leadership challenges and dynamics, the role of the district office team in educational leadership, along with the impact of educational leadership and its impact on student learning, a picture began to emerge for the research. Each article or research opportunity reviewed, indicated that senior executive team have three distinct concepts that revolve around their core. These include Leadership factors, Effectiveness factors, and Relationship factors.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The development of the Conceptual Framework as presented in the diagram, was designed to encompass the information discovered during the literature review and create a graphic that would articulate the concepts as presented. A circle with concentric circles, looking much like a flower with opening pedals, became my visual representation. A circle is ongoing, continuous and with no visible start or stopping point. The Senior/Executive team represents the main circle. This circle includes the senior leader and the senior team members. There is no differentiation between them in the diagram. They are one in the same in this graphics. This study is about the team.

Surrounding the senior executive team are nine circles that are represented by different colors. While some of the circles may overlap with others, they all overlap with the central circle. They are divided into three areas- Leadership, Relationships and Effectiveness Factors. Each of these outside circles, when working in harmony with the central circle, can create and sustain team effectiveness. They were created as broad categories to encompass the many philosophies and information found in the literature review.

The Leadership circles, define roles, behaviors and protocols as well as look at the concept of distributive leadership and incorporates the expertise of the team members. Just as each of our case studies utilize multiple approaches to creating and sustaining team effectiveness, the circles in this category can be used as needed and allow for individual interpretation. In our literature review, we saw many complimentary but distinct philosophies or concepts about leadership.

The Effectiveness circles are related to issues such as stability, time, and the clarity of mission and purpose for the senior leadership team. These factors, as this literature review identifies, when present, allow a team can move forward with momentum and clarity of direction. The effectiveness factors are essential to the framework and provide insight to the teams.

The Relationship circles include a collaborative approach to leadership, trust and open communication, and established relationships. They promote the human interaction and value of this collaboration in the quest for creating and sustaining team effectiveness. They promote transparency, availability, group involvement and acceptance of responsibility, and the value of relationships. They also represent, like the literature, team development has a multiplicity of theories and concepts that can be used to create effectiveness teams and sustain their success.

Each outside circle can stand alone as a component of creating and sustaining team effectiveness. When it stands alone- it reflects just one component. When it is linked together with those in each of the three categories, it becomes a more powerful and complete tool. When

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linked together with all three categories, the nine components become a framework to accomplish creating and sustaining team effectiveness, the nine circles, like the central circle, have no visible start and stop and are continuous. Each can play a role in the creation of our successful teams.

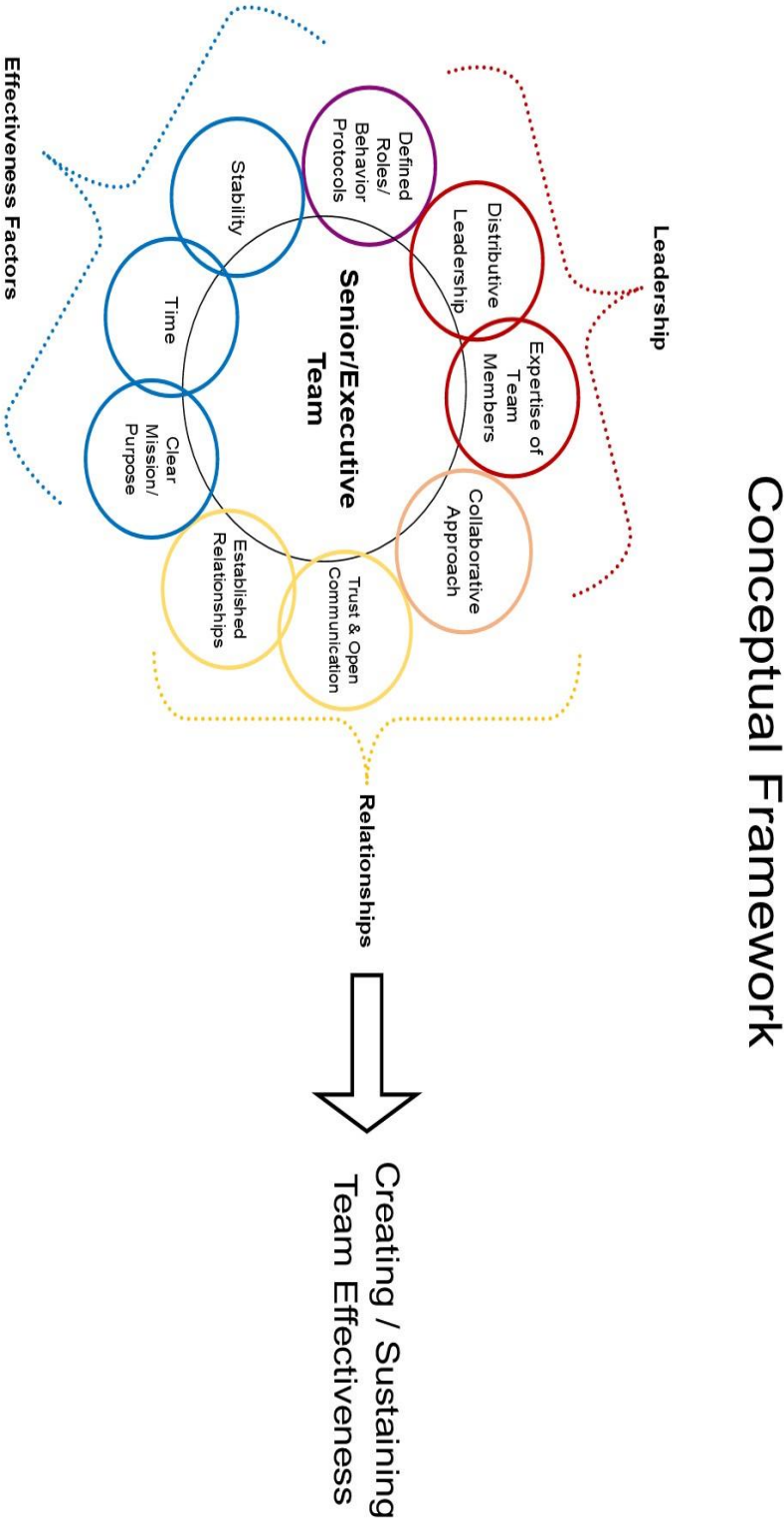


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework. Integration of the literature review and study methodology (Ruth Ann McGee Hewitt, 2019).

2.6 Summary

This literature review was one of the most challenging aspects of this study. The enormity of the literature on the subjects addressed, the limitations of current literature, along with the process of creating a review that would address our research questions with clarity, was a challenge. While much has been written on each subject we addressed, not all of it is current, scholarly or pertinent to the education profession. As a researcher, I found myself often chasing articles or research that led me to interesting information, but not material relevant to my study.

As the chapter evolved, it became clear that this study is needed and that more study is needed specifically in education to address the topics of leadership, team creation and development and organizational development. While each of the authors cited offered insight, there were often challenges to adapting those insights to school districts and educational systems. It was my hope to provide a foundation for the completion of this thesis and to provide a starting point for further study and investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In preparing this study, the information from the individual interviews and the focus groups was important. In each case, detailed notes were taken from the process that documented the specific comments and ideas expressed. These notes are an account of the information presented and were utilized in the study. This information was directly generated by the participants. This information can be viewed in the appendices in detail. This information was used in the analysis of the data along with the Five Behaviors/DiSC information.

My observations from the study are noted. My observations are based on my personal perceptions and recording of the individual interviews and focus groups. They were used as a form of environmental scanning and to explore the nuances and inter dynamics of the group and of the individuals. These observations contributed to the study by adding an overview of the social interactions and dynamics.

An examination of direction setting documents for each group was also conducted. I reviewed Annual Reports, Policies, brochures, media coverage and a unique selection of materials from each organization. This examination was used to enhance my understanding of the organizations and to determine issues that they may be facing, image and branding. They were voluntarily supplied by the organizations and were used to more thoroughly understand the similarities and differences of the groups.

3.1 Trustworthiness

As a researcher, I recognize that there are differences of opinions and theories regarding the conduct of research and graduate level study. At the core of these discussions and questions, is the concept of the trustworthiness. The research methodology of this study was carefully developed to meet both qualitative and quantitative standards while utilizing a mixed methods approach. I endeavored to ensure that the study included the rigor which included trustworthiness features such as credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability (Anney, 2015) . As evidenced by the study, this process included prolonged engagement in the field, confidence in my findings, the use of multiple or different methods to obtain corroborating evidence (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006, p. 239). Along with persistent observation, transferability, in-depth decriptions and an attention to the dependability of the research. With the help of my supervisor, Dr. Irma Eloff, my processes and procedures were examined for viability and acceptable academic practices.

3.2 Introduction / Research Methodology

This chapter describes the design, sampling, case study selection, instrumentation, data, collection, and data analysis of this study. Its purpose is to identify strategies that sustain leadership team effectiveness in education agencies. The goal of this study is to deepen the understanding and awareness of the value of effective teams and how leadership team effectiveness can contribute to the improvement of student achievement. Additionally, this study will deepen understanding and define how both public and private educational organizations promote and sustain leadership teams.

After reviewing the literature and defining the questions and issues to be studied, I determined that a mixed methods approach to research methodology was the most appropriate approach. Coleman (2015) proposed that methodology is “how we go about finding out” (pp. 392-393) what we know to be knowledge. Noted methodologist Creswell (2018) recommended a systematic framework for approaching mixed methods research.

This study could also be described as a qualitative multiple-case study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) concluded that a multiple-case study approach allows for in-depth analysis through which to understand more than one entity or example. “A case study examines a bounded system, or a case, over time in depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 24). Patton (2015) says “well-constructed case studies are holistic and context sensitive, two of the primary themes of qualitative inquiry...” (p. 535).

In the design of the research methodology for this study, the idea that multiple methods could be used to explore a research problem was a significant factor. Since the study explores four very different organizations, the options available in this approach were a positive fit. For example, it can be used to explain and interpret, to explore phenomena, to develop or to test new instruments, to address a question at different levels and is an easy approach to describe and to report (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

A composite definition was developed by Johnson, Onwuegbuzi and Turner (2007), after reviewing 19 definitions provided by highly published mixed methods researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 271).

Mixed methods research is a type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, and analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 123).

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For this study, the ability to utilize both a qualitative and quantitative approach in a multiple case study environment met the needs for my research. The appropriate methodology, selection, and design is paramount to qualitative research. “The design of this research sets forth how you will fulfill your purpose and answer the questions you’ve identified” (Patton, 2015, p. 244).

3.3 Research Questions

To better understand the dynamics of successful leadership in educational agencies, this study uses a variety of primary and secondary research questions. The primary research question for my study was: How can leadership team effectiveness be created and sustained within educational organizations?

3.4 Additional Research Questions

To answer this research question, additional research questions will be employed to identify and develop a deeper understanding of this theme and to potentially identify successful practices that may be replicable in education organizations.

These questions are:

- How do organizational factors or leadership styles contribute to creating or sustaining effective teams?
- How does the senior leader impact team success?

3.5 Research Methodology and Case Study Design

To identify the key characteristics and best practices and methodologies of effective leadership teams in education organizations, I have utilized a mixed methods approach that includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative research.

To create the research design for this study, a review was conducted on acceptable practices for research methodology and case study design. In this review, the mixed methods approach was most applicable to the case study questions. It also allowed me to utilize quantitative data in the form of environmental scanning early in my research. The goal of this research was to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to strengthen the study and to ensure that the results were viable. Utilizing the Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research, I explored chapters that addressed my study. From exploring the conceptual philosophy in Chapter 1, to exploring the pragmatic and philosophical philosophies and controversies of Chapter 3, to research design in Chapter 10, I was able to determine that this was my appropriate methodology. Chapter 17 provided me insight into utilizing appropriate data analysis for mixed methods research

3.5.1 Qualitative

The qualitative approach is exploratory and provides context to frame this study. Qualitative research, according to Patton (2015), permits the evaluator to study selected issues, cases, or events in depth and in detail. Additionally, the fact that data collection is not constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth and detail of qualitative data (Patton, 2015). Since the qualitative design involves meetings on site in local surroundings, the qualitative design is naturalistic with activities and processes studied in their natural settings and local communities.

3.5.2 Quantitative

The quantitative approach enables identification and quantification of the problems and the search for answers to the issues. It also reveals how these results impact the larger educational community. According to Merriam (2009) case studies should incorporate disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, educational psychology, and psychology using a comparative case study analysis. These leadership teams were compared in a variety of settings.

3.5.3 Mixed Methods

In selecting a mixed methods approach, the goal was to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative research using a variety of methods. In a sense, the goal was to combine the best of both types of research to create a valid body of research and study. Since mixed methods research is an emerging form of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), it also has critics in the research world (Creswell, 2014).

According to Clark and Ivankova (2016), in mixed methods studies, “researchers can produce stronger and more credible studies that can yield complementary and corroborating evidence about the research problem of interest” (p. 9). This study endeavors to use the mixed methods approach to collect, study, and analyze information on team leadership to empower others to learn from the information and potentially replicate the concepts.

“A quintain (pronounced Kwin’ton) is an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied — a target, but not a bull’s eye. In multi-case study it is the target collection” (Cohen & Bailey, 1997, p. 254). This author maintains that case studies could be used to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and the ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about, and feelings for a situation.

In addressing the validity of mixed methods research, Creswell and Plano Clark, (2018) defined mixed methods as: “Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical

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assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (p. 5).

There are the applied methodologists who tend to focus on the research methods (Brewer & Hunter, 1998; Creswell, 2018). To them, mixed methods means the collection, analysis, and interpretation of both qualitative and quantitative data in a study. This approach forces a focus on the “techniques” of research, and it might be seen as a “clean” way to view mixed methods without being encumbered by philosophy or other aspects of the research process. The disadvantage of this viewpoint is that the division between what constitutes quantitative data and qualitative data is not always clear.”

The mixed methods approach utilized in my data collection includes focus groups, in-depth interviews, and personal observations. These activities were conducted in person and via Skype meetings. The quantitative data was collected from the DiSC and Five Behaviors of a Cohesive team data. Creswell, (2018) explained, “it is appropriate to use mixed methods when the use of quantitative research or qualitative research alone is insufficient in gaining an understanding of the problem” (p. 14).

3.5.4 Case Study Design

An embedded, multiple-case design study approach was used which included the senior executive team of a large urban California school system and three other educational agencies (Yin, 2009).

By utilizing an embedded design (i.e., multiple levels of analysis), my research explores a unique variety of questions. The main unit of analysis is the senior executive teams and their roles, actions, and impact in creating and sustaining a successful team. A secondary level of analysis was developed by using the styles, skills, and leadership profiles of the senior/executive team. My goal is to utilize the senior executive leadership teams’ group, to understand how the team impacts, creates, and sustains the effectiveness of a leadership team. While the embedded design can be a more complex approach, it can help focus the case study inquiry (Yin, 2009).

In developing the study, the most appropriate method was determined to be the case study approach due to the limited examples of senior executive team effectiveness within school systems or descriptions of how superintendents create and manage teams (Eisenhardt,

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Kahwhay, & Bourgeois, 1997). Context is critical to this study since the research area is relatively new and this approach was best suited to pursuing my research questions and objectives. (Yin 2009, Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

As a researcher, my belief is that a multiple-case study design provided a stronger base for the research. This stronger base will provide a “better grounded, more accurate, and more generalizable” theory (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). Multiple cases enable a replication logic that is like conducting multiple experiments — each case can be considered analogous to a single experience (Yin, 2009).

In designing the study, I knew it would be important to make sure that the selection of participants and organizations was carefully evaluated. Once an organization was selected, the logistics of the study became a consideration. I needed access to the senior leader and the senior executive team. This access would include individual meetings, interviews, and focus groups. It would also include the participants completing online assessments, (DiSC and the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team). To have this access, I needed to be able to travel to the locations to meet in person and conduct on-site observations and processes. In addition to determining who was in the study and why they were selected, I needed to have resources to complete the study. These resources included time, financial means for travel, and the ability to pay for the online instruments that were used. Making sure that I could complete this study was an important consideration in how I would accomplish this.

Once I determined how I could complete the study, I needed to address what I wanted the study to achieve. Leadership and leadership teams are broad subjects. For this study to potentially contribute to the study of these subjects, the questions addressed needed to be succinct and well crafted. Multiple iterations of the primary research questions were developed. With the help of my advisor, Dr. Irma Eloff, I was able to develop the primary research question and the additional questions. What I would be studying is clear: how can leadership teams sustain effectiveness, and could the study reveal best strategies or practices that could be replicated? The hope is that this information would enable educational leadership teams to focus on and then to improve student achievement.

In determining other aspects of the study design, I determined where the interviews would be held. My preference was in the central office or headquarters of each group. This would give me access not only to the key participants but would enable me to understand more clearly the culture of the organization and to understand their business or operations through observation and access to organizational documents (Creswell, 2018; Kennedy & Edmonds, 2017, p. 71). “The purpose for utilizing personal interviews was to explore the associated lived

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experiences and rationale of the participants for their choices of leadership practices. The use of qualitative research is defined as a focus on people in their natural settings and describing their settings in their own words” (Kennedy & Edmonds, 2017, p. 72). The research topic was more related to behavior practiced by individual leaders than measurable numeric or statistical research. Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) suggest that the qualitative method of research is more appropriate for this type of research.

Determining who would be involved and who would be included was another carefully developed aspect of the study. In determining which groups would be selected, I created criteria that included:

- Availability and access to senior leaders and the senior executive team.
- Agreement and interest in participation.
- An organizational history that included:
 - A history of organizational success.
 - An established vision and mission for the organization.
 - Stability of senior leadership and senior executive team members.
 - A reputation for excellence and respect in the educational community.

To determine the applicability of the case studies, I defined these criteria to include:

Availability and access: I would be able to meet personally with the senior leader and senior executive team members. The organization would make themselves available and give me not only access to people, as needed, but also to information about the organization. This availability included the understanding that there would be multiple opportunities to meet and connect.

Agreement and interest in participation: Not only the senior leader, but the senior executive team would agree to participate and have an interest in the study and the subject being researched.

3.5.5 Organizational History

Each organization has been in operation for at least 25 years. This history would enable me to review how the organization has evolved with their leadership and leadership team practices.

Success was a harder to concept to define. Its definition was a fluid process. For each group, success meant longevity and demonstrated evidence of success through test scores, financial reports, and the ability to meet defined outcomes.

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A clearly defined vision and mission for the organization was another key criterion. This area was evaluated by reviewing strategic or long-range plans, publications, and through interviews and observation.

Stability was another important criterion. Stability enabled participants to have a history with the organization and to have withstood and survived crises or challenges to the organization. If the organization had stability — both in senior leaders and in senior executive team members — their insight and strategies could contribute to the study.

A reputation for excellence and respect in the education community was another consideration. Reputation was determined in multiple ways such as review of media articles, reviewing other industry articles and publications, and determining if others valued and respected the leadership of the group. This included conference participation, awards, involvement in professional organizations, and the individual reputations of key leaders.

3.5.6 Limitations

Brown (2018) suggests the three approaches used by these seminal researchers rest along a quantitative-qualitative continuum where the postpositivist methodology of Yin (2009) sits at one end, Stake's interpretivist design (1995, 2006) sits at the other end and Merriam (2009) who as a pragmatic constructivist draws on the elements of both, rests toward the center. Brown (2018) sums up the influences of each, saying that "case study research is supported by the pragmatic approach of Merriam, informed by the rigor of Yin and enriched by the creative interpretation described by Stake" (p. 9). While some may argue that mixing qualitative and quantitative methods could threaten the validity and veracity of the research (Boblin et al., 2013; Merriam, 2009; Sandelowski, 2011) approach demonstrates that when the integrity of the design is robust, methodological flexibility can be accommodated.

The versatility of case study research to accommodate the researcher's philosophical position presents a unique platform for a range of studies that can generate greater insights into areas of inquiry. With the capacity to tailor approaches, case study designs can address a wide range of questions that ask why, what, and how of an issue and assist researchers to explore, explain, describe, evaluate, and theorize about complex issues in context. Outcomes can lead to an in-depth understanding of behaviors, processes, practices, and relationships in context. Professions including the social sciences, education, health, law, management, business, and urban planning have embraced case study research, demonstrating these outcomes. Ongoing application of and sound debate about the value, validity, and capability of case study research have strengthened the efficacy of case study approaches as powerful forms of qualitative research.

3.6 Overview of Participants

Each of the case study organizations was carefully selected for inclusion. At first, I reviewed ten possible educational organizations that included the Twin Rivers Unified School District, the Anaheim Union High School District, Los Alamitos Unified School District, Orange County Department of Education, Act Point KPI, School Innovations and Achievement, as well as the four that were selected. I vetted each group utilizing the criteria established above. This included internet research, calls to key leaders, and personal observation. Each group was vetted by individual observation, analysis of state data and Local Control Accountability Programs (LCAP), reviews of local media coverage and an examination of the individual participants. State data included information on student test scores and financial viability. My goal was to find organizations that met the criteria I established for successful organizations and organizations that would provide me with needed access. The four organizations selected not only met these criteria but provided me with ready access and a sincere interest to participate. This study was purposely studying organizations that were positive examples with established track records. The data collected from participants in individual and group interviews was based on their personal perspectives and practices.

While there is a variety of research on the subject of leadership, however there is limited research on the topic of leaders transitioning from traditional leadership practices towards non-traditional team leadership concepts. It is hoped that this research will contribute to this body of knowledge and expand the awareness of the role of the senior leader and that of the senior/executive team.

Ravitch and Carl (2015) state:

Research participants are and should be seen as experts of their own experiences with much to teach us about their lives and experiences, and it is essential that one views their stories as contextualized and embedded in larger phenomena, experiences, and realities. (p. 111)

Participants were senior leaders and members of the senior executive teams in each of the four case studies. Prior to their agreements for participation, the topic and type of study was discussed with them. The senior leader granted approval to participate and the senior executive team members gave individual agreements to be a part of the study. This information was shared individually and in group meetings or conference calls. Participation was voluntary. Participants were informed of what would be required of them in the process. This included the online assessments of the DiSC and the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team Assessments as well as individual interviews and team focus groups. They were also informed that they had the

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option to withdraw at any time. The senior leader gave permission for the organization to be named in the study and for the use of their name and information. Senior executive team members gave approval for their names to be used if necessary.

An important consideration of this study and the participants was my attention to the ethical requirements of the University. As mentioned previously, all participants were voluntary participants. They freely volunteered to participate in this study. As a consideration for their participation, in our individual and group meetings, a verbal reminder was given reminding them they were voluntary participants and could refrain from participation at any time. This was reinforced by their leadership and it was clearly stated that there would be no penalties or repercussions if a participant or organization withdrew.

As a researcher, I have found myself being asked questions and assessed by the interviewee during the interviews. I felt it important to project a positive impression in order to gain their respect. I spent the first few minutes of each interview explaining who I was and the topic of my research. I felt it would improve the quality of their responses to my questions Goldman and Swayze (2012) suggested establishing control at the onset with a professional courteous tone (p. 72).

In my role as a qualitative researcher, I endeavored to be mindful of limiting my own interactions during interviews, particularly in responding to and unintentionally reinforcing participants' responses. My goal was to show neutrality.

Time was a major constraint to the availability of my research participants. In order to protect my access and allow enough time for quality interviews, scheduling and the use of the interview time were both sacrosanct. Appointments were scheduled and confirmed with participants well in advance of the interviews and confirmed immediately prior. In most cases the interviews were held in individual offices but were also held in private conference rooms when needed. The location of the interviews was deliberate. It allowed me to see the environment of the participants.

3.7 Ethics and Ethical Considerations

According to Solomon (1984), "Ethics is both a subject matter and a discipline" (as cited in Singleton & Straits, 2018, p. 47). In this study, careful adherence to ethical research protocols as well as the University of Pretoria's defined ethical guidelines was a priority. The University of Pretoria's guidelines helped me to ensure the ethical protection of the research participants.

Leedy and Johnson, (2019) proposed protection protocols for participants: (a) all participation was voluntary, and participants were under no pressure from any third party; (b) each participant was provided with an informed consent letter through the approved process

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along with an email explaining the study, time requirements, duration and expectations; (c) I acknowledged in advance, in writing, that participant contributions to this study would be public information; (d) Participants were given the opportunity to opt out of the study at any time; (e) all transcripts, data, and information were secured; (f) I am responsible for all dimensions of this study design, data collection and analysis, and reporting. These recommended protocols were followed to the best of my ability (Creswell & Miller, 2000, pp. 124-130).

Trustworthiness has further been divided into credibility, which corresponds roughly with the positivist concept of internal validity, *dependability*, which relates more to reliability and transferability; which is also a form of external validity, *confirmability* which is largely an issue of presentation. (Rolfe, 2006, pp. 304-310)

According to Singleton and Straits (2018), researchers must be aware of four problems that can occur when conducting research using human subjects: potential harm, lack of informed consent, deception, and privacy issues.” These recommendations were present in my preparation and conduct of the research for this study.

3.8 Research Methods

Following the receipt of written approval to proceed with the study from the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, initial contact was made with the senior leader of the case study groups. During phone calls and in-person visits, time was spent explaining the study, its purpose, and what the expected value of the research would be. Each senior leader, whether a Superintendent or CEO, understood that they would be sharing information not only about their organization, their leadership dynamics, but also about their senior executive leadership teams.

Conference calls were also held with each team to reiterate the initial conversation with the Superintendent or CEO and to explain what would be asked and expected of the participants and to answer any questions.

On site and in-person visits were held at each location. Prior to the visits, senior executive team members were provided assessments, a calendar of visits, and information on the process.

3.9 Data Collection

3.9.1 On-Site Visitations and Interviews

On-site visitations and interviews were scheduled for everyone in one-hour segments. Most of the interviews held to this timeline, but approximately ten additional hours were spent at each site reviewing materials and assessing the data and adding depth to the process. The first interview included addressing my primary and secondary research questions and completion of

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the SWOT analysis. The second interviews included a review of the information gained from the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team Assessment. Third interviews were held for additional questions or clarification, as necessary.

To understand the organizational dynamics and perspectives of the senior executive team members, the group to be interviewed in each organization was identified by the Superintendent or chief executive. I was able to interview all identified team members in each case study. While all were responsive to the initial interviews, subsequent interviews were limited. All the interviews were held either in a conference room or initially in the senior leader’s personal office. Subsequent interviews were conducted through a combination of in person and telephone appointments. Focus groups by organization were held at the end of the interview process at each site. Detailed notes were taken from each interview or meeting and were personally transcribed.

To avoid “key informant bias” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 91) as well as the bias that can be associated with “retrospective sense-making by image-conscious informants” (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 28), my goal was to interview all senior executive team members and not merely a subset of the groups. My goal was to ensure that each participant felt that their comments and participation were as valuable as that of the most senior leadership. All perspectives and perceptions on team leadership effectiveness were invited and welcomed.

I captured all interview notes in writing. Following the interviews, my handwritten notes and SWOT analysis and Hiring Priorities data were personally transcribed. The data collection captured from the formal assessments was downloaded and included in protected computer files.

Table 3.1 Participant Demographics. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019

| American Fidelity | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Senior Leader | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sex | Female | Female | Male | Male | Male | Male |
| Age Range | 50+ | 50+ | 30+ | 60+ | 65+ | 30+ |
| Years of Experience | 20+ | 20+ | 10 | 25+ | 35 | 10 |
| Ethnicity | White | White | Hispanic | White | White | Hispanic |

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| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Highest Education Level | Masters Degree | Bachelors Degree | Bachelors Degree | Masters Degree | Bachelors Degree | Bachelors Degree |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|

| Clovis | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Senior Leader | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Sex | Female | Male | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Male |
| Age Range | 60+ | 50+ | 60 | 40+ | 50+ | 50+ | 50+ | 40+ |
| Years of Experience | 25+ | 20+ | 30+ | 15 | 20+ | 20+ | 20+ | 10+ |
| Ethnicity | White | White | White | White | Hispanic | White | Hispanic | White |
| Highest Education Level | EDD | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | EDD | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree |

| FCMAT | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Senior Leader | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Sex | Male | Male | Female | Female | Female | Male |
| Age Range | 60+ | 60+ | 50+ | 60+ | 60+ | 50+ |
| Years of Experience | 25+ | 25+ | 20+ | 25+ | 25+ | 20+ |
| Ethnicity | White | White | White | White | White | White |
| Highest Education Level | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree |

| SCC | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Senior Leader | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sex | Male | Male | Male | Female | Female |
| Age Range | 70 | 50+ | 60 | 50+ | 50+ |

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| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Years of Experience | 40+ | 20+ | 40+ | 20+ | 20+ |
| Ethnicity | White | White | Asian | White | White |
| Highest Education Level | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree | Masters Degree |

3.9.2 SWOT Analysis

For this study, I chose to use a contemporary approach to planning called a SWOT analysis. Dyson and O'Brien (1998) included SWOT as a method to assist in strategic planning and development. It enables the researcher to have a balanced approach to a subject, including visioning, resources, planning, cognitive mapping, scenario planning, system dynamics and capital investment, appraisal, and real options as part of this inclusive approach (Dyson, 2004).

SWOT analysis originated from the Harvard Business School in the 1950s and was used to investigate organizational strategies in relation to their environment. Its popularity continued in the 1960s and 1970s (Panagiotou, 2003; Pickton & Wright, 1998), took exception to its overall effectiveness.

An attempt has been made to emphasize the value of SWOT analysis while at the same time warning of the dangers inherent in using SWOT as a simple listing device. SWOT factors require detailed investigation in order to understand their nature and implications for the business... In particular, it is advocated that SWOT should be seen as a management process which involves key staff interacting with each other in the production of the SWOT analysis. The SWOT becomes the focus to bring managers together to discuss relevant issues affecting the business and as such SWOT becomes a tool from which strategies may be developed. (Pangiotou, 2003, p. 10)

In this study, the SWOT analysis was used to explore the dimensions of team leadership in another format. Each participant was asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization as well as to identify the available opportunities ahead and assess any threats to the organization. While it may be considered a softer approach to assessment, it enabled my study to view the dynamics of team development through the eyes of each senior executive team and each senior executive team member.

While recognizing the limitations of SWOT analysis, I also acknowledge its benefits. Its simplicity allowed information to be shared regarding how the organizations operate and view

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themselves. It also helped me to understand priorities and issues facing each organization currently and those which may be manifested in the future.

As each team and each senior executive team member individually completed the SWOT analysis, I was able to see their shared values, to understand the culture, to identify what they viewed as areas of weakness, to see participants' future opportunities, and to understand what threats the team might face. In each instance, as noted in the case study analysis, there was both a common language used by each team as well as a strong set of shared perceptions. The SWOT analysis not only enabled me to view the data presented, but to have another perspective on each team and their culture and operations.

In assessing the SWOT topic areas, I utilized the following types of prompts to open the conversation. Prior to introducing the SWOT analysis, I asked the participants if they were familiar with a SWOT analysis. I explained what it was and how it could be utilized.

In assessing the SWOT topic areas, I utilized the following types of prompts to open the conversation:

- Looking at your team and the organization from an internal perspective:
- Can you identify the strengths of your organization and specifically your team?
- What do you view as the weaknesses of your team?
- In thinking about your team from an external perspective:
- What do you see as the opportunities that are present or in the future for your team and organization?
- What threats do you see now or in the future that might impact your team or your organization?

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This chart was used to conduct the SWOT analysis.

| INTERNAL | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
| What are the strengths of your senior/executive leadership team? | What do you view as the weaknesses of your senior/executive leadership team? |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| What are the current or future opportunities for your senior/executive team? | What do you view as the current or future threats to your senior/executive team? |
| EXTERNAL | |

Figure 3.1 SWOT Analysis Template. A template used to generate discussion and identify case study organizational dynamics. Adapted from Jackson, Joshi and Erhardt, 2003 and updated by Ruth A. McGee Hewitt, 2019.

3.9.3 DiSC Assessments

In assessing the leadership and personality styles of my case study participants, I was interested in utilizing an instrument that would enable me to understand the leadership characteristics, behaviors, and styles of successful leaders. An assessment of multiple instruments included these instruments:

Table 3.2 Potential Assessment Instruments. A listing and references for assessment instruments considered in this study. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019

| Instrument | Purpose |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 360° by Design | By providing feedback it develops and strengthens teamwork and accountability. Creswell, J. W. (2018). Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Los Angeles: Sage. |

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| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Emotional Intelligence Skills Assessment EISA</p> | <p>The <i>Emotional Intelligence Skills Assessment (EISA)</i> is a training assessment that promotes individual and organizational success by measuring adult emotional intelligence.</p> <p>Martos, M. P. B., Lopez-Zafra, E., Pulido-Martos, M., & Augusto, J. M. (2013). Are emotional intelligent workers also more empathic? <i>Scandinavian Journal of Psychology</i>, 54(5), 407–414.</p> |
| <p>Everything DiSC 363 for Leaders</p> | <p>Everything DiSC 363 incorporates critical feedback from direct reports, peers, and bosses into a development plan that helps to elevate leadership effectiveness.</p> <p>Scullard, M., & Baum, D. (2015). <i>Everything DiSC Manual</i>. Minneapolis, MN: Wiley.</p> |
| <p>The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team Assessment</p> | <p>An assessment-based learning experience that helps individuals and organizations reveal what it takes to build a cohesive and effective team.</p> <p>Salas, E., Grossman, R., Hughes, A. M., & Coultas, C. W. (2015). Measuring Team Cohesion. <i>Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society</i>, 57(3), 365–374.</p> |
| <p>The DiSC Management Assessment</p> | <p>This Personality Style assessment measures the four quadrants of a person’s personality to help make effective changes to behaviors.</p> <p>Scullard, M., & Baum, D. (2015). <i>Everything DiSC Manual</i>. Minneapolis, MN: Wiley.</p> |

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| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Life Styles Inventory | The <i>Life Styles Inventory</i> (LSI) is an individual development tool that uses both self-assessment and 360° feedback from colleagues to identify individual thinking and behavioral styles. Dewberry, C., Juanchich, M., & Narendran, S. (October 2013). Decision-making competence in everyday life: The roles of general cognitive styles, decision-making styles and personality. <i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> , 55(7), 783–788.) |
| Myers-Briggs Instruments | The purpose of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) personality inventory is to make the theory of psychological types described by C. G. Jung understandable and useful in people's lives and the workplace. Quenk, 2009 |

I determined that with the depth of my study, my personal resources and training, and my working knowledge of the DiSC assessment, as well as my certification that the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team Assessment would best meet the needs of my study.

In 1928, Harvard University professor and industrial psychologist William Moulton Marston published a book called *The Emotions of Normal People*. In his research, he was endeavoring to identify predictable traits and behaviors of everyday people in a variety of different working environments and positions. He did the initial research that created the benchmark which led to the creation of the DiSC personality types and initially developed four styles that could be used to identify key personality types. He called them: D (Drive), I (Influence), S (Steadiness), and C (Compliance). His work pioneered the concept that if one can understand the primary traits and behaviors of people with these styles, one can manage and lead with great success (Marston, 1928).

In the 1940s development of DiSC measurement/assessment tools began with industrial psychologist, Walter V. Clark. Clark (1956) built a test for use in personal selection called the Activity Vector Analysis (AVA) (Scullard & Baum, 2015, p. 193). He identified a list of adjectives that were commonly used to describe people and, using a checklist format, asked people to check the appropriate boxes to describe themselves. His research identified four factors or

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terms from his data: aggressive, sociable, stable, and avoidant. He referred to the Marston studies and changed his work to agree with Marston (Scullard et al., 2015).

John Geier, a faculty member at the University of Minnesota's Department of Health Sciences, used "Self Description" to create the original Personal Profile System (PPS). Geier collected pattern descriptions through clinical interviews and extracted behavior information he used to create what he titled Classical Profile Patterns. In 1994, he updated the instrument and a new version was created called DiSC Classic (Scullard et al., 2015).

Since the early 2000s researchers from Wiley and Sons have continued to evolve and grow the assessments to include The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team (Scullard et al., 2015). The variety of instruments produced using this research is appropriate for those who are eighteen years or older, have a seventh-grade reading level, and can understand both response items and pattern interpretation (Straw, 2006).

The letters used in the title for the DiSC have not changed, but the word selections have been updated. D and C were changed to Dominance and Conscientiousness. These changes were delivered after testing to improve the assessment (Scullard & Baum, 2015). The DiSC instrument that was used in this study is a proprietary instrument and was purchased by the researcher for use in this thesis.

This landmark research has been reviewed, assessed, updated, and developed into a variety of instruments that can be used to understand employee and leader motivation, behavior, and practices. Much of the research done on this subject over the last 91 years has been driven by universities and private organizations.

For this study, each participant was sent a link to complete the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team online assessment online. The assessment incorporated the DiSC Management Instrument and the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team assessment. The participants had one week to complete the online assessment. The time to take the instrument was estimated to be between 45 and 60 minutes. This assessment incorporated the DiSC methodology along with the research of author Patrick Lencioni from his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (Lencioni, 2002). Lencioni used his research to create the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team assessment that is designed to help organizations and individuals gain insight into teamwork. In the assessment process, individuals not only recognize their individual styles, but also understand how their team can use decision-making, commitment, and communication to assess their leadership and the ability of their team to function.

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In the assessment, following each identification of the DiSC model, teams explore five areas that Lencioni has identified as key to productive team dynamics. These keys are Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability, and Results. In each case study, these characteristics are used to find similarities in the successful teams and to identify winning strategies and replicable ideas. They also fit well with the identified research question and sub questions in this study.

My assessment concluded that this was the most appropriate instrument for the parameters of this study. It enabled the participants, (as a side effect), to learn more about their personal behavior and leadership styles and also to gain better understanding and appreciation of their team dynamics and the contribution of the team members.

Lencioni's book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, (Lencioni, 2002) while not a scholarly book, is a recognized authority in the curriculum of many business schools and universities. This book is written as a fable of a fictional corporation plagued with a variety of issues which stops them from succeeding and is leading to their demise. Despite having experienced staff members, excellent resources, and a superior product, the dysfunctions of the team impede the organization from success. Lencioni uses this fabled approach to identify barriers to effective teamwork such as difficulty with leadership, personal relationships, and the inability to deal with conflict and differences of opinion.

This book, first published in 1998, resonated with me on a personal basis. I could see school systems, not only in California but around the world, failing. They were failing financially, failing in terms of student achievement, and failing in terms of public support, with employee and executive churn at all levels, as well as suffering from costly litigation and judgments. This book, along the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team, offered practical, reasonable answers and applications to address the crises in education.

For this study, each participant was sent a link to complete the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team online assessment. The assessment incorporated the DiSC Management instrument and the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team assessment. The participants had one week to complete the online assessment. The time to take the instrument is estimated to be between 45 and 60 minutes. This assessment incorporated the DiSC methodology along with the research of author Patrick Lencioni from his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (Lencioni, 2002).

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My assessment concluded that this was the most appropriate instrument for the parameters of the study. It enabled the participants (as a side effect), to learn more about their personal behavior and leadership styles and also to gain a better understanding and appreciation of their team dynamics and the contribution of the team members.

3.9.4 Hiring Values Priorities Survey

During the interviews with case study participants, I developed a survey to assess how the team viewed priorities in their hiring practices. I was seeking data on what the individual members viewed as the values which guided their decision-making. The intent was to ascertain the values of the team and to see if there was continuity in their answers and their priorities.

Since continuity of leadership includes longevity in leadership and employees, each of those interviewed, using a forced choice approach, rated the following items on a numeric scale using a one-to-six rating system. Participants were asked, when hiring new team members how they would rate the following characteristics in terms of importance to their team:

Skills — The professional competencies and skills brought to the organization.

Knowledge — The knowledge individuals possessed when hired. This included professional and technical training and expertise.

Experience — Where they have been and what they have accomplished. How did they value the current and previous professional experiences of the candidate?

Ability — Current and perceived future abilities. Could the candidate do the job?

Morals and Values — How they do business and where their moral compass lies.

Traits and Character — Leadership traits and personal character.

The goal of this survey was to determine if the potential hire shared the same values and expectations as current team members, what was most important to the team and to their success, and if those values were shared.

3.9.5 Focus Groups

“Focus groups offer a particularly fruitful method for ‘thinking through’ qualitative research today” (Kamberelis & Dimeitriadjs, 2005). The authors argued that focus group research exists at the intersection of pedagogy, activism, and interpretive inquiry. While not always a part of scholarly research, their utilization is increasing.

In utilizing focus groups as a part of this research, my goal was to bring my individual participants together to view how they interacted with one another and to use the opportunity to witness how the senior leadership team addressed questions and what methods of communications they used. “Focus group research is a key site where pedagogy, politics, and inquiry intersect and interanimate each other. Because of their synergistic potentials, focus

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groups often produce through individual interviewing and observation and thus yield particularly powerful knowledges and insights” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 559) during the focus groups. As mentioned above, focus groups bring forth unique dynamics that may not be present during individual interviews.

As a researcher, I included the focus groups for two specific reasons. For one, it gave me the opportunity to interact with the senior executive teams. This opportunity allowed me to observe how they treated each other, how senior leaders functioned in the group, and to observe their communication skills and group dynamics. Secondly, it allowed me to share with the senior executive teams their group scores and answer any questions and determine their agreement or disagreement with the results.

As outlined in this chapter, focus groups were held alongside the individual interviews. Following the completion of all individual interviews, the groups met together to share reflections and to question the process or provide additional insight. They shared their perspectives on the instruments, research questions, and data collected. As the researcher and a trained DiSC and Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team facilitator, my expertise in this instrument allowed me to provide insight into assessment and results.

A focus group lasted from sixty minutes to ninety minutes and was held at the headquarters or central offices of each organization. The attendance varied with participants’ responsibilities and assignments. All participants were invited to attend.

The meetings began with a welcome by their senior leader. The senior leaders all thanked the teams for their time and participation. The process was then turned over to me. I reiterated the senior leader’s comments and discussed the DiSC process and the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team instrument. The group results were shared and reviewed. I asked the groups the following questions:

- Did you find the information applicable to you? Did your identified DiSC leadership style and the information provided in the report accurately capture your style?
- As you see the styles of your team members, do you see correlations in how you operate as a team?
- As you review the Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team results, do you agree with the team results? Do you see ways to use this information to improve your team effectiveness?

I charted the answers to these questions and facilitated the information. Without exception, all case study groups were in agreement with their personal profiles and the assessments of the group.

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Charted information was transcribed and shared with each group. The information from this was reviewed for Chapter 4, Findings.

“Focus group research is a key site where pedagogy, politics, and inquiry intersect and interanimate each other. Because of their synergistic potentials, focus groups often produce through individual interviewing and observation and thus yield particularly powerful knowledges and insights” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 559).

Table 3.3 Focus Group Attendance. A listing of the dates, location and attendance for focus groups. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

| Group | Date | Location | # Attended | Senior Lead Attended |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| American Fidelity (AF) | 3/9/2017 | Oklahoma City Corporate Head | 6 | Yes |
| Clovis Unified School District (CUSD) | 5/3/2017 | Clovis, California District Office Center | 7 | Yes |
| Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) | 8/6/2017 | Newport Beach, California Marriott Hotel Conference Room | 6 | Yes |
| School Services of California (SSC) | 4/9/17 | Sacramento, California Corporate Office, Conference Room | 4 | Yes |

3.9.6 Observation

The relevance of this study must include attention to detail regarding the observations of the researcher during the interviews. While understanding team leadership dynamics is a complex issue, this complexity was often clarified by observing firsthand how the senior executive team members interacted with me, with their senior leaders, and with each other. By traveling to their locations, I was also able to observe their interaction with a variety of subordinates and other individuals as well. Whenever possible, I utilized an observation protocol. This enabled me to capture both reflective and descriptive notes (Creswell, 2014).

After initial questioning, each individual interview provided me with an opportunity to further probe about meetings, team purpose and composition, norms, and how conflict and crises were addressed. The individual meetings also helped me to develop a rapport and trust

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with the interviewees. Handwritten notes were collected after each meeting and transcribed to a uniform format. These notes and findings are shared in Chapter 4 along with all other data.

To further assist with my study, in addition to the notes and materials created during my focus groups, individual and group interviews, I supplemented my study with additional documentary data collection. This material allowed me to create both paper and electronic files that provided background and insight into each organization.

I requested both in email and in person, from the senior leaders, copies or samples of senior executive team agendas, protocols, policies, board meeting agendas or minutes, strategic plans, annual reports or any other resources they had available. Each senior leader made available to me either in paper or electronically, copies of a variety of data as mentioned above. Additionally, I went online and searched each organization and looked for media coverage or industry news or information that mentioned my case study organizations. This search provided me with information about interactions with the press, their clients, and government agencies. I also visited the website of each organization continuously through this study. On the individual websites, I was able to view strategic plans and explore organizational operations. I was also open to any documentation offered by team members. Sometimes, the team shared books or articles that had an influence or impact on their leadership and their perspective. These additional materials provided me with additional data points to explore further.

At American Fidelity, the senior leader shared a series of articles they were reading on organizational development and generational differences. Another American Fidelity senior executive team member shared their personal affirmations and goals. In Clovis USD, the senior leader shared with me photos and the program for their organization-wide professional development program that had been recently held. Many of the Clovis USD team shared their knowledge and reading history of books by Patrick Lencioni. The senior executive team at School Services of California shared their interest in the subjects of emotional intelligence and demographics of the current California workforce.

3.9.7 Data Analysis

In addition to the instruments that were used to collect data (SWOT, DiSC, Five Behaviors, Researchers Journals, and Hiring Priorities), individual interviews were held with the senior leader and senior executive leadership teams of each case study. These interviews were a key element in this study and provided solid data used to identify themes, strategies, and key concepts. After each interview, the notes from the meeting were transcribed for review. From

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these notes, I was able to identify recurring concepts that would eventually lead to the findings of this study.

Each senior leader was interviewed at least two times in person. During the first interview, the researcher shared the study questions and discussed the purpose of the study. It also began a dialogue to assess the senior leader's philosophies about leadership and the value of the senior executive team to their organization. We also addressed the logistics of what instruments would be used and who would be interviewed and when.

The following interview with the senior leader, and those on the senior executive leadership team, included a brief review of the study, their participation, and answered any questions about the study. Once the logistics were addressed, each senior executive team member was asked a list of questions and also completed the SWOT analysis and hiring priorities survey. Following each interview, the researcher transcribed notes from the interviews and materials.

Once the interviews and all instruments were completed, the archival data and drawn from the interviews/observations were analyzed together to determine structures, protocols, and strategies that were employed by each senior team.

As a researcher, I approached the process of analyzing the data as an iterative or simultaneous process (Merriam, 2009). During the interviews, as data was gathered, based on a rudimentary analysis, the information was used to support the next interviews to seek additional information or clarification for the next interviews.

As indicated previously, a sixty-minute focus group was also held with all case study senior teams following the interviews.

3.9.8 Sites of the Study

Sites of the study were limited to the headquarters or central office of each case study subject.

The Clovis Unified School District's office is located in Clovis, California. It is a complex of multiple office buildings and facilities that house all district business and instructional operations. It is a modest facility but well maintained and professional. Individual interviews were held in the executive offices of the senior team members. The offices were professional and filled with career memorabilia and items that promoted the school district and the students, such as pennants and pictures. The focus group was held in a large conference room adjacent to the superintendent's office.

The American Fidelity interviews were held in the corporate headquarters located in a suburb of Oklahoma City. This facility includes a multi-story modern office structure that houses

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employees, an employee gym, a cafeteria, health care center and business operations. It is located on multiple acres that are landscaped and include walking trails and recreational sites. The focus group interview was held in one of their many conference rooms and professional development facilities.

The interviews of the senior leader and senior executive team were held in individual offices and collaboration rooms. The corporate philosophy at American Fidelity is one of minimalism. Offices are nicely appointed but contain little personal memorabilia. There are policies in effect that dictate what can and cannot be in an office. Since some members of the AF team work in California, in addition to their interviews at the corporate office, phone consults and meetings in outside locations were also utilized.

School Services of California is located on a floor in a downtown Sacramento historic office building. It is a nicely appointed facility with a utilitarian décor. It is located adjacent to the California State Capital. A small conference room was the location for our focus group and for all interviews.

FCMAT is administered by the Kern County Office of Education, located in Bakersfield, CA. Bakersfield is in a rural, agricultural area of California. Since all of the senior executive leadership team are in the field daily, they each operate from a home office and utilize virtual offices. Our focus group meeting was held in the conference room of the Newport Marriott Hotel in Newport Beach. It was held in conjunction with a professional development program that the FCMAT team was attending.

Individual interviews were held in the researcher's offices at the California Association of School Business Officials in Sacramento, and in a variety of locations including restaurants and school district offices. While this was the most challenging of our data collection, it was still a complete process.

3.9.9 Participants

3.9.9.1 Case study one – Clovis Unified School District. Clovis Unified School System (Clovis USD) is a well-respected school system with a history of strong, ethical leadership as well as a record of student success and achievement. They have had a limited number of superintendents and had low executive level turnover. They pride themselves on their history, their success, and building on their strong foundation and history. After reviewing test scores, media coverage, and assessing the industry, I felt they were an exceptional model for other educational organizations.

3.9.9.2 Case study two — American Fidelity. American Fidelity (AF) has long been a partner with my employer, the California Association of School Business Officials. Annually, our

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senior leadership team has traveled to Oklahoma City to meet with their leadership and to co-create products, trainings, and opportunities for the school business and operations leaders of California. I have seen the longevity and stability of their leadership as well as their ethical values through the foundation of their company and our partnership. I knew that they were a corporation that valued public education and could offer insight into their successful leadership practices.

3.9.9.3 Case study three — Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team. Since 2010, I have worked cooperatively with the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) on a variety of trainings, projects, and publications. They are a very unusual state agency in California that has been assigned to work with school districts that are in economic distress. School districts that call upon FCMAT are those that have effectively gone bankrupt. They require a long-term loan from the state treasury to stay in business and they turn over all governance and decision-making to a state trustee when the loan is provided. While this has not happened in many districts, (19 as of April 2019), it disrupts the educational system and students and families flock to new schools and areas. Sixty-five extraordinary audits of public and charter schools have been conducted since 2005 (FCMAT Annual Report, 2018-2019, p. 10). Student achievement, employee turnover, executive churn, and morale all suffer.

FCMAT plays a unique role in stepping in and managing the district to solvency, but they also play an educational role in training and assisting school systems to avoid these financial calamities. The staff is motivated and directed to help school systems succeed rather than punishing or controlling bad behaviors. They have a stable staff, a reputation for excellence and follow through, and leadership that is valued and respected in the field. What could have become a government agency that is regulatory became a lighthouse in prevention and financial leadership for schools.

3.9.9.4 Case study four — School Services of California. School Services of California (SSC) was my final case study selection. The words most often used to describe this agency include: gurus of school finance, experts, collaborators, and thought leaders. All 1,058 California public school systems, along with community colleges, rely on School Services of California (SSC), to train, provide materials and publications, to consult, to assess and analyze state policies and to advocate on behalf of public education. With over 95 percent of the education population utilizing their services, their selection was an easy choice. They are admired, respected, and valued. Their participation adds not only to the depth of the study, but also to the utilization of the information.

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Initially, an exploratory conversation was held with each potential group to ascertain interest and participation. Following the prescribed ethical guidelines of the University of Pretoria and with approval from the Ethics Committee, all participants were informed and formally invited to participate. Each organization and each person participating gave written approval and no research was conducted until ethical clearance and approval was obtained.

3.10 Summary

This chapter began with the intent of describing the design, sampling, case study selection, instrumentation, data collection and the processes utilized for data analysis. It addresses the framework, methodology and provides a clear picture of how the study was created and conducted. By utilizing the mixed methods approach that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative research, the assessment and survey instruments used, the DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment, SWOT analysis, Hiring Values pyramid along with the focus groups and individual interviews- as a researcher, I could create a study that could address the intent of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction / Results and Findings

It is important to be reminded of the purpose of this study as I review the results and findings from each case study. The research question was: “How can leadership team effectiveness be created and sustained in educational organizations?” Identification of strategies and practices to improve student achievement further defines the intent of this study. My additional questions of (1) What factors contribute to the development factors contribute to an effective team and (2) what impact does the senior leader have team success were also identified in the study findings.

In the United States, and particularly in California, K-12 public education is at a critical point as it faces the challenges of emerging charter schools, private education, social and political division, increase in equity and diversity issues, and continued pressure to improve student achievement and accountability. State standards and federal requirements, coupled with economic crises, have placed more and more pressure on educational executives.

In addition to their educational acumen and leadership, superintendents and senior executive team members need to be able to lead organizations effectively and efficiently. What transpires in the classroom and in the lives of students is impacted by the culture of the school district, the environment, the technology and equipping of classrooms, as well as a multitude of socio-political issues. Superintendents must lead the way, but it is not permissible for them to be only managers at the top who leave the business and curriculum work to their executive staff (Childress, Elmore, Grossman, & Johnson, 2007). Houston (2001) notes that the most successful superintendents of the 21st century are those who can lead by sharing power and engaging members of the organization in leadership. Research also finds that school districts that employ a team approach to leadership produce high student achievement (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Newman & Wright, 1999).

My case studies as well as literature review give credence and evidence to the importance of team leadership in the development of the organization. Murphy and Hallinger (1992) suggest that superintendents and leadership teams can significantly impact instructional leadership and thus student achievement by participating in regular, collaborative learning experiences.

Since the subject of leadership team development is exhaustive in the literature review, I endeavored to identify literature that best addresses the topic of this thesis. The case studies were designed to be the driving force and to assert a new dimension in the research. I strive to

incorporate leadership from the corporate world and team effectiveness with the traditional school system approach.

4.2 Description of Case Study Districts and their Executive Leadership

4.2.1 Case Study One — Clovis Unified School District

The Clovis Unified School District is a K-12 school district serving a suburban community located in central California. The district was formed in 1960 and serves 43,000 students and has 33 elementary schools, five intermediate schools, five high schools, four alternative schools, one adult school, one online school, the Center for Advanced Research and Technology, and one outdoor and environmental education school. It is a growing community and employs over 6,400 full and part-time employees serving the student population.

The district is under the leadership of senior leader, Superintendent Eimear O'Farrell who assumed the position in August 2018. Dr. O'Farrell was a 20-year veteran educator with a solid history and reputation within the school district. After assuming her new role, she was invited to review the district's processes. She graciously reviewed what had been done and gave her continuing support to this study.

In addition to Dr. O'Farrell, the senior executive team of the district participated in the process. All participants, as of this publication, remain in their previous positions within the district.

In an era where there is great churn and turnover in executive leadership in public education, Clovis remains a stable district with low leadership change or turnover. The most notable changes have occurred in their governance board with the election of two new members. Despite these new additions to their organization, the district and their leadership team continues to provide stable and award-winning leadership.

4.2.2 Case Study Two — American Fidelity Life Assurance Company

As mentioned in Chapter 1, American Fidelity is a large, for-profit corporation that provides services nationally to school systems with a variety of financial and administrative products. They are an international corporation whose subsidiaries include a variety of banks, businesses, and divisions. For this study, my research centered around their educational division only.

The American Fidelity educational division is housed in an extensive headquarters in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Their educational division is divided into regions and directed by regional vice presidents. While the group anticipates retirements and changes in key positions in the next ten years, the group and their leadership remained stable during the period of this study. They remain under the leadership of their first female CEO, Mrs. Jeannette Rice.

4.2.3 Case Study Three — Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team

The Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) is a tax-supported agency of the State of California that was created to assist school districts in economic distress. Their mission, leadership, and focus has remained the same since the start of this study. While some may consider them an unusual case study subject, for this study they served as a lighthouse example of a well-run, successful, well-respected organization with a reputation for reliability, honesty, and results. Every member of their senior executive team and their Director, Michael Fine, come from public school districts and, combined, have over 150+ years of experience and training. They have the distinct advantage of being practitioners who have experienced the same situations as the public schools that they provide services to. Headquartered in Bakersfield, CA, their work is accomplished throughout the state. Our meetings and interviews were held in a variety of offices, locations, and even at hotels during conferences.

4.2.4 Case Study Four — School Services of California

School Services of California (SSC) is a for profit service and consulting company headquartered in Sacramento, California. They provide fiscal and management consulting services to over 90% of the school districts, offices of education, and community colleges of the state. They are the most recognized and respected firm in the educational industry. Like FCMAT, their employees have all had previous experience in a variety of roles in education, government, and policy making.

Unexpectedly, in March of 2018, their Chairman of the Board and senior leader, Ron Bennett died. The entire educational community was in shock over the unexpected loss. Ron was a strong supporter of this study and had fully participated in every step of the study. The President of the organization, John Gray, thanks to advance succession planning and their strong culture and leadership team was able to continue the organization without interruption. Ron Bennett was an industry icon and his legacy lives on in the leadership and influence of School Services. The senior executive leadership team remains the same and while plans are in process for new additions and changes, at the time of this study, no changes have been made.

4.3 Findings

In reviewing the findings of the assessment's instruments, interviews, and group interviews, it became evident that each of these case study teams has a strong foundation according to the Five Behaviors instrument. Each team scored above normative data average on each of the five areas discussed in this chapter. This finding suggests that the foundation of each case study team paralleled that of the Lencioni research. Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability and Results

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were regular focus areas for each team. While the research highlighted areas each team could improve, overall, each case study had strong scores and alignment in all major areas.

The results from the other assessment and from the interviews supported the Five Behaviors concepts and identified themes. The research findings support three themes from the research:

1. Methods to create and define effective teams
2. Factors that contribute to team effectiveness and success
3. The role and impact of the senior leader in ensuring team success

These themes are further discussed and expanded upon in Chapter 5.

4.4 The Five Behaviors of A Cohesive Team

4.4.1 Concept Overview

For my study, I researched the effectiveness of four organizations in the education industry to assess their team cohesiveness and to identify areas of improvement to ensure lasting, synergistic team results (e.g. DeRue & Nahrgang 2015; Eisenhardt et al., 1997; Finkelstein et al., 2009; Posner & Kouzes, 2017). The process used is based on the literature of Patrick Lencioni and the DISC behavioral tool described previously.

According to Lencioni (2012) a cohesive team needs to master five behaviors and each behavior builds on the previous one, therefore, they are closely interrelated and should not be analyzed in isolation of one another. Every cohesive team must master the five following behaviors:

1. Trust One Another — Transparency and honesty within a team allows for vulnerability and for trust to grow from this. Teams should always begin with trust as it is the most important characteristic to ensure success and a high-functioning team. The word trust has different meanings for different individuals. In this study, I am not focused on the ability to predict a person's behavior based on experience, but, rather, the ability to develop trust as a cohesive team, which means:
 - A willingness to be completely vulnerable with one another
 - Confidence among team members that their peer's intentions are good and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the team
2. Engage in Conflict Around Ideas — With trust, teams can engage in unfiltered, constructive debate of ideas. All great relationships require productive conflict in order to grow. Many individuals avoid conflict; however passionate debates are essential to a great team. Productive conflict means:
 - Focusing on concepts and ideas
 - Avoiding mean-spirited, personal attacks

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3. **Commit to Decisions** — When opinions and ideas can be debated, the team will be more likely to commit to decisions. The two greatest causes for lack of commitment are the desire for consensus and the need for certainty, which often isn't possible. Great teams understand commitment of the 'team' even when outcomes are uncertain or not everyone initially agrees. I am defining commitment as:
 - Clarity around decisions
 - Moving forward with complete buy-in from every member of the team, even those who initially disagreed with the decision
4. **Hold One Another Accountable** - When commitment exists around a clear plan of action, the team will be more likely to hold one another accountable. The typical source of dysfunction in this example is the unwillingness of team members to tolerate the interpersonal discomfort that goes hand in hand with calling out a peer regarding their behavior. Difficult conversations are... difficult! In the context of teamwork, accountability means:
 - The willingness of team members to call their peers on performance or behaviors that might hurt the team
5. **Focus on Achieving Collective Results** — Results are ultimately the result of building trust, having healthy conflict, and achieving real commitment and accountability, though these criteria are often overlooked. I define results as:
 - Referring to the collective goals of the team
 - Not limited to financial measures, but more broadly related to expectations and outcome-based performance

As part of this effort, I had each organization conduct a DiSC® analysis for core team members to provide a gauge of the team's strengths and weaknesses and allowed them to compare rankings to a normative data sample of over 6,400 people.

The analysis provided is based on a behavioral tool called DiSC®, that helps people connect as a team and facilitates vulnerability-based trust. DiSC is comprised of four basic styles: Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S) and Conscientiousness (C). See below diagram for traits that describe each style.

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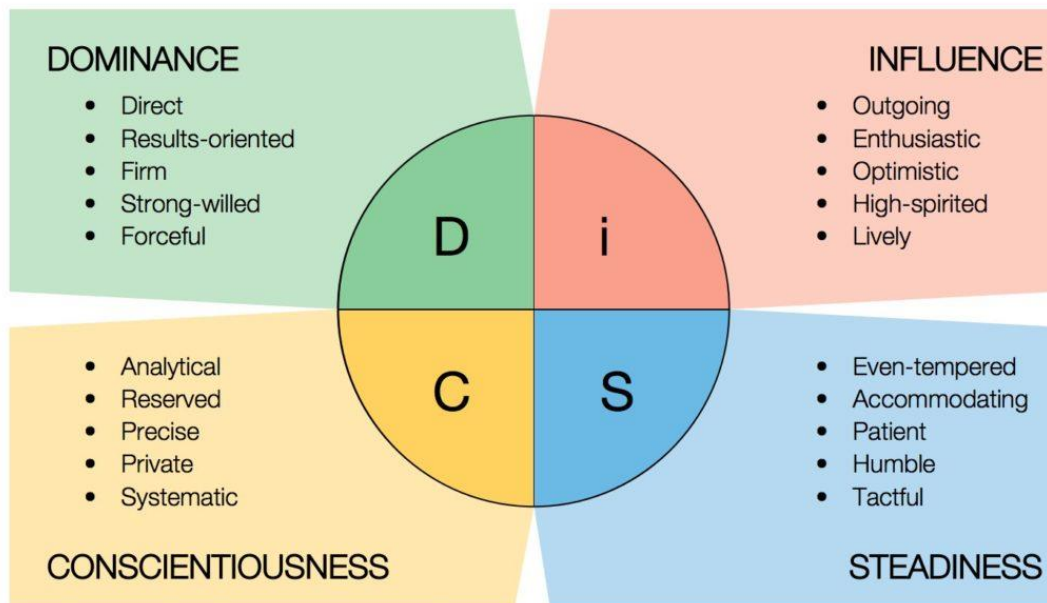
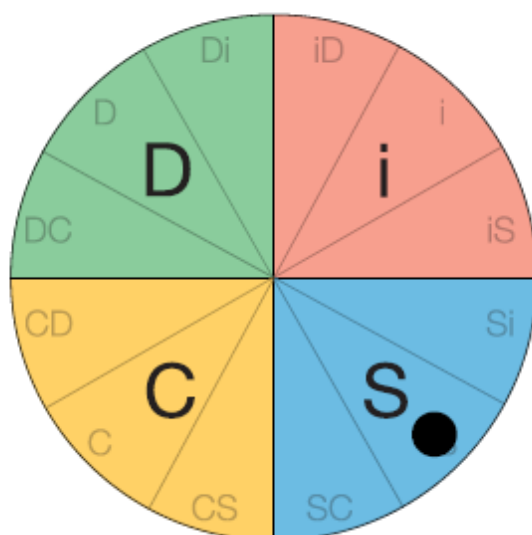


Figure 4.1 DiSC Report Diagram. This diagram illustrates the four dimension of the assessment and identifies the four behavioral types. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Everyone is a blend of all four styles, however most trend toward one or two styles. For example, this individual trends to Steadiness. The dot is positioned towards the outside or edge of the circle, indicating a moderate, not slight, inclination to this style.



Characteristics:

- Cooperative
- Quick to share credit with other team members
- Accommodating
- Cater to others' needs
- Need for harmony
- Difficulty with conflict
- Sensitive

Figure 4.2 Sample DiSC Results. This diagram illustrates an individual result. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

4.4.2 Team Report: Clovis USD 2017 (8 people)



This is an interrelated model where all behaviors are closely integrated. This team has a very solid profile, with Results, Commitment, Conflict and Trust are areas of strength, while Accountability is a potential area for improvement.

Figure 4.3 Clovis USD Five Behaviors Results. This diagram shows results of the Clovis USD team in the DiSC Five Behaviors team report. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

4.4.2.1 Behavior One – Building Trust. Clovis USD scored in the HIGH category for Trust with an average result of 4.13. On all measures, the Clovis USD team scored above the normative data average. However, their lowest score reflected this statement: *Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another (3.8 average)*. Scores varied significantly on this measure, therefore representing an area that needs to be better understood across the team. Over time, the willingness to be vulnerable with one another can create a bond that allows the team to work more effectively toward a common goal.

4.4.2.1.1 Analysis.

Strengths:

- Team members are willing to apologize to one another
- Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another
- Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility

DiSC Style -The Clovis USD team DiSC results are presented in the Appendix on page 159.

4.4.2.1.2 Opportunities for building trust for Clovis USD.

- Be more forthright with information
- Give credit where credit is due
- Get to know each other on a personal level

4.4.2.2 Behavior Two – Mastering Conflict. Clovis USD scored in the HIGH category for Conflict with an average result of 4.31. On all measures, the Clovis USD team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score reflected this statement: *When conflict*

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occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issue before moving to another subject (4.0 average).

4.4.2.2.1 Analysis. When conflict does occur, the Clovis USD team appears willing to take time to work through issues to reach a resolution. Confronting problems can be time consuming, however, by addressing them directly, the team will save time wasted on unresolved issues.

Strengths:

- Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement
 - Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings
 - When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issues before moving to another subject
 - During team meetings, the most important, and most difficult, issues are discussed
- Opportunity existed to "go beyond the meeting end time to resolve an issue".

4.4.2.3 Behavior Three – Achieving Commitment. Clovis USD scored in the HIGH category for Commitment with an average result of 4.47. On all measures, the Clovis USD team scored above the normative data average. However, their lowest score reflected this statement: *Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that were agreed upon (4.0 average).*

4.4.2.3.1 Analysis. The Clovis USD team was strong on all Commitment statements, however two team members commented that they may not buy into the team's decisions because *I don't have all the information*. This is an opportunity for growth for the team.

Strengths:

- The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities
- Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action
- Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that have been agreed upon (lowest average score, but still very high)
- Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagree

4.4.2.4 Behavior Four – Embracing Accountability. Clovis USD scored in the HIGH category for Accountability with an average result of 3.84. On all measures, the Clovis USD team scored above the normative data average. However, their lowest score reflected this statement: *The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform and team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility (3.8 average).*

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4.4.2.4.1 Analysis. The Clovis USD team has an area of weakness related to this statement: *The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform.* Scores varied significantly on this measure. The team can use peer pressure to effectively and efficiently maintain high standards for the team.

An additional area of weakness is *Team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility.* Members do not always challenge one another about what's being done, how time is spent, and whether enough progress is being made.

Several team members agree that if they challenge one another to review progress with their goals during team meetings and give one another feedback that it would be beneficial for accountability.

Strengths:

- Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another
- Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods

4.4.2.5 Behavior Five – Focusing on Results. Clovis USD scored in the HIGH category for results with an average result of 4.53. On all measures, the Clovis USD team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score is reflected in this statement: *When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance and Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team (4.3 average).*

4.4.2.5.1 Analysis. The Clovis USD team has an area of weakness related to the statement: *Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.* Scores varied significantly on this measure and the team would benefit from discussion around this point.

Strengths:

- Team members value collective success more than individual achievement
 - When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance and Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team
 - Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.

It should be noted that the strengths of this team were correlated with this instrument and the comments made during the SWOT analysis and individual interviews.

To summarize, Clovis USD exhibited these outcomes:

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- Results: This team values collective outcomes more than individual recognition and attainment of status. They are also quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.
- Accountability: The team needs to work on ensuring that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform. Peers need to confront one another as problems arise in their respective areas of responsibility.
- Conflict: During team meetings, the most important – and difficult — issues are discussed.
- Trust: Team members would benefit from acknowledging their weaknesses to one another.

4.4.3 Team Report: American Fidelity 2017 (6 people)



This is an interrelated model where all behaviors are closely integrated. This team has a very solid profile, with results, commitment, conflict and trust are areas of strength, while accountability is a potential area of improvement.

Figure 4.4 American Fidelity Five Behaviors Results. This diagram shows the results of the American Fidelity team in the Five Behaviors team report. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

4.4.3.1 Behavior One – Building Trust. American Fidelity scored in the MEDIUM category for Trust with an average result of 3.71. On all measures, the American Fidelity team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: *Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another (3.2 average)*. Scores varied significantly on this measure, therefore representing an area that needs to be better understood across the team. Over time, the willingness to be vulnerable with one another can create a bond that allows the team to work more effectively toward a common goal.

4.4.3.1.1 Analysis.

Strengths:

- Team members willing to apologize to one another
- Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another
- Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility

DiSC Style - The American Fidelity team DiSC results are presented in the Appendix on page 160.

4.4.3.1.2 Opportunities for building trust for American Fidelity (in order of number of responses):

- Spend more time together
- Get to know each other on a personal level
- Share professional failures and successes
- Reduce gossiping
- Let go of grudges
- Understand each other's working styles
- Admit mistakes
- Apologize
- Be more forthright with information
- Give credit where credit is due

4.4.3.2 Behavior Two – Mastering Conflict. American Fidelity scored in the HIGH category for Conflict with an average result of 4.04. On all measures, the American Fidelity team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score reflects this statement: *Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement* (3.8 average).

The significance of this rating is a subtle warning for the future. In building their team, members need to feel comfortable in bringing up areas that may result in disagreement. Attention to this subject and development of a protocol or norm for the group may be valuable for them to consider.

4.4.3.2.1 Analysis. When conflict does occur, the American Fidelity team appears willing to take time to work through issues to reach a resolution. Confronting problems can be time consuming, however, by addressing them head-on the team will save time later wasted on unresolved issues.

Strengths:

- Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement
- Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings
- When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issues before moving on to another subject
- During team meetings, the most important — and difficult — issues are discussed

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Several of the team members admit that they have practices at work which are not helpful to the team. These include raising one's voice when passionate, going beyond the meeting end time to resolve issues, and avoiding someone when angry. Emphasis on changing these behaviors will lead to a more cohesive team.

4.4.3.3 Behavior Three – Achieving Commitment. American Fidelity scored in the HIGH category for Commitment with an average result of 4.04. On all measures, the American Fidelity team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score reflects this statement: *Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that were agreed upon (3.7 average).*

4.4.3.3.1 Analysis. An area of disagreement was that *Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that have been agreed upon.* Scores varied significantly here. The team needs to identify situations where there is a lack of buy-in and address it quickly. It is possible politics, egos, or the lack of a proper forum for airing concerns is an issue.

Five team members commented that they may not buy into the team's decisions because they agree with the statement: *I don't have all the information.* This is an opportunity for growth for the team. Also, several mentioned not having enough time in meetings and not being clear about priorities.

Strengths:

- The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities
- Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action
- Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagree

4.4.3.4 Behavior Four – Embracing Accountability. American Fidelity scored in the HIGH category for Accountability with an average result of 3.79. On all measures, the American Fidelity team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score reflected this statement: *Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another and Team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility (3.5 average).*

Much like their score in Mastering Conflict, learning how to engage each other and deal with sensitive subjects is an area for further study. Since this team has two newer members, they may be hesitant to confront or provide constructive feedback. For this team to continue to be successful, this is another area they may wish to explore in team training or in the development of protocols or norms.

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4.4.3.4.1 Analysis. The primary area of weakness for American Fidelity is *Team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility*. Members do not always challenge one another about what's being done, how time is spent and whether enough progress is being made. As stated previously, this area along with the other identified weaknesses are opportunities for the team to address issues that may impact their long-term success. Knowing this information will be a key in developing their team development strategies.

Another area of weakness is *Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another*. This is one of the team's greatest challenges. The willingness to hold one another accountable in a constructive way is key to developing cohesiveness.

Scores varied significantly across the following measure, therefore, it needs to be further explored by the team: *The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform*.

All team members agree that if they challenge one another to review progress against goals during team meetings it would be beneficial for accountability. In addition, five of the six responses suggested following through on personal commitments as well. Finally, four of six said that giving one another feedback, publicly sharing goals, spending more time together, and calling one another out on unproductive behavior would help with accountability.

Strengths:

- Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods

4.4.3.5 Behavior Five – Focusing on Results. American Fidelity scored in the HIGH category for Results with an average result of 3.88. On all measures, the American Fidelity team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on this statement: *When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance (3.7 average)*.

4.4.3.5.1 Analysis. Several team members cited that distractions prevent the team from focusing on results. These included *vague or shifting goals, insufficient/ineffective processes and structures and lack of drive and urgency*. The team would benefit from more focus and consistency, as well as support and approval, to change aspects of the process that are beyond their control.

In examining this finding, understanding this organization and its business would indicate that issues considered outside their control could include market fluctuations, legislation impacting their industry, along with changes by the Board of Directors. For example, this organization had a product aligned with the federal Affordable Care Act. When the federal

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administration changed from the Obama Administration to the Trump Administration, this product was changed immediately without clear direction to the industry. It put the service and product into a state of flux that continues to today (Rice, 2019).

Strengths:

- Team members value collective success more than individual achievement
- Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team
- When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team’s performance and team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team

– Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others

To summarize, American Fidelity exhibited these outcomes:

- Results: This team values collective outcomes more than individual recognition and attainment of status. They are also quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.
- Commitment: The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities.
- Accountability: Team members do a good job of questioning one another about their approaches and methods.
- Accountability: The team needs to offer more unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another, and peers need to confront one another as problems arise in their respective areas of responsibility.
- Conflict: During team meetings, team members solicit one another’s opinions.
- Trust: Team members would benefit from acknowledging their weaknesses to one another.

4.4.4 Team Report: FCMAT 2017 (6 people)



This is an interrelated model where all behaviors are closely integrated. This team has a very solid profile, with results, commitment, conflict and trust are areas of strength, while accountability is a potential area of improvement.

Figure 4.5 Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team Five Behaviors Results. This diagram shows the results of the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team in the Five Behaviors team report. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

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4.4.4.1 Behavior One – Building Trust. FCMAT scored in the HIGH category for Trust with an average result of 4.0. On all measures, the FCMAT team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: *Team members acknowledging their weaknesses to one another (3.5 average)*. Scores varied significantly on this measure, therefore representing an area that needs to be better understood across the team.

4.4.4.1.1 Analysis. There are probably times when team members are unwilling to be vulnerable, perhaps not wanting to admit their own limitations. Over time, the willingness to be vulnerable with one another can create a bond that allows the team to work more effectively towards a common goal.

Strengths:

- Team members are willing to apologize to one another
- Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another
- Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility

DiSC Style - The FCMAT team DiSC results are presented in the Appendix on page 161.

4.4.4.1.2 Opportunities for building trust for FCMAT.

- Spend more time together
- Understand each other's working styles

4.4.4.2 Behavior Two – Mastering Conflict. FCMAT scored in the HIGH category for Conflict with an average result of 4.25. On all measures, the FCMAT team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: *When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issue before moving to another subject (4.0 average)*.

4.4.4.2.1 Analysis. When conflict does occur, the FCMAT team appears willing to take time to work through issues to reach a resolution. Confronting problems can be time-consuming, however by addressing them head-on the team will save time later wasted on unresolved issues.

Strengths:

- Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement
- Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings
- During team meetings, the most important — and difficult — issues are discussed

In addition, there was some variance on “raising your voice when you get passionate,” which bothered some more than others. The team also disagreed on “using strong language when you are upset.”

4.4.4.3 Behavior Three – Achieving Commitment. FCMAT scored in the HIGH category for Commitment with an average result of 4.33. On all measures, the FCMAT team

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scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: *Team members and meetings with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action (3.8 average)*. Scores varied significantly on this measure, thereby representing an area that needs to be better understood across the team.

4.4.4.3.1 Analysis. The FCMAT team was strong on all commitment statements, however cohesive teams should take a few minutes at the end of a meeting to ensure everyone is on the same page. Review of commitments leads to smoother and more successful implementation of decisions.

Strengths:

- The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities
- Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that have been agreed upon
- Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagree

4.4.4.4 Behavior Four – Embracing Accountability. FCMAT scored in the MEDIUM category for Accountability with an average result of 3.50. On all measures, the FCMAT team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: *Team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility (3.2 average)*. Accountability tends to be difficult for most teams.

4.4.4.4.1 Analysis. The FCMAT team has an area of weakness related to this statement: *Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another*. Scores varied significantly on this measure. Team members aren't always willing to confront one another about these kinds of issues. A willingness to hold one another accountable is key to developing cohesiveness.

An additional area of weakness is reflected in the statement: *Team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility*. Members do not always challenge one another about what's being done, how time is spent, and whether enough progress is being made.

Several team members agree that if they challenge one another to address missed deadlines immediately it would be beneficial.

Strengths:

- The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and shares an expectation to perform
- Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods

4.4.4.5 Behavior Five – Focusing on Results. FCMAT scored in the HIGH category for Results with an average result of 4.17. On all measures, the FCMAT team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance (3.7 average).

In the individual interviews and SWOT analysis, this team viewed themselves as individual and group leaders and experts in their industry. In their roles, they are tasked with investigating and finding areas of fiscal impropriety or concern in their clients. In a sense, they are tasked with holding the public schools accountable for their goals. This finding would suggest that an area for future development would be to address this issue of responsibility as a team. If not addressed, it may cause their team to lose its effectiveness.

4.4.4.5.1 Analysis. Several team members agree that insufficient/ineffective processes and structure is a top distraction.

Strengths:

- Team members value collective success more than individual achievement
 - Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team
 - Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others

To summarize, FCMAT exhibited these outcomes:

- Results: This team probably values collective outcomes more than individual recognition and attainment of status.
- Accountability: This team may hesitate at times to confront one another about performance or behavioral concerns. The team would also benefit from offering unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another.
- Commitment: This team supports group decisions even if they initially disagree and the team is clear about its overall direction and priorities.
- Conflict: This team is probably comfortable engaging in unfiltered discussion around important topics.
- Trust: This team has probably created an environment where vulnerability and openness are the norm, however they would benefit from acknowledging their weaknesses to one another.

4.4.5 Team Report: School Services 2017 (5 people)



This is an interrelated model where all behaviors are closely integrated. This team has a very solid profile, with results, commitment, conflict, and trust as areas of strength, while accountability is a potential area of improvement.

Figure 4.6 School Services of California Five Behaviors Results. This diagram shows the results of the School Services team in the Five Behaviors team report. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

4.4.5.1 Behavior One – Building Trust. School Services scored in the HIGH category for Trust with an average result of 4.05. On all measures, the School Services team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another (3.8 average). Scores varied significantly on this measure, therefore representing an area that needs to be better understood across the team. Over time, the willingness to be vulnerable with one another can create a bond that allows the team to work more effectively toward a common goal.

4.4.5.1.1 Analysis.

Strengths:

- Team members are willing to apologize to one another
- Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another
- Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility

DiSC Style - The School Services team DiSC results are presented in the Appendix on page 162.

4.4.5.1.2 Opportunities for building trust for School Services.

- Be more forthright with information
- Give credit where credit is due
- Get to know each other on a personal level

4.4.5.2 Behavior Two – Mastering Conflict. School Services scored in the HIGH category for Conflict with an average result of 4.45. On all measures, the School Services team scored

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above the normative data average. Most scores were very close to each other with a range of 4.4 – 4.6.

4.4.5.2.1 Analysis. When conflict does occur, the School Services team appears willing to take time to work through issues to reach a resolution. Confronting problems can be time consuming, however by addressing them head-on the team will save time later wasted on unresolved issues.

Strengths:

- Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement
 - Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings (one of the team's top three strengths)
 - When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issues before moving to another subject
 - During team meetings, the most important — and difficult — issues are discussed
- An opportunity exists to “going beyond the meeting end time to resolve an issue” however, most consider this an acceptable practice. In addition, three team members admit to raising their voices when they get passionate, despite the team not really accepting this practice.

4.4.5.3 Behavior Three – Achieving Commitment. School Services scored in the HIGH category for Commitment with an average result of 4.30. On all measures, the School Services team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: *Team members end meetings with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action (4.0 average).*

In examining this finding, while the team scores above normative data averages, failing to end their meetings with clarity and a clear road map could impact their future success. Developing a norm or protocol that would include a method to identify the meeting outcomes could address this issue and contribute to their success.

4.4.5.3.1 Analysis. The School Services team was strong on all commitment statements, however, two team members commented that they may not buy into the team's decisions because *there is not enough time during meetings, and we are not clear about the priorities.* This is an opportunity for growth for the team.

Strengths:

- The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities
- Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action
- Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that have been agreed upon
- The team has mastered addressing conflict

4.4.5.4 Behavior Four – Embracing Accountability. School Services scored in the MEDIUM category for Accountability with an average result of 3.60. On all measures, the School Services team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform (3.2 average).

Based on the individual interviews and the SWOT analysis, this is an interesting finding. The group has exhibited cohesion and collaboration as a team. This might be interpreted to mean that their personal relationships could interfere with their success. The term pressure indicates that the members would be pressuring each other to perform. This team, in my observation, exhibited a great deal of personal drive and dedication to their work. Their personal styles may have influenced this finding.

4.4.5.4.1 Analysis. The School Services team has an area of weakness related to this statement: The team ensures that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform. Scores varied significantly on this measure. The team can use peer pressure to effectively and efficiently maintain high standards on the team.

An area of weakness is reflected in this statement: Team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility. This is one of the team's top three weaknesses and scores varied significantly here. Members aren't always willing to challenge one another about what's being done, how time is spent and whether enough progress is being made.

An additional area of weakness is Team members confront peers about problems in their respective areas of responsibility. Making an effort to confront issues head on will allow the team to more easily identify and resolve problems before they get out of hand.

Three team members agree that if they challenge one another to review progress against goals during team meetings it would be beneficial for accountability.

Strengths:

- Team members offer unprovoked, constructive feedback to one another
- Team members question one another about their current approaches and methods

4.4.5.5 Behavior Five – Focusing on Results. School Services scored in the HIGH category for Results with an average result of 4.45. On all measures, the School Services team scored above the normative data average. However, the lowest score was on: *When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance and Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team* (4.2 average).

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4.4.5.5.1 Analysis. Common distractions exist for a few team members when it comes to insufficient/ineffective processes and structure as well as vague or shifting goals. One team member mentioned a lack of overall drive and urgency plus an emphasis on personal goals more than team goals as an opportunity for improvement.

Strengths:

- Team members value collective success more than individual achievement
- Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.
- When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance
- Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others (this is one of the team's top three strengths)

To summarize, Clovis USD exhibited these outcomes:

- Results: This team is quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.
- Accountability: The team needs to work on ensuring that members feel pressure from their peers and the expectation to perform. Peers need to confront one another as problems arise in their respective areas of responsibility.
- Conflict: Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings.
- Commitment: Team members support group decisions even if they disagree initially.
- Trust: Team members would benefit from acknowledging their weaknesses to one another.

4.5 Hiring Values Rating

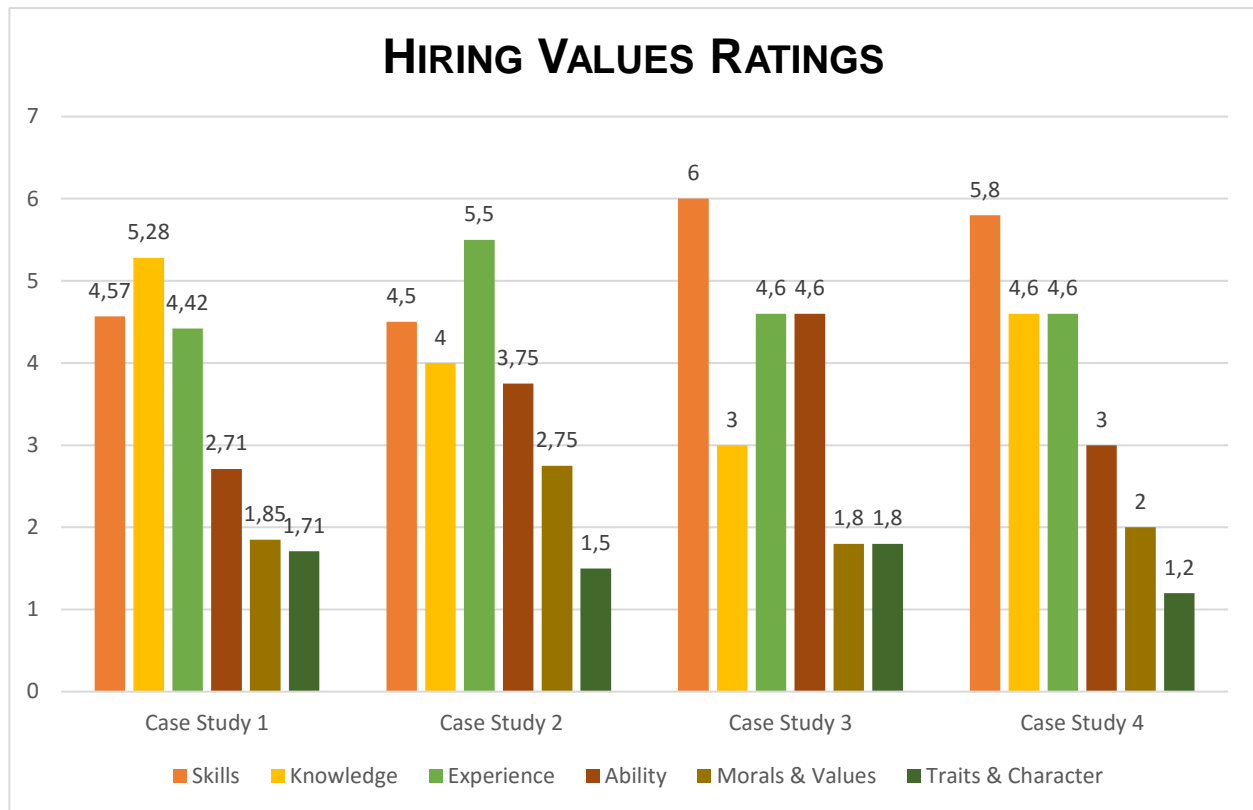


Figure 4.7 Hiring Values Rating Chart. This chart exhibits the results of all four case study organizations from an evaluation of hiring values. It was developed by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

Teams were asked to rate on a scale of one to five, with one being the highest priority and five being the lowest priority their values in hiring practices for their organizations. Each case study participant was asked to rate the following areas: Skills, Knowledge, Experience, Ability, Morals and Values and Traits and Character. Additional information about this was discussed in Chapter 3.

Conclusion: Every team rated Traits and Character and Morals and Values as their number one and two priorities in hiring. They rated Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Ability as their lower rankings.

This information is an interesting result and addition to this study. It echoes the results of the DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment as well as the individual and focus group interviews. It indicates to the researcher that traits and character and morals and values are key indicators of a value for each case study. It is a foundational part of their team building and in their direction to their specific organizations.

Synthesis and Substantiation of Data

| | 5 Behaviors/DISC | Hiring Values Rating | SWOT Analysis | Interviews |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TRUST | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to be vulnerable with one another Confidence amongst team members that peers intentions are good. | Morals & Values ratings were second only to Traits and Character as hiring criteria with average rating of 2.1. | Trust, respect (CUSD) Culture, Ethical (AF) Values, Quality (FCMAT) Trust, Reputation (SSCA) | Cited by all four organizations as a critical factor in developing and sustaining effective teams. |
| CONFLICT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to focus on concepts and ideas Avoiding personal attacks Managing unfiltered dialog and debate Ability to handle differing opinions | Ability was the third highest ranking factor in hiring. | Weaknesses identified in each case study related to Conflict: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of showing weakness (CUSD) Managing disagreements (AF) Morale (FCMAT) Overcommitted (SSCA) | Organizations were asked "How they deal with Challenges" Communication (timely, courageous & candid) was noted in all case studies. Focus on Collaborative resolution (SSCA) Meaningful discourse was cited as healthy for AF |
| COMMITMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When opinions and ideas can be debated, a team is more likely to commit to decisions Clarity around decisions Ability to move forward with buy-in | Traits and Character were rated highest in the values companies look for in their hiring practices | The following were noted as strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment & Experience (CUSD) Focused, Longevity (AF) Resources/Succession (FCMAT) Committed to each other (SSCA) | Each organization noted Clear Goals and Responsibilities, Strong Relationships & Reliability as key in effective teaming. |
| ACCOUNTABILITY | Willingness of team members to call out peers on performance or behaviors that might hurt the team. | Traits and Character were rated highest in the values companies look for in their hiring practices | Review dashboard visuals & reports to assist in selecting strategies & identifying successful in district solutions. | Accountability was a direct strength for SSCA. The other organizations referenced the concept indirectly with "Action Oriented" (CUSD), "Focused" (AF) and "Strong Values/Experience" (FCMAT) |
| RESULTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referring to the collective goals of the team Not limited to financial measures but rather expectations and outcome-based performance | Traits and Character were rated highest in the values companies look for in their hiring practices | Each organization identified results as a key strength: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tradition of Excellence (CUSD) Longevity (AF) Experience, Succession (FCMAT) Reputation, Longevity (SSCA) | Each organization cited a culture, history or reputation of <u>success</u> as a key factor in creating effective teams. |

Figure 4.8 Synthesis and Substantiation of Data. This graphic consolidates the results of the study assessments and case studies to further synthesize and substantiate the study results. It provides a side by side comparison of each instrument using the Lencioni Five Behaviors.

4.6 Selection Bias

It is important to mention the topic of selection bias and its potential impact on this study. While I have previously discussed the process and rationale for the selection of the four case study organizations, it is important to note that although my initial research and history with each organization indicated a strong team-oriented culture and a drive for accountability and results, I did not know how they operated internally. Many organizations can appear to the general public or their clients or customers as a focused and effective organization and it may be a veneer or public face. Once inside the doors and in reviewing the interworking's of the group, you could encounter a very different and perhaps even dysfunctional organization.

As a researcher, I did not know how they would ultimately score on the DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment, on the SWOT analysis or the Hiring Values Rating. I did not know what

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would come out in the focus groups or in the interviews. I was predisposed to believing them to be functioning and successful as mentioned before but was excited to see their success translate into the findings that were generated by the study. It also encourages me that future study of a combination of groups that are both selected for their success and for their dysfunction may yield more enlightening research.

4.7 Summary, Review and Integration

Chapter 5 will address the findings and themes of this research in greater detail. This section will present a short summary and review of the findings as it shows the integration of the study questions to the results identified in this study.

The findings in this Chapter directly address the primary research question: How can leadership team effectiveness be created and sustained in educational organizations? In each case study, the team had a strong foundation that was built upon the Five Behaviors concepts of trust, conflict, commitment, accountability and results. They were aligned in their results and whether it was in the assessments or in the interviews, each case study demonstrated similar values and expectations. Can you create and sustain leadership team effectiveness? Based on the results of this study, each group does this, and it is evidenced by these findings.

The additional question of how do organizational factors or leadership methods contribute to creating or sustaining effective teams was also addressed in the research. These included communication, team building, strong leadership, time desire, organizational culture, trust, integrity and reputation among others. Each team incorporated these factors into their daily operations and into the culture of their senior executive teams and organizations.

The second additional study question: How does the senior executive leader impact team success? was also highlighted in the findings. In each case study, the teams showed a high level of respect for the senior leader and their approach to leadership and to the team. This was evidenced in each case study by their identification of the value of senior executive leadership in providing direction, guidance and support.

As this study began, each of the case study participants was identified as a stable organization with success in the marketplace or in their industry. As shared in earlier chapters, these factors contributed to their selection for this study. I knew they had strong reputations and were recognized in the education world as successful contributors.

What I did not know when I began this study was whether the organizations had a strong senior leader or senior executive team, nor did I know how these teams operated. I also did not know if the senior leader was a traditional leader with a top-down style of management or if they

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were a collaborative or transformational leader. I also could not identify the factors that contributed to their success or how the teams operated collaboratively.

As a result of these findings, this study has identified specific key indicators that could be replicated by other educational organizations to create and sustain team effectiveness that could impact student achievement. Chapter 5 will elaborate on these findings and address the specific key performance indicators and integrate the findings of this study with the current research on successful teams.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS AND THEMES

5.1 Introduction and Analysis of Findings and Themes

This chapter provides an analysis and integration of case study findings (Chapter 4), literature review, (Chapter 2), and an in-depth review of the themes discovered during this research. To create this information, all data collected in the study including the DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment, SWOT analysis, Hiring Values Rating, interviews and focus group notes and the researchers journal were utilized.

This study was focused on the primary research question: How can leadership team effectiveness be created and sustained in educational organizations? The sub questions included: How do organizational factors or leadership methods contribute to creating or sustaining effective teams? How does the senior/executive leader impact team success? As I continue to analyze and review the case study findings and integrate the literature review, I began to see a puzzle emerge.

This chapter will also define key concepts and reiterate and update information relative to each case study organization and participants. It is hoped that the reader will see how the findings become the pieces of the puzzle that are utilized in creating and sustaining effective teams and how they are used within each participating organization.

This findings and results are organized into three main themes: (1) Factors that contribute to team effectiveness (2) Methods to create and sustain effective teams and their success and (3) the Impact of the senior/executive leader in team leadership.

5.2 Definitions

For the purpose of this thesis, how the case study participants defined effectiveness and success was of interest, in addition to the theoretical definitions at the outset of the study. These definitions can be tied through their Five Behaviors Assessments to the attributes of Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability, and Results as core values that impact the positive cultures of each organization. Their definition of success also ties into the factors that create and sustain an effective team. These include Team Culture, Leadership, Team Membership, Team Expectations and Agreements. Each team, as evidenced in the findings of Chapter 4, has a strong culture, history, reputation, and public perception of success. Their success could be defined by their leadership of team effectiveness could be defined as a combination of internal and external factors that determine how well a team works as a unit (Andrews D.S., 2012). Success and effectiveness definitions have also been addressed earlier in this study.

In developing the themes, two definitions are key to the analysis and integration. For the purpose of this study, a specialized definition for the words factors and methods has been developed by the researcher. Scholarly research suggests a definition for factors could include culture, foundation, or structure (Mineo, 2014; Molnau, 2013; Saldana, 2015). For the purpose of this study, the definition chosen is factors: circumstances, facts or influences that contributes to the team's organization and success. Factors are a foundational focus for each team.

Research quantifies the term methods with multiple meanings, it is called leader behaviors that promote team potency (Li et al., 2013). Other terms such as process, processes, tasks, or complex tasks are also suggested (Cooke & Hilton, 2015; Molnau, 2013). Tuckman refers to this methods concept as performing (Tuckman, 1997). For this study, Methods: particular procedures, processes or approaches for creating and sustaining and effective team was developed as a working definition. Methods are part of how and why teams operate effectively.

5.3 Theme 1: Factors that Contribute to Team Effectiveness

Each case study organization presented similar key concepts which emerged as dominant themes in this study. The Theme 1 Factors that contribute to team effectiveness may be the most significant key success indicators for this study. It highlights the concept that successful and effective teams happen by design and execution — not by accident. As I explored how they created and developed their teams and how they defined the concept of effectiveness and success, the concepts were consistent: a strong team culture, leadership, team membership and composition, and clear team expectations and agreements. Each of these concepts was a foundational piece for the creation and sustainability of the senior executive leadership team.

“One of the clearest signs of an experienced leader is the attention she pays to her people and her teams,” notes Lindred Greer, an associate professor of organizational behavior at Stanford Graduate School of Business. “Everything in a company is determined by the quality of team dynamics, and the ability to effectively lead teams is at the heart of managerial success” (Schouten, Dannals, Greer, & De Jong, 2018).

Teams that engage in team building, innovation, and creative solutions may induce admiration, pride, and positive feelings that result in improved team reputations and commitment (Peralta et al., 2014).

Effective teams have a common identity; they know who they are and where they are headed (Hackman, 2008; Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Katzenbach & Smith, 2015; LaFasto & Larson, 2002; Lencioni, 2012).

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The dimensions of Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability and Results identified by the DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment were factors that contributed to the success of each leadership team. As explored and defined in Chapter 4, each of the groups scored above the normative data averages for each dimension that fosters and promotes effective teams. In the SWOT analysis, as well as in the interview and focus group findings and evidenced in the observations from my researcher's journal, the terms and dimensions of these five elements continued to reappear and be discussed. The five dimensions were in alignment in each case study. I will discuss these dimensions as they relate to the theme.

5.3.1 Team Culture

While each case study organization had a distinct and different culture, strong leadership and the value of culture were vital to their success. In each organization, they could define the culture, identify their leadership styles and expectations, and expressed accountability as a top priority (DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment, SWOT analysis, individual and group interview notes).

Members of each senior executive team shared their commitment to their organization and their pride in employment. In CUSD, the theme was repeated over and over that they were part of the best school district in California. They saw themselves as a winning organization and they wanted to be a part of it. They also used this as a marketing tool and a core value, mentioning that not everyone could work there, and they only hired the best.

At SSC and AF, members of the teams shared similar pride in their organizations. In both agencies, they spoke of how they sought out their jobs. They wanted to be a part of these teams — for employees, this was not just a job — it was an organization they wanted to work for. Team members indicated that becoming a member of these teams was a significant professional accomplishment.

FCMAT senior executive team members also shared similar traits but also added a dimension to their commitment by addressing the value they brought to public education and to their teams. They viewed their work as important for the entire state and for public education. To be a part of this was regarded as an honor and an obligation which also came with some added responsibilities and expectations.

Accountability was a continuing theme in each group. Methods to ensure accountability included regular reporting, clear expectations, clear chains of command, group knowledge, involvement in decision-making, problem-solving, and maintaining high standards. Not only did they hold their teams accountable, but they shared a high level of personal accountability. Each person wanted to make sure that they were adding value to their teams.

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The value of their reputation in the educational industry was a significant positive for each organization. They valued their reputations and discussed that the continuation of this legacy was a part of their organizational culture. Reputation was also a part of what attracted the participants to their organizations. They viewed the organization's reputation as an indicator of the professional trust. Each organization included trust, commitment, accountability and results as integral to their reputation.

Closely aligned with this issue of reputation was integrity. While each group addressed this issue as a core value, they also identified some challenges that come with the organizations' reputations and viewed integrity as an essential value for building brand influence in the marketplace.

For CUSD, its reputation and legacy are linked to its founding superintendent. From the formation of the district, this organization set out to be a success and would build on its founder's dream. CUSD focuses time and resources on sharing its successes both in terms of student achievement and organizational success. The continuation of this legacy is paramount to the senior executive team. Team members and district publications often quote the founding superintendent and use integral sayings and principles as touch stones to emphasize their values and beliefs.

The only case study with a governing board or school board was the CUSD; they also indicated that the senior executive team had strong support from the school board. This support was evidenced by their approval of the team's recommendations as well as ideas and initiatives.

SSC is often referred to as the guru of school business in California (CASBO Newsletter, 2017). Their staff and the reputation they have for correct information, service, and information is a part of their legacy and reputation. The senior executive team knows that their work products and services are viewed as "golden" in the education community. They understand that their brand is tied to trust, commitment, accountability, and results.

AF has built its reputation in California and across the country as an organization that cares about public education and offers exemplary products. Their senior executive team speaks of the legacy of its founders, their successes, and their desire to keep their position solid in the marketplace. The chairman of their Board is the grandson of the founder of American Fidelity. This family tie is also equated with a commitment to the original values, traits, character and morals that were a part of the original culture and still continue today.

Team members at FCMAT understand that without a reputation for integrity, they cannot carry out their mandate from the State of California. They view every action of their senior

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executive team and employees as a part of their reputation. How they promote that culture is through accuracy, trust, accountability, results, and transparency.

As evidenced by their DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment, SWOT, Hiring Values Rating, researcher observations, interview and focus group notes, the development of their team cultures echoes core values.

The issue of integrity was one of the strongest themes explored during the study. Truth, honesty, delivering what is promised, having all the information, making relevant recommendations, providing the right services at the right times, unbiased recommendations, and professionalism were identified as part of the integrity of each organization and senior team.

In each case study, the relationships of the team members were acknowledged as important to the success of the senior executive team and their work. The time they spent together, their opportunities to get to know each other, knowledge of their skills, talents, and personalities, as well as management styles, were all considered important. Each group, either during work-related projects, meetings, or outside activities, endeavored to get to know each other and understand their colleagues. As a matter of fact, they often complimented their colleagues and shared positive personal information. They often spoke of their colleagues with pride.

5.3.1.1 Trust and honesty. Trust was an important factor for each team. To be a successful team, each group saw this as a foundational aspect of their work and of their relationships. They had trust in the organization and its values and priorities. They had trust in the intention and leadership of their senior leader. They had high levels of trust with each other. Trust was an expectation for each team.

The concept of educated trust was often discussed. Each senior executive team believed that they did not have blind trust, but an educated trust, that was based on past experiences, histories, and relationships. The trust they placed in their senior leader and in each other was paramount to their success.

As organizations, maintaining a high level of trust and honesty was necessary for their long-term success. Having the trust of parents and staff members in the CUSD allowed them to have a union-free environment and a positive parent support group. Being honest with their facts and figures helped them win support and public approval.

FCMAT and SSC also recognized that trust and honesty are key objectives. It can be argued that neither one can serve their clients or accomplish their work without a reputation that is based on trust and honesty. When you bring either agency into a school district, one is asking

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for outside professional assistance to help tackle difficult and sensitive issues. Without a high level of trust and honesty, their recommendations would not be acceptable.

AF, one of many organizations offering services, understood that they would not be invited to offer their products if they were not honest and didn't build long term trust with their clients. Without these essential qualities, they would lose business.

Each senior executive team valued trust and honesty within their team and the organizations they serve. As shared previously, pride in the organization and in the team was prevalent in each case study. The impact of their team leadership was important to them and they understood that each team member plays a role.

As teams, each group identified these themes as values for team leadership.

One value team members demonstrated, by example, was clear communication. It did not matter if you were the senior leader or a senior executive team member, these themes were important for all.

In each case study, the teams shared that they had ongoing discussions about leading by example and what it meant. Values, character, and reputation also were part of these discussions.

5.3.1.2 Accountability at all levels. While leadership by example is the strongest way to promote accountability by staff, without accountability as a focus of the entire organizations, the senior executive leadership teams could be stranded during a crisis.

Accountability in each of the case studies is a regular subject and a concept embedded in all of their activities. This accountability promotes stability and leadership. Accountability in each case study organization was described as a value that was demonstrated by keeping deadlines, adhering to protocols and procedures, and fulfilling promises. They viewed this accountability as proof of their leadership and their dedication to the team. The accountability was viewed both as an individual goal and as a group dimension.

5.3.1.3 Focus and shared core values. The case study participants commented on the topics of focus, core values, character and morals and their value to the senior executive team and the organization. Focus allows the senior executive team to keep one's sight on priorities and to structure work to accomplish goals. It is easy to lose focus when challenges or crises hit. Each senior executive team regularly discusses and agrees upon focus and priorities.

Core values, character traits, and morals were noted in the hiring values as a component of team culture. It was reported to be the number one and number two consideration of all new hires. They hired for "fit" first. A team with an established and practiced set of values was a constant in this study. Teams do not develop core values by accident; like team building, it is

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done with intention. The groups recommended that seniors executive teams take the time to identify their core values.

The case study participants commented on the topic of focus and core values and their value to the senior executive team and the organization. Focus allows one to keep one's sight on priorities and to structure work to accomplish goals. It is easy to lose focus when challenges or crises hit. The majority of senior executive team members in this study regularly discuss and agree upon focus and priorities and recommended this activity to others.

Focus on teams with an established and practiced set of values was a constant in this study. Teams do not develop core values by accident; like team building, it is done with intention. The groups recommended that senior executive teams take the time to identify their core values. This concept was supported by the amount of time the groups spend both formally and informally establishing relationships and participating together in activities. They also recommended that spending time formally reviewing items such as strategic plans, mission or vision statements and understanding the culture and values of their organizations contributed to this process.

5.3.2 Leadership

5.3.2.1 Strong, shared and distributed leadership: culture and accountability. In creating their executive teams, each group identified that strong leadership was a priority. They viewed themselves and their teams as strong leaders able to make decisions. They also had an established hierarchy with respect and acknowledgement of the role of the senior leader.

Talented leaders may often identify gaps in organizational processes with in the organization's mission, but only skilled and knowledgeable teams are equipped to fill these gaps (Sperber & Linder, 2016).

"Strong leadership at the organizational level is imperative for organizational strategy and change to be effective" (Burke, 2018, p. 138).

Each group believed that honesty was a key component of trust. Being able to honestly share information, carefully analyze facts, and to trust the information presented as well as the intentions of the group was a factor. They identified that trust is often slow to develop but quick to disappear. Each group discussed how they address trust issues and work on building strong foundations of trust as a senior team.

The importance of shared, or distributed, leadership is that it is a leadership style which distributes leadership responsibility, in such a way that people within a team or organization lead each other.

5.3.2.2 Respect and clear vision. Respect, strong leadership, and a clear vision for the organizations were identified as contributors to team success and effectiveness. Respect was highlighted as a value for each team. The ability to respect each other, have respect for the organization, for their individual roles and responsibilities, and for their efforts was essential for success. Each group indicated that it built trust, helped to establish a positive culture, and modeled good leadership.

Since each senior executive team in the case studies was a cross section of ages, races, education levels, and leadership styles, respect as a core value was a continuing objective.

Strong leadership and clear/shared vision presented frequently and were often discussed in relation to accountability and data-based decisions. Strong leadership was also discussed as accountability-based, alongside the ability to make data-driven decisions quickly. Each team contributed successfully to their ability to be perceived as strong leaders within their organizations.

As author of approximately 10 books on leadership and organizational health, Lencioni, (2012, p. 77) has suggested that successful leaders guide their organization through six critical questions:

1. Why do we exist?
2. How do we behave?
3. What do we do?
4. How will we succeed?
5. What is most important right now?
6. Who must do what?

In the CUSD, the senior executive team places emphasis on the value of their team, and its ability to make decisions, and its ability to problem solve. They view strong leadership as a core value and a part of their culture. One comment was, "if you cannot be a strong leader, you cannot be on our team."

At SSC, FCMAT, and AF, strong leadership is seen as a driving force in their long-term success and reputations. They pride themselves on being strong leaders and building strong leaders.

Valuing team members, as reinforced in the study, reflects a senior team that understands their impact, power, and authority. They were not teams in name only but could demonstrate evidence of their value to the executive team and the organization. Each group

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viewed their participation as vital to the success of the organization. They also indicated that they felt valued, appreciated, and respected.

Leading by example was also important within each organization. They viewed this as “walking the talk” and that actions speak louder than words. The notion of “leading by example” was often demonstrated with a variety of examples. This varied from attendance, punctuality, demeanor and dress, to continuing education, promoting core values, and being strong brand ambassadors.

5.3.2.3 Commitment to the organization. Commitment to their organizations and their teams is a given in each case study. The common understanding is that when a crisis or challenge happens, it can be addressed and there is the talent and ability to address the issues and provide leadership. Not often, in any of the four organizations, were there knee-jerk reactions or overreactions to crises.

A senior leader also needs to embody this ethical leadership. It is not enough to have a printed list or code of ethics, it must be a part of the leadership team and leaders’ daily activities.

5.3.3 Cohesive Team Membership and Composition

Membership on the senior executive team and in the organization was important. Being a member of a senior executive team was valued for the impact one had on the organization, the value of the team to the individual members’ success and the added opportunities to have key information.

On each team, individual voices were highlighted. There were opportunities to receive information, share information, provide insights and offer suggestions, debate issues, and offer alternative viewpoints. While not every action or issue was resolved with total consensus, members of the teams felt valued, appreciated, and heard in the processes. Regardless of one’s job title or position, each person had influence and the opportunity for their work to contribute and impact the organization.

Since senior executive teams are composed of individuals with a varied portfolio of tasks and responsibilities, having the opportunity to understand how work and role impacts other senior leaders and the organization was a positive. At SSC and FCMAT, this was identified as a key element in their success. Knowing what was happening across the state and within the organization allowed the executive members to navigate political landscapes more successfully.

At AF, being aware of what other senior executive team members were experiencing allowed the team to navigate issues impacting their business more successfully and, when possible, offer help and support. By understanding and supporting each other, AF senior

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executive team members were better able to create and sustain the team and to anticipate potential issues that could impact the entire group.

In CUSD, the team utilized communication to share responsibility for all decisions. Understanding and being involved in problem solving, allowed all the leaders of the organization to pool their resources. Senior leaders shared that they felt supported and empowered by the contributions of their colleagues.

5.3.3.1 Trust Relationships. Since each team was created over long periods of time, the senior executive team members entered the group at different times. As the team evolved, it became important to note when they became team members. In each instance, individuals all became members with experience, education, and knowledge of the industry. Some joined the teams during periods of success, others during an economic recession or during a time of change. A dynamic in building these teams is in the membership of the team. Understanding the situations and environment of the organization when they joined contributed to their organizational knowledge and history.

Since each organization is an established entity with a stable history of leadership, there was limited turnover at the senior level. This dynamic, coupled with the entry period of a member, was noted during the interviews. The relevancy of these issues, the stability of the organization, low senior leader and senior executive team membership turnover, and organizational history are reflected in the strong relationships of the teams. The members of these teams valued the organizations and had faith in their leadership and purpose. The low turnover was described as a testimony to their desire to be there and their knowledge that the leadership was valued and respected.

5.3.4 Team Expectations and Agreements

Clear communication was an ongoing theme in the study for leadership. Being able to speak in public with authority and knowledge, being clear in giving directions and sharing information, writing clearly and concisely, listening for understanding, and being able to address differences of opinion were themes linked to clear communicators.

Compensation strategy and flexibility were the final, identified stability factors. In a public-school system or a government agency like FCMAT, salaries, titles, and roles are identified on public salary schedules and available for everyone. The decision in both these agencies to reward administrative or senior leaders is often a political decision made by elected leaders. Because both the CUSD school board and the Governor of California value these leadership teams, compensation is regularly reviewed and competitive.

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As SSC is an employee-owned company, company profits positively impact all employees, not just senior executive team members. Company profits and finances are frequently discussed, and the established policy is that all employee compensation is regularly reviewed and is competitive.

For AF, compensation at this for-profit company is a private matter. They work with their employees to establish a high level of trust and to promote often. At AF, the case study participants shared that salaries and bonuses structures are generous. The organization regularly updates salary schedules and offers performance incentives. The company also has an established protocol that awards extra incentives to employees such as a company car, group trips and vacations and awards.

5.3.4.1 Defined standards. Knowing what is expected, having clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and identified and defined standards allows an equal playing field for all employees. Taking the time to define standards and to articulate them to all staff was a recommendation from the case study participants. The ethos that was present is never assuming that people know what to expect, but rather, to show them, to teach them, and to demonstrate to them what leaders want and expect.

5.3.5 Theme 1 Connections

The foundational and fundamental dimensions of Theme 1 have been validated and acknowledged in both scholarly and management literature focused on the factors that contribute to effective teams. While the literature speaks extensively on team formation and attributes, it provides multiple approaches and theories, but fails to establish common norms. Clark, 2007, distinguished the characteristics of a team versus a group. Cohen and Bailey, (1997) as well as Rasmussen and Jeppesen (2006) identify them as groups of independent individuals who operate as a group with a certain amount of autonomy. These dynamics from the literature are exhibited in our main themes and sub themes regarding leadership teams.

To keep current and stay relevant in today's world, the role of the team is evolving. (Anderson, 2012; Laloux & Wilber, 2014). This evolution with its complicated and complex issues and paradigms, requires organizations to establish new hierarchies and methods of managing and leading (Groysberg & Slind, 2012; Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Laloux & Wilber, 2014; LaFasto & Larson, 1999; Meister & Willyer, 2010). This research also supports the concepts in this theme of organizations that are flattening their traditional, hierarchal top down management structures to increase participatory leadership and decision making (Groysberg & Slind, 2012; Tornblom, 2018; Lee & Edmondson, 2017).

These connections among others presented in Chapter 2 integrate the literature into the findings from our data sets and interviews in Chapter 4 to form the integration in this chapter. The literature supports the concepts of team culture, the role of the leadership team, and the role of strong leadership in effective teams.

5.4 Theme 2: Methods to Create and Sustain Effective Teams

5.4.1 Create

5.4.1.1 Mentoring and Monitoring -- Team Building

5.4.1.1.1 Team building. Another interesting sub-theme of the study was the universal acknowledgement of the impact of their teams. Each senior executive team member, from the identified senior leader to the team itself, identified the team as a key factor in their success. The recognition that their success was dependent and interdependent on the entire team was reinforced.

At FCMAT, senior leaders all mentor entry or new employees for one year. CUSD has established work teams that allow senior leaders to mentor and to be mentored in subject areas outside their work responsibilities. At SSC and AF, mentoring for all employees is a value and a responsibility of senior management.

5.4.1.1.2 Ethical leadership. Organizational norms and standards that include ethics, behavior, demeanors, and expectations were recommended by the majority of the case study participants. While the data indicated that they were all committed to this, not all recommended it as a protocol. To be a part of these successful teams, you need to share these dynamics of ethical leadership. For example, in the findings in Chapter 4, the issue of ethics was identified in the data sets that included values and character traits and morals extensively in the interviews. In the book *Ethics, the Heart of Leadership* (Ciulla, 2014), the author concludes that ethics and morality are essential components of true leadership since without them a leader cannot be trusted. The author goes on to say that if a leader is trusted, followers will go to extraordinary lengths to provide extraordinary performance. Trust is the essential element that enables leaders and followers to work collaboratively towards a common goal (Ciulla, 2014). This trust is fundamental to this subtheme.

5.4.1.2 Sound Relationships. Acknowledging differences was also a key in their team building and communication. They had the ability to accept each other's different communication styles. Many times, they would identify these differences with endearment and affection. They also were able to not only problem solve with each other, but to laugh and enjoy each other's company. The case study participants spoke frequently of the value of their personal and professional relationships. They indicated that the more they understood each

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other, understood their histories, families, and experiences, they were able to build strong bonds and an expanded appreciation.

5.4.1.3 Effective Communication. As shared before, communication is a priority for each group. Communication plays a role in the creation and definition of the teams but also in their overall success.

Senior executive team meetings are not a new idea. In each case study, the groups used these formats to stay connected and to keep a vital dialogue going that is centered around crucial information and projects. Each group indicated that the meetings are not used to “kill time,” but to build the organizations. They try to determine when a written report, memo, or brief will be a better method to share information rather than individual reporting. The key to each group’s successful communication is using the time to deal with issues, jointly problem-solve, and to reinforce their relationships and the direction of the organizations.

Establishing clear, strong and dynamic communication process and protocols was important to each case study organization. Each person, during the individual interviews, shared their continuing commitment to open communication and acknowledged that it is a continuing challenge to accomplish. They all also indicated that they are regularly seeking ways to improve their communication and to use their meeting time more effectively.

In exploring what factor contributed to team success, the groups identified: Communication, Trust, Honesty, Respect, Strong Leadership and Strong Vision as key indicators.

5.4.1.3.1 Communicate all information. Open, honest transparent information sharing was identified as an important strategy in the study. Each case study organization endeavored to share both positive and negative information. Participants shared that in the absence of clear communication, people guess, assume, or create their own scenarios. When this happens, the mission of the organization or expectations can become misguided. They also felt that by communicating all information, they build a high level of trust.

In the literature, Lencioni asserted that, “Great teams do not hold back with one another...They are unafraid to air their dirty laundry, they admit their mistakes, their weaknesses, and their concerns without fear of reprisal” (Lencioni, 2014, p. 44). He used this concept to further highlight his finding that trust is a cornerstone of teambuilding and development. He further stated that trust is the foundation of real teamwork (p. 44).

Each group in the study believed in strong proactive communication. As evidenced in the examples below as well as in the findings presented in Chapter 4, communication continues to be a consistent theme and value.

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In the CUSD, they have a formal communication staff and maintain not only strong relationships with the news media, online community, and their stakeholders, but also have a website and established communication strategies and protocols. Their communications staff is tasked with developing consistent messaging for the organization and in providing ways to proactively present information to both the public and their staff.

AT SSC, each senior executive team member is trained and handles communication within their areas of responsibility. Their daily newsletter is their organization's primary source of information dissemination along with their presentations at public events. Timeliness in their communication is seen as a part of their protocols. They endeavor to provide accurate information to their clients on a regular basis.

The FCMAT team uses outside public relations help as well as maintains a strong social media presence via their website, list serves, publications, and media relations. They continually update their materials to reflect current updates and changes as well as to educate the education community. They routinely share reports and whitepapers that will inform and educate.

AF has large public information and marketing teams that work with senior executive leadership team members to create media, social media, publications, their website, and other communication strategies. They actively communicate and anticipate potential difficulties and prepare when possible. The senior leader as well as the senior executive team are trained in dealing with the media, using social media and in general public relations skills.

As the examples would indicate, each group values good communication and proactively shares information on a regular basis. They also all use multiple modalities to accomplish this. The concept of good communication is a continual priority in each organization and time and resources are used to regularly improve and update their processes and methods.

5.4.1.3.2 Communicate with all staff. Regular communication with all staff was another recommendation from the case studies. One issue that was identified, was the need to include all staff in the sharing of information. Allowing information to be held by a select few when the entire organization can benefit from the knowledge was described as a detriment to promoting a positive culture. Encouraging and promoting open, two-way communication with the entire staff was presented as a bonus to building a strong culture.

5.4.1.3.3 Strategic planning. While many organizations have strategic plans, they are not always viewed as a driving force for the organization. In the case studies, each group had an articulated strategic plan that included short- and long-term goals and objectives. They

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viewed this strategic plan as a direction-setting document for their organizations and a plan of action.

A strong strategic plan allows organizations to know where they are going in the long and short term and can identify priorities for all employees. The participants in our case studies had knowledge of their strategic plans and actively participated in their development, execution, and review.

5.4.1.4 Addressing Conflict

5.4.1.4.1 Key success indicators. Throughout this study, concepts such as communication, leadership, vision, trust, culture, accountability, honesty, integrity, reputation, and team building emerged consistently. Each successful team in this study exemplified these values.

History, reputation, longevity of the team and commitment to the organization were also addressed. Clarity and a strong vision were predominant in each organization.

5.4.1.4.2 Addressing challenges. In each case study, the organizations have faced political, financial, and a variety of other challenges. The challenges may be legal, financial, one of resources, or even natural disasters. Each of the organizations have faced some type of challenge and has not only weathered it but succeeded despite it.

5.4.1.5 Team meetings/time. Communication was a priority. It was defined as regular meetings, calls, emails, and conversations. Each group had a variation in their methods, calendars, and expectations for frequency, but all promoted open, honest, timely and transparent information.

The Clovis Unified School District, (CUSD) and School Services of California (SSC) have a standing four to eight-hour mandatory meeting each week. Attendance is required and the meetings are used to address issues, share information, review plans, and to spend time understanding and promoting their work and their relationships. Both groups expressed that this time spent with their senior executive team was crucial for their continuing success.

American Fidelity (AF) and the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) had a different but also defined methodology for communication. They have regular meetings, quarterly or semi-annual retreats or intensive meetings, and use technology such as Skype or webinars to keep in touch and informed. Both groups have members working remotely from each other and they use these techniques to maintain communication.

5.4.1.6 Strategic vision. The concept of strong vision was an important term. Not just organizational vision, but meaning a strong and powerful commitment to their mission, vision, goals and priorities. Each group felt that knowing who the organization is, what it stands for, and

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where it is going was an essential element of their success. To that end, without exception, each senior team interviewed was able to clearly articulate their mission, vision, goals, and those of their organization.

5.4.2 Sustain

5.4.2.1 Personal responsibility

5.4.2.1.1 Sustaining and promoting team stability and effectiveness. Since each organization has a long-term history, the issue of sustaining and promoting team stability and effectiveness was another important theme. As evidenced in the histories of each case study organization, each senior leadership team has a long-term history of stability. This stability is evident by the low turnover of team members, the lack of dissent or dysfunction, and the pride and commitment to the organizations by the individual members. This stability has played a role in their ability to create and sustain team effectiveness.

A key component of this stability was desire. Team members wanted to be on these senior executive teams and to work for these organizations. They have choices and other organizations may offer better compensation or perks to employees. So it is useful to consider: what keeps them involved and vital.

Flexibility is listed as a factor. Flexibility with time, resources, training, and the ability to work outside one's job description are attributed as issues in their success. In the case studies, SSC, FCMAT, and AF saw that their flexibility as a company allowed them to change direction, try new initiatives, and to be nimble and flexible as organizations.

CUSD did not cite flexibility as a key indicator. They see this as an area that they need to address. Often, their traditions and values, based on early leadership, still hold within the organization.

5.4.2.2 Team development

5.4.2.2.1 Collaboration. Collaboration was identified as a theme for each case study. Collaboration with the senior leader and the senior executive team was an expectation. Collaboration within the organizations was also identified as a core value. Each group recognized that their success was inextricably tied to that of their employees, clients, and key stake holders.

Each case study encouraged collaboration by expecting their senior executive team members to be involved outside the organization. By collaborating with outside organizations, professional associations, and local groups, senior executive team members would share information and act as organizational ambassadors, as well as also gain information.

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CUSD's team holds memberships in all state and national educational agencies relevant to their work. They also have identified relationships within the community with government agencies and local groups. They support this by giving time and resources to allow for participation.

SSC, FCMAT, and AF also encourage and support team members' involvement in internal and external organizations. They want their senior executive team to be visible and available to organizations and groups. Each group sends key leaders to present at conferences and symposiums, asks them to write whitepapers and articles, and to play an active role in identified key groups. They also will contribute financially to outside organizations to support leadership training and education.

Collaboration can take many different forms. In this study, collaboration was identified as involvement and support of their organizations, colleague organizations, and the opportunity to play a role in the success of the industry. It was an active and ongoing activity for each group.

Desire to be a part of the team was an overarching theme. Each senior executive team valued the organization and wanted to be there. They saw that the reputation of the organization, their high standards, leadership, and ongoing mentoring, solid compensation strategy, and flexibility as key factors.

Each case study subject has a known reputation and history of stability. All teams and organizations had normal employee turnover and a high rate of retention for senior staff. The standards for the organization were clearly articulated. Not only was there a mission, vision, or strategic plan, but each group spent time reviewing beliefs, values, and parameters. The organizations know who they are and what they want to accomplish. They also know how they want to be viewed and seek to hire people who share their values and beliefs.

5.4.2.2.2 Maintain and promote the organization's culture. In each case study, the organization's history and leadership were embedded in their culture and their work. During a challenge, their demonstrated track records for dealing with challenges and surviving was recognized. When faced with a challenge, the core values and leadership of the organization kept team members connected to their personal culture.

5.4.2.2.3 Create motivation. In the event of a catastrophe, crisis, or challenge, creating motivation can be a complex and complicated subject. In the case studies, two of the teams, SSC and AF, support the concept that creating motivation for employees and senior executive team members is valuable. They accomplish this, for example, by financial rewards, public acknowledgement, promotions, or team recognition. Senior executive team members want the

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organization to succeed, and keeping employees and leaders highly motivated is an ongoing activity.

5.4.2.2.4 Maintaining stability. Employee turnover is a common challenge in all industries and education is no exception. Staff memberships change due to family moves, retirements, or advancement to name the most common types. While there is always a natural level of turnover, working to maintain senior executive team stability was valuable to the organizations in my case studies. The case study participants believed, as stated in the interviews, that a part of their success was directly attributed to this stability.

A senior executive level team that works well with each other benefits the organization. In the event of a crisis, the executive team knows each other and what to do. The participants shared that they knew how to communicate with each other, understood individual and group roles, and responsibilities, and saved time with this knowledge. They also support the senior leader and know the organization. Keeping this team intact and flourishing has been a positive for each case study. AS indicated in the study, this stability is evidenced in the data sets and is an indicator of their scores in the DiSC/Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team assessments. They support the concepts of trust, conflict, accountability, commitment, and results. These dimensions, as indicated in the interviews, were enhanced by their long-term relationships and stability.

In order to maintain this stability, senior executive leaders in my study recognized that they must keep compensation competitive, recognize and value team members, and keep the group engaged and involved. Succession planning and group involvement in the selection when a vacancy occurs may also be a key. While not all groups spoke of succession planning the Hiring Values Rated and interviews gave strong indication of the importance of the selection process to the team.

Each group indicated that making hiring a priority and focus also contributed to their success during challenging times. They tried to hire highly qualified people and keep their focus on whatever challenges they faced. Highly qualified was a quantifier for several of the groups. It was described as making sure that the people being hired not only had experience, expertise, and knowledge of the organization, but would also match the culture and values of the team.

5.4.2.3 Meeting effectiveness. In reviewing our case studies, the participants often discussed meeting effectiveness as a strategy and method to sustain their team. In their comments, it was often noted that the value of the meeting was not measured by the time, but by the actions and the relationships. Each case study senior executive team had protocols and communication strategies that were used in meetings. All held regular meetings and

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encouraged open dialog and group problem solving. The common theme was that these meetings allowed them to build trust, practice open dialog, debate and conflict, hold each other accountable, renew their commitment to each other and the organizations, and obtain positive results. These actions follow directly the Lencioni (2012) Five Behaviors and are found in all of the case study data as well as in the literature.

5.4.2.4 Continuity. In theme two, the issue of continuity was presented as a tool or method to create and sustain team effectiveness. This continuity was reflected in the team membership and longevity of service in our case studies. Continuity was presented by the participants as a method to preserve organizational culture and history, encourage good relationships, build trust, and to support group achievement and results. A team that has continuity of service was able to strategically use their time to address issues and build the team rather than doing introductory or basic team building activities.

5.4.3 Theme 2 Connections

The literature and research connections for this theme are very closely aligned. Chapter 2 of this study includes multiple examples of strategies and methodologies used by teams to create and sustain the team and to enhance their effectiveness. Levi (2019) found that teams face issues of managing conflict, power, social influence, decision making, leadership, problem solving, creating and diversity. Fowler (1995) identified five common characteristics for effective teams, Morel (2014) identified specialized skills to promote positive collaboration, and Sevier (2003) identified twelve effective team qualities for a senior team. These examples are among many in our literature review that highlighted the tools needed for a team to create and sustain effectiveness.

Due to the breadth of the literature reviewed and that mentioned in Chapter 2, the examples used in this connection with Theme 2 are designed to show the connection rather than review the entire body of research. The methods and strategies that contribute to an effective team are exhaustive. The sub themes of this highlight those identified in our study by the participants and are in concert with the information presented in our literature survey.

5.5 Theme 3: The Impact of The Senior Leader on Team Effectiveness

5.5.1 Leadership Style

Leadership and ongoing mentoring were a consistent theme in the data from this study. In each case study, as described previously, there is a clearly established organizational chart and understanding of roles, responsibilities, and authorities. Each senior or executive team is encouraged to participate fully in the leadership process. Each case study has experienced

longevity in their senior leader and in their teams. Mentoring is an ongoing process and was identified as a method used in each group to build relationships and enhance skills.

5.5.2 Team Leadership Methodology

5.5.2.1 Information recommendations and lessons. Much of the replicable information, recommendations or lessons learned, have already been communicated in these findings. Some may seem to the reader as commonsensical and not unusual. What is unusual in this study is that each of the case study groups embodies these issues and has for decades. Many organizations do some of these things, but few, in my experience, embody all of them.

In addition to the concepts already stated, the case study senior executive teams also commented on the issues of ethical leadership, defined standards, communication with all staff levels, strategic planning, focus, and core values.

Because leadership matters, a long-term goal for this study is that the information will help educational agencies build solid, strong, and effective executive leadership teams. By examining four successful organizations, the goal was to identify what makes them successful and to see how others can use this to maximize their effectiveness.

5.5.3 Theme 3 Connections

Theme 3 discusses the impact of the senior leader on the creation and success of an effective team. It is the area of research that could be designated as the sole aspect for a study such as this. Leadership and the role of the senior leader encompasses every aspect of team development. It is a theme that weaves itself through the literature review and findings. The impact of the senior leader should not be minimized or excluded as a key dimension of effective teams. Senior leaders must understand the relationships between individuals and teams to develop and relate to team dynamics (Jai et al., 2016). Lencioni, (2012) also suggests that leaders guide their organizations through six critical questions. These include why, how and what questions that allow leaders to determine their philosophies, protocols and team dynamics.

In Chapter 2, the concept of traditional and transformation leadership was discussed. Theme 3 incorporates the dynamic of the transformational leader with that of a differentiated leadership style. The senior leader described in this chapter does include much of the literature concepts but uses our data sets and research to further define the subject area. Transformational leaders, or leaders who are adaptable to change, often provide a flexible approach to teams and team building that enhances innovation (Sperber & Linder, 2016). This flexible approach can allow great leaders to serve, rather than rule, because they recognize that those they lead entrust them with leadership responsibilities (Hackman & Johnson 2013, p. 21).

5.6 Summary

As evidenced by the literature review and the findings of this study, the main themes and sub themes of this study are closely aligned. There continues to be a need for continuous and relevant job based professional learning for school leaders (LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Hammond, 2010; Honig 2008; Peurach, 2019). This continuous learning should combine leadership with team development as components for success. By drawing on the social information processing theory and adaptive leadership theory, it can be proposed that leader humility facilitates shared leadership by promoting-claiming and leadership granting interactions among team members (Chiu, Owens, & Tesluk, 2016).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This completion of this thesis has reminded me of building a 3-dimensional puzzle. As I began the study, chapter one presented a beginning picture of the objective or projected potential outcomes. The rationale for the study along with the primary and additional research questions, presented a picture of what the study hoped to accomplish. Chapter 2 reviewed the current literature. It established a context upon which to build the puzzle. Chapter 3 introduced a set of directions on how to complete the puzzle. It addressed the basis of the study, how it would be accomplished, the philosophy of the study and in a sense, a map or directions revealing how the puzzle would be completed. Chapter 4 presented the building blocks for the puzzle. It contained all the pieces of the puzzle. As you read Chapter 4, you saw that it included the results of the DiSC and Five Behaviors Assessment, the SWOT analysis, the Hiring Values Rating and the results of the interviews and focus groups. These data sets were key pieces to the puzzle. It was the chapter that not only reviewed all the data but reviewed the synthesis and substantiation of the information. It included all the necessary pieces needed to put the puzzle together. As it integrated and synthesized the research, it created the foundation and first clear picture of what the puzzle would be. Chapter 5 integrated the literature and findings and created an even clearer picture of the puzzle that would address the primary and additional research questions. In Chapter 5, I began building the puzzle and revealing the dimensions and dynamics. This chapter, Chapter 6, will reveal the completed puzzle by summarizing and offering conclusions. This chapter will offer insights into the study, explore silences and limitations, review opportunities for implementation, and recommendations for future studies. A 3-dimensional puzzle presents a greater challenge to assemble than the most intricate flat puzzle. In a traditional puzzle, you see a completed picture and then use the pieces provided to create the picture. In a 3-dimensional puzzle, the process requires you to not only connect the pieces, but to add dimensions to them that brings the figure to life. This puzzle offered a multifaceted and multi layered picture and structure. Unlike the traditional puzzle, this 3-dimension structure allows you view the completed puzzle from many angles. It provides an appropriate analogy how I view this study. It was and is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. Depending on the angle you view it and how you view the information, you will explore a complex amount of data and synthesis. The 3-dimension puzzle analogy and this research

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offers only one representation of research that addresses the issue of creating and sustaining effective teams.

This chapter begins with an introduction to the conclusion of the study, provides a summary, evaluates and reviews implications, insights and outcomes, addresses the silences and limitations of the study, and offers recommendations for future study and utilization.

6.2 Summary

In undertaking this mixed methods case study, addressing how leadership team effectiveness could be created and sustained in educational organizations was the major focus. For the purposes of this study, the mixed methods approach was used to create a structure to devise, collect and analyze data. Both qualitative and quantitative measures were used in the data collection. By answering the primary question and the additional study questions, the hope was to create research that could empower and promote strong leadership teams. If the research could identify data that could be replicated in other agencies, it had the potential to add to the field of research on team development and effectiveness. This study may promote further study that would enhance the field of leadership team development. By carefully studying my selected case study organizations, I could find out how these groups were able to create and sustain leadership and to understand the factors, methods and strategies that they utilized and explore the role of the senior leader. These findings may potentially contribute to greater knowledge and understanding.

In Chapter 4 I identified three themes that originated from the data. In Chapter 5, I expanded upon these themes and incorporated the current literature into the development of each theme. In this chapter, I will summarize and identify these themes and share my conclusions. This study was designed to address one primary question: How can leadership team effectiveness be created and sustained in educational organizations? Two additional questions were identified to help to clarify and expand upon the primary questions: How do organizational factors or leadership methods contribute to creating or sustaining effective teams and How does the senior leader impact team success?

During the analysis and assessment of my data, three themes emerged. Each of the three themes addressed each of the primary and additional questions and expands upon the issues raised in the study. In earlier chapters, care was given to define and clearly represent the meanings and nuances of the questions and to address why these issues were important for study. It is my intent that these themes and this research will contribute to the subject of team effectiveness and encourage future study.

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In exploring the phenomenon of continually changing and evolving organizational environments and structures in 21st century educational organizations, I recognized both in the literature review and in the study that continued employment of outdated leadership theories has not been valuable (Bennis, 2013; Latham, 2014). While the literature was less than anticipated in relation to team effectiveness and development, it did suggest that leaders often no longer practiced traditional leadership styles and have begun a transitioning toward leadership approaches that include practicing several different leadership styles simultaneously and an individual adaptation of methods (Derue & Wellman, 2009; Kaigh, Driscoll, Tucker & Lam, 2014; Srinivasan & Pauwels, 2010). These styles and practices gave me the initial illumination and highlighted the impact of a leader or leadership that valued teams and recognized that traditional academically recommended leadership strategies were evolving.

6.3 Review Identified Themes and Implications

Utilizing the data sets from the DiSC/Five Behaviors of an Effective Team assessment, SWOT analysis, Hiring Values Ratio and interviews, the study was able to synthesize the data to begin to answer the primary and additional research questions. Interviews with 25 case study participants in the four selected organizations were conducted utilizing the Creswell (2018) structured and semi-structured participant interview format. The data produced from these interviews along with the assessments supported the emerging theories of these three themes presented in this study.

The Five Behaviors dimensions of Trust, Conflict, Commitment, Accountability, and Results (Lencioni, 2012) were used as a basis for the foundation of the study. In each of the three themes, you will see the key elements of the Five Behaviors exemplified in each dynamic. Since each of the case study organizations senior leaders and senior executive teams scored above the normative data averages for each dimension that fosters and promotes effective teams, this became a foundational part of the study.

6.3.1 Theme One: Factors that Contribute to Team Effectiveness

Theme one identifies factors that contribute to team effectiveness. It enhances the multi-dimensional and multi-faceted approach to the topic by exploring team effectiveness from multiple angles. Just as indicated in my 3-dimensional puzzle analogy- theme one looks at many aspects, from multiple perspectives. It also provides a foundation for the creation of an effective team.

The factors that contribute to this theme are foundational, fundamental and show evidence that creating and sustaining effective teams is an action oriented, deliberate effort.

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Each case study showed evidence that to create the team and sustain its effectiveness, a conscious and deliberate course of action was used.

The factors that contribute to team effectiveness include a strong and positive team culture. The role of the senior leader, their attitude, philosophy and orientation to shared decision making and creating a strong and positive culture was also a recognized foundational factor. This culture is created and sustained through communication, trust, honesty, respect, leadership and vision. While each group approached the subject from a unique perspective, the results generated a positive and powerful team culture. Theme one addresses the question of identifying what creates and sustains a team.

6.3.2 Theme Two: Methods to Create and Sustain Effective Teams

Theme Two addressed specific methods that were employed by my case study organizations to create and sustain effective teams. Theme One, provided the foundation and Theme Two, provides specific methodologies and strategies that created and sustained team effectiveness that could be replicated in educational organizations. While each case study organization had unique organizational factors and a variety of leadership methods, the concepts in theme two were prevalent and relevant in each organization. Theme 2 is also aligned to the DiSC/Five Behaviors dimensions of effective team leadership.

Theme Two was divided into two sections and was centered on defining specific methods to create and sustain effective teams. Section one addressed the creation of the team and section two addressed sustaining on going effective teams. As indicated in Chapters 4 and 5 as well as additional information contained in the appendices, the Five Behaviors values continue to influence this theme. In following the 3-dimensional analogy, not only is Theme Two providing puzzle pieces but the ability to connect the pieces together.

In creating effective teams, methods employed include team building, ethical leadership, relationship building, communication, transparency and sharing of information with all staff, addressing conflict and challenges, effective use of team meetings, time and the value of strategic planning.

In sustaining effective teams, the methods of supporting and encouraging personal responsibility, ongoing team development, continual collaboration, maintaining and promoting a positive culture, creating motivation for team members and maintaining team stability were identified.

In Theme Two- the methodologies were deliberate and continual both in the creation and sustainability of the effective teams. While each methodology was utilized, it was done in an individual style and approach that was relevant for the organization and their specific needs and

challenges. They were the directions that were used to create and build the 3-Dimensional team puzzle for each group. While the outcomes from the study in this theme are similar, their utilization is individualized and customized for the organization and to meet organizational needs.

6.3.3 Theme Three: The Impact of the Senior Leader on Team Effectiveness

It could be argued that the order of the themes should be changed, and this theme moved to the first position. Placing this theme in third position and utilizing the information to answer the answer the last additional research question was a deliberate and intentional decision. This study was developed to study how to create and sustain team effectiveness in educational organizations. It began with the concept of team effectiveness and concludes the outcomes with this theme. It would be a failure of the study to omit the importance of the role of the senior leader in the creation and sustainability of effective teams. The senior leader plays a pivotal and important role in each theme. Their value is woven into the outcomes of the study. In Theme One- they play a role in the development of the foundation, in Theme Two- you can see their impact into the execution of the methodologies and strategies, and finally in Theme Three, you understand the value and impact the senior leader more clearly. Like the senior leaders in each of my case study organizations, the impact of the senior leader includes empowering others to lead, recognizes the strengths and assets of the senior executive team, and supports the work of the team. While the senior leader has additional and expanded authority, they view themselves as an integral part of the senior executive leadership team.

Theme Three looks at two significant dynamics and dimensions of the impact and role of the senior leader. It shifts the traditional leadership role of a top leader providing direction and holding responsibility and power to that of a transformational leader who shares and empowers their senior executive team to not only do the work but share in the shape and direction of the organization. This changes the traditional dynamic of a senior leader as leader and team members as followers to concept of the senior leader leading from the center rather than the top of the organization or team.

Theme Three promotes the concept that the style and philosophy of the senior leader are strategic and important to the creation and sustainability of team effectiveness. The senior leaders in my case studies were self-aware, intentional, and confident in their leadership. They were not threatened by the success of their team but were energized by the team's successes. They were intentional in their approaches, in their selection of senior executive team members and were direct in their communication and in establishing protocols and procedures. The senior leaders had a variance of leadership styles in the DiSC instrument (see Appendix, page 174),

but used a high level of emotional awareness and intelligence. They were mentors and role models, readily available.

The philosophy of the senior leader toward team leadership was also an important dimension of my study. As indicated in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, evidence of their agreement with the DiSC/ Five Behaviors concepts and their support of a distributed and shared leadership philosophy. The impact and the role of senior leader is explored in each theme and highlighted in the findings.

6.4 Silences and Limitations of the Study

A large amount of data was amassed in this thesis in completing the mixed methods approach for the study. While I believe the data, sets are relevant and academically viable, there were areas that were not addressed. The study did not address issues of diversity and inclusion. Each of my teams was limited in their diversity and were largely homogenous. Gender was not addressed directly, and each case study showed a participation of men and women. Educationally the data includes a similar educational experience. The study did not show the impact on undergraduate vs graduate level education. The ages of each case study participant were of interest. In three of the four case studies, the senior executive teams were composed of persons 40 years of age or older. The study lacked information from individuals under 40 years of age and with a shorter professional career or time in the organizations.

Since only organizations with identified successful or effective teams were utilized, information on what contributes or causes ineffective teams was not addressed. An analysis of common issues that exist in these types of organizations may prove to be beneficial in further study.

The utilization of the Lencioni research and the DiSC/Five Behaviors Assessment as well as the SWOT analysis and Hiring Values Ratio are not traditional academic approaches. This could be viewed as a limitation to the study. While these issues have been addressed and discussed earlier in the study, they should be revisited as a possible issue of limitations.

The use of four case studies in this mixed methods approach could also be considered a limitation to the study. While the number of organizations and members meets basic scholarly research requirements, a larger sampling of organizations and participants could potentially generate a different picture should be considered.

The potential bias of the researcher should also be mentioned. While, every effort was made to maintain accepted scholarly practices in the development and execution of this study, there remains a potential of bias. To remove that potential, utilization of the mixed methods approach and use of qualitative and quantitative research and multiple data sets was employed.

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The researcher also worked diligently to create clean and accurate records of interviews and to protect the integrity of the research. All required elements of the University of Pretoria Ethics requirements were met.

In the earlier plans for this study, the ability to link team effectiveness to student achievement and performance was a potential outcome. Unfortunately, after extensive research, the researcher was not able to access relevant data-bases that might have illuminated these connections and correlates. While there were some references that promoted the concept in the literature, it was impossible to prove the direct link due to the high variety of variables that could impact on student performance.

A final limitation of the study that should be noted is the limitations encountered in the literature review. While the literature review is an accurate assessment and review of what is available, much of the research on effective teams was created from 1960 to 1990. Surprisingly, the amount of current literature available was limited. Until days before this study was submitted a continual review of literature was conducted and the materials updated.

6.5 Implications

When this study began, I understood that these four case studies organizations were successful and had an established track record and reputation. Each team had an established senior leader and employed a senior executive leadership team. I did not know how they had created their teams or how they managed to sustain it in a constantly evolving and changing environment. I believed that the senior leader played a role in their success, but I was unsure of what that role was and how they motivated their team and managed to sustain the team and the organization. In other words, I knew that each case study had success- but I did not recognize how they did it or whether it would be replicable or appropriate for other organizations.

As I finalize this study, what I know now is summarized in the themes identified. I now recognize that sustaining leadership team effectiveness is an on-going, deliberate and relationship directed process. It requires a leader who is unafraid to share information, authority, and responsibility as well as recognition with their team. As a leader of a large organization, I was predisposed to value the role of the senior leader. In my research, I strove to be open minded and empirical in my review of the senior leaders. As I assessed and analyzed their leadership styles, both using the data sets and, in the interviews, and through my observations, their humility, understanding of human motivation and relationship building, emotional intelligence and willingness to trust were evident. The senior leader and senior executive team members modeled leadership and the concepts presented by this study. My view of a traditional leader was modified into that of a transformational team-oriented leader.

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The motivation, dedication, and passion of the senior executive teams and their desire to be a part of the organization were also identified as a key indicator for organizational success. Wanting to be a part of the team, wanting to succeed, wanting your colleagues to succeed and caring deeply about your work and reputation were foundational. The amount of time and dedication evidenced in the case study research as well as the openness and sincerity of the teams was refreshing.

Finally, the issue of time was an unexpected dynamic in my research. While I understood that time is required, the amount of time, the multiple methods used to communicate and share decision making, the time to build relationships, the time to understand the dynamics of the issues, and the time to refine the solutions to complex issues was an unexpected aspect of the study. In the beginning of this study, I viewed staff meetings as a regular communication channel with a fixed schedule, start and stop time as well as a meeting protocol. I viewed them as a limited experience with low value. Today, I view staff meetings and time spent together as a foundational aspect of creating and sustaining effective teams and one of the best methods to create ongoing success. While schedules and protocols were evidenced, the work of the team and the needs of the organization drove the use of time and meeting dynamics.

6.6 Recommendations

In completing this study, the three-dimensional puzzle that has emerged shows three areas for future recommendations.

- Further Study
- Practice
- Education and Training

6.6.1 Recommendations for Further Study

The replication of this study with a variety of case study participants who are identified as effective and ineffective teams/ organizations would be beneficial. Using the same data sets and structured and semi structured interviews, looking at the same data would be of value. It would be beneficial to explore whether the three themes identified in this study would remain constant.

Another study with a variety of men and women of multiple generations and different nationalities/ethnicities, education and work experience would also be beneficial. It would be valuable to know whether the ages and nationalities, ethnicities have a different view point or perspective that would contribute to building and creating effective teams. It could also study whether the amount of education or length of employment or individual leadership expertise contributed to the creation and sustainability of the team.

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A study of school systems or organizations of similar size, geography and student populations would also be a welcomed addition to this research. Exploring the dynamics of similar systems with a different set of challenges and an impoverished socio-economic base would be of interest. Addressing unique challenges of diverse populations would also give a new perspective to this research.

This study chose one school system, one state agency, and two for profit educational agencies as case studies. Additional studies that were limited in scope to school systems only, educational state agencies, or for-profit educational organization only would be of interest. In this study, the concept that creating and sustaining team effectiveness has common themes and understanding would be questioned and validated with additional study.

Based upon the results of this study, it is recommended that further research be conducted on the areas mentioned previously but could also address issues relating to women in leadership, the impact of education and experience on leadership team effectiveness, and the study of leadership utilizing a distributed or shared decision-making approach. Each of these areas, coupled with the studies suggested would contribute to the research.

6.6.2 Recommendations for Practice

In assessing how this study could be utilized, it is important to note that in most organizations, teams just happen. They are formed by titles, necessity, and with political consequences among other reasons. Because of this, attention is paid to the expected results or outcomes for the teams, but very little time or resources is spent in the creation of the team or in exploring ways to improve teams or sustain them.

This study has revealed the importance of the role of the senior leader in team development and sustainability. Each of the senior leaders in the case study organizations had been a part of successful teams as well as had the time in their position to learn skills and strategies to build their own teams. When they entered their respective roles, they brought their education and training, coupled with their team experiences and created each of the senior teams studied in this research. This study found that the team leaders took time to develop their teams, continually improve their teamwork and communication, and to build a senior executive leadership team who wanted to be a part of their organization.

In linking this research to recommendations to improve the practice of team development, I would recommend that senior leaders, as they form their senior executive leadership teams or other teams, spend time in thought, analysis and planning. Time to address what the goals of the team are, what the expected results for the team are, and to explore how the team will utilize their collective strengths would be beneficial. Knowing what to expect from

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the team would be an asset to the senior leader. The senior leader could use this opportunity to create the mission, vision, goals and expectations of the team before the team is formed.

The next recommendation is that the senior leader spend time addressing who should be on the team and why. Exploring roles and responsibilities and identifying leadership team styles and characteristics. The identification of the team could be done prior to formation and by understanding what each team member will contribute to the group, the team can be developed to ensure that the expertise needed is available. Again, this recommendation ties to the concept of the philosophy and management style of the team leader and the use of time required. Effective senior level teams, as indicated by our study, share leadership that includes planning and decision making. Having the right people on the teams and establishing the roles and protocols would enable the senior leader to be more effective.

As another utilization of this research, the concept of team development where the utilization of leadership styles or communication styles or assessments like the DiSC or Five Behaviors Assessment could be utilized. As a group, the newly formed team could explore their styles, communication needs, and the dynamics of the team. Again, the team in this practice, would deliberately be formed and developed. By utilizing assessment instruments as utilized in this case study, the group not only identified key behaviors of cohesive teams, but also were able to assess their strengths and potential challenges.

Regular self-evaluation or debriefing activities could also be a recommended practice. Each of the case study teams in this study, took time to reflect on their successes and failures. They employed good communication and leadership practices to not only hold themselves accountable, but to hold the group accountable for results. Regular reflection would improve performance and enhance effectiveness. As linked in our results, each of our case study senior executive teams spent time formally and informally practicing this recommendation.

As mentioned previously, time spent together was considered invaluable by each of our case study teams. To create and sustain team effectiveness, ensuring that the team has opportunities, either in person or using technology to be in contact with each other on a regular basis would enhance any team. Holding offsite meetings or retreats, spending social time together, and even sharing a ride to a meeting or an event, would enable the team members to build relationships and enhance communication.

Each of these areas for practice would fall under areas recommended in Chapter 2 in the Conceptual Framework. They would work on leadership, relationships and team effectiveness by employing any of these potential practices.

6.6.3 Recommendations for Education and Training

In most curriculum or credentialing programs for teacher or school administrators, the subject of leadership is addressed. It is often addressed as a study of theory rather than a practicum. In this study, the leadership may often be individual based as opposed to team leadership. To enhance current and future team leadership in education, utilizing the results of this study and literature review, the following recommendations are presented.

- Additional courses on individual leadership development.
 - These courses could include university level study in organizational development, individual leadership, communication, leadership styles, accountability methodology, and conflict resolution.
- Course work that includes practical application of team creation and development.
 - In addition to reading theory or case studies, providing students with course work that gives them hands on experience in working with adult level teams could provide valuable insight. Project based experience as a leader or member of a team could provide not only skills, but also insight into the student's leadership styles and needs.
- Mentoring of potential senior leaders in the creation and implementation of a team approach to leadership.
 - While executive coaching is often offered in the corporate world, in the education world, it has been fairly limited to the mentoring of classroom teachers. By providing senior leaders with a mentor well versed in team creation and development, a senior leader would have the opportunity to utilize expertise and address concerns or issues before they become challenges to the organizations.
- Enhanced research including case studies that address current generational, cultural and technological advancements in team development, effective meetings and promoting debate and discussion.

Teams are an evolving dynamic. Today, we have virtual global teams around the globe conducting business and we have school system using technology to hold virtual meetings and problem solve. Most leaders in education have no expertise in the use of virtual technology and limited use of technology for meeting effectiveness. This is an area where additional research and even additional university level courses would be appropriate.

As our education community continues to evolve, it would be unwise not to provide leadership and training on diversity, equity, and the appreciation of generational and cultural differences on team development. As multi generations work side by side, each brings a unique

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perspective and history. Include in these teams, religious, ethnic or other cultural differences, and without understanding how to blend and utilize these strengths, teams may falter.

Training and education in team development was once secured by people playing team sports or serving in the military. This limited the experience to a select group and provided an experience denied to most. By including this subject matter and potentially these ideas in university level education and training, there is a potential for advancement.

6.7 Conclusion

As I began this research, I was uncertain where it would lead. I believed then and continue to believe, that by studying and researching key performance indicators and looking at strategies and methodologies, I can identify best practices that can help to create and sustain team effectiveness. I initially thought that I would find specific logistical and concrete actions that if followed would promote the creation and sustainability of leadership teams. I had hoped to find a formula or equation that if followed, would ultimately create an effective team.

I end this thesis with a renewed appreciation for effective teams and with a continual desire to promote practices that create and sustain effective teams that promote effective leadership in education. I also understand now, using the 3-dimensional puzzle analogy, that there is no one size fits all approach. Each team will have a unique picture or structure. While there will be dimensions and pieces of the picture of structure that are similar, each successful and effective team will need to use a variety of strategies and methods to accomplish this. While I believe that this study explores and reveals valid methods and strategies, it must be customized to the organization. It is my desire that this research and what else is to come, will help to identify tools and techniques to accomplish this.

I also end this study with a renewed appreciation for senior leaders who empower, promote and support distributed leadership and authority and for the senior executive team members who make it happen. In our research, another approach to leadership developed: leading from the center. Rather than the traditional hierarchical approach to senior leadership, the concept of leading with your team and from the center of the team and organization emerged in the study. The new transformational approach to traditional leadership is a 21st Century and beyond concept that can motivate and inspire leaders to lead effectively.

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APPENDIX

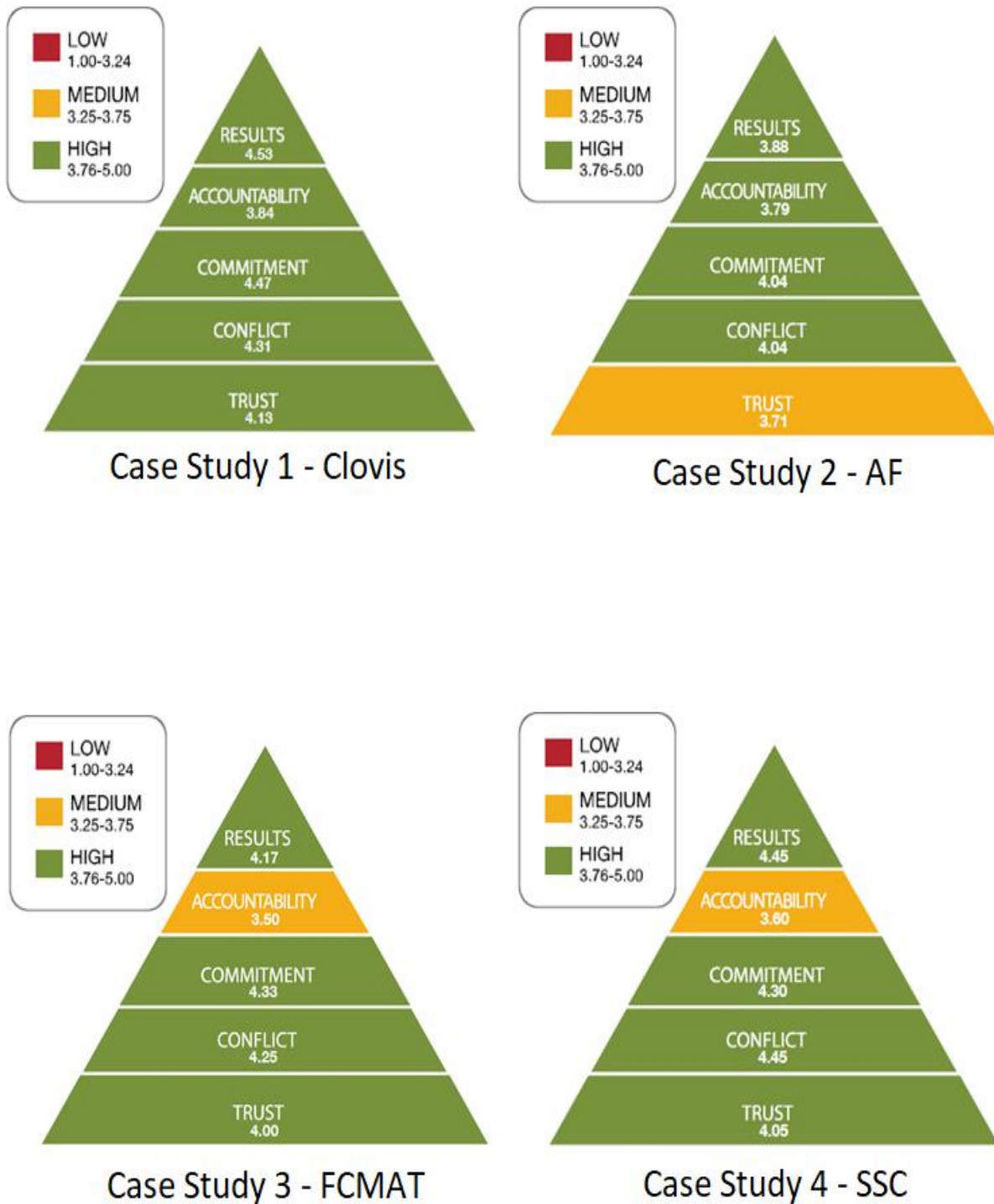


Figure A Five Behaviors case study comparisons. A review of the results from each cases study team report. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

■ Low: 1-3.24
 ■ Medium: 3.25-3.75
 ■ High: 3.76-5

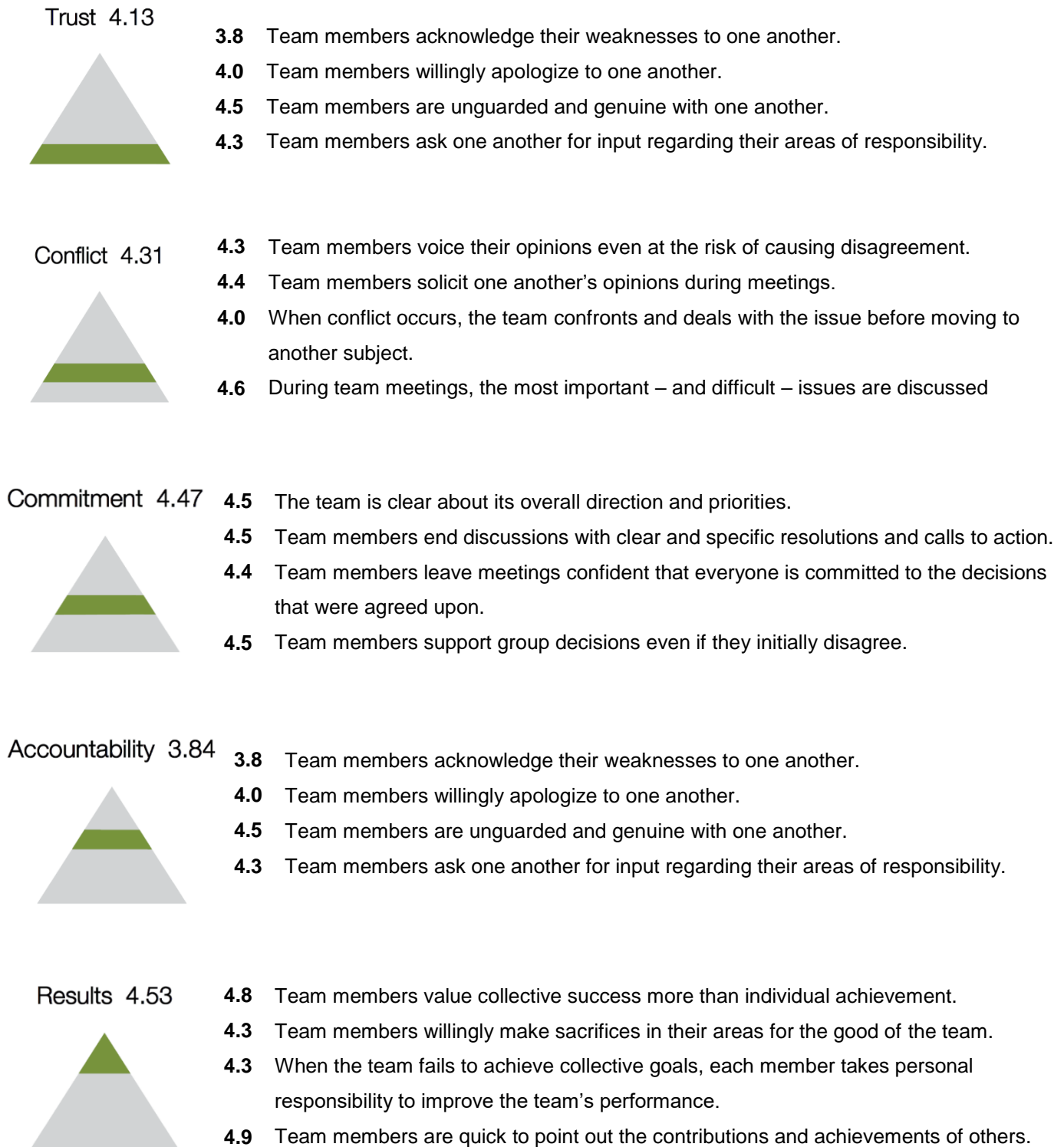


Figure B Five Behaviors results from Clovis USD showing team scores on each characteristic.

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Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

■ Low: 1-3.24
 ■ Medium: 3.25-3.75
 ■ High: 3.76-5

Trust 3.71



- 3.2** Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another.
- 4.0** Team members willingly apologize to one another.
- 3.7** Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.
- 4.0** Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility.

Conflict 4.04



- 3.8** Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement.
- 4.3** Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings.
- 4.0** When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issue before moving to another subject.
- 4.0** During team meetings, the most important – and difficult – issues are discussed

Commitment 4.04



- 4.5** The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities.
- 4.2** Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.
- 3.7** Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that were agreed upon.
- 3.8** Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagree.

Accountability 3.79



- 3.5** Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another.
- 3.8** Team members willingly apologize to one another.
- 3.5** Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.
- 4.3** Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility.

Results 3.88



- 3.8** Team members value collective success more than individual achievement.
- 4.0** Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.
- 3.7** When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance.
- 4.0** Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.

Figure C Five Behaviors results from American Fidelity showing team scores on each characteristic. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

■ Low: 1-3.24
 ■ Medium: 3.25-3.75
 ■ High: 3.76-5

Trust 4.00



- 3.5 Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another.
- 3.8 Team members willingly apologize to one another.
- 4.0 Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.
- 4.7 Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility.

Conflict 4.25



- 4.3 Team members voice their opinions even at the risk of causing disagreement.
- 4.3 Team members solicit one another's opinions during meetings.
- 4.0 When conflict occurs, the team confronts and deals with the issue before moving to another subject.
- 4.3 During team meetings, the most important – and difficult – issues are discussed

Commitment 4.33



- 4.7 The team is clear about its overall direction and priorities.
- 3.8 Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.
- 4.2 Team members leave meetings confident that everyone is committed to the decisions that were agreed upon.
- 4.7 Team members support group decisions even if they initially disagree.

Accountability 3.50



- 3.5 Team members acknowledge their weaknesses to one another.
- 3.7 Team members willingly apologize to one another.
- 3.2 Team members are unguarded and genuine with one another.
- 3.7 Team members ask one another for input regarding their areas of responsibility.

Results 4.17



- 4.7 Team members value collective success more than individual achievement.
- 3.8 Team members willingly make sacrifices in their areas for the good of the team.
- 3.7 When the team fails to achieve collective goals, each member takes personal responsibility to improve the team's performance.
- 4.5 Team members are quick to point out the contributions and achievements of others.

Figure D Five Behaviors results from the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team showing team scores on each characteristic. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

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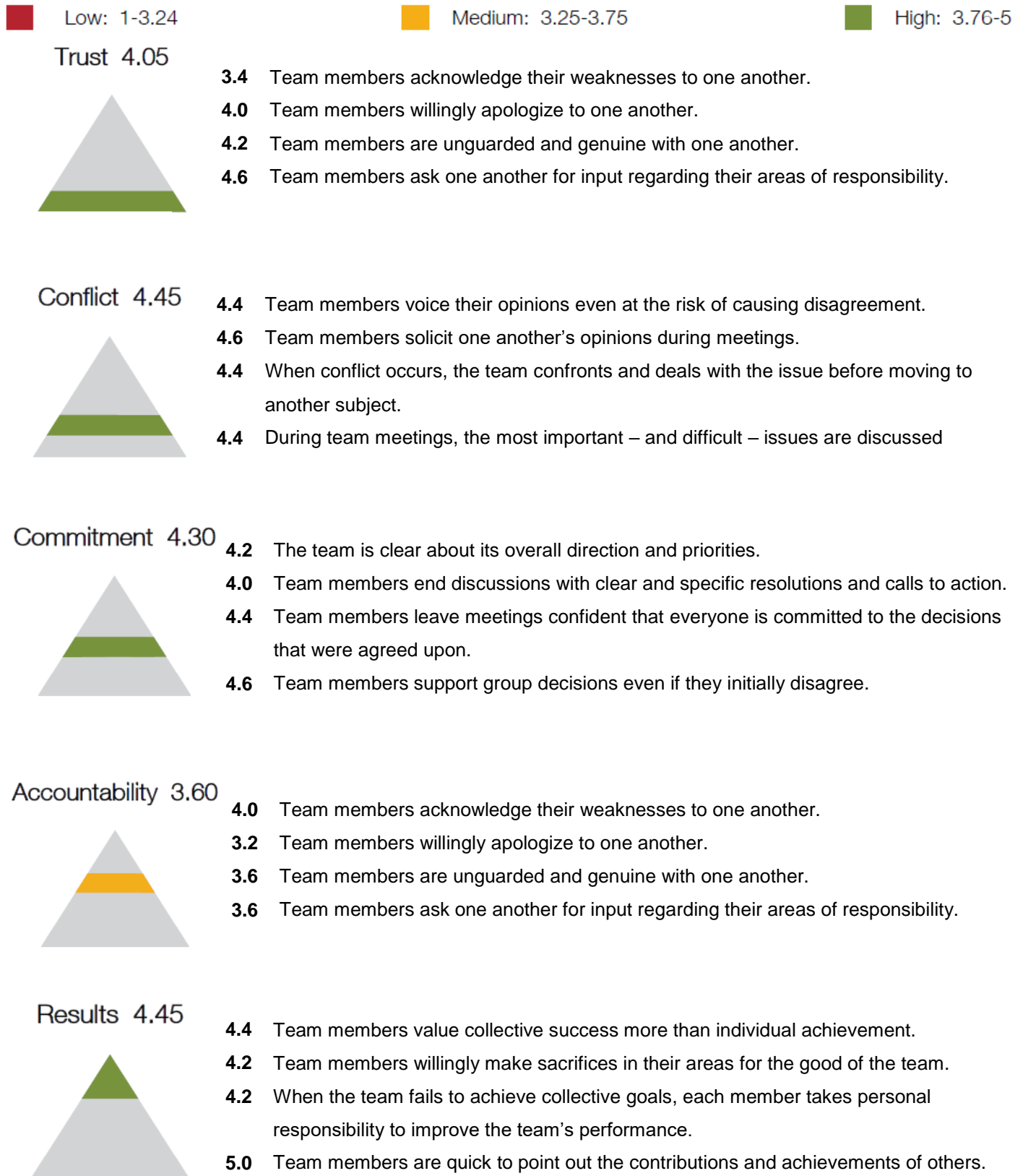


Figure E Five Behaviors results from School Services of California showing team scores on each characteristic. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

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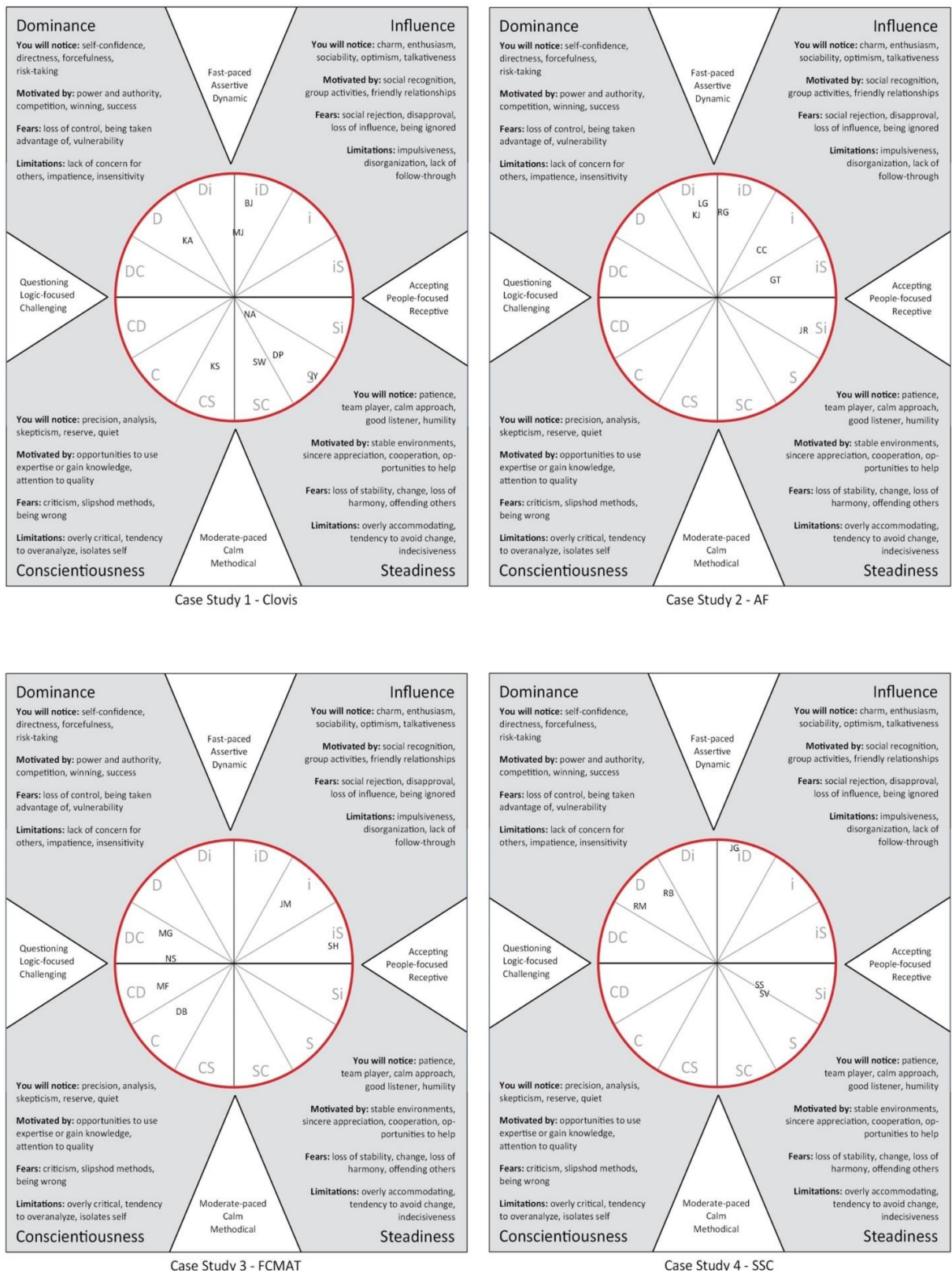


Figure F Comparison of case study DiSC Team Map. This graphic shows the comparisons of the styles of each team member. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

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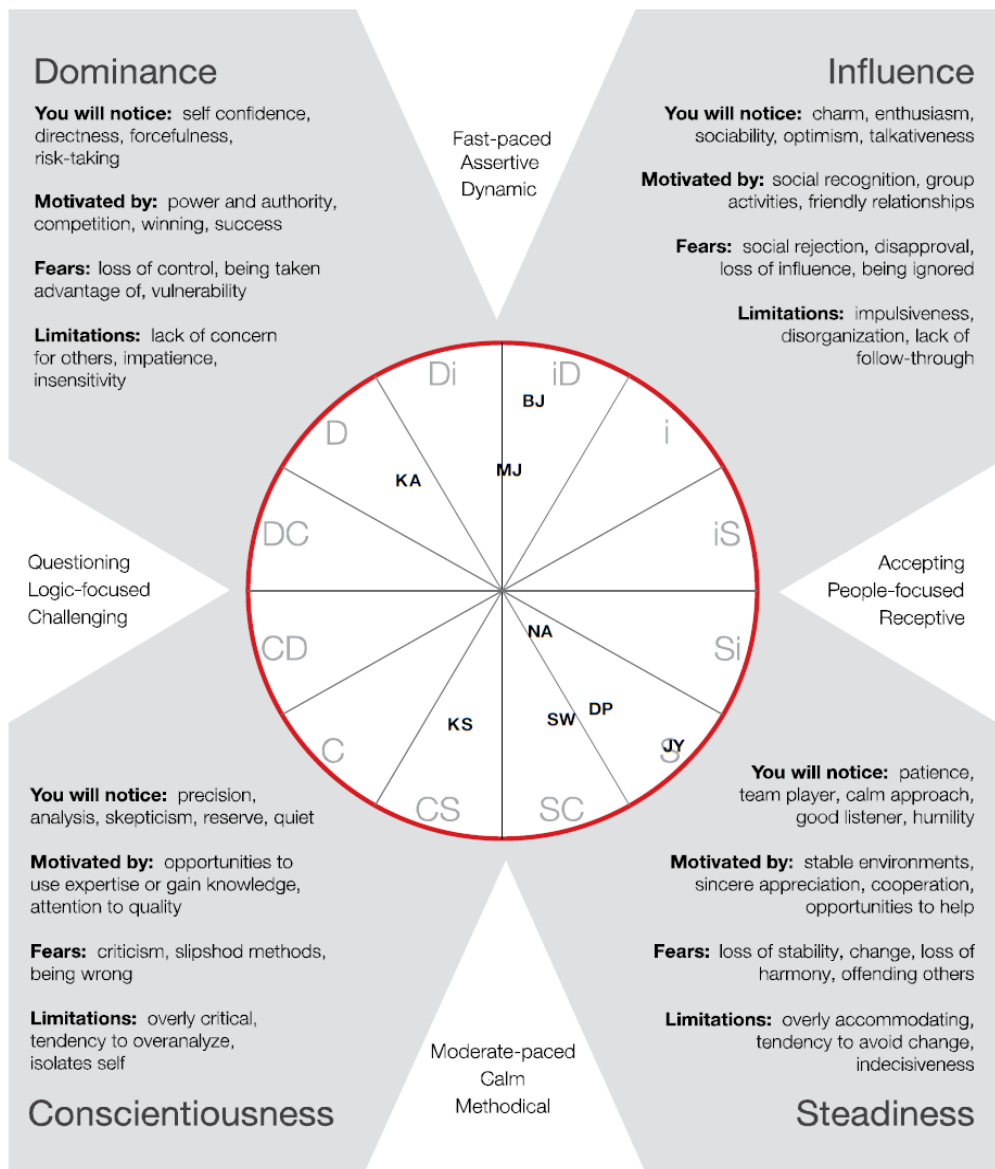


Figure G The Everything DiSC Team Map for Clovis USD. This graphic shows the comparisons of the styles of each team member. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map gives team members an opportunity to discover one another's DiSC styles. Also, it lays the groundwork for weaving DiSC in throughout the rest of the report.

The Everything DiSC map shows the locations of all team members along with a snapshot of the characteristics tied to the four basic DiSC styles.

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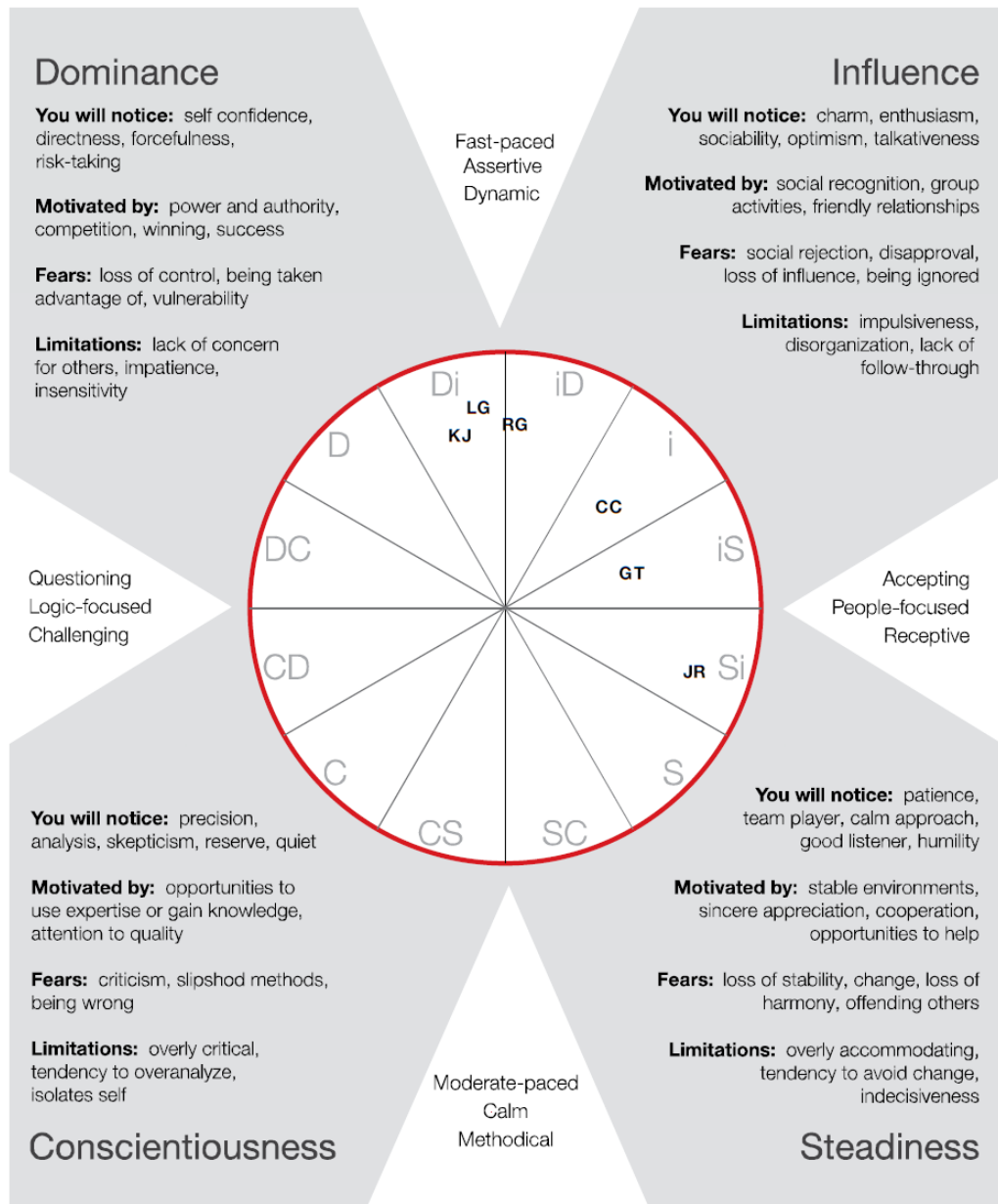


Figure H The Everything DiSC Team Map- American Fidelity. Comparison of case study DiSC Team Map. This graphic shows the comparisons of the styles of each team member. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map gives team members an opportunity to discover one another’s DiSC styles. Also, it lays the groundwork for weaving DiSC in throughout the rest of the report.

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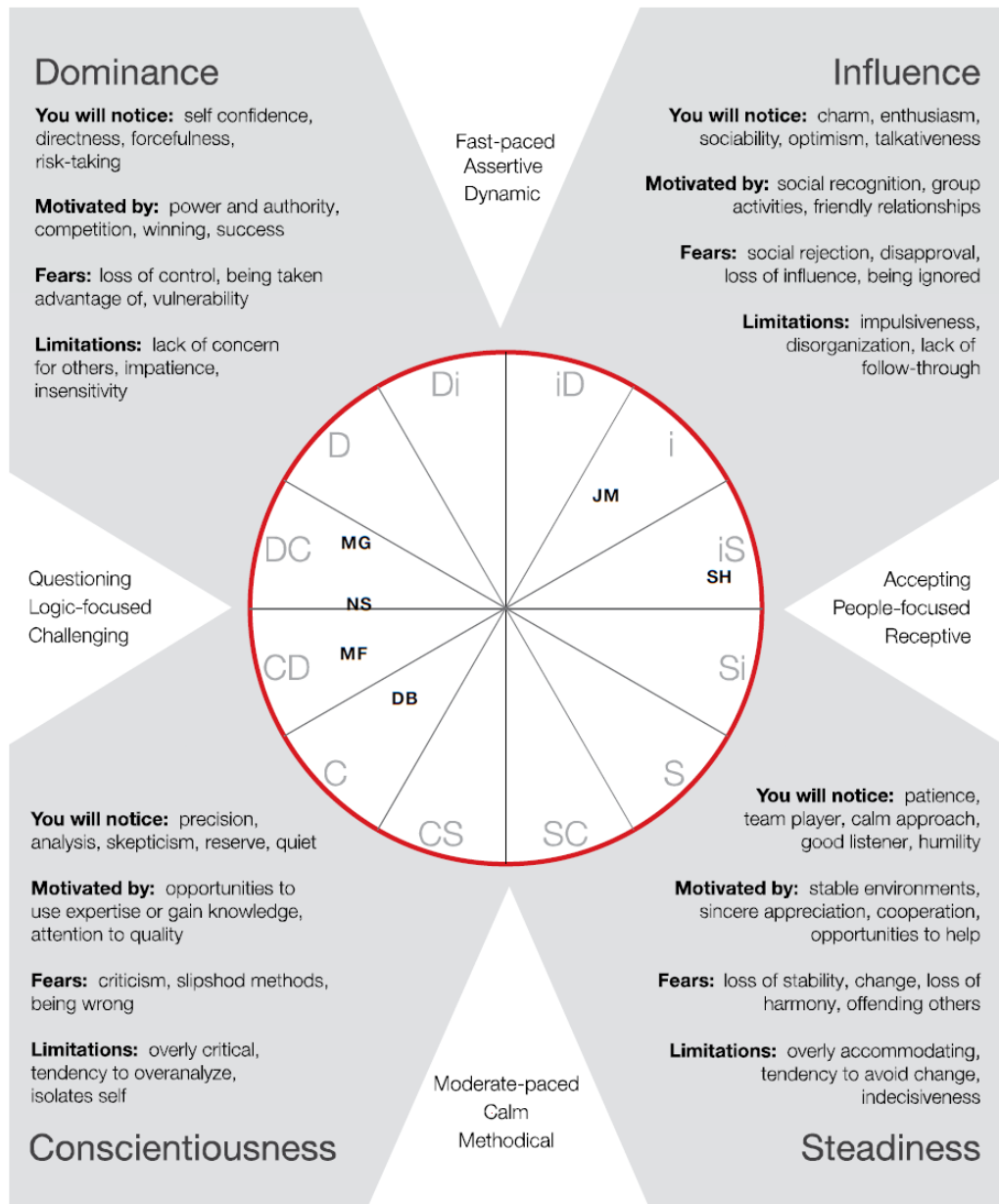


Figure 1 The Everything DiSC Team Map- Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team. This graphic shows the comparisons of the styles of each team member. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map gives team members an opportunity to discover one another’s DiSC styles. Also, it lays the groundwork for weaving DiSC in throughout the rest of the report.

The Everything DiSC map shows the locations of all team members along with a snapshot of the characteristics tied to the four basic DiSC styles.

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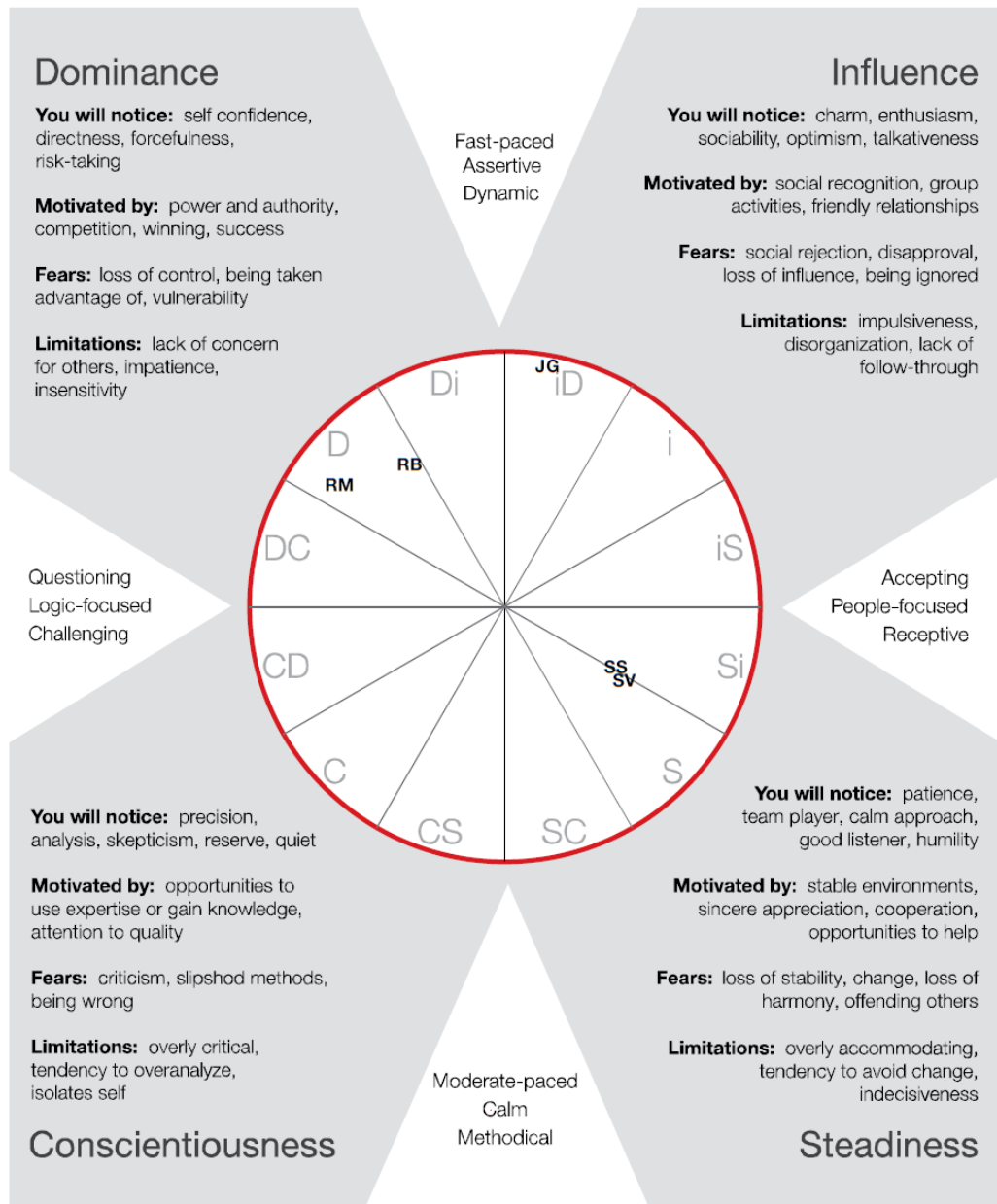


Figure J The Everything DiSC Team Map- School Services of California This graphic shows the comparisons of the styles of each team member. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map gives team members an opportunity to discover one another’s DiSC styles. Also, it lays the groundwork for weaving DiSC in throughout the rest of the report.

The Everything DiSC map shows the locations of all team members along with a snapshot of the characteristics tied to the four basic DiSC styles.

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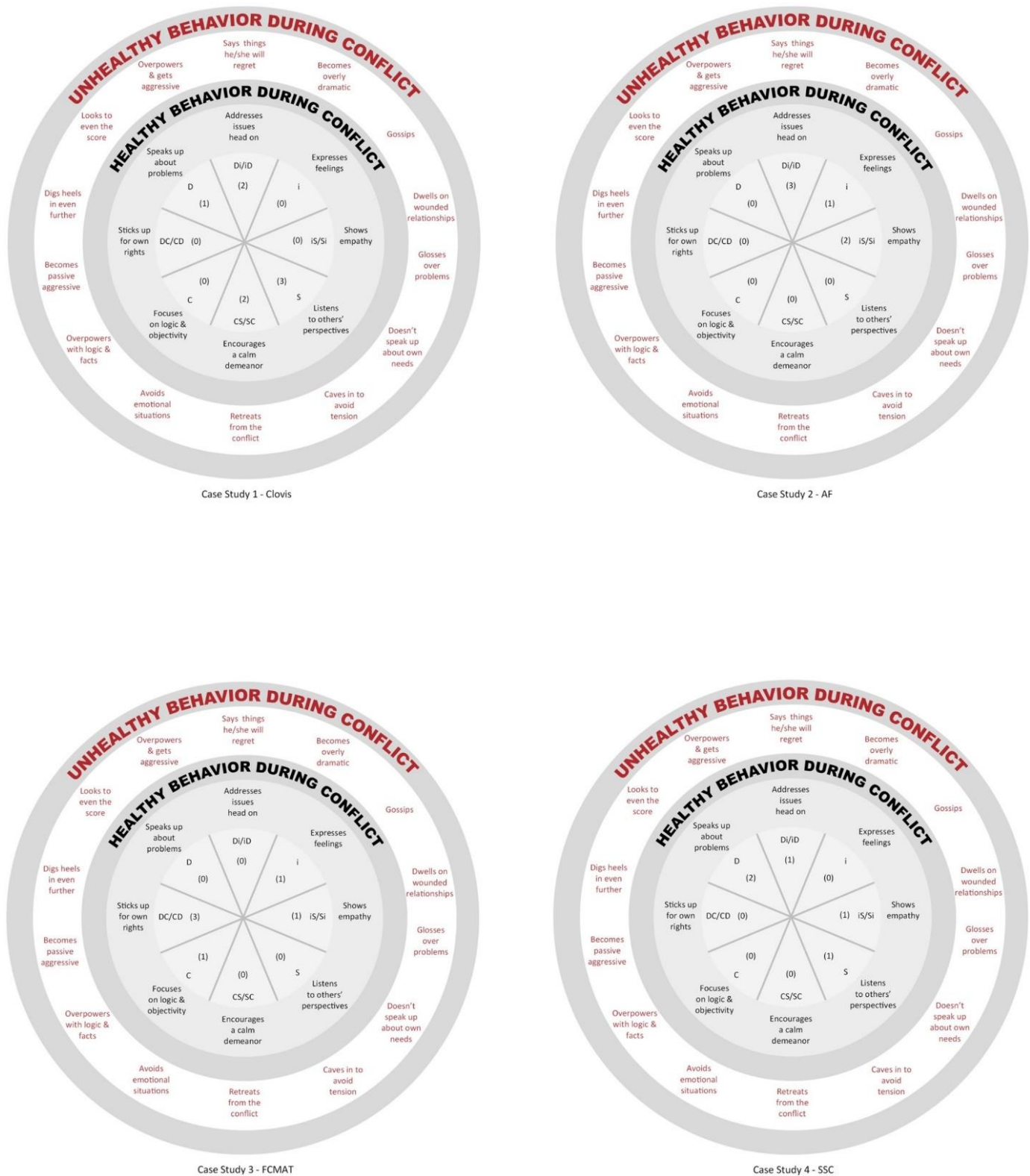


Figure K Comparison of case study DiSC Conflict Team Maps. This graphic includes the scores from each case study on healthy and unhealthy behaviors during conflict. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

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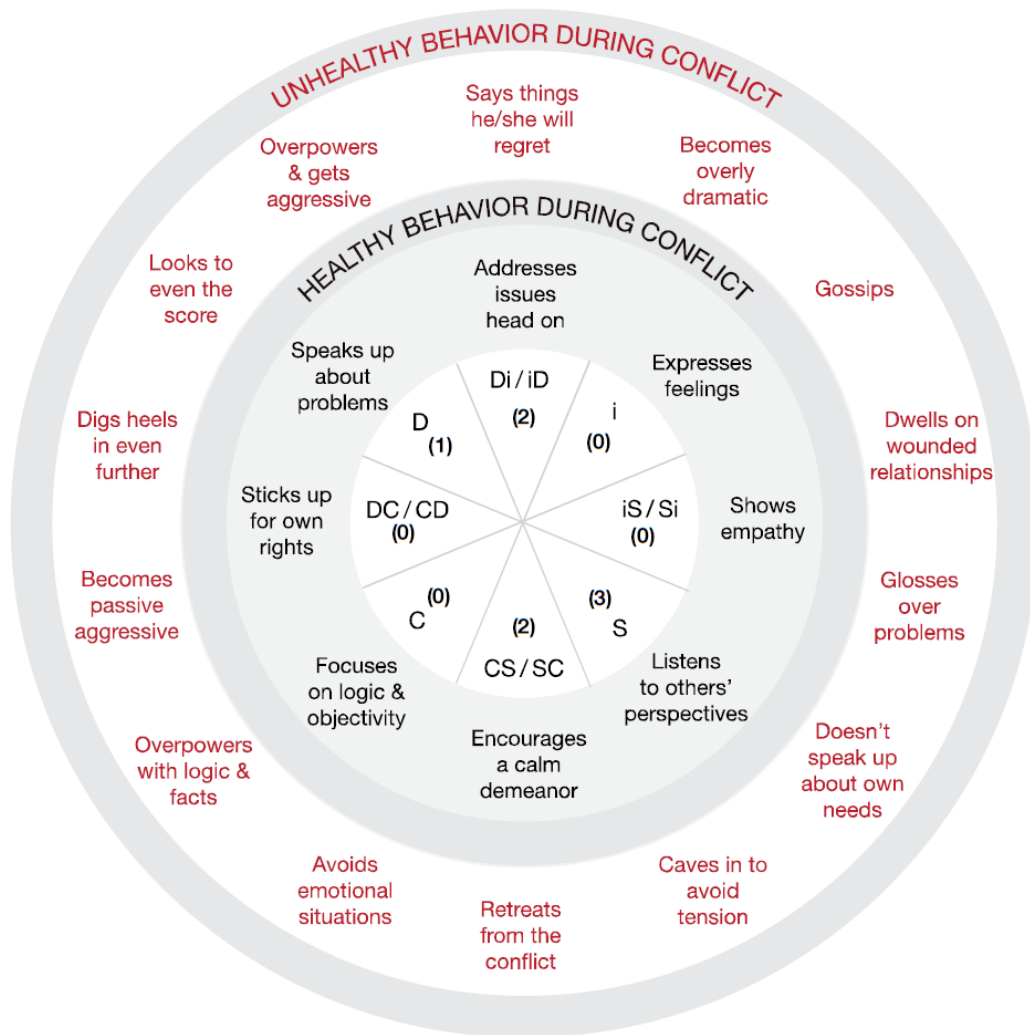


Figure L Conflict Team Map- Clovis USD. This graphic shows the scores of the team on healthy and unhealthy behaviors during conflict. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map is designed to help teams candidly discuss healthy and unhealthy conflict, and acknowledge that we all handle tense situations differently. The unhealthy behaviors, in particular, are generalizations.

The descriptions on the inner, gray circle illustrate what healthy behavior during conflict might look like. The descriptions in red on the outer circle illustrate unhealthy behavior related to each style. The numbers of the innermost circle reflect the people on your team who fall into each of the style regions (out of 8 people). Note that this map is not intended to be an exact one-to-one correspondence between a given style and a given behavior.

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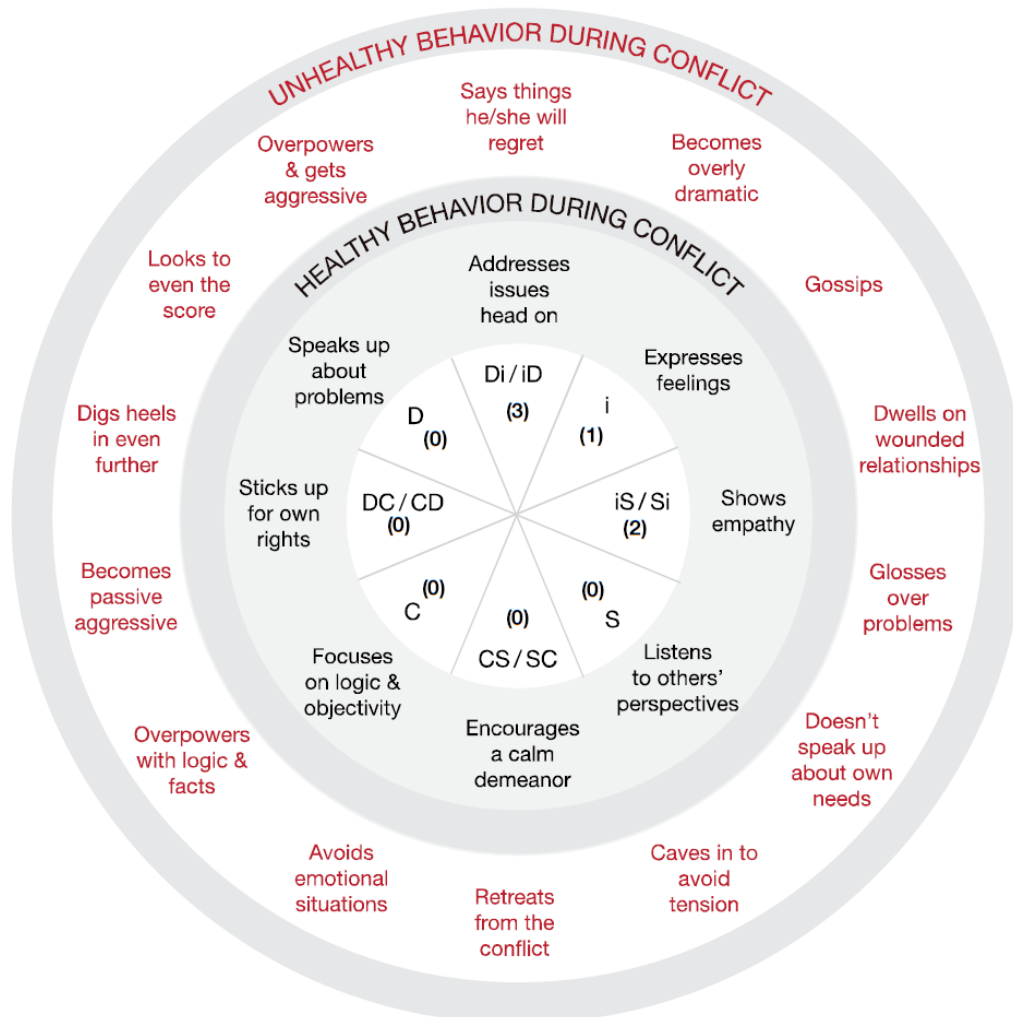


Figure M Conflict Team Map American Fidelity. This graphic shows the scores of the team on healthy and unhealthy behaviors during conflict. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map is designed to help teams candidly discuss healthy and unhealthy conflict, and acknowledge that we all handle tense situations differently. The unhealthy behaviors, in particular, are generalizations.

The descriptions on the inner, gray circle illustrate what healthy behavior during conflict might look like. The descriptions in red on the outer circle illustrate unhealthy behavior related to each style. The numbers of the innermost circle reflect the people on your team who fall into each of the style regions (out of 6 people). Note that this map is not intended to be an exact one-to-one correspondence between a given style and a given behavior.

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

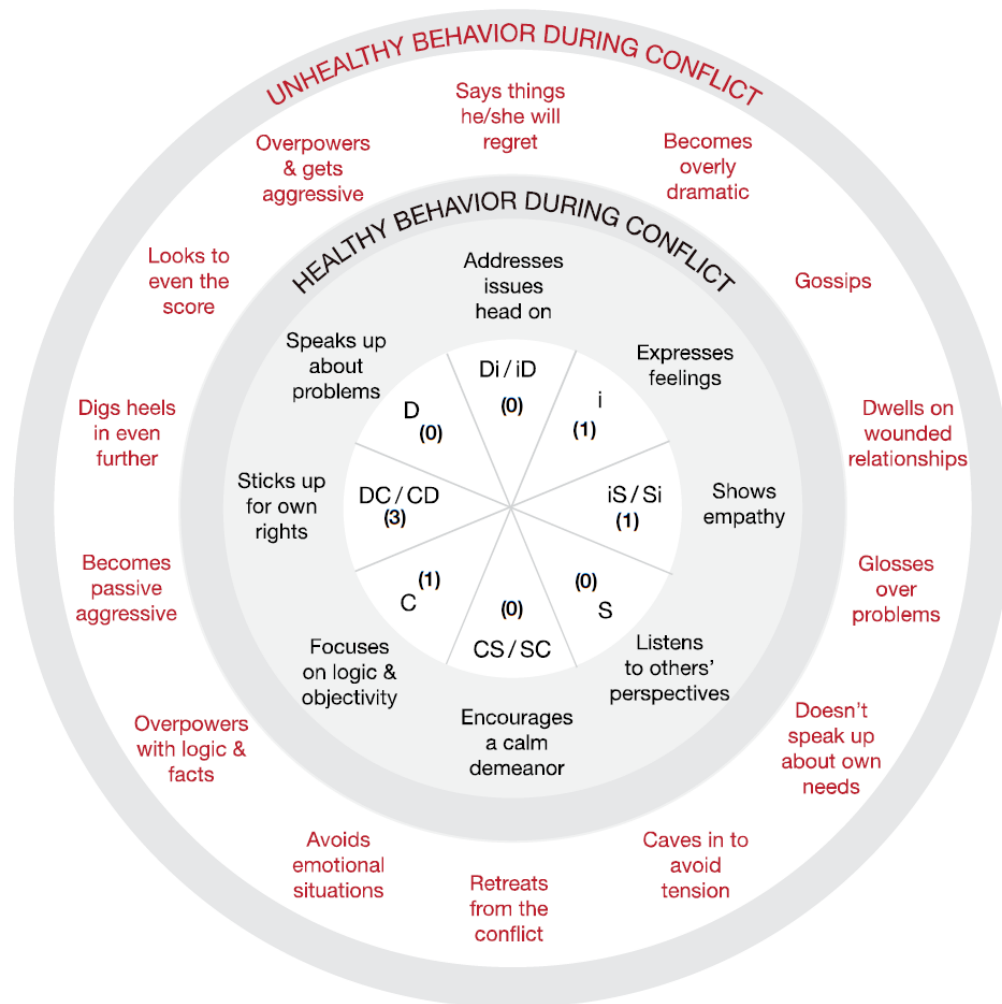


Figure N Conflict Team Map- Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team. This graphic shows the scores of the team on healthy and unhealthy behaviors during conflict. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map is designed to help teams candidly discuss healthy and unhealthy conflict, and acknowledge that we all handle tense situations differently. The unhealthy behaviors, in particular, are generalizations.

The descriptions on the inner, gray circle illustrate what healthy behavior during conflict might look like. The descriptions in red on the outer circle illustrate unhealthy behavior related to each style. The numbers of the innermost circle reflect the people on your team who fall into each of the style regions (out of 6 people). Note that this map is not intended to be an exact one-to-one correspondence between a given style and a given behavior.

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

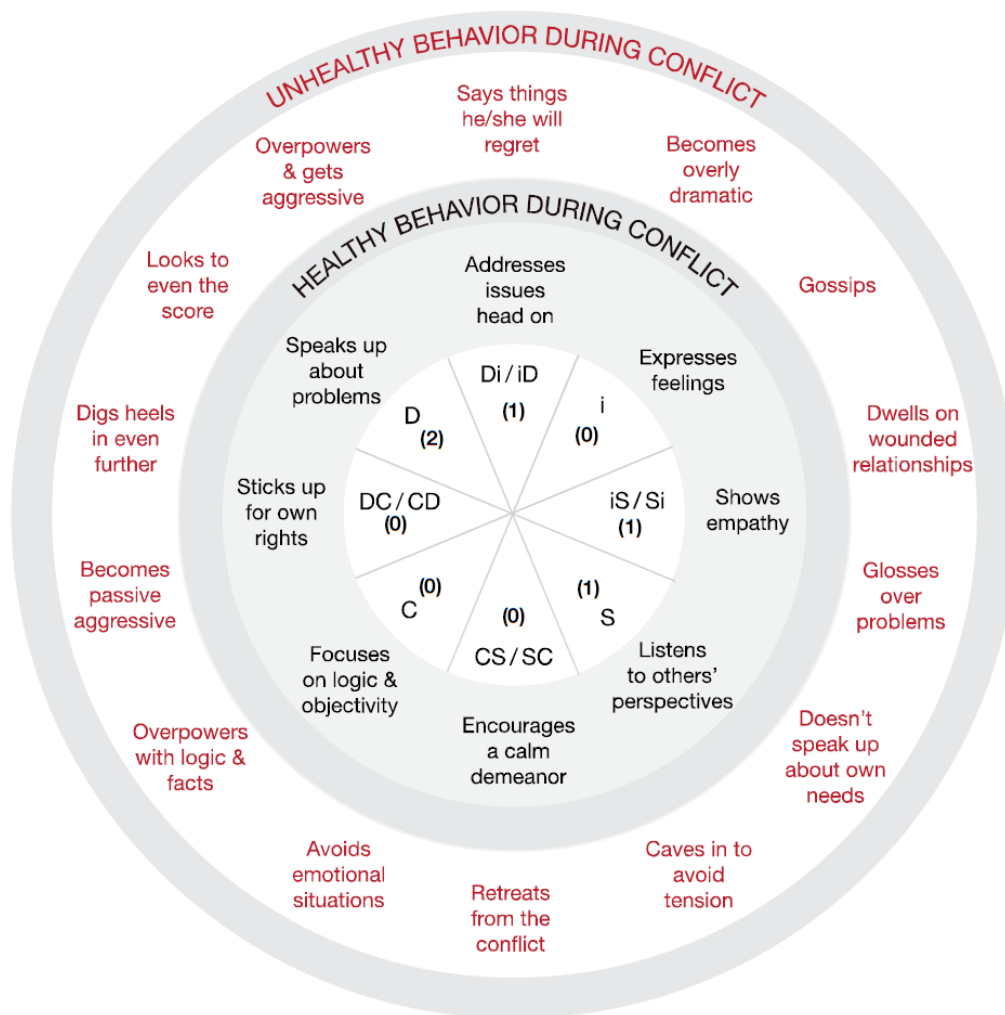


Figure O Conflict Team Map- School Services of California. This graphic shows the scores of the team on healthy and unhealthy behaviors during conflict. ©John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

This map is designed to help teams candidly discuss healthy and unhealthy conflict, and acknowledge that we all handle tense situations differently. The unhealthy behaviors, in particular, are generalizations.

The descriptions on the inner, gray circle illustrate what healthy behavior during conflict might look like. The descriptions in red on the outer circle illustrate unhealthy behavior related to each style. The numbers of the innermost circle reflect the people on your team who fall into each of the style regions (out of 5 people). Note that this map is not intended to be an exact one-to-one correspondence between a given style and a given behavior.

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

| SWOT Case Study 1 -Clovis USD | | SWOT Case Study 2 - American Fidelity | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Internal | | Internal | |
| <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect - Commitment - Leadership of the Board - Trust - Experience - Communication - Care for Kids - Action Oriented - Tradition of excellence - Support from staff and community | <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over extending themselves - Letting each other know our value - Fear of showing weaknesses - Cycle of promotions - Need to be more efficient in meetings - Hard to give candid feedback | <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture, Morals, Values - Innovative, forward-thinking - Run a business with a family heart - Ethical - Caring - Builds people up - Focused - Longevity - Staff is very skilled - Sales Expertise - Understanding of the market | <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk Management - Recruitment & Training - Problem People - Balance Organization with people from outside - Manage passions and disagreements - Make sure management is successful with changes - Fast-Paced Environment - Slow to react |
| <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Become quicker to make decisions - New Leadership arrives - Continue to Improve - Growth in District in students and schools - New Superintendent - Embrace progress of Education - Transitions - Holds onto core values - Build collaboration | <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant change to the board and staff in the next 5 years - How to maintain the growth of the community - Different Genders / Transgender Issue - State Control vs. Local Control - Change Dynamic of the Board - Transparency a challenge - No Threats - Financial Stability - Political Influences - Special Education Costs | <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How we do business is important - Use of Data Analysis - Become a role model - Only as successful as our schools are - Niche player - Provide more services at cost/no cost - "Smart Works" talk - Better use of statistics and data - Artificial intelligence - Protective of reputation | <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal thinking, closed minds - Succession to change -old guard will not let go - Change in leadership - No accountability at some levels - Distance from the customer |
| External | | External | |
| SWOT Case Study 3 -Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team | | SWOT Case Study 4 -School Services of California | |
| Internal | | Internal | |
| <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources and people - Experience - Marketing - Innovation - Quality - Succession - Values | <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't know where we are vulnerable - Distractions - Deadlines - Morale - Focus on continuing leadership - Connections - Systems | <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - Supported - Accountability - Trust - Longevity - Forward-thinkers - Communication - Experienced; hard-working - Committed to each other | <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must be internally motivated; do not have competition - Tend to overcommit ourselves - Infrequent meetings due to schedules Sometimes do not hold people accountable - Leadership is all the same age and experience level |
| <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing - Product development - Industry trends - New/target Markets - Partnerships | <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political effects - Legislative Effects - Market Demand - Loss of Key Staff - Economy - Sustainable Funding | <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Succession planning - Client-Oriented - Redesigning website - Best Team - People we can groom to be the next - Next recession ready to handle successful planning - Hiring - People to move into new fields | <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of Recession - Loss of key staff - Age of executive staff - Unexpected leave - Interpersonal conflicts - Retirement health issues |
| External | | External | |

Figure P Comparison of case studies SWOT analysis. This chart shows a side by side comparison of the four case studies. Created by Ruth Ann "Molly" McGee Hewitt, 2019.

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

| Internal | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect - Commitment - Leadership of the Board - Trust - Experience - Communication - Care for Kids - Action Oriented - Tradition of excellence - Support from staff and community | <p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over extending themselves - Letting each other know our value - Fear of showing weaknesses - Cycle of promotions - Need to be more efficient in meetings - Hard to give candid feedback |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Become quicker to make decisions - New Leadership arrives - Continue to Improve - Growth in District in students and schools - New Superintendent - Embrace progress of Education - Transitions - Holds onto core values - Build collaboration | <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant change to the board and staff in the next 5 years - How to maintain the growth of the community - Different Genders / Transgender Issue - State Control vs. Local Control - Change Dynamic of the Board - Transparency a challenge - No Threats - Financial Stability - Political Influences - Special Education Costs |
| External | |

Figure Q SWOT analysis of Clovis USD. This chart shows the results of the group SWOT analysis from the case study group. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

| Internal | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture, Morals, Values - Innovative, forward-thinking - Run a business with a family heart - Ethical - Caring - Builds people up - Focused - Longevity - Staff is very skilled - Sales Expertise - Understanding of the market | <p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk Management - Recruitment & Training - Problem People - Balance Organization with people from outside - Manage passions and disagreements - Make sure management is successful with changes - Fast-Paced Environment - Slow to react |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How we do business is important - Use of Data Analysis - Become a role model - Only as successful as our schools are - Niche player - Provide more services at cost/no cost - “Smart Works” talk - Better use of statistics and data - Artificial intelligence - Protective of reputation | <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal thinking, closed minds - Succession to change -old guard will not let go - Change in leadership - No accountability at some levels - Distance from the customer |
| External | |
| <p><i>Figure R</i> SWOT analysis of American Fidelity. This chart shows the results of the group SWOT analysis from the case study group. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.</p> | |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

| Internal | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources and people - Experience - Marketing - Innovation - Quality - Succession - Values | <p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't know where we are vulnerable - Distractions - Deadlines - Morale - Focus on continuing leadership - Connections - Systems |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing - Product development - Industry trends - New/target Markets - Partnerships | <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political effects - Legislative Effects - Market Demand - Loss of Key Staff - Economy - Sustainable Funding |
| External | |
| <p><i>Figure S</i> SWOT analysis of the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team. This chart shows the results of the group SWOT analysis from the case study group. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.</p> | |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

| Internal | |
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| <p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - Supported - Accountability - Trust - Longevity - Forward-thinkers - Communication - Experienced; hard-working - Committed to each other | <p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must be internally motivated; do not have competition - Tend to overcommit ourselves - Infrequent meetings due to schedules - Sometimes do not hold people accountable - Leadership is all the same age and experience level |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Succession planning - Client-Oriented - Redesigning website - Best Team - People we can groom to be the next - Next recession ready to handle successful planning - Hiring - People to move into new fields | <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of Recession - Loss of key staff - Age of executive staff - Unexpected leave - Interpersonal conflicts - Retirement health issues |
| External | |
| <p><i>Figure T</i> SWOT analysis of School Services of California. This chart shows the results of the group SWOT analysis from the case study group. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.</p> | |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

Table A Complete common responses from interviews with Clovis USD. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019

| Questions | Themes |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. How do you create and develop leadership team effectiveness in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Values opinions, good communication – Expecting high standards of understanding staff and teamwork – Strong board leadership – Dialogue with staff – Culture of success – Values and traditions and heritage |
| 2. How would you define effectiveness or success in your team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reputation – Maintain integrity – Employee contributions team — all super star – Strong influence of the board – Expectation of success |
| 3. What factors contribute to an effective and successful team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Respect each other – Strong leadership – Trust – Communication – Accountability – Reliability – Honesty – Time collaboration |
| 4. What impact does executive leadership have on the organization and on your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Values the team – Trusts in leadership teams – Leads by setting the example – Communication – High expectations – Collaborative leadership – Time |
| 5. What factors play a role in your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stable budget and budget planning – Leadership and mentoring of employees |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Positive culture – Community |
| 6. How do you deal with challenges and crises in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Commitment – Accountability for everyone – Honesty – Nimbleness |
| 7. How have you been able to maintain your stability? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Priority on hire the best employee fit – Strong culture – Accountability on all levels |
| 8. What information or recommendations do you take away from your experiences that could assist educational organizations? What lessons from your work could benefit educational agencies? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stability in leadership is crucial on all levels – Establishment of a well-defined culture – Definition of core standards and values – Don't settle |
| 9. How can your expertise or experiences be used to promote and impact student performance and achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Culture and core values matter and are promoted – Strategic planning – Keep focus on Students – Standards matter |

Table B Complete findings from interviews at Clovis USD. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019

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| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team Composition</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Orientation – Development – Time – Continuity – Commitment of team members – Action oriented |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team problem solving</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Responsibility for organization as a whole – Responsibility for individual responsibilities – Care of brand and reputation |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through the <i>culture of the organization</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Longevity – History – Leadership culture – Reputation – Ethics |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Organizational Priorities</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agreed upon vision and mission – Understanding and support of roles and responsibilities – Clearly articulated priorities and plans – Clearly established and accepted chain of command. |

Table C Complete common responses from interviews at American Fidelity. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019

| Questions | Themes |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. How do you create and develop leadership team effectiveness in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Culture – Executive organization/ Bill Cameron – History of success / expectations – Credibility – Reliability |
| 2. How would you define effectiveness or success in your team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Effectiveness – Success of its people is success for the company – Market share |
| 3. What factors contribute to an effective and successful team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Respect each other – Strong leadership – Trust – Strong Vision – Collaboration – Reliability |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| <p>4. What impact does executive leadership have on the organization and on your success?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sets culture standards and expectations - Values their team - Clear communicators - Time - Loyalty - Relationship |
| <p>5. What factors play a role in your success?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependable leaders - Changing out leadership roles and allows for growth - Compensation strategy for results - Nimbleness |
| <p>6. How do you deal with challenges and crises in your organization?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courageous conversation and meaningful discourse - Collaborative culture - Create motivations |
| <p>7. How have you been able to maintain your stability?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Set priorities and stay focused - Dependability - Accountability |
| <p>8. What information or recommendations do you have from your experiences that could assist educational organizations? What lessons from your work could benefit educational agencies?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire the right leaders - Support leadership on all levels |
| <p>9. How can your expertise or experiences be used to promote and impact student performance and achievement?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stability breeds productivity - Identify expected outcomes - Value the leadership and the team - Create a vision and live the vision |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

Table D Complete findings from interviews at American Fidelity. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

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| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team Composition</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Orientation – Development – Time – Continuity – Commitment of the team members – Action oriented |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team problem solving</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Responsibility for organization as a whole – Responsibility for individual responsibilities – Care of brand and reputation |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through the <i>culture of the organization</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Longevity – History – Leadership culture – Reputation – Ethics |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Organizational Priorities</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agreed upon vision and mission – Understanding and support of roles and responsibilities – Clearly articulated priorities and plans – Clearly established and accepted chain of command |

Table E Complete common responses from interviews at Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019

| Questions | Themes |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. How do you create and develop leadership team effectiveness in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strong communication – Bring together a strong team – Longevity of leadership – Expertise – Trust |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| 2. How would you define effectiveness or success in your team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collaboration in meeting goals – Reputation – Integrity |
| 3. What factors contribute to an effective and successful team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication – Trust and honesty – Reliability – Accuracy |
| 4. What impact does executive leadership have on the organization and on your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Vital for building strong teamwork – Clear roles and responsibilities – Time to address issues |
| 5. What factors play a role in your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reputation and high standards – Collaboration – Exceptional employees |
| 6. How do you deal with challenges and crises in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Make sure to communicate all information and how to handle it without frustration or distractions. – Quick responses |
| 7. How have you been able to maintain your stability? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication – Leadership – Continuity |
| 8. What information or recommendations do you have from your experiences that could assist educational organizations? What lessons from your work could benefit educational agencies? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote strong ethical leadership that builds and guides a strong team – Train all employees to become leaders |
| 9. How can your expertise or experiences be used to promote and impact student performance and achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Role models – Practical examples of team success – Practice reliability and accountability |

Table F Complete findings from interviews at Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019

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| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Orientation – Development |
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Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| Composition to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Time – Continuity – Commitment of the team members – Action oriented |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team problem solving</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Responsibility for organization as a whole – Responsibility for individual responsibilities – Care of brand and reputation |
| How leadership team effectiveness in education agencies is sustained through the <i>culture of the organization</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Longevity – History – Leadership culture – Reputation – Ethics |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Organizational Priorities</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agreed upon vision, mission – Understanding and support of roles and responsibilities – Clearly articulated priorities and plans – Clearly established and accepted chain of command |

Table G Complete common responses from interviews at School Services of California. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

| Questions | Themes |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. How do you create and develop leadership team effectiveness in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Values opinions, good communication – Expecting high standards of understanding for staff and their teamwork – Healthy conversations – Accountability – Time |
| 2. How would you define effectiveness or success in your team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reputation – Maintain integrity – Employee contributions team |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| 3. What factors contribute to an effective and successful team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect each other - Strong leadership - Trust |
| 4. What impact does executive leadership have on the organization and on your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sets culture standards and expectations - Values their team - Trust in leadership teams - Leads by setting the example |
| 5. What factors play a role in your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependable and confident - Leadership mentors employees - Employees have support of the company - Flexibility - Exceptional Hiring |
| 6. How do you deal with challenges and crises in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courageous conversation and meaningful discourse - Culture - Collaborative resolution |
| 7. How have you been able to maintain your stability? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realistic expectations and meeting them - Stability in leadership - Culture |
| 8. What information or recommendations do you have from your experiences that could assist educational organizations? What lessons from your work could benefit educational agencies? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stability in leadership - Well defined culture - Keeping staff informed of direction/maintain good communication - Take time to build the team and work together |
| 9. How can your expertise or experiences be used to promote and impact student performance and achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture and core values which innovate - Strong leadership that is valued - Longevity of leadership and staff should be prioritized |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

Table H Complete findings from interviews at School Services of California. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

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| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team Composition</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Orientation – Development – Time – Continuity – Commitment of the team members – Action-oriented |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Team problem solving</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Responsibility for organization as a whole – Responsibility for individual responsibilities – Care of brand and reputation |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through the <i>culture of the organization</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Longevity – History – Leadership culture – Reputation – Ethics |
| How is leadership team effectiveness in education agencies sustained through <i>Organizational Priorities</i> to improve student achievement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agreed upon vision and mission – Understanding and support of roles and responsibilities – Clearly articulated priorities and plans – Clearly established and accepted chain of command. |

Table I Common themes from interviews and data. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

| Questions | Common Themes |
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| 1. How do you create and develop leadership team effectiveness in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication – Team building – Strong leadership – Culture – Accountability – Longevity of leadership |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise - Credibility - Reliability - Expected history of success |
| 2. How would you define effectiveness or success in your team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - Integrity - Strong influence of board members - Collaboration - Reliability - Accuracy |
| 3. What factors contribute to an effective and successful team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Trust - Honesty - Respect - Strong leadership - Strong vision |
| 4. What impact does executive leadership have on the organization and on your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values team members - Leads by example - Clear communicators - Clear roles and responsibilities - Time to address issues - Collaboration - Loyalty - Relationship |
| 5. What factors play a role in your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - High Standards - Leadership mentors - Compensation strategy - Flexibility - Exceptional employees - Nimbleness - Exceptional hiring |

Sustaining Leadership Team Effectiveness in Education Agencies to Improve Student Achievement

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| <p>6. How do you deal with challenges and crises in your organization?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate all the information - Commitment - Accountability - Collaborative culture - Creative motivation - Quick response - Honesty - Nimbleness |
| <p>7. How have you been able to maintain your stability?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make hiring a priority - Culture - Focus - Leadership stability - Communication - Leadership - Dependability - Accountability |
| <p>8. What information or recommendations do you have from your experiences that could assist educational organizations? What lessons from your work could benefit educational agencies?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote ethical leadership - Defined core standards and values - Communication with staff - Train all to become leaders - Support leadership on all levels - Take time to build the team to work together - Establish a well-defined culture |
| <p>9. How can your expertise or experiences be used to promote and impact student performance and achievement?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic planning - Focus on Students - Culture - Core values matter promote them - Role models - Practical examples of team success - Practice reliability and accountability - Value leadership and the team |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a vision and live the vision - Identify expected outcomes - Longevity of leadership and staff should be valued - Standards matter |
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Table J Common themes synthesized from individual case studies. Created by Ruth Ann “Molly” McGee Hewitt, 2019.

| Question | Common Theme | Case Study |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. How do you create and develop leadership team effectiveness in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Team building - Strong leadership - Culture - Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 4 SSC |
| 2. How would you define effectiveness or success in your team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - Integrity - Strong influence of board members - Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 1 Clovis, - Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC |
| 3. What factors contribute to an effective and successful team? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Trust - Honesty - Respect - Strong Leadership - Strong Vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 3 FCMAT - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 4 SSC |
| 4. What impact does executive leadership have on the organization and on your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values team members - Leads by example - Clear communicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 4 SSC |
| 5. What factors play a role in your success? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - High standards - Leadership mentors - Compensation strategy - Flexibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 3 FCMAT, Case Study 4 SCC - Case Study 3 FCMAT, - Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 2 AF, - Case Study 4 SSC |
| 6. How do you deal with challenges and crises in your organization? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate all the information - Commitment - Accountability - Culture - Creative motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 3 FCMAT - Case Study 1 Clovis, - Case Study 1 Clovis, - Case Study 2 AF, Case Study 4 SSC - Case Study 2 AF |
| 7. How have you been able to maintain your stability? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make hiring a priority - Culture - Focus - Leadership stability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 1 Clovis, - Case Study 1 Clovis, - Case Study 2 AF - Case Study 4 SSC |

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| <p>8. What information or recommendations do you have from your experiences that could assist educational organizations? What lessons from your work could benefit educational agencies?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ethical – Defined core standards – Communication with staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 3 FCMAT – Case Study 1 Clovis, – Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 4 SSC |
| <p>9. How can your expertise or experiences be used to promote and impact student performance and achievement?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strategic planning – Focus on students – Culture – Core Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Case Study 1 Clovis – Case Study 1 Clovis – Case Study 1 Clovis, Case Study 4 SSC – Case Study 4 SSC |