

Wilson, E.M (2008). *A qualitative investigation of how ethics influence urban principal's practice in school improvement.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Abstract

The federal government is holding schools accountable for increasing academic achievement of all students through the enactment of the "No Child Left Behind Act" (Cohn, 2005). In urban school districts, the principal is responsible for educational quality based on the belief that students' success or failure is determined by the way a school is operated (Fullan & Watson, 2000). Urban principals must partner with their staffs to establish a primary directive that incorporates trust, respect, and a cooperative link to serve the whole child together. It is in the best interest of accountability to manage with a consistent emphasis on morals and ethics. This qualitative study investigation explores the influence of ethics upon the urban principals' practice in school improvement efforts in three urban schools in the Midwest.

Data were acquired by qualitative inquiry based primarily on face to face, in-depth interviews with three urban principals and teachers from their schools. The researcher's question was best suited for data collection techniques that were explorative and generative in nature. The researcher used a phenomenological perspective suited for an educational research context in order to capture these principals' perspectives about how ethics influence their practice.

The submission of ethical principles assists the principals' practice in facilitating in meeting school improvement efforts. The five finding themes that emerged across the principals were: ethic of care for a shared vision and decisions with effective communication, professional ethics with high expectations, servant leadership committed to educating the whole child, moral purpose, and mutual respect and care for others. The principal shared how ethics guided their practice in meeting school improvement efforts.

Implications of these findings indicated that these interviewees defined a person of ethics as one who has taken a stand in doing what was right in the best interest of the students and the staff.