THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE MICROPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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Abstract

Principals as agents in secondary schools shape the meaning of what goes on in the school. To some extent, what happens in the school is a reflection of their beliefs, values and the dominant societal norms. School-community partnerships are a result of competing values, beliefs and visions of what can contribute to the success of the school from the perspective of the principal, the policy of the district school board and the teachers’ interests. School-community partnerships are therefore generally a compromise between the values of the principal and the teachers in the school through nurturing relationships and interpersonal leadership style.

This study focused on the role of principals in establishing and maintaining school-community partnerships in an urban district school board in southern Ontario. The study employed qualitative research methods, drawing on two case studies in secondary schools. Data for the study was collected over a period of eight months through in-depth interviews of two principals and sixteen teachers. I used a micropolitical conceptual framework to analyze the principal’s role in school-community partnerships. The conceptual framework contributes to revealing the role of agency in organizations. The study revealed that principals initiate, support,
coordinate, approve, allocate resources and evaluate school community partnerships. Through these roles, principals influence how partnerships unfold in the school.

Principals’ role in school-community partnerships are a reflection of the leadership style they enact in schools. The role is indicative of her/his values, beliefs and preference. This insight is important as a variable to how policies are implemented at different levels on the chain of implementation. It confirms other research that have strongly suggested that policies can be implemented best if the principals’ and teachers’ values and beliefs are consistent. The implementation of policies are negotiated on daily basis between the principal and the teachers and principals have upper hand in determining their outcome. The result from this study illustrates how the roles of individuals in an organization mirror their values and beliefs and in turn affect how policies are implemented. The presence of school-community partnerships in secondary schools, although mandated by the district school board policy are the result of the role played by principals rather than merely policy provision. The role of the principal that was not clear was evaluating partnerships. There is need for further study to examine the criteria of evaluating partnerships in schools in order to ascertain the total contribution of the same to the success of schools.
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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

To date, research on school-community partnerships has focused on explaining the factors that facilitate the process of initiation; the reasons for them; types of school-community partnerships; and the benefits and challenges of sustaining them (Dryfoos, 1994; Epstein, 1995; Epstein and Sheldon, 2002; Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, and Voorhis 2002; Furman, 2002; Hands, 2005; Mawhinney, 2002). Scholars often identified specific persons that played important roles in creating school-community partnerships. The school principal was one individual frequently mentioned in regards to the role s/he played (Epstein, 1995; Sanders, 2002; Sanders and Harvey, 2002). Although often cited, the role of principals in school-community partnerships, especially in secondary schools, have not been fully explored due to the complex contextual factors that characterize them. Research suggests that the size and complexity of secondary schools, the presence of subject teacher expertise, and the different social economic status of the communities in which schools are located may affect the role principals play in school-community partnerships.

While studies have noted that principals played a significant role in school-community partnerships (Sanders and Harvey, 2002; Voisin, 2003; Voorhis and Sheldon, 2004), unspecified references to the role of principals are inadequate to aid in building a knowledge foundation that can enable educators and policy makers to understand the roles of principals in the process of school-community partnerships. More research was needed to establish the specific practices of principals’ involvement in school-community partnership processes. Hands’ study (2005) focused on two secondary schools, examined roles of teachers, community partners and principals in school-community partnerships. Hands pointed out that principals played very important roles in the school-community partnership by influencing school culture and capacity
building. The study also noted that the role principals played with respect to school culture involved consensus building, fostering of cooperation, conflict resolution and dealing with differences in values and beliefs among the school personnel. The limitation of Hand’s study was found in its failure to illustrate the dynamics of interaction between principals and teachers in school-community partnerships, which always involves issues of power.

Another addition to literature is that of Voorhis and Sheldon (2004) who examined the role of principals who supported school-community partnerships. Voorhis and Sheldon took a longitudinal study of three hundred and twenty schools, eighty percent of which were elementary schools, thirteen percent were middle schools and seven percent were high schools. These scholars identified the importance of principals and hypothesized that principals influenced the key components of school-community partnership programs. Voorhis and Sheldon further observed that principals have powers to mobilize school personnel and also hold onto financial resources for specific initiatives. Their conclusion was consistent with other scholars such as Hands (2005) and Sanders and Harvey (2002), who maintained that the principals’ role matter a lot in school-community partnerships. Despite this level of recognition of the importance of the principal’s role, these scholars do not specify what principals do in relation to partnerships. Besides, still these studies do not acknowledge the uniqueness of organizational complexity in secondary schools in comparison to elementary schools.

Research suggests that the principal’s actual implementation of duties seems to be predisposed by the reality on the ground when the structural organization of secondary schools was examined. For instance, in secondary schools, teachers’ subject expertise is an important source of power with which principals must negotiate in the day-to-day running of schools (Ball, 1987; Moore 1990; Siskin, 1994). The sheer size and complexity of secondary school programs
have not been explained in relation to what principals do. The present study employed a micropolitical conceptual framework to examine the complex interaction dynamics embedded in school-community partnerships, particularly secondary school-community partnerships. The study analyzes both principals’ own views of their roles and teachers’ perceptions of the principals’ roles in school-community partnerships.

**Research Question**

This study was guided by the following research question:

What is the role of the principal in the micropolitical context of secondary schools in establishing and maintaining school-community partnerships?

**Rationale and significance of the study**

The significance of this research was to discover the values of the principal in potentially enhancing relationships involved in school-community partnership processes. This in turn boosts the principal’s role in mobilizing extra resources for schools. This was important as it sheds light on the roles of principals within bureaucratic school systems. It also helps to expand knowledge about secondary school contextual factors that impact on the roles of principals in establishing and maintaining school-community partnerships.

This study could also lead to the development of new knowledge in terms of how principals deal with social diversity in their schools. Many principals lead schools in communities whose composition is diverse and ever changing. Schools are a reflection of the quality of relationships within the school and the community. When the community cares about the school, as evidenced through school-community partnerships, it boosts the morale of students to perform well (Epstein, 1995). Micropolitics between the principal, teachers and students reveal the quality of interactions that exist in a school and which are a requisite for a school’s success. Understanding the complexity of interactions involved in schools is crucial for improving schools. An insight into the role of principals in influencing school-community
partnerships is crucial for knowledge building for principals, policy making processes, leadership development in general, and for further research. As Merriam states: “Insight gleaned from case studies can directly influence future research” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19).

This research expands on pre-existing knowledge of the mediator role of secondary school principals in balancing competing interests of different groups in a school. The role of the principal is to buffer teachers from external intrusions and to present the school to the community in view of the different fragmented semi autonomous departments (Siskin, 1994).

The micropolitical perspectives encourages us to discriminate between the different forms that collaboration takes, to examine who constitutes those forms and to ask whose interests they serve in each case. (Marshall, 1990, p.52)

This study also points towards the variations that exist between schools engaged in school-community partnerships and those that are not involved. As many research findings demonstrate, developing the skills of networking go beyond normal expectations for what principals may be mandated to do by virtue of their job descriptions. The greater impact conducive to student success in schools seems to come from the wider community involvement besides parent involvement.

**Structure of the thesis**

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter Two situates the study within the wider scholarship on school-community partnerships, on principals and on the characteristics of secondary schools. The chapter ends by describing the micropolitical conceptual framework. Chapter Three covers the research methods and procedures for data collection and data analysis. Chapter Four and Five present case studies of the two schools, identifying school-community partnerships and how they operate, the social interactions between the principal and the teachers and the role of the principal. Chapter Six zeros in on micropolitical relationships and compares the role of the principals across the two case studies. Chapter Seven summarizes the study and
answers the research question. A few recommendations are made on how to improve the role of the principal in secondary schools to maximize the potential of school-community partnerships in secondary schools and improve the academic performance of students. This research adds knowledge to the studies on school-community partnerships. More so, its reliability lies in the following personal contribution that I make:

I have professional experience as a secondary school classroom teacher for eight years. This experience proved valuable to me in conducting interviews. During the interview period, I realized that I was dealing with a research context that was familiar. I also discovered that a number of interview participants were well aware of the University of Toronto and particularly the faculty of education. It was easy to develop a rapport with interview participants because some asked what subjects I taught in High School and my areas of study; questions that helped with gaining trust necessary during the interviews. The ability to conduct effective interviews depends on establishing a certain level of comfort with the participants and I realized that I had what it takes to do the interviews.

The reliability of the data collected was strengthened by the fact that I was able to apply the skills I had acquired through the research methodology courses I studied at my masters and doctoral studies. These courses equipped me with relevant technical skills such as how to choose appropriate research questions and align them with research methods; and how to prepare data collection tools and report writing. The experience of conducting and writing a research case study during my master’s studies was very helpful because I was able employ familiar use of case study methods. I was familiar with quite a number of steps and procedures involved and the suitability to my research question.
Constant consultation with my supervisor at all stages of problem formulation, proposal writing, data collection and data analysis and report writing helped me to enhance the reliability of the data collection and analysis. My supervisory committee assisted by providing me with feedback on the research proposal, which contributed to the reliability of the research. I also consulted frequently with fellow graduate students, some who are in the field as teachers, and others who were ahead of me in the doctoral program, and those whom we are in the same year. I have worked with them collaboratively sharing my research and they provided me with advice along the way, a clear demonstration that research is a collaborative venture.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In an attempt to understand the role of principals in the micropolitical context of secondary school-community partnerships, this section reviews literature in areas related to school-community partnerships, the role of principals in terms of their relationships with teachers, and salient characteristics of secondary schools.

School-community partnerships

The large and growing body of literature on this topic has focused on reasons for the formation of school-community partnerships, types of school-community partnerships, and the benefits and challenges facing them. According to Bauch (2001), school-community partnerships are the “development of a set of social relationships within and between the school and its local community that promote action” (p. 208). Previous studies have reported on an array of collaborative activities involving schools and their environments (Epstein, 1995; Furman, 2002; Mawhinney, 2002; Hanson, 2003). These collaborative activities range from short-term involvement to long-term relationships. They also involve few or many partners and may include one class in a school, a department, or the whole school.

According to scholars, the purposes and types of school-community partnerships vary (Epstein, 1995; Sanders, 2001a; Sanders, Jones and Abel, 2002; Sheldon and Epstein, 2002). The benefit of school-community partnerships may be related to aims of the partnerships (Burke, 2001). There was a common understanding among scholars that school-community partnerships enhance opportunities to meet the different needs of students within a community (Burke, 2001; Dryfoos, 1994; Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salina, Jansorn & van Voorhis, 2002). Some scholars have described school-community partnerships as a way to enhance school resources (Epstein,
1995; 1997; 2001; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hands, 1996, 2005). Other scholars maintain that school-community partnerships boosted social capital for students from low socio-economic status to achieve academic success (Coleman, 1990; Mawhinney, 2002). School-community partnerships supplement what families provide at home. According to Sanders et al. (2002), school-community partnerships assisted at risk students and improved school discipline.

There are many types of school-community partnerships. Sanders (2001) identified ten major categories of school-community partnerships. These can be simplified further into four types: student centered, family centered, school centered and community centered. School-community partnerships such as school tutoring or homework benefited both the student and the family. In homes where both parents are working, homework support supplemented the effort of parents in providing counseling and mentoring. School centered partnerships benefited the whole school while community centered partnerships benefited the community. For example, a school can provide an opportunity for community members to use its facilities for functions. The presence of school-community partnerships vary from school to school depending on several factors: the role of the principal, the role of the district school board, the availability and proximity of community partners, school culture as well as teachers’ initiatives (Sanders & Harvey, 2002).

Scholars have described several different ways that school-community partnerships are formed. Some suggest that the school assess its needs before initiating school community partnerships (Sanders and Harvey 2002). Epstein (1995) described how a principal can set up an action team and a fund that work to create school-community partnerships. But Hands (2005) stressed that in reality, an action team was the exception, not the norm. According to Hands, schools could establish school-community partnerships without having an action team or setting
aside funds for the operation of a school-community partnership. A school in need of resources may struggle to set aside funds for a school-community partnership. Viosin (2003) and Sanders and Harvey (2002) described how principals used their past contacts to establish school-community partnerships for their schools. School-community partnerships could also be created as a result of linking with various social services in the community to the school (Christenson, 2004; Coleman, 1990; Crowson and Boyd, 1993; Dryfoos, 1994, 2002). This provides information about what community resources are available to the school and the school services the community could access. In some instances, school-community partnerships were products of the policy and arrangements of a district school board (Epstein, Williams and Jansorn, 2004).

The opinions of scholars vary regarding the benefits of school-community partnerships to a school and to learners. School-university partnerships can help teachers professionally by providing learning resources and by providing avenues for the professional development of educators (Firstone and Fisler, 2002). School-community partnerships that involved collaboration with social service agencies helped to increase resources to benefit students who might otherwise not be able to access such services under normal circumstances (Bucy, 1990; Crowson & Boyd, 1993; Dryfoos, 1994; Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn and Voorhis 2002; Epstein and Sheldon, 2002). Other specialized agencies such as health institutions, police, faith groups, psychologists and psychiatrists provided important support to schools to deal with students under situations that are beyond the resource capacity of the school (Epstein, 1995, 2001; Sanders, 2001, Voisin 2003). School-community partnerships provided opportunities for students to access mentors, tutors, career information, quest speakers and presentations. Some school-community partnerships also provided expertise and scholarship opportunities for students.
It is hard to generalize the challenges that school-community partnerships encounter. Some scholars have identified challenges particular to specific school-community partnerships. There are challenges associated with initiation, implementation process, difficulties sustaining school-community partnerships in managing potential conflicts and lack of resources including human resources, time and funds (Furman, 2002; Sanders and Harvey, 2002). Researchers have pointed out that school-community partnerships are time consuming and many teachers resisted what they perceived as external influences that might lead to a loss of their professional autonomy (Datnow, 2000; Malen, 1994; Mathews and Menna, 2003). Suspicion and skepticism existed among many teachers and even some principals around the issues of school-community partnerships since these partnerships are bound to generate conflict between teachers and school principals (Voisin, 2003; Ball, 1987; Blasé, 1991). In fact researchers report that in some schools, the culture of welcoming school-community partnerships might not even exist (Epstein, 2001).

**Principals**

This section focuses on principals with an emphasis on the interactions between principals and teachers. Principals occupy such an important position in the school that it is hardly possible to discuss anything about schools without referring to them (Anderson 1990; Ball, 1987; Voisin 2003). Anderson (1990) states that because administrators in most organizations are in a better position to influence what “counts” as important than other organizational members; they are to a great extent the managers of organizational meaning, the custodians of organizational legitimacy, and the definers of organizational and social reality. According to Ball (1987), however, exercising the role of principal is constrained by the contextual factors of the school such as experience, teachers, policies, parents, students and the community. Other scholars have identified size of the school, socio economic status and
demographic diversity as contextual factors that impact on the principal’s role (Siskin, 1994; Moore, 1990; Mawhinney, 1999).

In studying educational leadership, Leithwood, Janzi, and Steinbach (1999) concluded that certain forms of leadership, especially transformative leadership are amicable to school-community partnerships. They state that transformative leaders encourage dialogue with followers and seek ways to empower followers. They state that principals are second to instruction in influencing the academic success of students and that principals who encourage democratic dialogue by encouraging school-community partnerships can enhance the impact of learners’ achievement. The description of transformative leaders can be likened to what Ryan (2006) describes as inclusive leadership, although there may exist discrepancy in the understandings. Literature on school leadership tends to assume that the role of the principal is in the enactment of leadership (Anderson 1990, Ball 1987, Foster 1989).

Some researchers prefer a micropolitical approach to study principals because, as Mawhinney states, “Those who have the power to determine which issues and questions are seen relevant and critical and which will be viewed as irrelevant and illogical play the most powerful micropolitical games” (Mawhinney, 1999 p.164). In line with this, Ball has stated that:

In abstract terms in the school context, leadership styles are both an act of domination (the assertion of ultimate responsibility) and an expression of integration (the focus of identity and common purpose within the institution). A style is a form of social accomplishment, a particular way of realizing and enacting the authority of headship. It is eminently an individual accomplishment, but at the same time it is essentially a form of joint action. (Ball 1987 p.83)

Ball (1987) has identified four styles of leadership that principals enact in schools in relation to context. These are interpersonal, managerial, adversarial and authoritarian styles. Rarely will a principal’s leadership style be limited to any one category. The leadership style that a principal
adopts depends on the values he/she cherishes and the practical circumstances that the principal encounters in the day to day running of the school.

Principals who favor interpersonal leadership styles prefer face-to-face, personal interaction, encourage others to think as autonomous professionals and also choose formal meetings and decision-making. The managerial style of leadership prefers committees, issuing of memoranda and formal procedures. An adversarial leadership style prefers argument, confrontation and maintains control. A principal using an authoritarian leadership style will avoid and stifle argument and dictate situations. Knowledge of these leadership styles is helpful in understanding the role of principals in schools because, as Sanders states, “successful initiatives require individuals who are comfortable in multiple domains and can facilitate meaningful dialogue and shared decision making across inter-professional and intra-professional and experiential boundaries” (Sanders, 2003, p.168). The principal uses power in various ways to execute responsibilities. This includes, delegating responsibilities to teachers to attract school-community partnerships, using different communication strategies to reach prospective partners, creating action teams for partnerships, (Epstein 2001) and personally networking for school-community partnerships (Hands 2005).

According to Voorhis and Sheldon (2004), principal turnover affects the effectiveness of a principal’s role in school-community partnerships. Hargreaves and Fink (2003), and Voisin (2003) confirmed the same. The literature has not illustrated the extent of the impact of transfers of principals on existing school-community partnerships in the schools they leave and those they join. There is evidence that that every time a principal arrives in a new school, s/he tends to start to negotiate new school-community partnerships (Sanders and Harvey, 2002). Datnow (2000) states that principals are critical in implementation of reforms and policies in schools by virtue of
their formal roles. A principal may adopt a policy to please those above in the hierarchy, but in order for it to be effective, teachers need to be involved in its implementation. Therefore it was important to interview teachers to get their impression of the school-community partnerships in a school.

In a qualitative research study that examined factors that lead to successful school-community partnerships, Sanders and Harvey (2002) identified four factors for successful partnerships. Leadership vested in the principals was one of the factors. The other three factors are: the school’s commitment to learning; the school’s receptivity and openness to community involvement; and the school’s willingness to engage in two-way communication with potential community partners about their level and kind of involvement. Their conclusion was similar to many other research findings that pointed to the fact that principals played an important role in processes of school-community partnerships (Bauch, 2001; Epstein, Sanders and Clark, 1998; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). However, Sanders et al (2002) do not mention specifically how or what principals really do to facilitate school-community partnerships. They described the role of principals as being supportive to school-community partnerships.

**Secondary Schools**

There are core secondary organizational features that might have an impact on school-community partnerships. These include the size of the school, social diversity within the school, and subject expertise. In the United States, much research on school-community partnerships have focused on elementary schools (Epstein, 1995; Sanders, 2001; Sanders and Harvey, 2002; Voorhis and Sheldon, 2004). The few studies that mentioned secondary schools have assumed that there was no difference in organization between elementary and secondary in terms of recommendations (Sheldon and Epstein, 2002; Sanders, 2001; Voorhis, 2002; Voorhis and Sheldon, 2004). Yet other literature on school organization have found that elementary and
secondary schools have marked differences, and therefore any discussion about schools that do not recognize these differences portray inaccurate picture of school-community partnerships (Bascia and Imants, 2006; Blasé, 1991; McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990; Moore, 1990).

Voisin (2003) examined 15 secondary schools in southwestern Ontario in 5 different districts school boards. Researches have demonstrated that the location and demographic composition of the community in which a school was situated impacted on school-community partnerships (Bauch 2001; Epstein, 2001; Furman 2002; Hands, 2005; Sanders and Harvey, 2002). The principals in Voisins’ (2003) research described their schools as highly diversified in regard to the composition of the student population background. All the principals reported that their schools have significant percentages of students who were born outside of Canada and for many of their students; English was not their first language. It was not clear in the literature whether the presence of social diversity was an incentive or disincentive to school-community partnerships and what the role of principal would be in either situation.

Subject expertise and school-community partnerships

The way teachers learned and what they specialized in at university as their teaching subjects shaped how they viewed the world around them (Metz, 1990; Siskin, 1994; Voisin 2003). In many secondary schools, teachers defined themselves first as subject experts before even mentioning teaching (Moore, 1990; Siskin, 1994). There was tendency in secondary schools for teachers to have closer association and bond with staff that have studied and teach the same subject. Subjects created boundaries and defined the nature of social interaction that teachers form in secondary schools (McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990; Metz, 1990). This particular
relationship might in turn influence the kind of relationships a school may form with the external environment.

Some subject teachers are more powerful in terms of ability to influence policies in the school and ability to control more resources compared to other subjects (Ball, 1987; Marshall, 1991). They could rally teachers to form powerful alliances in a school. This kind of organization within secondary schools provided unique scenario when discussing school-community partnerships. To date, no research has demonstrated how this could be an asset or a barrier to the functioning of school-community partnerships. Bascia and Imams (2006), explained how secondary schools are fragmented and rendered complex by the presence of academic subjects. They also reported that, “secondary schools are larger and further apart, mitigating against close school-community relationships and resulting in impersonal relationships between students and adults.”(p.3). In her comparative study of two schools, a suburban and a rural one, Hands (2005) acknowledged that there was a difference between secondary schools and elementary schools in terms of how they conducted school-community partnerships. But Hands did not demonstrate how subject sub-units impacted on school-community partnerships in her two school case studies that she examined. Hands (2005) acknowledged that more research was necessary to examine the situation of school-community partnerships in secondary schools in urban centers because her case study focused on sub-urban and rural schools.

Size of school and school-community partnerships

Those who set out to improve high schools confront organizations that are larger and considerably more complex than elementary schools that were primary focus of most research on effective schools. (Moore, p. 167)
Secondary schools stand out as unique by virtue of large student enrolment and large numbers of teaching and non-teaching personnel. But within the literature on school improvement this uniqueness was not acknowledged. Literature does not take into account the size of a school. There tends to be generalizations regarding assumed roles for principal. However, the fact that some schools are very large do mean that one needs to understand the contextual factors in analyzing the role of a principal who works in a complex organization. In a larger school there are chances of the presence of potentially many departments and therefore the organizational structure was altered in comparison to small elementary schools. A better understanding of the role of principal might be appreciated by allowing principals to narrate their activities in relation to school-community partnerships.

**Socio-economic factors and school-community partnerships**

Socio-economic factors affect how relations are played out in any social settings, including schools (Hands, 2005; Metz, 1990). Different neighborhoods in which schools are located create socio-economic variables among schools (Hanson, 2003; Metz, 1990; McLaughlin and Talbert, 1990). More affluent neighborhoods will have schools that are well equipped with learning resources. Many studies on school-community partnerships acknowledged issues of social economic differences as key to implementation of partnerships, although they failed to examine how this might have affected school-community partnerships. Many researchers even concluded that the major reasons why schools could create school-community partnerships are to revitalize poor urban neighborhood secondary schools (Crow son and Boyd 1993; Epstein 2001; Leithwood, et al 1999; Sanders, 2002). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the socio-economic status of the neighborhood in order to appreciate the role the secondary principal plays in a school-community partnership. Below, I propose the conceptual framework that will aid an
understanding of the interconnectedness of the role of the principal in secondary school-community partnerships,

Conceptual Framework

The formal definitions of the role and duties of the head and reflections on the changing role of the head’s proffered in the existing body of literature, provide an insufficient basis for analyzing the work of the head as organizational leader. In particular, the ranges of contextual factors that restrict condition or otherwise affect the head’s role fulfillment in specific settings are woefully neglected. (Ball, 1987, p. 81)

A study examining the partnering behaviors and perceptions of all of the teachers at a school in which the principal is supportive of school-community partnerships would shed light on any divisiveness stemming from teachers’ different levels of community involvement. (Hands, 2005, p. 202)

School-community partnerships in secondary schools are to great extent, functions of the role that principals played in shaping relationships among teachers and the community. These relationships, fostered by the principal, depend on how s/he coordinates with different teachers. “And although micropolitics is concerned with strategies deployed in the conflict of interest between teachers, perhaps the main focus is the conflict of interests between school leaders and teachers” (Hoyle, 1990, p.214). Scholars use micropolitical frameworks to analyze schools as organizations, in particular in relation to issues of power, conflict, cooperation and interests (Ball, 1987; Blasé, 1990, 1991a; Datnow, 2000; Iannaccone, 1975; Marshall, 1990). As Datnow observes:

Research on the micropolitics of education is concerned with conflict between different interest groups in and around schools, focusing specifically on how such political phenomena affect schools (InaCom, 199 1; Marshall & Scribner, 199 1). These competing interests, ideologies, and the informal negotiations of power in schools and districts are the essence of micropolitics (Datnow 2000, p.359).

Scholars discussing schools from a micropolitical perspective acknowledged that schools are contested sites (Ball, 1987; Blasé, 1990, 1991a; Hoyle, 1986, 1999). Iannaccone was the first to
apply micro politics to the analysis of educational issues (Blasé, 1990; Hoyle, 1986, Mahwinney, 1999). Researchers that have analyzed school-community partnerships generally have used ecological frameworks to explain the processes of partnerships (Epstein, 1995, 2001; 2002; Epstein and Sheldon, 2002; Sanders and Harvey, 2002; Hands, 2005). The ecological framework considers the school and its immediate environment and emphasizes parental involvement in schools (Epstein et al 1995, 2001; Epstein and Sheldon, 2002).

Many scholars who conduct research in the field of school-community partnerships have applied Epstein’s conceptual framework of “spheres of influence” (Epstein, 2001; Sanders and Harvey 2002; Hands, 2005). Epstein (2001) conceptualizes a school as being nested in a web of social interconnectedness in the community. One limitation of this conceptual lens is that it does not expose the reality of the school as a contested site vested with interests, power, differing ideologies and values, all of which impact on school-community partnerships in any school (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Ball, 1987; Bacharach and Mitchell, 1987; Siskin 1994; Datnow, 2000).

Ecological frameworks lead to the same conclusion that principals are crucial to school-community partnerships. The problem with these frameworks is that they do not for instance recognize the dominance of male white principals in secondary schools. This might be due to what Siskin states in reference to American educators: “As Larry Cuban (1988) has argued, the language of politics has been, and continues to be, an uncomfortable vocabulary for American educators: many educators still wince over the use of the word political in reference to schools much less a teacher” (Siskin 1994, p.116). For these reasons, Siskin further states that, “many micropolitical interactions are submerged quiet, unstated, even unnoticed. Most political acts in school are viewed as simply part of the everyday routine” (Marshall 1991, p.143).
Ecological conceptual frameworks do not consider agency and interest, power relations and conflict. In essence, this process creates an impression that Anderson (1990) refers to as rendering invisible visible events in schools. Anderson (1990) further notes that principals are value-meaning definers in a school: what they espouse as important might affect the kind of school-community partnerships initiated or fostered in school. The nature of interactions between the principal and teachers in the school depend on the school culture and the latter is a reflection of general community values (Macmillan 2005). Macmillan moreover defines school culture as “the complex behavioral norms, assumptions and beliefs of a school or learning organization (Owens, 2001), and may be typified by the way things are done in an organization (Carlson, 1996)” (Macmillan 2005, p.3).

In contrast, the micropolitical framework explores the ideology guiding school culture, the school traditions and values of the principal and other personnel in the school. In Mawhinney’s observation, “Micropolitical studies document the privatization of conflict within the school walls, or within one subgroup on the site” (Mawhinney 1999, p.164). Ball (1987) illustrates how conflicting or competing ideology or values surrounding the school can affect the principals’ role by stating:

“Local authority advisers may be pressing for innovation, the parents for improved examination results and the staff for peace and quiet. When all goes well in a school, whatever that may mean, the head is ‘successful’ and may establish a reputation, which can be exploited, traded elsewhere. When things go wrong it is usually the head who is blamed” (Ball 1987, p. 86).

In a separate but related study, Datnow (2000) states that; “Because of institutional arrangements, some positions accrue material and symbolic resources (e.g., power) that enable incumbents of those positions to impose meanings upon others (Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Mehan, Hartweck, & Meihls, 1986),” an opinion echoed by Datnow (2000, p. 258). Blase (1991)
Ball (1987) opines that:

“the control of school organizations is significantly concerned with domination (the elimination or pre-emption of conflict) thus, domination is intended to achieve and maintain particular definitions of the school over and against alternative, assertive definitions. The process, which links these two basic facets of organizational life-conflict and domination-is micro politics.” (Ball 1987, p. 218).

Balls further asserts: “two aspects of micropolitical relations emerge as crucial. One concerns the containment of internal conflicts; the other is the management of relationships with external audiences. The head teacher is the crucial figure in both,” (Ball, 1987, p.253). This statement underscores the pivotal role of the principal in a school. The principal has on the one-hand teachers and of course students to deal with and on the other hand an external audience, which might include parents, community, school board, teachers unions, the Ministry of Education and others.

The principals’ role in school-community partnerships cannot be understood separate from the leadership styles they employ in school, a culture that can promote or prohibit school-community partnerships and the quality of relationships between the principal and teachers. The leadership styles principals enact would promote the values they prefer and this might include partnerships. Teachers as subject expertise have autonomy in schools that create loyalties within their disciplines. This in turn enables them to create bonds within the school and dictate how concurs, noting that “all micropolitical perspectives share certain characteristics: Each focused on how individuals and groups used power to achieve their goals in organizational settings” (p.9). The role that principals played in school-community partnerships in secondary schools could be analyzed by examining the relationship between them and the teachers. Consequently, the presence and or absence of school-community partnerships in secondary schools could be attributed to how principals or teachers use their powers to create coalitions for common goals.

Even though there is a general assumption is that principals have power by virtue of their formal positions, teachers wield power in many different ways and can influence the decisions taken by the principal and the actual adoption of the principal’s decision. The influence might be overt or covert and can be manifested in particular incidences of support or resistance of programs initiated by the principals (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1990; Datnow 2000; Moore, 1990). This can in turn shape the kind of response the principal can have. This may possibly affect school-community partnerships.

Again literature on school-community partnerships has not demonstrated the impact of population diversity on these partnerships even though it acknowledges that population diversity affects interactions in schools (Anderson, 1990; Metz, 1990; Sanders, Jones and Abel, 2002). Bascia (1986) explained how teaching in Canadian schools that have predominantly white teachers impacts on minority teachers. Bascia underscored the importance of examining the value systems that underlie teaching and administrative practices if improvements in individual and organizational responses to students are to be realized. In a separate but related study, Bascia & Imant (2001) examined the treatment of minority ESL teachers and found out that these teachers are marginalized by the system and their teaching subjects are on the margins.

Socioeconomic factors also affected micropolitical interactions. Metz (1990) has demonstrated how social economic factors affected teachers’ work in schools. The socioeconomic status of the school environment affected the role of the principal in school-community partnerships. Many scholars have advocated for creating partnerships in resource-
deprived communities to support student achievement in school. Researches have demonstrated how schools in rich community neighborhoods created partnerships with ease whereas schools in poor neighborhoods faced many challenges (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998; Leithwood, et al, 1999; Mawhinney, 2002; Sanders and Harvey, 2002. The role of the principal in school-community partnerships could be analyzed using the micro political theoretical framework. Using the micropolitical theory, Ball (1987) made it clear that principals in schools enacted certain styles of leaderships that constituted their role in the school. Through these enacted styles, principals convey their intentions, goals and direction of what they want in the control and integration of schools. Concurring with this understanding, Marshall (1991) observes:

In micropolitical analyses of schools one identifies power distribution, values allocation, coalition building, audience and constituency building, manipulating of symbols, conflicting ideologies, and fights over turf (Marshall, 1991 p.155).

Thus the enactment of leadership style would promote what the principal stands for through distribution of power and allocation of values, including how they form allies and or coalitions to achieve their ends. Micropolitical conceptual framework presupposes that principals, as perceived by teachers, enact four possible leadership styles, namely: interpersonal, managerial, adversarial and authoritarian. Ball (1987) cautions this perception by warning that: “heads must seek to maintain the style for fear of being seen as inconsistent, vacillating or weak”.

Some principals’ leadership styles might fall within one category or a combination of styles. The summary forms of the features of the four leadership styles articulated by Ball are as follows:

**Interpersonal**

The interpersonal typical of mobile and visible head

- emphasis on personal interaction, face to face.
- preference for individual negotiation and compromises.
- prefers to consult with individuals rather than hold meetings oriented to informality in relationships and the use of informal networks for communication and consultation. (p. 88)

- The head is the focus of communication and dispenser of patronage. The lines of obligation and exchange are maintained through the person of the head. (p. 90)

- The conduct of business is reduced to sets of personal relations and individual ownership. (p.91)

- In a number of respects the interpersonal head is much more a part of the staff of the school than is the case in the other styles. A deliberate attempt is made to reduce the formal trappings of the headship position. (p. 94)

**Managerial**

- involves the importation into the school of structures, types of relationships and processes of organizational control from the factory. The head is the chief executive of the school, normally surrounded and supported by a senior management team (variously composed of deputy heads and senior teachers). relates to the staff through this team.

- The head may or may not value wide social contacts with staff,

- does not require close working relationships across the whole staff. The day-to- day running of the school and the ongoing decision-making and policy-making processes are focused upon the work of the senior management team: (p. 101)

- the emphasis of organizational control is position-oriented rather than person oriented. Information and influence flow through the formal channels and structures. (p. 101)
Adversarial

- Rests primarily upon the vehicle of talk—the arenas of the talk are public rather than private. (p. 104)
- encourages and is a major participant in public debate. emphasis on dialogue and not infrequently on confrontation. There is recognition of competing interests and ideologies in the school, and these are allowed to enter the formal procedures of discussion and decision-making.
- relies very heavily upon the ability of the head to cope with the uncertainties of the relatively unorganized public debate. That is to deal with attacks, to persuade wavers, to provide reasoned argument, to employ stratagems and devices where necessary. (p. 105)
- of necessity closely identified with the issues and ideologies being advocated. (p. 107)
- Crucial to this is awareness, cultivation and use of allies. allies, and opponents, come to be recognized as a part of the normal terrain of competing interests and ideological divisions among the staff

Authoritarian

- is concerned straightforwardly to assert. Statement rather than confrontation is the primary mode of verbal engagement with others.
- takes no chances by recognizing the possibility of competing views and interests.
- Opposition is avoided, disabled or simply ignored. No opportunities are provided for the articulation of alternative views or the assertion of alternative interests, other than defined by the head as legitimate. (p. 109)
- Meetings are cancelled, the agendas of meetings are massaged, and when ‘illegitimate’ issues are indicated efforts are made to isolate and label those responsible as deviant, as operating outside the bounds of normal practice. (p. 111)
there is an evident commitment to the status quo, to defend, almost at all costs, the established policies and procedures of the institution. This style of leadership seems most common among long-serving heads or in schools where ‘traditions’ represent cherished values strongly held by the dominant coalition.

In trying to understand the role of principals in school-community partnerships it was important that the teachers’ views be considered. The teacher’s perception would ultimately reveal what the role of the principal was in school-community partnerships. Besides, it’s crucial that the styles of leadership that the principals have strived to enact ‘in practical circumstances’ are scrutinized because this would bring out the values the principals stands for and which have implication to the leadership style they enact.

The “practical circumstances” are the particular instances of principal’s interactions with both teachers who are involved in partnerships and those not involved. The relationship between principals and teachers in issues of school-community partnerships can be explained as a micropolitical behavior of staging opposition on the part of those not involved, whereas the principal’s action toward these teachers would be viewed as respect for professional autonomy. The possible outcome could be that both the principals and opposing teachers form alliances where the teachers’ sentiments might not necessarily be in support of the principal. In the meantime, those who support the principal may enjoy some privileges.

The next chapter provides details of the research methods used to gather the data for this study.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This study used qualitative case study research methods to gain an in-depth understanding of situations and meanings for those involved. The interest was in the process rather than the outcome; in context rather than a specific variable; in discovery rather than confirmation (Merriam, 1998, p. 19; Rothe, 2000). Qualitative research employed several different tools for research design, data collection and data analysis. One marked distinct feature of qualitative research would be interviewing of participants and in most cases not having hypotheses that predetermine meaning. The purpose is to elicit understanding and meaning with me as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis through the use of inductive thinking to produce a rich description (Merriam, 1998, p.11).

A number of the studies reviewed for this research have used case studies; however, a major limitation is reliance on close-ended questionnaires alone for data collection (Voorhis and Sheldon, 2004). The approach does not provide room to probe a participant further on any issue. The role of principals in school-community partnerships could be ascertained by interviewing principals to inquire about what specific roles they play, and interviewing teachers regarding what they might have observed principals do on specific occasions concerning school-community partnerships. Another way to become familiar with the role of principals in school-community partnerships would be to read policy documents relating to partnerships. These documents might specify the principal’s specific actions. The choice of the research method is based on the kind of research question and also the perceived strength to adequately enlist
responses that answer the major research question. One scholar outlined the strength of a case study as follows:

A case study is the best plan for answering the research questions: its strengths outweigh its limitations. The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Case study anchored in real-life situations results in a rich and holistic account of phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers’ experiences (Merriam, 1998 p.41).

In this study, the case study methodology was used to gather information through in-depth interviews with the principal and teachers, using open-ended questions.

**Procedures**

The study involved selecting eight public secondary schools in one Southern Ontario district school board after reading through their website profiles and ascertaining that the schools have school-community partnerships. Permission from the district school board was required to undertake this research study. A letter to the district board (Appendix B) was sent to district school board personnel responsible for research after university ethical review approval. The letter outlined (1) the nature of the research; (2) explained benefits of the research to the district school board; (3) detailed the strategy I developed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participating principals and teachers; (4) requested permission to access the schools. The district school board granted me permission to access the selected schools to recruit participants for the study. The reason for selecting eight Schools was to create a sizable potential pool to select from: should some decline I would have options to turn to without going to the board to ask for further permission.

On receipt of the letter from the district school board, I visited a number of the selected schools with signed letters to make appointments with the principals but I found it difficult to
secure appointments because of the busy nature of the principals’ work. I visited two schools and was informed by the school office assistants to leave contact information and a note explaining the reason to meet the principal. I left the letters of permission to access the schools from the district school board and telephone and e-mail contacts. After two days I received a telephone call from one principal to make an appointment to meet and discuss the proposed study. A day was fixed to meet. The principal agreed to participate and signed the consent form for the school to participate. The teachers that agreed to participate in the study were asked to sign the consent form and return it to me. Participation in the study was based on voluntary interest of the principal and teachers.

On the day of interview I was able to identify possible teachers for interview because the principal was asked to identify partnerships in the school and names of the teachers in charge of these partnerships. Additional information from teachers was also sought, to reach partnership participants who might be unknown to the principal. Some of the teachers the principal referred me to, declined to be interviewed.

In this way, I recruited more teachers besides those identified by the principal. One lesson I learned was that teachers who were not very involved in school-community partnerships had little information to share about these partnerships. See Tables 2 and 5 page 39 and 80 respectively, which have the shape of an inverted pyramid: the principals identified many school-community partnerships and named a few teachers who were involved and those teachers were able to name fewer school-community partnerships and the trend continued with the last teachers to be interviewed having few ideas about school-community partnerships. Amongst the teachers interviewed were some who had taught for very few years and others who had taught for many years. This was important in order to get different views, from those who had been in school for
a long period and therefore familiar with the social dynamics as well as new teachers whose perspectives on how they have fitted into the culture of the school were useful to my analysis.

While interviewing was going on in the first school, I was busy making contacts with other schools. Principals from two more schools promised to contact me after I visited the school for appointment. In one school, despite the fact that the website profile stated that the school had several school-community partnerships; the principal asserted that the school did not have any. Another principal declined to participate in the study on the account that she was new in the school and felt that she had not learned much about the school. The fifth principal I approached agreed to participate in the study. Thus I approached five out of the possible eight choices of schools predetermined for selection. In the second school the same procedure was used of interviewing the principal first and then teachers. In this second school, the principal indicated that not many teachers were involved in school-community partnerships, and this was confirmed: after interviewing about five participants. I struggled to recruit more participants for the study. Out of the possible eleven participants I managed to recruit only eight.

Sample

In each case school, I interviewed a principal, one male and one female. I was able to interview a total of eight female and seven male teachers, for approximately 45 minutes to one hour each. Interviews were scheduled at times and locations convenient for each participant. All the interviews took place at the respective schools. All information was kept in strict confidence in my office at OISE/UT. Coded pseudonyms were used to refer to the teachers, principals and the schools.

At Chester Collegiate, I identified and interviewed ten participants. At Lovington Collegiate, I interviewed three of the four teachers I was referred to by the school principal. The
fourth, a vice principal declined to be interviewed because she was busy. Still I was able to get more participants and I was able to interview eight participants at Lovington School. In total, I interviewed a total of eighteen participants, including two principals in Chester and Lovington Collegiate Schools.

**Data analysis**

Data analysis for this study involved organizing and making sense of all that I had seen, heard and read (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Analysis began during the time data was being collected. It took me almost four months to interview participants from each school. The interviews were audio taped and later transcribed using a transcriber. During the interview sessions, I made separate field notes based on observations of the school principal and teachers’ daily interactions. After interviewing all the possible participants from each school, I transcribed and sent the transcripts back to the participants for verification of their accuracy. I consulted the websites and other written documents to compare the information provided by the participants and what was stated to enhance the quality of the information. Each participant interviewed was given a code for the purpose of organizing the retrieval of identified quotes to be used in the interpretative narrative. Pseudonyms were applied instead of real names of the participants to protect their identity. I took the transcribed data to show my supervisor. We discussed the adequacy of the data collected for answering my research question. The supervisor and I agreed that data collected so far was adequate to answer the research question. The supervisor provided me with books to read further on to refresh on current literature in relation to the data collected.

The data analysis consisted of several quite elaborate phases. In the first phase after transcribing, I read several times through the transcripts to make sense of what was in the data
and what kind of information was relevant to my research question. The process involved decision making, sorting and separating the data according to relevance and grouping according to the questions from the questionnaire. I then isolated the data and identified key words used by the participants. I further developed a coding system for storing the information and for easy retrieval. The codes related to specific words used by the participants for describing the role of principals in school-community partnerships. The specific key words screened from the data included initiate, approve, support coordinate, implement and evaluate. Therefore, when reading each participant’s transcripts, I would look for what each participant stated in regard to these key words. I grouped what each participant stated and reflected on them, interpreted and wrote in my own words a narrative describing these key words that represented the role of the principal. In writing the narrative, I frequently compared the field notes and the notes I made when reading through the data. Through this process I started to reduce the data into a meaningful coherent narrative of the data I had gathered.

The other coding was related to the partnerships. I went through each participant’s data picking out what each participant identified as a partnership, its name, type and any information I considered was important to note. As a result of these, I was able to come up with the identified partnerships, their activities in the school, person in-charge and the nature of social interaction between the principal and the teachers over each partnership identified. I compared this information with the leadership styles elaborated by Ball (1987) found in the conceptual framework to make sense of the appropriate interpretation to make of the information. The leadership styles presuppose a pattern of typology that can reveal how a leader’s actions can manifest the part s/he plays in an organization.
Other codes related to issues of micropolitics such as power, cooperation, conflict, self-interest, values, beliefs and ideology in the data. I was keen to look for the words the principal and teachers used that described the role of the principal that inclined to micropolitics. I examined the similarities and differences in perceptions between teachers and the principal and among the teachers in relation to partnerships. I was keen to look for points of divergence and incidences that revealed power, self-interest, ideology, and beliefs.
CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY 1:

CHESTER COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

Chester Collegiate Institute was located in a major intersection of roads running west to east and south to north in a major urban center. There were many small shopping malls, including a big one. Beside the school, there was a huge senior’s home. The nearby Chester Public Library was undergoing renovation at the time of this data collection. The school building was a large complex and according to the Principal, the School has about 1350 students. Many of the students commuted from neighboring elementary school catchment areas. One teacher told me that the school offered French immersion classes and hence it attracted many students who wanted to major in French. By the time of this data collection, the principal of Chester Collegiate Institute had been at the school for two years. He had been promoted from the position of vice principal of a neighboring school. The week I visited the school, a new community partnership called “Youth-police” was being initiated. Besides this partnership, most school community partnerships predated the new principal’s tenure.

School-community partnerships

This section describes the school-community partnerships identified by the principal and teachers. I discuss the school-community partnerships as they emerged from the data and the role of the principal in school-community partnerships as described by the principal and the teachers. I describe the focus of each school-community partnership, those involved, why it was formed, how it operated and the nature of social interactions associated with the school-community
partnerships between the teachers and the principal. Table 1 below presents the school-community partnerships identified by the principal and teachers at Chester Collegiate.

**Table 1: Principal’s and teacher identification of school-community partnerships.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chester Collegiate principal identified partnerships</th>
<th>Chester Collegiate teacher identified partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Breakfast club</td>
<td>11. Settlement workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seniors’ Home</td>
<td>12. New Comers services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Public Library</td>
<td>13. Partnership for Breaking the Circle of Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chester Youth Service</td>
<td>15. Police Student Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talented Student Program</td>
<td>16. Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Steel Band</td>
<td>17. Youth Leaders for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hospital partnership</td>
<td>18. Awards Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Translation Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Youth and police partnership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the Table 2 (below), at Chester Collegiate, I interviewed the principal Mr. Kohl, designated (1) and 9 teachers designated (2-9). The last column in table 2 indicates the code number of school-community partnerships. Overall, the ten participants identified eighteen school-community partnerships operating in the school. The teachers represented in the sample at Chester Collegiate came from the departments as shown in Table 2. Data from this table can be compared with the data in Table 1, which shows the number of school-community partnerships identified by the participants. For instance Ms. Watson identified partnerships 1, 2, 3 and 4 from the principal’s list while Mr. Lumumba and Mr. Raymond, a Music teacher, identified one school-community partnership each, thus number 7 and 6 respectively. Ms. Kate identified partnership 2, 3, 5, 8 and 10 but she doubted whether some were
school-community partnerships. In fact Ms. Kate declined to share more details on school-community partnerships.

Table 2: Participants in the interview Chester Collegiate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Department/role</th>
<th>Number of Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Patrick Kohl</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Katherine Moss</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>3, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick Graff</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lillian Kate</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 8, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cecilia Watson</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Simon Lumumba</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jay Stephen</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>3, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kathleen Mathews</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>2, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Grey Raymond</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>2, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jane Brian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>13, 15, 17, 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on tables 1 and 2 above, below is a description in which, first I show, partnerships identified and led by the principal, I then show those identified by the principal but supervised by
teachers; and thirdly, partnerships identified by teachers and supervised by teachers. The partnerships identified by the principal were: Breakfast, seniors’ Home, Public Library, Mall, Youth and Police, Police, Talented Youth, Chester. Partnerships identified by the principal and teachers but supervised by the teachers included: Steel Band, Translation Committee, and Hospital Partnership. The last groups of partnerships that were identified by teachers alone and supervised by teachers were: Settlement Workers, New Comers, Impact, Partnerships for breaking the Circle of Violence, Youth leaders for Development and Awards Program

**Breakfast partnership**

This school-community partnership came to the school through the district school board. A non-profit organization partnered with the district school board to provide breakfast in schools and as a result some schools, including Chester, could apply to have the breakfast provided. In practice, the school provided the space and partial funding for operation of the program, while the non-governmental organization provided personnel who prepared and served breakfast to the students. This school-community partnership was already in operation by the time the principal came to the school. The principal stated in regard to the partnership:

> We have a full breakfast program that was run by the Breakfast for Learning Group. We provide the space and funding for food and they do the cooking. It is a volunteer group and that is free breakfast every morning, ah up in room 503. Now of course free breakfast is self explanatory, get the kids a good breakfast and they can learn well.

> Based on what the principal said, it appears that breakfast was provided to any student that was interested. There was no great student involvement even though the principal expected them to do so. Among the reasons why the students did not participate, according to the principal, was that breakfast was provided early in the morning before school time and students found it difficult to come that early.
I did not interview the teacher in charge of the day-to-day operation of this partnership because the teacher was absent. Not many teachers were aware of the breakfast program. Out of the ten interviewees, only 3 teachers and the principal mentioned it. Of the 3 teachers, 2 were in the Guidance and Counseling department. It is possible that students were referred to the program from the counseling office. This school-community partnership was coordinated from the principal’s office. The principal was continuing the tradition of having the breakfast program in the school by providing space and funding for the program. The principal supported the teacher in charge through the allocation of funds and space.

**Seniors’ Home partnership**

According to the principal, partnership with the seniors home was about providing shelter in time of emergency such as a blackout or anything else that can leave seniors with nowhere to go. The school was open to provide temporary shelter. It was not clear whether there had been an emergency and the seniors had been sheltered or the school-community partnership was there in anticipation of emergency occurrence. The principal stated:

> We have a partnership with Chester Lodge retirement home next door but it was just an emergence shelter in cases of difficulty so if they have to evacuate their building we provide for them. It was a verbal agreement we have. Then I do not know whether that includes partnership or not. (It was called what?) Chester Brook Lodge it was right besides us here the other side of the school they have got a lot of patients who are in beds and could be left out for example if there was a gas leak or fire we will accommodate them into the building.

Ms. Kate the librarian described another aspect of this school-community partnership. She indicated that the partnership had been suspended a while ago when one teacher transferred and moved from one department to another. She described this school-community partnership as the initiative of the teachers in the school. It involved taking students to the senior’s home to have conversations with the seniors. According to her, there was a cultural barrier between the students and seniors. The teachers considered the seniors as a resource for information about the past. Many of the seniors were war veterans who were eager to share their stories with the
students. Ms. Kate remembered this school-community partnership with nostalgia and regretted that it was at risk of not continuing.

**Public Library partnership**

The importance of networking was demonstrated through the Library partnership at Chester Collegiate. Two forms of school-community partnerships involved the public library. Because Mr. Kohl, the principal believed in the importance of networking, he provided space to the public library in the school while the library building was undergoing renovation. The principal’s description of this partnership differs from that of the teacher/librarian, Ms. Kate. During the interview, the principal stated that:

> We also have minor partnerships with the public library across the street. Ah we actually host them, they are undergoing construction now, rebuilding, very complex and we are going to house the summer reading program in the school. Their facilities are under consideration and we have back and forth you know students who may need to use computers we set up with them. Ah basically it’s another outlet for our students to use for research and they are quite accommodating.

Ms. Kate, the teacher / librarian, in contrast stated that this partnership was an elaborate program that involved students from different grades who visited the library to listen to visiting authors. She said:

> I have remembered that we partner up with public library at Chester Public Library as well and I don’t know why I did not think of that. They send us authors to come and speak here to students and we send students to go and listen to their presentation and sometimes we do have people come in and do presentations on the computer and how to navigate their websites and that kind sort of thing.

In reality, this school-community partnership appeared to be elaborate. It attracted students of various grade levels and there was a clear and demonstrated coordination and
involvement by different teachers who taught different subjects ranging from English to History. Ms. Kate liaised with the library in programming the events that took place in the library.

**The Mall Partnerships**

The mall school-community partnership was initiated by the principal and did not involve the district school board. The purpose of mall school-community partnership was to enhance mall security and for the mall to assist the school by informing the school when students loiter in the mall. Evidence from the principal, Mr. Stephen an English teacher and Mr. Lumumba, a Guidance and Counseling Teacher underscores the fact that the community in which the school was located was very poor and poverty impacted negatively on the behavior of students. Mr. Stephen acknowledged this situation by saying:

Clearly the social economic status of this area was a relevant factor in bringing in some of these organizations because it was needed ok. It was a little bit different say, then than others parts of this place where the socio economic status was a little a bit different. For example TSP one of their initiatives was to get kids away from gangs. Here this was a fairly gangland. You have to read the papers in this area it was a fairly prevalent gangs in this neighborhoods verses other neighborhoods in this place where it may not appear so. Therefore their schools do not have programs that our school has right. So it was natural that the socio economic status of the community ah necessitates the involvement into some of these programs.

The principal reported that some students from the school had been involved in shoplifting. The school and the mall agreed that the mall react to such incidences of unruly behavior by alerting the school that would in turn come and take the errant students. So the mall school-community partnership in this school case was to maintain a positive co-existence between the school and the mall. The mall school-community partnership, which solely depended on the activeness of the Principal, was to protect the students from breaking the law, which activates chances of dropping out of school. The principal noted that this particular partnership had helped students greatly as some of the incidences involving students that would
have warranted students being arrested and charged and possibly dropout from school had been averted because other measures of discipline from within the school had been followed instead.

**Youth and Police partnership**

The principal identified Youth and Police as the newest school-community partnership in the school. He said that the police served as volunteer coaches for basketball by providing intramural activities in the school. The principal and Mr. Stephen, the English teacher, were involved in coaching the basketball team. This school-community partnership was to involve the police playing together with the students. Mr. Stephen observed that the intention was to promote a positive relationship between the students and the police in the neighborhood. The principal served as the coordinator of this partnership. Ms. Moss, a History teacher, identified another aspect of this school-community partnership:

Chester Collegiate has a police officer that was stationed at our school to do better to improve school community relationships between the school and police officers in this community…. Ah as far as police officer Maria who was stationed here, actually she was going to talk to my class tomorrow because I teach grade 11 Law. So I am having her and to talk to the students about the law but also they can see she was here and try to improve the relationship between the school and the police community.

Although the principal identified this school-community partnership at the beginning of the week of my interview with him, he spoke of it in reference to basketball and he even mentioned the police officer stationed in the school.

**Talented Student Program**

Like the breakfast program, the district school board recommended the Talented Student Program (TSP) to the school. The program was initiated three years prior this data collection and was therefore in operation before the new Principal. This program was popular among teachers
interviewed and acted as a drop-in centre within the school-providing student mentoring, leadership, and documentary filmmaking resources. Talented Student program was without a doubt a repertoire of involvement that provided assemblies and recognized students’ achievements. Chester Youth Services, a local non-governmental community organization, sponsored this school-community partnership. The organization provided staff and the school space in a classroom for a number of hours in a week to do their activities. The school contributed some partial funding towards the partnership. When asked who in the school was in-charge of the Talented Student Partnership, the principal stated:

Talented Student Partnership program liaises with me. I am the one they come down to. When he needs a survey, wants to go out to the classrooms to do anti-bullying, he and I discuss that so it pretty comes through me (and even the steel band) yup, yup

Besides the Principal, six out of the nine teachers interviewed mentioned the Talented Student Partnership program. Mr. Jay Stephen, an English teacher, said that Talented Student Partnership provided students with opportunity to gain experiences that can be helpful to the community when they leave the school and that through the partnership, students learned accountability to the school and to the community. As said by Mr. Stephen, students benefited further by learning issues about their health and the ability to avoid bad peer groups that would otherwise lead them to easily recruit into gangs. Mr. Stephen maintained that what happens in the community can affect the school; gang activities can filter into the behaviors of students in the school. For the school to improve students’ academic achievement, just shielding the students from what ails the community is not enough.
Chester Youth Services partnership

Chester Youth Services was a local non-profit social service organization that ran the Talented Student Partnership in the area where Chester Collegiate School was situated. The organization hired staffs that ran the Talented Student Partnership in the school. Teachers who were interviewed were aware that Talented Student Partnership sponsored by Chester Youth Services. The principal was at the center of the operation of this school-community partnership. He had inherited it from the previous principal and he encouraged teachers and students to be involved. The principal continued the tradition of providing space and funding and was involved in the day-to-day administrative operation. The vitality of the partnership was dependent upon the commitment of the principal. He was involved in the coordination of communication about it in the school. Only those teachers who had shown interest were aware of the operation of this school-community partnership.

Hospital partnership

This was one of the oldest school-community partnerships; having begun in 1993. Ms. Mathews, an ESL teacher, spearheaded the activities of this partnership. She allied with someone in the hospital, and they agreed on how the two institutions could achieve their needs. Since then, all the principals at Chester Collegiate School had supported it because of the enormous benefits accrued to each institution. For example, the hospital received funds through students’ participation in the annual Steel Band fundraising activities. Through these activities, students in turn gained leadership skills and experience in participating in community charitable activities as they learned good citizenship. The principal provided fare for bus transportation of the students to the hospital. The principal also coordinated the activities of the hospital partnerships by acting as the liaison person. This school-community partnership had evolved over many years but its
continuity had relied on the commitment of two teachers Ms. Mathews, ESL teacher and Mr. Raymond, a Music teacher.

The principal identified hospital school-community partnership as a local initiative that was known to a number of teachers I interviewed. The principal’s description of the hospital partnership epitomized how a partnership can form an artery structure where many partnerships are connected to others. In this case, the hospital partnership was connected to the Steel Band and Translation Committee such that the teachers involved shared information on planning annual events together with the principal. The hospital school-community partnership was a response to the needs of the two institutions: the school needed a place where students could earn their 40 mandatory hours of community service and prepare for future careers, while the hospital needed people who could assist in language translation for patients.

**Steel Band partnership**

This partnership had been in the school for many years, having been started by Mr. Raymond, a Music teacher. Mr. Raymond, organized the steel band, which was composed mostly of student taking music classes. The principal identified the steel band as a school-community partnership in the school but in reality the program consisted of music classes that were invited to various functions in the community to play and participate in annual steel band festivals. The steel band was at the core of the hospital partnership. The band played wherever they were invited and specifically they performed drumming for hospital fundraising functions. Whenever the band played out in the mall, the mall paid the band and the money was used to make other trips. The principal stated thus concerning the steel band partnership:
We have a steel band here, they do Christmas concerts in there (Is that a partnership from outside). Steel band was ours yeah steel band was our classes who go there to do Christmas concerts in the mall and they actually pay us, I am not sure they do volunteer because the mall actually pays the program and they take that money and use it for trips, Last year was to Barbados. The band played there for students and that was a good connection with them. They played elsewhere as well. Ah those are the ones that come at the top of my head with involvement with the community.

According to the principal, the steel band went out of the school as ambassadors of the school. The principal demonstrated a strong commitment to this school-community partnership because he felt personal satisfaction in the band’s achievement for the school. On identifying the origins of the steel band as a school-community partnership Mr. Raymond, the Music teacher, stated:

I would to say that the partnership I’m referring to was Naitiri Alumni Association of Canada. This was a group of people who came from Barbados to spread the steel band program presently they have a partnership with district school board. They have provided financial assistance and most importantly they provided the start up funds. It started as after school program then we had a night school run by school board.

Mr. Raymond said that the steel band was begun by a group of alumni of secondary schools from Barbados and Trinidad. The group, which resides in Canada, decided to form steel bands and sought school-community partnerships with the district school board. Mr. Raymond took up the responsibility of teaching drumming and playing in the steel band. Mr. Raymond also stated that the organization enlisted student membership in the band at a small fee. The alumni organization supported the school with musical instruments. The steel band ensured a positive public reputation for the school and many students who participated in the steel bands formed their own new bands after graduation.
Mr. Raymond as the director of the steel band in the School had benefited personally. He stated that his involvement in the steel band and playing had secured his position in the school and made it difficult to get transfers. Mr. Raymond also noted that he enjoyed a close relationship with the principal, as was the teacher in charge of the hospital school-community partnership. Not many teachers interviewed identified the steel band as a partnership; in fact its operation was limited to the principal and the teacher involved. This was another example of capitalizing on teacher interest and autonomy to initiate ideas and a principal supporting the teacher.

**Translation Committee partnership**

The principal identified the translation committee as a school-community partnership. Teachers who identified it as a partnership included Ms. Kate, the teacher/librarian, Mr. Graff, the History teacher, Ms. Watson, the Guidance and Counseling teacher, and Ms. Mathews, an ESL teacher. Ms. Mathews was in-charge of this partnership. The Translation committee spearheaded the hospital partnership, partnerships with other schools and with the Ministry of Citizenship and immigration. The Translation Committee brought together students and staff who carried out translation services in the school during parents’ nights, for other schools and for the hospital. The Translation Committee formed the core group in the school that undertook the hospital school-community partnership and also did fundraising for the hospital. Students who volunteered in the Translation Committee were awarded credits for the forty-hour community service required to graduate from Ontario secondary schools. Ms. Mathews stated that:

I think am going to talk about the partnerships I know. For me, it was the Translation Committee. I have run this since 1993 with South Parkland Hospital and that was our main community we are affiliated with. We help South Parkland Hospital. We provide services like if they like documents to be translated then we
do for them. Yesterday I finished translation for Grassland Public School. Our students and staff assist in translation. We translate for schools. We translate into many languages. We coordinate with translation services getting people from the community. We help parents’ especially recent immigrants who cannot read English or French. Even in our school if a teacher needs to talk to parent who does not speak English we assist in translation.

Ms. Mathews noted that by participating in this partnership, students gained skills such as fundraising, leadership, communication character development and interpersonal relations. Through this participation, students’ future careers are also shaped. There was evidence that Ms. Mathews worked very closely with the principal on this school-community partnership. The principal, Mr. Kohl, was invited on behalf of the school to attend volunteer recognition ceremonies hosted by the hospital. Ms. Mathews mentioned that the school got coverage in the local newspaper for the services they provided. In addition, the Ministry of Citizenship and immigration recognized students who participated in the translation with certificates of recognition.

**Settlement Workers partnership**

Two teachers, Ms. Watson, the Guidance and Counselling teacher, and Mr. Graff, the History teacher, identified this school-community partnership. The district school board had an agreement with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to provide programs for new immigrants to train in English language skills. There was a settlement worker who came to the school twice a week to meet new students. During Parents Nights, the settlement worker hosted a table that showed the services available in the community for new immigrants. Ms. Watson coordinated the operation of this partnership in the school. The principal did not mention this partnership and no teacher indicated that the principal was involved.
New Comers Services partnership

The district school board recommended this partnership to the school and it involved the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. The major purpose was to deliver programs that assisted immigrant students and their parents to adapt to new life in Canada. The teachers did not mention the principal’s relationship with this partnership and the principal did not identify this partnership in the school. The New Comers partnership involved a ministry staff member being sent to the school to mentor recent immigrant students. This school-community partnership operated like settlement workers school community partnership. The two organizations were yet to sort out how to best deliver services since they appeared to duplicate their work. Ms. Watson confirmed this confusion between the two community partnerships:

The next one, I don’t know if it will fall into the same category of partnership or not but it is very new. It just started within the last couple of months and that was New-Comer Services for Youth and they run on Spring Road and Goliva comes in every week. He shares that office with the Settlement Workers for a session on Thursdays. And he was doing some mentoring, running mentoring programs with Newcomers except that they are still sorting out their roles I think. Ah he actually will hook them with somebody with somebody to mentor them. …They wouldn’t be doing that. He has done some workshops with something with the March break were he did resume writing job-searching workshops. That overlaps sometime but he also had over the March break where he took several kids that he was linking up with mentors, they went to the Zoo, and they did some during the March break. Settlement workers will not do that kind of thing.

As Ms. Watson pointed out, this was a case of the school-community partnerships all recommend by the district school board, run by different organizations but delivering similar programs.

Youth leaders for Development partnership

Mr. Lumumba, a Guidance and counseling teacher identified this partnership and admitted that he was in charge of its operation in the school. This partnership was about students
who volunteered to do fundraising for various projects in different African countries. Mr Lumumba said that students came together as a club under his supervision and they identified a project. Every year, they raised funds and carried out new project in different African countries. By the time of this data collection, students who were members of the group had been involved in three projects within three years. Mr. Lumumba avowed that this partnership was also in collaboration with various development agencies working in the countries they would have identified. The partnership also relied on people who emigrated from these countries and settled in Canada. According to Mr. Lumumba, by volunteering to organize and do fundraising, students learned to become leaders and realize that fellow students in different parts of the world were not privileged to attend school. Similarly, students learned a sense of interdependence in humanity and the responsibility to help those less privileged. Moreover, Youth leaders for development partnership exposed students to global issues while they learned skills such as verbal communication, interpersonal relations, time management, organizational skills and sense of responsibility.

It was not clear how many students were involved and from which grades but what I sensed was that recruitment was done from all grades and mostly students who were interested. It was also not clear how much money the partnership had fundraised but Mr. Lumumba stated that they had constructed three elementary schools in three countries in Africa.

**Partnership for Breaking the Circle of Violence**

Mr. Graff, a History teacher, named Breaking the Circle of Violence (PBCV) and Impact Partnership as partnerships he was in charge of in the school. He said that PBCV was in its second year of operation. This partnership involved organizing a series of workshops in the
course of the year and collaborating with different organizations from the community that deal with youth. He said that for over three years there had been high incidences of youth violence in the community necessitating the formation of different organizations to address the problem. Mr. Graff used his partnerships to facilitate the various ethnic-focused groups and organizations to speak to the students at the school. He observed that youth violence was ethnic related, and that to adequately address the problem; he tapped into various ethnic organizations to create collaboration and inclusiveness. Mr. Graff also stated categorically that the root cause of youth violence was lack of resources, which was a sign of the underlying poverty in the community. He mentioned that a lack of role models for youths in certain ethnic groups was also to blame for violence and that a number of the youths who were involved in violence had been alienated and marginalized by the education system right from their childhood. Many of the youths might have dropped from school and they had no employable skills.

Mr. Graff said he had organized workshops and created alliances with different ethnic based organizations for over a period of two years. This way, the people from the organizations came to school and spoke to different groups of students who were at-risk. It was not clear how many students were involved, what was obvious was that students who participated were from different minority ethnic groups. Mr. Graff did not name the specific ethnic community organizations he worked with.

**Impact school**

This was the second partnership that Mr. Graff was in charge of. He said that this was a big local non-profit community based organization that used to work with the school and had just stopped its operation due to budgetary constraints. This partnership seemed to have involved one
of the ethnic based community organizations that Mr. Graff was working with to eradicate youth violence, although he did not indicate this. The organization was involved in peer mentoring and after school programs such as school homework support group and summer camps. The organization was still active in the community but was not offering any program in the school at the time of data collection. Ms. Brian also identified this partnership although she was not aware that the partnership had ceased being active. She identified Mr. Graff as the staff member in charge of the partnership.

**Awards Program partnership**

Three teachers identified this school-community partnership: Mr. Graff, the History teacher, Ms. Brian, a Special Education Teacher, and Ms. Watson, a Guidance and Counseling teacher. Ms. Brian was the most involved in this partnership and she observed that this school-community partnership involved the whole province and many school boards:

That was a program that was meant to develop character initiative at school. Ah has different character attributes that are somewhat aligned with school board attributes ah so we have a person from the Awards Foundation who comes to school once a month and works with a group of students and ah try to build character initiative within the school ah through this thing called positive tickets. We have awards where students are who demonstrate good character are nominated by their teachers and they receive awards and also the students attend a conference and come back to the school and do a service project a community service project that helps them develop character ah and also helps services the community.

According to Ms. Watson, this school-community partnership had existed in the school for years and was geared towards at-risk students. She remarked the partnership drew students from different grade levels who were in turn chosen by their teachers to receive awards. Since the partnership agreement was with the district school board, it was easier for schools to apply to
have the program administered. The principal did not mention it and teachers did not indicate what role the principal played in this partnership.

**Discussion**

The preceding section described school-community partnerships in the school including, people in-charge, their purpose and how they operated. The next section considers characteristics in secondary schools that shape the unfolding of the partnerships, in particular, how partnerships come into the school, how school personnel understand them, the category of students involved and specific partnerships; including the nature of interactions among teachers and the principal.

**Multiple understandings of school-community partnerships**

In preparing the interview protocol, I intentionally refused to mention to the participants what a school-community partnership is. I wanted to specifically hear from the principal and teachers what they understood to be the school-community partnership programs at their school. Asking the question such as, what is a school-community partnership? This would have hindered the participants’ ability to freely articulate their understanding of school-community partnerships especially if they realized weaknesses in the way their own partnerships operated. Then again, lack of a clear definition did not prevent some participants from seeking to re-assure themselves that they understood what they were naming as school-community partnerships. In so doing, I was able to discover unique weaknesses in the conception and implementation of programs under the term school-community partnerships. For example, at first the principal’s tone could tell that the principal had no doubts what constituted school-community partnerships but later he wondered whether what he was referring to was or counted as a school-community partnership. In a separate case, a teacher, Mr. Lumumba’s understanding of what constituted school-community partnerships in the school was different from other teachers. Mr Lumumba described
a parent association as a school-community partnership, an idea that no other teacher referenced. I did not include the parent association in my list of identified partnerships because these were not really partnership as there is no element of voluntary.

The Library partnership exemplified some level of unawareness among school staff regarding partnership programs. The principal’s explanation swerved over the concern that the Library was housed at the school and that students used library computers to supplement what the school had. Conversely, Ms. Kate stressed that students went to the library to attend lectures given by authors. This also points to differences between the principal and teachers regarding knowledge of partnership activities. The impression one gets is that the Principal and the teacher were speaking of two different and independent school-community partnerships involving the library, one led by the principal and the other by teachers. This diffused nature of operating a partnership is the reason teamwork and collaboration can occur as independent clusters in the school, especially in secondary school that are more often than not large sized (Moore, 1990; Siskin, 1994).

None of the interviewees mentioned the library school-community partnership other than the principal and Ms. Kate. It became apparent that a number of participants were not quite sure what a school-community partnership was and this seemed related to the individualized interactions between teachers, the principal and the partnerships they chose. It’s not a surprise that only those teachers involved in certain activities taking place in the school could account for that activity.
**District School boards and school-community partnerships**

The district school board played an important role in school-community partnerships in this school. This understanding is consistent with Hands’s (2005) findings. In Hands’s study, she observed:

The school board context and the community context were also found to have an impact on partnerships by constraining or facilitating their establishment. The board serving the two schools had made community involvement a focus of and goal for all schools in its district. To support individual school efforts, the board personnel had created board-level partnerships with community organizations whose services were made available to the schools, and board personnel were employed to assist schools in liaising with their communities (p.149).

The district school board recommended certain programs as a way to address the challenges that the schools were facing. While there was no evidence to the effect that board personnel assisted the school to form these partnerships, as was the case in Hands’s research, the board maintained and operated a number of school-community partnerships. In fact, some of the programs involved contracts with the federal and provincial governments as evidenced by the presence of programs dealing with the orientation of new immigrants to services in the community. The Talented Student program was an initiative at the district school board level operating in a number of schools in the province. The district school board also recommended the Breakfast program, the Settlement Workers and New Comers Services and the Awards program both in this school and elsewhere across the school board. There was a scenario whereby the board recommended a program or a school could apply to the board to operate a program. Since they involved money, the principal was forced to monitor them by approving the program for funding and operation.
Resource allocation and school-community partnerships

In her studies on school-community partnerships in elementary schools, Hands (2005) paints a gloomier picture concerning efforts to establish partnerships. She states:

At the most elementary level, efforts to establish partnerships require financial support whether the liaisons are developed between schools and community organizations or between other community institutions and businesses. (p. 15).

Certainly, the availability or lack of resources in school and the community affects school-community partnerships in a number of ways. Interest of teachers; the principal; individuals; businesses and organizations and the role of the district school board partly determine the number and type of partnerships that can be found in a school. Resource availability is important in understanding the rationalization and distribution of school-community partnerships within any particular school. The district school board and the principal play key roles: these formal decision makers control the allocation of time, material resources and funds. In the case of Chester collegiate secondary school, the district school board recommended a number of the partnerships operating in the school such as the Talented Student program, the Breakfast program, the police, settlement workers and Newcomers.

Even without the help of the school board, the principals’ discretionary powers can play a big role in determining which school-community partnership activities should operate in the school no matter the expenses involved. For instance, the Translation Committee was supported financially so that students could be transported to the hospital. In addition, the principal allocated space and money for the Talented Student program to run in the school. Interestingly, the school-community partnerships that the principal did not mention did not draw on the school budget and had not been allocated space in the school. The powers of the principal can moreover be noticed in the way the principal influenced teachers’ interest in participating in partnerships.
by either supporting their initiative or delegating the responsibility to the teacher. Ball confirm
this understanding when he states that:

Schools are sites of ideological struggle. They are also arenas of competition and
contest over material advantage and vested interest. Careers, resources, status and
influence are at stake in the conflicts between segments, coalitions and alliances
(p. 279).

To understand the impact of resource allocation on school community partnerships, Ball’s
statement must be taken into account.

**Teacher participation and school-community partnerships**

School-community partnerships provide an opportunity for teachers’ involvement in
educational activities beyond the classrooms. However, in my interviews, it appeared that few
teachers were involved in these school-community partnership activities and those involved had
special interests related to the subjects they taught. This may be due to the emphasis on
distinction among the subjects and specializations that teachers teach and which cannot allow
them to define their roles beyond the classroom. Bascia and Jacka (2001) agree:

Difference in self-efficacy, engagement and commitment to students have been
noted among teachers of different academic subjects (e.g. science vs. social
science) that are associated with different student clientele (see also Ball, 1987;
Bascia, 1996; Bennet, 1985; Finley 1987), P. 331

I also noticed that out of the nine teachers I interviewed, five associated with school-
community partnerships taught social science subjects. As far as student clientele was concerned,
the students who participated in the school-community partnerships were from racial minority
groups, new immigrants and at-risk students. Case in point, Mr. Kirkpatrick, a History Teacher
was also a special education teacher and because his students were the beneficiaries, he
happened to be so familiar with many school-community partnerships operating in the school.
Many of the school-community partnerships identified by teachers but not the principal existed by virtue of the teachers’ efforts and initiatives and its possible that they did not receive the same level of appreciation by the principal and hence they were unfamiliar to many in the school. Still, the low teacher participation and knowledge about school community-partnerships may be related to what the principal did or did not do in relation to school community partnerships because the principal had the power to approve, promote, delegate and coordinate the activities of the school-community partnerships. The principal represented the school culture, the larger community expectation and views about what was supposed to be the true representation of the school to the public.

Sanders, (2002) consents:

One factor that was crucial to school’s ability to find time for partnership planning and reflection was principal leadership. Many studies in the community involvement literature site the importance of effective principal leadership for successful school-community collaboration. An effective school leader was one who supports his or her staff in developing their professional skills as collaborators. This requires that he or she models such behavior, rewards such behavior, and provides teachers with the necessary time to engage in collaborative action (Sanders & Harvey, 2002 p. 176)

In this school, the teachers who participated in school-community partnerships were few in relation to the total number of teachers on the school. The coops existing in the school at the time were not identified as school-community partnerships; this would have boosted the number of teachers involved in school-community partnership.

The principal, Mr. Kohl, stated:

The teachers who are involved, who are not many, we have eighty staff members… maybe twenty are involved, the other sixty… you have to ask them, I am not even sure they realize how many partnerships we have.
One teacher I interviewed mentioned that there were subject-based coops. No teacher or the principal identified coops as school-community partnerships. Moreover, it was interesting to note that the principal did not mention any teachers from science or mathematics department participating in school-community partnerships. Although the coops could fall within these subjects, the low level of teacher participation in school-community partnership may be interpreted in a number of ways. First, it is possible that there was no cooperation among the teaching staff. Secondly, the principal deliberately worked with only few teachers on school-community partnerships. Third, the nature of the partnerships, such as when they involve racial minorities may have prompted some teachers to feel more responsible and therefore take more charge of these partnerships as opposed to others. Bascia and Jacka (2001) seem to underscore this fact concerning how certain racial and minority teachers operate in schools:

Other studies suggest that racial minorities and immigrant teachers are often singled out and single out themselves out, for special responsibility for immigrant and racial minority students. (Ortiz, 1982; Thiessen, Bascia & Goodson, 1996) (Bascia & Jacka 2001, p.333).

In addition to the above, its worth noting that many of the teachers the principal referred me to for interviewing were racial minorities and they were the ones in charge of school-community partnerships that focused on new immigrant students. The irony is that the principal did not specifically name any school-community partnership working with immigrants as operating in the school.

On the other hand, the principal’s assertion that he was not sure about how many school-community partnerships were in the school was significant and shows that teachers who knew about the existence of certain partnerships had certain closeness to the principal and knew that the principal was in charge of coordinating these partnerships. But it can also be argued that
since the principal had been in the school for only two years, he did not yet understand all the school-community partnerships well enough to fully recommend them to the teachers. In any case, research findings on elementary school-community partnerships, reminiscent of secondary schools, indicate that the principal plays a crucial role in the teachers’ involvement in school-community partnerships. During my data collection, I learned that in this school in particular, most of the school-community partnerships were transacted through the office of the principal. Ideas such as working collaboratively, teamwork or coordination were alien terms to this school. This may also be explained by the large size of the school and the general fragmented nature of departments in secondary schools that make it difficult to coordinate and collaborate on important partnerships. The fragmentation among departments may deter close collaboration as Hargreaves (1994) observes:

In some organizations the differences and disagreements among the participants are more significant than what they happen to share this was often true of secondary schools with their balkanized relations between departments, for instance (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998 p. 50)

Little (1990) also mentions other issues within secondary school departments that may hinder collaboration and coordination on school-community partnerships by stating that:

Given the dominant subject-matter organization of high schools, departments represent a naturally occurring ground for teachers’ interactions and satisfactions (or frustrations). The department was the most prominent domain of potential interdependence among teachers (Little, 1990, p.149).

During my data collection, I realized that there was no school-wide committee in Chester Collegiate and among the school-community partnerships that many interviewees identified; there was lack of collaborative efforts between the teachers and the principal. For instance, , many interviewees identified the Translation Committee as a school-community partnership just
because it was connected with the Steel Band and hospital partnership. Besides, two teachers and the principal were involved in it and they sort of represented a core committee.

Another possible explanation for the low-level of teacher participation in school-community partnerships may lie in the characters of teachers involved in partnerships. Some teachers immersed in school-community partnerships may exclude fellow teachers, intentionally or unintentionally, from knowing about what they are doing. Hargreaves and Fullan use the images of sculpt and sculptor in the words of Huberman, to capture the existence of these relationships among teachers:

As Huberman (1990) has expressed it, sculptors may often want to see each other sculpt, to talk about sculpting with fellow artists, and to go exhibitions of their work but they would never sculpt with a colleague on the same piece of marble. Because of frequent difference in beliefs and approach Huberman says, teachers may be no different from sculptors in this respect (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998 p. 51).

**Departments and subject Specialization in school-community partnerships**

I identified this theme in the literature at the proposal writing stage before the time of data analysis. The principles guiding the choice of this theme was the idea of the balkanization present in secondary schools, based on the subdivision of disciplines into departments and subject specialization. The presence of departments was a reality around which teachers’ work in the school was shaped. Many scholars agree that departmentalization has a great impact on schools (Moore, 1990; Siskin, 1994). Little (1990) states further:
Departments linked to established subjects matter, disciplines are a significant organizational feature in these comprehensive high schools and are the primary frame of reference for most teachers. Despite assaults on segmented curricula and departmental organization (Hargreaves 1988; Sizer, 1984, 1992), subject matter departments continue to dominate the social and political organization of secondary schools (p. 149).

Albeit, Little (1990) is also careful to acknowledge that variations may exist in between departments especially in matters of resource allocation:

Departments in the same school may differ dramatically in the material resources that they command: space, equipment, up-to-date texts, supplemental materials, professional development monies, and the like. To some extent the differences are felt within both academic and non-academic arenas. As Siskin (1991) relates, for example, science departments are typically favored in the resource competition in the ways that social studies departments are not (p. 153).

Of course these kinds of departmental organizations not only affect the functions of the school but the operation of school-community partnerships as well in terms of resource and needs. In my data collection, my interviewees were divided on how departmental organizations affected school-community partnerships. Some perceived no connection while others saw some sort of relationship. Ms. Watson, from the Guidance and Counseling department, was categorical that she could not answer the questions related to departments. Mr. Graff, of the History department noted that departmental organizations in the school were fragmented and therefore they presented big problems. Given that Mr. Graff was involved with so many partnerships, his observation that the division among departments was a problem was very credible; he experienced first hand the impact of department balkanization on school-community partnerships. It appears that efforts to ameliorate the divisions that existed among departments could not be easily accomplished because each department worked independently of others.
Types of school-community partnerships

Even though school-community partnerships tend to differ from school to school and school board to school board, it’s possible to categorize them by types, and these more general types may be found in different localities. There are four types of school-community partnerships, namely; Student centered, Family-centered, School centered and Community-centered. Of the eighteen partnerships identified at Chester Collegiate Institute, many could be characterized as student focused, school-wide kinds of partnerships. This is in line with the literature, which explains that the purposes of school-community partnerships are to help students to succeed in school. Others are parent or community focused school-community partnerships. However, the boundaries between types of school-community partnerships are fluid in the sense that they all center on helping the student. For instance, even when a type of partnership was community focused, students’ benefit is at the core of the interaction. When students are fundraising for a community cause, an important goal is that they gain different skills in the process. They learn communication skills, social interaction skills and gain insight into problems facing people in different parts of the world through fundraising. There is also a tendency for school-community partnership activities to overlap, as can be seen in table 3 below. The school-community partnerships named on the right appear in different types of school-community partnerships.

Table 3: Types of school-community partnerships at Chester Collegiate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of partnership</th>
<th>Example of partnership found in the school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered</td>
<td>Talented Student, Breakfast, Public Library, Steel Band, Newcomers, Partnership for Breaking the Circle of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-centered</td>
<td>Settlement workers, New comers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-centered</td>
<td>Public Library, Mall, Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-centered</td>
<td>Hospital, Steel band, Translation Committee, Seniors home, Youth for Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Chester Collegiate the principal was more involved in student-centered programs as opposed to his involvement in community-centered programs which he helped initiate. The principal did not identify any parent-centered initiative and no teacher identified the principal being involved.

**Immigration and school-community partnerships**

The interview protocol did not directly seek information about immigration but many interviewees referred to the impact of immigration on the school. A number of the school-community partnerships in the school specifically addressed the challenges of new immigrants. Scholars have acknowledged the impact of immigration to North American schools. Bascia and Jacka challenge the role of educational systems on the issue:

Educational systems are expected to play a major role in providing transitional experience for immigrants especially immigrant children-youth’s indeed social diversity has been a major force in driving North American educational reform and change for over a century (Bascia, 2001). Yet with competing understandings of the purposes of education for immigrants’ students, institutional responses to an increasingly diverse student population have been slow and piecemeal. (Bascia and Jacka, 2001, p.325).

The rise of school-community partnerships in my case study school seem to be in response to the challenges posed by new immigrants to the education system. According to Hands (2005), new Canadians are a feature of many Canadian communities. However, Hands’s
work does not show evidence of school-community partnerships related to immigrants, probably because her samples of schools were located in non-immigrant communities.

At Chester Collegiate, the Translation committee, New Comers, and Settlement Workers programs worked with new immigrants. Similarly, the Translation committee, which assisted with translation of documents at the hospital, was indicative of high level of new immigrants in the neighborhood. The needy students’ issues were addressed by other school-community partnerships, the Breakfast and Breaking the Circle of Violence.

Mr. Graff also described how one partnership, the New Comers, worked in partnership with the school. He noted that the organization had a close link with immigrants in the school and its presence was meant to help new comers into the Canadian society;

We have another partnership with New Comers. So we have New Comers stationed at Chester and what the new comers do they work with young people, students who have been at this school less than 5 years in terms of integration, in terms of language skills, in terms of he has been there for them ah in the past few developed an ESL club to real give our young people a sense of inclusion and feeling at home and also today they do that to integrate them.

The relationship between the New Comers and Settlement Workers school-community partnerships in the school remained vague. Their activities were similar and their clients were the same-new immigrants hence they were in danger of competition for the same clientele. Ms. Watson, the Guidance and counseling teacher, confirmed these fears when she stated that the two groups were yet to settle their mandate in the school, they were funded differently but they were doing almost the same activities in the school.
Equally noteworthy in my interviews was the link between programs for immigrant students and at-risk students in the school, and especially the relationship and challenges that may have existed between the two groups of students. Are the two synonymous? A lot of literature does not differentiate between these two although I suppose that there is need to critically analyze these relationships and take policy measures to address them.

**Poverty (Socio-economic status) and school-community partnership**

Scholars strongly argue that school-community partnerships are linked with low socio-economic status of communities. Scholars also agree that school-community partnership can provide a strategy for schools in low social economic areas to boost academic achievements. In order to test the validity of these assumptions, I included a question on socio economic status in the interview protocol. My interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that there was a strong link between the establishment of school-community partnerships and the low level of socio economic status. The principal on the other hand did not acknowledge any relationship between school-community partnerships and socio economic status. He responded; “Ah I don’t think so, I don’t believe so.” This was contrary to what the teachers interviewed in the school asserted. Teachers gave responses such as the “community is needy,” “where the school is located is poor,” “partnerships are a result of the low socio economic status” and “parents, mostly recent immigrants are poor.” Thus teachers were resolute that socio economic status drove school-community partnerships. One teacher, Mr. Lumumba, mentioned some extreme level of need exemplified in some students’ inability to pay for trips, buy books or lunch.
At risk students

According to one teacher, Mr. Stephen, some school-community partnerships, operated at Chester Collegiate because of necessity. He opined that students were in danger of negative influence from the surrounding neighborhood, which was well known for gang groups. This was in fact reason for police school-community partnership in the school. It was also the reason the school had special education programs for at risk students. Ms. Watson, the Guidance and Counseling teacher said this concerning services available in the school for at risk students:

Kirkpatrick was a History teacher; Jane was a special Education teacher. They work with at risk kids and that was how they got involved with Awards Program. So with at risk students that will cover all the departments but it was not run necessarily or linked to specific department. It was with at risk kids.

The phrase “at risk students” surfaces in the interviews of participants. Ms. Watson, the Guidance and Counseling teacher, specifically used the phrase to describe some of the students in the school. Critical theory scholars differ in their interpretation of “at risk” students and so it will be worthy interrogating the notion at this point. Are what some teachers call at-risk students the same as recent immigrants? Does the phrase at-risk student denote a student who is academically weak? Does the phrase, at-risk students refer to students who are undisciplined and are facing the risk of being expelled from school? All these are questions worthy analyzing.

The role of the principal in school-community partnerships at Chester Collegiate Institute

Below I describe the leadership styles of Mr. Kohl, the principal of Chester Collegiate Institute that emerged from the data. According to Ball (1987) a principal manifests four leadership styles and which can point toward the kind of role he or she plays in the school
because the styles typically attest to the principal’s keen interest in leadership. Mr. Kohl’s role in school-community partnerships can be analyzed by looking at specific leadership styles in his specific role in establishing and maintaining school-community partnerships. Mr. Kohl exhibited one out of the four leadership styles particularly on interpersonal whereby he emphasized teamwork in conversation. The interpersonal features exhibited by Mr. Kohl included his participation in the coaching of basketball and attending award ceremonies for the school. He preferred face to face interactions, hence his desire to play basketball with students. A leader who employed interpersonal style would like to participate in activities he or she prefers. Mr. Kohl was also interested in having personal interaction with the leaders of the partnerships right from his office and this was noted in his statement that school-community partners leaders went to his office for any help they needed. The personal interaction extended to how he operated the mall partnership: the principal reported that he preferred negotiation with the mall management when students were found in trouble instead of conferring charges to students. The principal was mobile and visible. He focused on communication and practiced open door policy that made him accessible.

Mr. Kohl participated in steel band, hospital and breakfast partnerships. Besides, he spoke about the activities of these partnerships to the members of staff in the staff room. He did not show negative attitude to teachers who did not participate in partnerships because in adversarial style, one recognizes differing ideologies. Mr. Kohl did not exhibit any features of authoritarian leadership style.

Principals can use different leadership styles depending on the circumstances. As Ball (1987) has clearly pointed out, the roles of the principal manifest in leadership styles enacted in day-to-day school administration. Principals mix these styles in relation to certain issues and
events. Some principals may fail completely to pull off particular leadership styles. There was strong evidence that in this school the principal was inclined towards interpersonal leadership style and there was little evidence that Mr. Kohl’s leadership style could be described as managerial or authoritarian. Data demonstrated how the former two leadership styles supported the promotion of school-community partnerships in this school. The principal acknowledged that there may be differences in values and opinions between him and the teachers but he supported other teaching staff to come up with new ideas if the ideas were consistent with the objectives of the school and provided they did not pose a threat to his headship.

The most important aspect of the relationship between the principal and teachers in the formation of school-community partnerships was in recognizing that the principal was committed to partnerships. This was demonstrated in his efforts to provide funds, space and support to the teachers who were involved in school-community partnerships. This involvement also gave the teacher’s involved privilege and a sense of satisfaction in their work. For instance, one of the interviewees, Mr. Raymond, the Music teacher, pointed out that involvement in school-community partnerships had made it possible for him to remain at the school, rather than enduring the frequent transfers to other schools, a common tradition in the teaching profession. The principal’s support for school-community partnerships extended to offering coaching services to a police basketball team that played in the school.

Since school-community partnerships require close relationships and interaction. Language and cultural differences can be a barrier to principals in their efforts to reach out to non-mainstream communities. This may as well explain the predominance of minority teachers in school-community partnership activities in this school: because they provided important cultural bridges. Again, research by Bascia and Jack, (2001) suggests that minority teachers are
called upon or voluntarily see it as their responsibility to link the school with non-mainstream communities. Mr. Kohl stated this concerning his role in partnerships:

I am the main liaison, they come to me and I get to give them permission or find out what they need and if there was going to be a good fit so that was certainly with the new basketball starting up he and I had discussion to try to see how it will fit yes it comes through me. That was the role of the principal.

**Initiating school-community partnerships**

Mr. Kohl’s actions were consistent with an interpersonal leadership style-informality and consultation. He had initiated school-community partnerships with the senior’s home, the library and the mall. The role of initiating specifically denotes personal involvement in establishing and to certain degree being directly in charge of partnership activities. Hands (2005) emphasize this idea when he observes that:

Whether the form of the partnerships was prescriptive, as were the community based education partnerships, or more informal, such as those cultivated between the educators and individual citizens, the school personnel and the community members engaged in negotiations to give shape to the partnership activities (P.95).

Mr. Kohl also supported the efforts of the teachers involved in school community partnerships and the teachers stated that the success of the school-community partnerships was directly linked to the principal’s commitment. For example one of the teachers, Mr. Lumumba, who was supported by the principal observed:

I think the principal definitely affects how successively they are. This principal we have is very supportive of this initiative if the students want do to some thing.

**Approval of school-community partnerships**

Mr. Kohl stated categorically that it was the role of the principal to approve partnerships. Evidently, he spoke on behalf of previous principals that had been in the school: the school was
steeped into the culture of welcoming school-community partnerships. Again, the idea of approving school-community partnerships was grounded in the principal’s legal authority by virtue of his position. It also represented his exercise of power. The principal’s decisions were political because most of the partnerships required teachers’ voluntary participation. The principal was obligated to engage members of staff in consensus building through consultation and negotiation.

Mr. Kohl seemed comfortable with the teachers; he stated that he worked with other teachers as a team. There was evidence that in the two years he had been in the school, he had worked well with the teachers who volunteered their time towards partnerships. His observation that only few teachers in the school were involved in school-community partnerships points to a kind of parallel working with only some teachers. His tone expressly denoted disapproval of teachers who were not involved in partnerships. Those who were involved in partnerships were on the principal’s list of devoted teachers.

 Teachers and even community partners consulted the principal on all matters concerning school-community partnerships. This point was fundamental: almost all the teachers interviewed indicated that all matters pertaining to school-community partnerships were supposed to go through the principal. One teacher stated that a school-community partnership would approach the principal and the principal would delegate an appropriate teacher. A partner could also approach a teacher and the teacher would then take the issue to the principal. This was much in line with the interpersonal leadership style. The new school-community partnerships that did not require financial support from the school could exist without much involvement by the principal. Partnerships that were approved by the principal and required funding on the other hand expected the principal’s involvement. Many of the school-community partnerships not identified
by the principal may have been in existence before his tenure and did not require direct support from him. This may explain why they remained invisible to him. Mr. Kohl was however reluctant to acknowledge this by stating: “I don’t do much in terms of… other than giving permission; finding money or allocating space.”

**Support and coordinating and school-community partnerships**

One teacher commented that the principal’s acknowledgement of students and teachers participating in school-community partnerships enhanced partnerships. Thus it was not just the approval of the principal that mattered but also the gestures the principal displayed in the day-to-day activities that encouraged school-community partnerships. This fits more with a principal with an interpersonal leadership style, which Mr. Kohl demonstrated. Mr. Graff agrees:

> I think that the principal I can speak from my observational part of the job of the principal was to show enthusiasm, for school community partnership and encourage staff to pursue the various school community partnerships based on their interests.

In his work the principal demonstrated this with the translation committee and the steel band.

**Resource allocation**

As stated earlier, the principal’s power was observed in the control of resources in the school. Mr. Kohl not only identified the issues he stood for but he demonstrated how he deployed the resources to the cause; he provided space in the school for the senior’s home, he provided funds and an office for school-community partnerships in the school. He also provided permission to the teachers to take students participating in school-community partnerships for school trips.

Concerning this role, Mr. Kohl was quick to say:

> Ah well, I am the contact person, I am the one who liaises the administration with those programs, I am the one who provides wherever funding, space or any other needs or allocations they need. So I am the one who gives approval for grants to run and of course I get to be invited to the recognition assemblies.
One teacher confirmed that the principal provided the bus to transport students to various activities that involved school-community partnerships. Almost all teachers interviewed maintained that there was nothing that took place in the school without the principal providing funding for the activities. Ms. Moss’ statement confirmed the important link that the principal provided:

I would think ah that you are not going to have a good connection between the school and community without the principal either actively going after these partnerships or being welcome to those partnerships.

Mr. Kohl, by virtue of the legal authority of his position, had power to distribute resources consistent with the values he cherished, and teachers who were interested in them received his support. Mr. Kohl’s way of doing things was consistent with an interpersonal leadership style. In one case, Ms. Mathews stated that the principal acknowledged her contribution to school-community partnerships by praising her and even accompanied her to public award presentations. By attending public functions, the principal was making a statement about his preferred leadership style as well as his beliefs about school-community partnerships. He not only encouraged teachers to participate in partnerships but he also rather demonstrated his role in these partnerships. If it were a principal who in his or her belief did not value school-community partnerships, his or her role would be revealed through those actions. But in this school, because he was a supporter for school-community partnerships, the principal encouraged teachers, students and community groups to get interested.

The role of this principal manifested in the contrasted statements two teachers made about the previous principal. Ms. Brian, a Special Education teacher, stated that the previous principal at times inhibited school-community partnerships and told teachers not to participate if he felt like there were too many activities going on. Mr. Graff described the principal from his
previous school as not supportive of school-community partnerships and saw those who tried to initiate them as subversive. In describing an authoritarian leadership style, Ball stated that:

The aim here was to stifle talk, indeed to reduce talk to a one-way flow. Discussion was defined as subversive, as a potential threat to the head’s ‘authority’. The head aims to limit talk to uncontroversial matters, indeed also to redefine potentially divisive issues as non-controversial and thus not requiring discussion. (Ball, 1987, p. 110)

There appeared to be a contradiction between Ms. Brian’s views and those of Mr. Raymond, the Music teacher concerning the past principal’s attitude towards school-community partnerships. Mr. Raymond, the Music teacher, said that all the principals had supported him all through, whereas according to Ms. Brian, the Special Education teacher, the previous principal was restrictive in his attitude towards school-community partnerships. This hints to the heart of micro politics in a school. Teachers supported by a principal and those who are not end up having different experiences within the same school in similar time periods. The tactic of the principal in this circumstance was consistent with the enactment of an interpersonal leadership style. From this instance it is clear that the role of the principal was to support what he or she saw fit at different times by encouraging and also discouraging the happening of certain events in the school.

**Implementing policy on school-community partnerships**

Mr. Kohl favored school-community partnerships and was keen to continue to promote school-community partnerships recommended by the district school board. According to Mr. Kohl, the school was chosen for partnerships by the district school board because previous principals from the school had shown interest through the willingness to deploy resources towards the cause. Ms. Watson, the Guidance and Counseling Teacher, in commenting on this, stated that they are usually given more. The district school board recommended quite a number
of the school-community partnerships operating in the school. These included: PSP and the Settlement workers. A number of the board recommended school-community partnerships were school-wide school-community partnerships and they were very active although there were no specific teachers responsible. Ironically, I was told that many of the school-community partnerships were headed by at list one teacher.
CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY 2

LOVINGTON COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

Lovington Collegiate Institute was located in the north east of an urban center. According to the principal, Ms. Veronica Turner, the school was located in a low-income neighborhood. There were other schools in the neighborhood that attracted students from rich families. Most of the students drawn to this school had characteristics of inner-city schools: many families’ enclave in pockets of poverty because many parents were recent immigrants who did low-income jobs. The neighborhood was diverse in population. Eighty four percent of the students spoke a primary language other than English. The school had a population of over 900 students. Out of the total population, 17 percent of students had lived in Canada for less than two years and 20 percent of students had lived in Canada for 3-5 years. The school was located a short distance from a major road intersection. There was a big shopping mall with a public library near the school. The principal had been in the school for a number of years, having been promoted from the position of vice principal in the same school. Therefore, the principal of Lovington Collegiate was quite conversant with the history of the school and the school-community partnerships therein.

School-community partnerships

This section describes the school-community partnerships that the principal and the teachers identified in the interviews. Table 4 below provides names of school-community partnerships coded 1 to 19, and Table 5 provides the overview of the school-community partnerships the department and subject teacher specialists participants came from in the school and number of
school-community partnerships identified. Ms. Turner identified fifteen school-community partnerships and the teachers identified four more.

Table 4: The principal and teachers’ identification of school-community partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case 2 Number and name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Breakfast Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Insurance Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Boys Mentoring Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mall Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Co-ops in business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. College/university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Brooklyn community Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Police school Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Religious institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Senior Girls Fitness Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Junior Girls Fitness Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Community Garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Food for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Settlement Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Cross cultural Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Road Traffic Safety partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Lovington Rotary Club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 (below) shows that at Lovington Collegiate, I interviewed the principal Ms. Turner, designated (1) and seven teachers (2-8). The last column indicates the code number of school-community partnerships with each participant identified as shown in Table 4 above. Overall, the eight participants identified nineteen school-community partnerships operating in the school. The teachers represented in the sample at Lovington Collegiate came from the departments and subjects shown in Table 5. Data from this table can be compared with the data in Table 4, which shows the number of school-community partnerships identified by the participants.
Table 5: Participants in Lovington Collegiate Institute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number record</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number of Partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Veronica Turner</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Clifton Zebedi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>World Studies</td>
<td>1, 5, 9, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>John Hicks</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kim Evans</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Guiding and Counseling</td>
<td>2, 8, 16, 12, 13, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Petronila Hewitt</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Guiding and Counseling</td>
<td>5, 11, 17, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Andrew Ford</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>8, 9, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Gillian Kahne</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Physical Education.</td>
<td>5, 11, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nora Bey</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1, 5, 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the above two tables 4 and 5, below I describe first; partnerships identified by and supervised by the principal. Secondly, I describe partnerships identified by the principal but supervised by teachers; and thirdly, partnerships identified by the teachers and supervised by the teachers.

The partnerships identified by the principal were: Breakfast, Insurance company, Boys Mentoring and Mall partnership, The partnerships identified by the principal and teachers but supervised by teachers were: co-ops in Business, college and university, Brooklyn Community Service, Public Health, Police school partnership, Religious institution, Senior Girls Fitness, Junior Girls Fitness, Community Garden and Settlement Workers. Partnerships identified by
teachers and supervised by teachers were: Cross Cultural Services, Road Traffic Safety partnership, Hospital and Lovington Rotary Club.

**Breakfast partnership**

The principal identified this as a partnership with the city, and which funds a breakfast program. No other teacher interviewed identified this partnership. There was no information for example on which students the breakfast program catered for or when the program began. The principal coordinated this partnership. The breakfast was for students who needed breakfast. There was little information regarding the exact number and student population target that participated in the breakfast program.

**University and college partnership**

According to the data, there seemed to exist two forms of school-community partnership with colleges and universities. In one, university students visited the school to assist the students as mentors and with tutoring. This partnership depended on specific subject teachers’ initiative and prospective individual university students. The school-community partnerships were informal arrangements. It is not possible to state clearly who was responsible for this kind of partnership in the school. It is probable that individual teachers made private arrangements. University students who volunteered were former students from the school pursuing university education at the time. As I was waiting to interview one teacher, I happened to sit with one of the university students in the staff room. She informed me that she had been volunteering in the class and that she hoped to become a teacher after her undergraduate degree so she was gaining experience to build her curriculum vitae. The other form of school-community partnership involving colleges and universities was where the school sent students to colleges to register for
courses that counted towards their credits while they were still in high school. The practice was called a dual credit program.

**Insurance Company partnership**

The day I visited the school, the principal was in the process of negotiating a new school-community partnership with an insurance company. The principal told me that she had just received a cheque for sporting activities. One other teacher also referred to the relationship with the insurance company as a school-community partnership. The description of how the school applied for funding from the insurance company showed that it was an initiative by the school leadership to reach out to the community. Ms. Kahne, the Physical Education Teacher confirmed that the school had received a cheque from Jubilee Insurance Company. This was indicative of shared information between the principal and the teachers. In this case, the principal had worked collaboratively with teachers in preparing the application.

**Boys mentoring partnership**

The principal identified this school-community partnership program and said she was directly involved in its initiation while she was vice principal. The principal also noted that she had transferred the program to the school from her previous school where she had worked. To some extent, the principal was still in-charge. This partnership involved inviting adult male speakers to the school to speak with boys on various topics and to act as role models for them. The partnership targeted different ethnic groups who represented the school’s diverse student population. As mentioned above, the whole purpose was to provide mentorship to the boys. The partnership had therefore been in the school as long as the principal. No other teacher interviewed identified this school-community partnership as operating in the school. The clientele of the partnership was boys in all grades in the school.
Mall school-community partnership

Only the principal identified this partnership. It was an informal arrangement that involved various businesses located in the neighboring mall, which sponsored different events in the school when requested. The principal said that the different businesses were ready to assist the school by sponsoring school events if asked, and in return the principal normally hosted annual “thank you events” for those community partners. This kind of school community partnership existed on the goodwill of the principal and the businesses in the mall. It exemplified the principal’s initiative to network, interpersonal leadership style and to encourage school-community partnerships in the school. Ms. Turner stated to this effect:

But we have a meaningful partnership in the Mall if we are having an event here they will certainly support it. Ah, that was what I meant by informal partnerships…so if we are having an event here we invite them and there are shop groceries, stores there will sponsor events. When we had Robotics they were able to support provide us with tools to build the robots that type of partnerships… it is ad-hoc as needs arises.

Co-operative Education partnership

The principal identified Co-operative Education as a school-community partnership. Three teachers also named co-ops as school-community partnerships. The co-ops were subject-based mostly on Business Education and science subjects. They were structured to supplement what students learned in class. The co-ops provided opportunities for students to have hands-on experience. Through the district school board, the school made arrangements with colleges, businesses, daycares, hospitals and religious organizations for students’ experiential learning that
took place outside the classroom. Students were exposed to experiences that shaped their future career choice. The co-ops enabled students to earn dual credits—a credit at secondary and college at the same time. The principal emphasized that the coops were highly valued within the school:

One of the things we do very well at Lovington Collegiate is to ensure that students have different pathways. And by that I mean students are encouraged or exposed to not only college or university but also co-op partnerships and placements and school to work partnerships. Having said that, we have a vibrant co-op placement program, two of them in particular… one where we have students, at Valley View Health Science Center. We have just negotiated one now in its second year and the third one was with Elm College and was called Specialist High School Major with a business focus. Students who have achieved and shown an interest in moving into business area can qualify by getting a special certificate over above the regular high school diploma and in that area of business, specifically finance.

Ms. Bey, a Business Education teacher, was in charge of the business co-op. She stated that she had partnerships with various accounting organizations where students of business had internships. According to Mr. Zebedi, a World Studies teacher, co-ops were coordinated through the department of Guidance and Counseling. He described how students went to daycares to work as assistants and earned mandatory community hours as required by the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Hicks stated that there were no co-op connections with the Canadian military. But he indicated that there were connections between co-op programs and the ESL, suggesting that many students in ESL may not have been involved in co-ops. The principal’s role was very critical to these co-op school-community partnerships. Apart from having approved the school-community partnerships, she coordinated their operation by negotiating places for co-ops. She encouraged teacher involvement and had seconded one teacher to be solely responsible for ensuring that the co-op school-community partnerships succeeded. Ms. Hewitt said this concerning college and university partnerships:
We have several at our school. We have programs that deliver co-op curriculum; we have an existing partnership with Valley View Health Science Center for students who want to explore their career in health care. We have a partnership with co-op where we sent students involved in safety, work experience as demonstrated in the curriculum.

**Public Health partnership**

Another school-community partnership identified by the principal was a multifaceted collaboration that involved a food catering company, the public health department and the school. Its purpose was to introduce a healthy menu for students’ healthy growth. Only the principal mentioned this school-community partnership and she was the one who coordinated it. Through this partnership, students had an opportunity to discuss what constituted a healthy diet and the food catering company provided food. The company donated chairs to revamp the cafeteria. This shows how schools can gain material help from school-community partnerships.

The company also benefited greatly by selling food at the school. Researchers have pointed out the value of symbiotic benefits of such partnerships (Sanders 2002).

**Brooklyn community Service partnership**

The principal and three teachers identified this organization. This school-community partnership involved a local community agency, called Brooklyn community services; a voluntary non-profit community organization, governed by a volunteer board of directors with multiple sources of funding from three levels of government and a number of programs, some geared towards assisting immigrants to settle and adjust to life in Canada and after school and summer camp programs. The programs offered through this agency included mentoring for girls, physical fitness, anger management, conflict resolution and counseling.

This partnership is evidence that school-community partnerships exist because of the existence of community organizations that are highly organized and well resourced. Lovington Collegiate was located in the geographic area covered by Brooklyn community services.
organization and thus the school could easily tap into what the organization offered. The organization’s programs started with students in the nearby elementary school, and then it continued to support students in Lovington high school. But it still depended on the culture of the school, the principal and teachers’ willingness to partner. School culture constitutes the totality of self-image of the school. It takes a while for a school culture to form in any given school. The principal of Lovington indicated that she sought the partnership, even though the organization had disposition to partner with the school. The open door policy that the principal practiced can be reflected in the mutual school-community partnership.

**Police Student Partnership (PSP)**

The principal and three teachers, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Ford and Ms. Evans identified Police Student Partnership. The major objective of this school-community partnership was student character development and physical activities in the school. Volunteers with a non-profit organization ran the partnership. The school-community partnership existed also in a number of schools in the district school board; the partnership contract was with the board. It was not clear which students were involved in the partnership, how they were recruited or which teacher in the school was the supervisor of the partnership. The principal’s description suggested that this partnership was self-driven by students as a club. The partnership seemed to have been in existence for a number of years. One of the teachers, Mr. Ford said he was aware of the existence of PSP in the school but he was not familiar with the ins and outs of the partnership.

**Religious institution partnership**

The school had a partnership with a neighboring church. The nature of the relationship was multifaceted in the sense that it involved co-op programs. The church for example acted as a community centre. The principal and one teacher identified this partnership but in relation to
response to the issue of the socio-economic status of the community. Mr. Hicks, an ESL Teacher, said that the socio-economic status of the community made it crucial for the school to partner with the church. He said this concerning the partnership with the church and charitable organizations:

We come from a community where many of the folks are living in or along the corridor of the poverty line where parents and guardians are unemployed for various reasons and I think that is reflected in what we see in our kids needing right. They come from home, they come here and we see the repercussions of folks who are marginalized in a lot of ways and so connections with Tropicana connections with ah St Peter’s and other things.

**Senior Girls Fitness partnership**

The principal and two teachers identified this school-community partnership, sponsored by the municipal government. The city provided funds and a supervisor for the program. Ms. Evans stated that:

Another community and or programming in the school are Senior Girls Fitness Program. The Municipality of Brooklyn runs Senior Girls Program. We are facilitating it here at Lovington and that happens on Thursday and that Senior Girls Program does happen outside the community as well. Ok. Basically, in Senior Girls Program, we basically do the same social skills programming as well as there is a component of physical activity. The findings are that girls from ages 13 to 17, their physical activity decreases within that frame of age range and so one of the main focus of the Senior Girls Program is social aspect. We do physical for example, the girls are playing netballs. I do not know if you are familiar with that. The girls are also learning to do step, which is another physical activity. We also do class activity as well. They do sent a person who comes in and helps us to check in whether we are staying on task. They also fund the snacks that they give us money and we go and buy groceries, food… they also provide prizes and incentives for the girls.

This school-community partnership activity appeared relevant to Physical Education but there was no collaboration with the department of Physical Education. One would expect this the program to be under the professional autonomy of the department of Physical Education in the school. However, the partnership nature of operation pointed to a problem in the interaction
between the program and the department. The Physical Education teacher who participated in the
interview hinted to a problem when she stated that even though she provided the key for the gym
for the program, she was not involved in the program.

**Junior Girls Fitness partnership**

The principal and two teachers identified this partnership. The partnership was with a local
non-profit organization and its purpose was to encourage young girls to be active physically and
to provide training in social skills, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, time management
and anger management. There was an element of supporting female students at risk. The Junior
Girls Fitness program was similar to Senior Girls Fitness but the two were sponsored by different
organizations.

**Community Garden partnership**

The community garden was the most widely referenced partnership in the school. Mr. Ford
was the teacher in charge of the program. He initiated the partnership together with a few
students and parents. He realized that there was land on the school grounds that could be turned
into a garden to grow vegetables for the community and at the same time provide an opportunity
for students to learn the practical aspects of growing food. This school-community partnership
provided opportunity for student to develop social and leadership skills by participating in
planning meetings with people from the community, teachers and fellow students. The teacher
applied for funding from an organization called, *Food for All.*

The principal created a welcoming environment and culture for teachers to form school-
community partnership. She praised Mr. Ford publicly through the school teaching staff e-mail
list and she attended the Community Garden meetings. The principal played a role in the
initiation and coordination of the activities of the partnership: She assisted the teacher by getting
the garden fenced and invited the teacher to make presentation to the parent council meeting the
week I visited the school.

**Road Traffic Safety partnership**

One teacher identified this as a school-community partnership. Its mandate was to
educate students about the danger of drunken driving. The school’s link was with a national non-
profit organization that campaigned against drunk drivers. While teachers claimed it was active
and students met frequently, there was little information about this partnership. Ms. Evans stated
that:

> Let me see if there is another one. There is one called RTSP stands for Road
Traffic safety partnership which is run by a national nonprofit organization and
they meet regularly as well.

This information was very little and could not help with establishing further ideas about the
operation of this partnership in the school, who initiated it or supervised it within the school.

**Settlement Workers partnership**

The principal and two teachers identified this school-community partnership, whose
focus was on meeting the needs of immigrant students. This partnership was also an example of
the impact of external pressure on schools to partner with groups in the community. The school
had to find a way to break barriers in communication between the school and parents. In the case
of Lovington Collegiate, the district school board had partnered with the Ministry of Citizenship
and Immigration to develop a cadre of people with knowledge about community services that
immigrants could tap into. The school could partner with some of these organizations. The staffs
of the organizations were paid by the government to provide services to immigrant families. The
organizations were invited to school during parents’ nights to provide information about
government services at their disposal for their adjustment to life in Canada. The vitality of
school’s partnerships would not be so without the principals’ and teacher’s support for the needs of the diverse student population. The principal, Ms. Turner showed her commitment to this partnership by stating:

We also have in our school settlement workers. So we have partnership with them. They’re called BSP one was in Chinese, one was Tamil representing two major ethnic communities in my school and they are able to establish programs to help with transition for new comers to the country not only new comer students but with their families. They are very pivotal to access to the school and some of the student groups we have in the school.

**Cross Cultural Services partnership**

Ms. Hewitt identified this organization’s operation in the school as a partnership but she did not provide information on its objectives. But from the title one can deduce that it focused on the orientation of new immigrants to the social services available in the community. The principal and the teachers interviewed did not mention this partnership.

**Hospital partnership**

Ms. Kahne, a Physical Education Teacher and the teacher- in- charge identified this as a school-community partnership. The hospital partnership seemed to be distinct from the public health partnership identified earlier. Its purpose was to expose students to the dangers of drugs. It had been in the school for many years; Ms. Kahne, inherited it from another retired teacher. Through this partnership, forty students were taken to Valley View Hospital for training every year.

**Lovington Rotary Club partnership**

Ms. Bey, a Business Education Teacher, identified this as a school-community partnership. It was mostly allied to the business department. Through it students were sponsored to attend retreats and learn about business. Ms. Bey, stated that:
We also work with the Rotary Club of Brooklyn. Business leaders basically prepare a weekend retreat for some of our students and just meet leaders there and discuss there a camp enterprise they are called also all to do with business. So they go on a three-day retreat.

**Discussion**

The principal suggested that very few teachers were involved in or knew about the partnerships in the school. The difficulty I encountered in recruiting additional teachers confirmed that very few teachers are in the loop of school-community partnerships in the school. This lack of awareness may be linked to how teachers interact with the principal and how principals influence how school-community partnerships are understood. The small number of teachers I recruited, apart from those suggested by the principal, made very few comments during the interviews. They were unaware of many school-community partnerships perhaps because they were not in the circle of the principal’s allies. There was no evidence to suggest that the principal in this school disliked teachers who did not participate in partnerships but rather that partnerships were understood as individual teacher initiatives.

Consistent with this absence of general knowledge about the partnerships was the disparity that existed between different teachers as to what comprised school-community partnerships. For instance, not many teachers mentioned co-ops as school-community partnerships. One teacher said he was not aware of any school-community partnerships taking place in the school. One teacher, Ms. Kahne on two occasions asked for confirmation that what she identified was indeed a school-community partnership and stated that she did not know the definition.

The only thing I don’t know this is considered a community partnership student party program at Valley View Hospital, it is called Preventing Alcohol and Related Drug Trauma Among the Youth. It is a program that Valley View
Hospital puts on for students and you apply to go ah and we usually take 40 students every year into that program.

The principal did not identify this school-community partnership despite the fact that it had existed in the school for many years. Ms. Kahne, the teacher who was in charge of the program, was not categorical in describing this partnership either.

**Types of school-community partnerships**

Multiple possible types of school-community partnerships were identified in the literature review. I intended to understand how the types of partnerships in the school correspond with the types in the literature. There was a number of ways I could discern underling differences in conceptions of school-community partnerships among teachers. One teacher identified two major categories of school-community partnerships, those connected to core curriculum and those connected to extra-curriculum. The co-ops were connected to core-curriculum. The extra-curriculum included supplementary activities such as Physical Education. I asked one teacher of Physical Education whether physical exercise programs offered by school-community partnerships collaborated with the Physical Education in the school and she answered that they did not work together. This was an interesting scenario that a school-community partnership had programs geared towards physical exercise but did not collaborate with Physical Education Department. It pointed to the fact that there might be friction between the teachers and the school-community partnerships. It also showed that there was minimal collaboration among the teachers in the department of Physical Education.
Table 6: Types of School-community Partnerships Lovington Collegiate Institute.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school-community partnership</th>
<th>Example of partnership found in the school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered</td>
<td>Breakfast, Coops, PSP, RTSP, Rotary club, Hospital, Boys to mentoring, Senior Girls Fitness Program, Junior Girls Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-centered</td>
<td>Settlement workers, New comers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-centered</td>
<td>Insurance company, Food for All, Religious Institution, Mall, colleges and university, BCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-centered</td>
<td>Cross Cultural services, Community Garden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nineteen school-community partnerships were identified at Lovington Collegiate. Many will fit under the student-centered category. This was in line with the literature that maintains that the purposes of partnerships are to help students succeed in school.

**District board school and school-community partnerships**

Some school-community partnerships at Lovington Collegiate were recommended or mandated by the district school board: the Breakfast program, the Police Student Partnership, Co-operative Education programs, and the Hospital Partnership. Among those interviewed, only the principal identified the breakfast program as operating in the school. Mr. Hicks, the ESL Teacher identified the Police Student Partnership and said that it was formal, meaning that a contract existed and it was recognized but he, like the principal, did not identify what this school-community partnership did. He also did not know the teacher in charge of this school-community partnership. Another teacher, Mr. Ford identified this partnership and stated that the little information he knew was that it was popular in the school but he also did not mention what it did and which teacher was involved. According to the principal, at the end of every year, many
teachers reported to her about the school-community partnerships activities and together with
students they chose an issue and worked together with students. The Principal stated:

We also have in our school PSP. Ah at the beginning of each year our staff liaison
works with all the students in the school to find out what they think was the most
pressing need the most pressing issue in the school. And then once they have
tabulated surveyed the responses, they take it forward and establish. So one year
for example they thought that the lockers were being broken in they had a
campaign with and try to bring awareness to the students what was happening in
the school and how it could be addressed and so every year they choose an issue
or the student choose the issue they implement strategies to counter act that.

What this implied was that students were at the core driving of the activities of PSP in the
school. Although Ms. Evans stated that normally the responsibility of running the programs of
PSP was assigned to different teachers. She stated:

We have many different programs that are run in the school. I don’t know if you
want me to run some for you. Basically some of the programs we do have in the
school are staff facilitated or have an element. That was the thing; we one let us
see we have PSP, Police Student partnership. Basically PSP stands for Police
Student Partnership. It was a group. They are in partnership with the police
department. That was one of the programs that are working in partnership.

Ms. Kahne described a situation where there had been a problem between the district school
board and school-community partnership and the principal with the teacher have been trying to
solve the problem. She stated:

And over the years since this program started it started first as a Scouting program
with ----- EMS ah it was to give students and scouts an opportunity to pursue a
vocation so they had ----to paramedics, fire fighters, police and program I was
involved in was with paramedics and there was an involvement as far as they
came in and supplied us with things and ah it was to promote paramedics
medicine and also they were trying to get more multicultural paramedics as well
ah so they were trying to promote themselves they were providing training a
course in first aid, T-shirts they were giving us a lot and there has been problems
between the school board and then they trying to solve those problems right now.
Hopefully the partnership will come back again ah but who knows.
Teacher’s participation in school-community partnerships

A limited number of teachers were involved in the school-community partnerships, many in the social science and counseling departments. No identified partnerships were referenced to teachers from science. There were no examples of the teachers collaborating on school-community partnerships. One teacher lamented that despite the fact that teachers were knowledgeable about the project he was doing, including being informed during a regular staff meeting, no teacher was interested in helping out. However, this teacher acknowledged that the principal attended some of the school-community partnership meetings.

Immigration and school-community partnerships

Immigration was raised as an issue in relation to school-community partnership. The principal noted that there are recent immigrant parents in the community and that they are faced with some challenges. Teachers stated that many parents are recent immigrants and they attributed community partners interested in working with the school as a response to what was happening in the community. Mr. Zebedi, World Studies teacher, stated that:

We have a lot of newer immigrant members of the community who are probably struggling economically… A lot of the poor people are the immigrants that have come to the city and they aren’t able to move ahead as the previous immigrants. There are barriers. A lot of our children are children of people who…. has these barriers facing them and for these parents then to be involved in schools it was not that easy. You know a lot of what we see a lot of the parents meetings not many parents will come as we would like to talk to the teachers. There are many parents who will like to talk to teachers but they do not come. May be they are exhausted after work. So socio-economic conditions make a huge difference.

In addition to lack of jobs and language barriers, two teachers alluded to racism as a challenge facing the community. A number of organizations have partnered with the school whose activities are related to addressing challenges posed by the recent increase in immigrants. The settlement workers, Cross Cultural services, and Brooklyn Community Service are examples
of school-community partnerships that have a dimension related to immigration. The teachers pointed out specifically that the school had a large number of immigrant students and that many of the parents of students in the school were struggling economically. The programs implemented by the partners included those for dissemination of information about community resources, mentoring, physical fitness and counseling. Most of the programs took place during lunchtime and after school.

Many school-community partnerships activities in the two school cases drew teacher participation mostly from non-academic subjects. The aspects that need further research could be how teachers in academic subjects help students at risk. One teacher interviewed from academic subject stated that low social economic status was not an issue in their school-community partnership. The sense I make from this was that some students who participate in school-community partnership activities are not needy students.

**Poverty (social economic status) and school-community partnership**

One interview question specifically asked about the socio-economic status of the community surrounding the school. A number of the responses indicated that the community could be described as low socio-economic status. The principal acknowledged that there are recent immigrant parents in the community and that they are faced with some challenges:

But if I was to say yes to have, ah a community where they can inject a hundred of thousands of dollars in our school that doesn’t exist in our school. So we work hard on building community through ….so when we have events in our school. They give what they can; you know they give what they can.

One teacher said that she only realized that the area in which the school was poor when a teacher from Lovington transferred to another school and informed her that in her new school the music department was rich in musical instruments because parents donated money, something that does not happen in this school. That school had alumni association and it was supporting the school
financially. At Lovington Collegiate there was no alumni association. Recent immigrants with less connection with the school now settled the area around Lovington. For a school to have the vitality of alumni many of the people that attended the school should still have a close connection with the school. The major cause of poverty in this area, according to a number of teachers, was because many newcomers have not gotten jobs or they have jobs with low pay. There are situations, according to one teacher’s response, where both parents are working and have limited time to come to school to consult with teachers about their children’s academic development. According to the teacher, because of poverty, student’s home environments do not support student’s academic demands.

At-risk students

At-risk student was a phrase articulated by a few interview participants, but referring to different students. One teacher used the phrase to denote the girls in the school who were unable to socialize well with fellow students and solve conflicts. They did not have skills to communicate. The second meaning of the phrase at-risk referred to girls not willing to participate in physical activities and hence were likely to develop behaviors of isolating from others and not being active. Another participant used the term to characterize the many students in the school who were struggling academically. The teacher described many students in the school as at-risk student academically especially recent immigrants. The teacher stated that not many of the students, despite wishing to go to attend post secondary education especially university, measure to that standard. The teacher attributed this to their home background. Of the many school-community partnerships happening in the school, few seemed to address academic performance directly, perhaps because not many students or teachers from science and mathematics departments were involved: these were core curriculum areas that determined student’s progress.
Students who are facing racism could be at risk because of the alienating or isolating effect of racism hence there existed ethnic related school-community partnerships in the school.

One teacher identified the problems that faced the school as rooted in language barrier. The teacher regarded the area where the school was located as the epicenter of language diversity and believed that it might contribute to poor communication between the school and the home. This could account for low parent participation in the life of the students. Some scholars have identified language barrier to be a factor in parent-teacher communication and may contribute to students being labeled at-risk students (Metz 1990).

**Departments and subject specialization and school-community partnerships**

The data showed that teachers in very few subject areas were involved in school-community partnerships. Teachers from Guidance and Counseling, Physical Education, Geography and Business Education were involved in school-community partnerships but as individuals, not as departmental members. The driving forces in teacher’s participation in school-community partnerships seemed to be individual initiative. Even though there was evidence that the principal delegated responsibility to teachers regarding partnerships, whether a teacher was in charge of a school-community partnership or not depended upon individual teacher. One participant claimed that social sciences teachers are the ones that are involved more in school-community partnerships because the subject matter encourages socialization. Mr. Zebedi, a World Studies teacher, stated:

> From my department it was easier to get to know what was happening. We are social science department that involves social studies. So we have History, Geography, and Sociology people. People from those backgrounds they are in my department and I think partly because the nature of the subject matter we are in the in social activism, social consciousness. Mathematics was not quite into that frame of thinking ah so for us my colleague teaches History he has organized for the past three years ah a modal of the United Nations program so that was what he was into. This year the kids have been involved in the United Nations program
and through that program kids get to understand global politics ah he also teaches religion so makes sure that he takes out his kids to various religious institutions and structures, churches, synagogues and mosques. He engages kids… So the kids this engagement especially in my department was very strong. It was easy my department because we are social sciences.

Within departments teachers did not collaborate with each other with respect to the school-community partnerships. All teachers said that school-community partnerships did not occur at the department level and there was no interdepartmental collaboration on school-community partnerships in the school. But balkanization of departments might have contributed to the invisibility of school-community partnerships. Hands (2005), quotes other scholars that have echoed the same sentiment:

As scholars such as Hargreaves (1994), Bascia (1994), and McLaughlin and Talbert (1990) amply demonstrate in their work, secondary schools are complex often balkanized environments which serves to impede educators’ ability to work together especially across departments. Indeed, in this study of partnerships in secondary schools, there was no evidence to suggest that strong partnerships were established, or even existed across departments. (p. 200)

**The role of principal at Lovington Collegiate Institute**

Ms. Turner had been principal in this school for some time. She was conversant about the school’s partnerships and was willing to share details. The role she played in the school’s school-community partnership was clearly articulated in her own words as well as the perception of teachers. The micropolitical conceptualization posits that principals enact their roles under internal and external pressures that impact the school, which create constraints that Ball (1987) calls “an interactional cage” (page 86). This could arise from the school culture, students, principal’s values, power, conflicts, district school board policies, existing school-community partnerships, community values, teachers’ values, and the structural organization of the school.
Principals play a crucial role in a school as definers of meaning (Foster 1989). The way the teachers and students describe their school reflects the language of the principal. The values and the beliefs of the principal do permeate the school, influencing the school culture. School culture constitutes the totality of self-image of the school. It takes a while for a school culture to form in any given school. A school without strong culture will be a school that will probably have experienced frequent leadership transfers and also the community demographics are transitory. Otherwise a school found in communities where people have been living there for many years, will tend to foster certain values and those values may be infused in the school.

The principal can promote his or her values in regard to different aspects of the school culture. A principal who believes school community partnerships are essential will, through words and actions, demonstrate his or her preference for school-community partnerships. The principal’s action driven by his or her beliefs constitutes a leadership style. The analysis of style manifests the role a principal plays in a school because as Ball states “A style is a form of social accomplishments, a particular way of realizing and enacting the authority of headship” (1987, p.83). A micropolitical conception provides an avenue through which it was possible to account for the role of principals in school-community partnerships. The fact that many teachers were not aware of the partnerships taking place in the school is subject to a number of possible interpretations. The principal acknowledged that not many teachers were aware of the school-community partnerships that exist in the school. The former principal while holding school-community partnerships on high regard must have contributed to the current minimal level of understanding of the school-community partnerships in the school. Just like the current principal Ms. Turner, demonstrated interpersonal leadership style and initiative as the previous principal understood partnerships as individualized to teacher interests. This leadership style tended to
produce isolated incidences of school-community partnerships. If a principal employs strategies like face-to-face negotiations and personalized interactions with teachers, the results of such interaction will remain private to the two and hence many others will not know the existence of school-community partnerships teachers. If a principal does not believe a school-community partnership was essential, then the principal can withdraw support and eventually a teacher might abandon the venture.

The micropolitical conceptual framework helps us to understand the dynamics of interactions that not only explain the process but also the operation of school-community because it helps to explain the nature of the interaction between principals and teachers. The principal sets the tone of how she/he wishes everything in the school to be perceived, the tone may be in terms of verbal explanation of her or his beliefs. The enactment of the role will be inclined towards a certain style of leadership the principal articulated. In case of a situation where a principal do not manifest any specific style of leadership teachers might perceive a principal as inconsistent person. But usually principals will strive to manifest a style of leadership and through the manifested leadership it is possible to discern the role the principal played in a school and especially in school-community partnerships. Certain leadership style appear to be more conducive to school-community partnership existence in school than other styles. The interpersonal leadership style that Ms. Turner enacted appeared supportive of the number of the school-community partnerships at Lovington Collegiate. Ms. Turner made her beliefs about partnerships known to the teachers. Her vision of a successful school consisted of working close with community partners and she not only encouraged school-community partnerships, but also initiated some school-community partnerships and thus had modeled for the teachers.
Initiating school-community partnerships

Ms. Turner had initiated two school-community partnerships in her tenure at the school, the Boys’ Mentoring Program and the Mall school-community partnership. Initiating requires personal attention to negotiating, networking, establishing, and to a certain degree, being directly in charge of the partnerships. The partnerships Ms. Turner established were still thriving and she was still in charge of them. Now that she was principal, they were flourishing, impacting positively on the students. According to one teacher, the principal initiated and supported school-community partnership was because in her style of leadership, school-community partnership was integral to the success of the school. This was captured well in the words of Mr. Zebedi, a World Studies teacher, when describing the principal:

I think she was an extremely engaged ….she tries at every opportunity to link the community to the school because in her belief system a school community and the kids are like a triangle and that was how she sees the role of the community function

Teachers said that principals scrutinize school-community partnerships before they were allowed in the school, thus playing a crucial role in initiating them. The district school board might encourage school-community partnerships but it rests on the principal and teachers to implement them, as street level policy makers (Ball, 1987). Although the principal’s role in vetting school-community partnerships did not always include them directly initiating, the principal was pivotal in whether a school-community partnership happened. This was captured well by Ms. Evans:

She makes sure that the partnerships that are coming in here are benefiting the student needs, making sure the community partners coming in whatever their agenda was, she filters to ensure that the needs of the students are being met.

Approval of school-community partnerships
The presence of partnerships in a school to great extent was directly related to the principal’s power to say yes or no to school-community partnerships. At times however, the principal may compromise if teachers favor partnerships in situation where a principal does not favor partnerships. Leadership style accounts for the role of the principal in school-community partnership in terms of the interpersonal relationships that Ms. Turner displayed. School-community partnerships require face-to-face, individual attention and personal networking: teachers involved in partnerships mentioned that they are connected with the principal. Many of the partnerships involved teacher-principal interaction. A number of teachers asserted that Ms. Turner was a powerful principal in terms of the energy she displayed in relation to school-community partnerships. Ms. Hewitt, a Guiding and Counseling teacher said:

With our principal there are so many things that go directly to the principal and when she gets information she passes it over. It can be bottom up or up to bottom. Communication will have to be copied to the principal even if a teacher in-charge of a partnership was communicating to the partnership directly.

The principal employed interpersonal leadership style and made effort to make issues she valued visible.

**Support and coordinating**

Ms. Turner had a positive attitude towards school-community partnerships and ensured their successful day-to-day operation. She said:

I am very involved, I need to know, and I would like to know what was happening in my school. I would like to promote the great things are happening in my school if I am not there on the table discussing with the leadership team my teachers will let me know. I support 100%. It does not need to be tied to the curriculum. I support students in what they see… Yes I will be very much I need to encourage it.

The principal created an office dedicated to the coordination of school-community partnerships, with different days dedicated to each school-community partnership. The school
social worker supervised the office and assisted in the planning and scheduling of the office of partnerships. The fact that Ms. Turner had created an office demonstrates her commitment to allocating resources to the cause of school-community partnerships. It also speaks to her exercise of power in allocating resources. Thus it was not only the approval of the principal that matter but the little gestures displayed in the day-to-day activity.

**Evaluating school-community partnerships**

The principal was indirectly through the vetting of the school-community partnership was in evaluating the school-community partnerships. The principal in the initial stages of inaugurating a school-community partnership was to determine how the goal of the community partner fits into the needs of the school. An effort was made to align the community partner with the student or school needs. In this role the principals do demonstrate their commitment to school-community partnership by their strategies as manifested through their leadership styles. Interpersonal skills are important and also face-to-face interactions come into play at the creation of school-community partnerships. Although this was the practice of the principals in evaluating partnership there was limited evidence that principals check the progress that school-community partnerships make after being established.
CHAPTER 6

MICROPOLITICS AND THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This chapter is a comparative micropolitical analysis of the roles of the two principals. In the process of selecting the study sites, I discovered that some school principals claimed that they had few activities that merited being described as school-community partnerships, and others were not sure what I meant by partnerships. In conducting research in the two schools, I learned that the principal’s understanding of school-community partnerships depended on how they wanted the public to understand the meaning and the role school-community partnerships played in the school. If the principal believed that partnerships do not contribute much or they are not in favor of them, they could deny their existence in the school even when partnerships were listed on the school website.

Principals’ roles in school-community partnerships depends on the fact that their values and dispositions, as exhibited by the leadership styles they enact in practice, set the tone or direction for those in their schools. Through their verbal expressions and daily conducting of activities, principals send out the message of their desired school’s direction: whom to welcome into the school, with whom to associate in the external environment and whom to exclude. Principals use certain tactics, which Ball (1987) conveniently categorizes in relation to four leadership styles. While principals may use a mix of styles, some may dominate. Through the style employed by the principal, it is possible to understand the role of the principal in shaping the school culture and the school-community partnerships.

A micropolitical lens allows us to recognize that cooperation and conflict do not necessarily manifest openly. The principal’s exercise of power in relation to the teachers might
be subtle. According to Ball (1987), rarely do attempts at cooperation, consensus building and conflict emerge openly in the day-to-day working relationships between the principal and the teachers. What does emerge openly is the outcome of decisions taken by the principal. When events occur where disagreements or contentions may appear, principals or teachers may utilize such moments to achieve their goals. In many instances, principals have an upper hand in decision-making because they have confidential information and can control its dissemination. Principals will have to tread carefully in situations where teachers have access to information: in most cases when a principal is new to a school, the option he or she has is to seek cooperation from the teachers to provide insight on the school culture, or resort to contend with just the information that he or she can access through the position of principal. The option the principal chooses depends on the kind of reception he or she receives in the school. Acceptance from the teachers will incline a principal to seek information from them: in case of resistance, the principal will resort to official information found in the office. Even if the principal does not verbalize his or her intent, through his or her actions, teachers learn the style of leadership a principal is adopting in relating to them.

The two principals in my case studies had capitalized on the district school board policy to form school community partnerships, by initiating them and encouraging teachers to initiate and participate in them. By supporting the few teachers interested in school-community partnerships, the principals cultivated school cultures that were receptive to partnerships. In both schools, the principals were the anchors of communication regarding school-community partnerships. The principals wrote letters on behalf of teachers; they met face to face with the partnership leaders to negotiate the compatibility of the goals of school-community partnerships to the school’s goals; and followed up on all matters concerning school-community partnerships
in the school. In some cases, the role of anchor of communication was delegated to teachers. Even when a teacher was fully in charge of a school-community partnership, it was only because the principal was in favor of it. All of the above required a principal who had or could build trust, deal with competing interests and who likes face-to-face interaction. These attributes required people with interpersonal leadership style. The two principals that participated in the study had different personalities but similar leadership styles.

The principal of Chester Collegiate, Mr. Kohl, possessed a blend of interpersonal and managerial leadership styles. Most of the school responsibilities were under his control including a number of the school-community partnerships. This was in line with what Ball (1987) described. According to Balls, a principal inclined towards an interpersonal leadership style is the focus of communication and dispenser of patronage. Mr. Kohl had been at Chester Collegiate for only two years. However, because he valued school-community partnerships, he allowed those he found in the school to continue and initiated others. The teachers involved in the hospital school-community partnership demonstrated close working relationships with the principal, in line with interpersonal leadership style: This was an example of principals who work with willing teaching staff on initiatives that promote student achievement in the school. Reminiscent of principal’s with interpersonal leadership styles, Mr. Kohl was willing to accept a divergence of views among the teaching staff and could accommodate teachers who did not participate in school-community partnerships and support those who took initiative, especially if the initiative was something he believed was important. Mr. Kohl was personally committed to the hospital school-community partnership. He modeled partnerships for the teachers by attending partnership activities, and he praised teachers and students involved. Principals that
employ interpersonal leadership styles will be directly involved like Mr. Kohl: He coordinated communication and encouraged face-to-face interaction with the teachers and students.

The principal of Lovington, Ms. Turner, also exhibited a mix of leadership styles. Even though she was the anchor of communication, she had delegated most of the partnership responsibilities to various teachers. Ms. Turner viewed school-community partnerships as necessary to the promotion of students’ academic performance. She made it clear to teachers that she was out to promote school-community partnerships. Teachers who were involved in these partnerships were aware of this and enjoyed the freedom to initiate and operate partnerships, including some that she was unaware of. Partnerships in existed by virtue of Ms. turner, the principal’s preference for them. Ms turner identified the teachers involved in partnerships and remarked that the teachers involved in that she identified worked closely with her, evidence of her interpersonal leadership style: she preferred face-to-face interaction, was mobile and visible.

The data shows that principals perform a number of distinct activities in relation to school-community partnerships, including initiating partnerships, approving partnerships, resource allocation, supporting, coordinating, implementing policy and evaluating school-community partnerships. These particular roles overlap. I will discuss each of the roles separately below in light of the micropolitical conceptual framework. The descriptions are derived from the verbs used by the principals and from teachers themselves.

**Initiating school-community partnerships**

The role of the principal in school-community partnership was evident in both schools regardless of how long the principal had been at the school and whether or not he/she initiated these partnerships. In both cases, there were partnerships in which the principal’s active role was discernable, even though teachers and community groups may have initiated the partnerships.
School-community partnerships are products of the art of networking, starting from initial contact of two individuals. Hands’s study (2005) established the same reality:

For all of those interviewed for this study, initiating communication and developing links between schools and community members or organizations were facilitated by knowing someone at the other organizations (p. 168)

In both schools, principals and teachers noted that principals often played an important role in initiating school-community partnerships and then delegated responsibilities to teachers. According to one teacher at Lovington, Mr. Zebedi, the teacher’s role in initiating and supporting school-community partnership was contingent to the fact that the principal was in favor. Teachers commented that everything went through the principal. Ms. Watson from Chester stated: “Ok, everything goes through the principal first.” Even board mandated school-community partnerships were implemented because the principal agreed to implement them. Both principals were involved in initiating informal partnerships with various groups in the school. The principal of Chester had initiated school-community partnerships with the senior’s home, the library and the mall using discretionary powers. The principal of Lovington Collegiate had initiated Boys’ Mentoring program and the mall partnership.

One teacher at Lovington Collegiate stated that the principal does the vetting of school-community partnerships to decide whether they are fit for students. Although this does not amount to initiating, it suggests the role of the principal in ensuring that the partnership exists or not. It also shows that the principal’s role was crucial at the initial stages partnerships. Ms. Evans at Lovington Collegiate said this of her principal’s role:

She makes sure that the partnerships that are coming in here are benefiting the student needs, making sure the community partners coming in whatever their agenda is she filters to ensure that the needs of the students are being met.
Principals do not need to seek anyone’s permission or endorsement but teachers have to get approval from the principal. Principals thus have more discretionary powers by virtue of their position. Teachers can enjoy the privilege of initiating school-community partnerships if the principal’s leadership is inclined to school-community partnerships.

**Approving school-community partnerships**

Individual principal’s preferences affect the operation of school-community partnerships. Public support, enthusiasm shown towards teachers participating in partnerships, goodwill gestures and good relationships between the principal and the teacher can go a long way to boost the activities of a partnership. Mr. Kohl, stated:

> I am the main liaison. They come to me and I get to give them permission or find out what they need and if there is going to be a good fit, so that is certainly with the new basketball starting up he and I had discussion to try to see how it will fit. Yes, it comes through me. That is the role of the principal.

One teacher commented that when the principal acknowledges students and teachers participating in school-community partnerships, it enhances the partnerships. Thus it is not only the principal’s approval of a school-community partnership that matters but the little gestures the principal displays in day-to-day activities that encourage partnership activities. One teacher involved in partnerships believed that the principal had not genuinely committed to his partnership because the principal always showed up to the meetings late. Mr. Ford stated this in relation to the principal’s support of his school-community partnerships:

> On paper, (ha, ha) on paper, ah (What do you mean on paper?) I mean like the principal will sign her name, will write pieces… ah will support e-mail threads online because we have a mailing list and all information goes out. I usually see a reply from the principal informing… responding to everybody, not just me but other people by saying things like ‘this is fantastic,’ ‘way to go,’ very supportive in that way.
Observably, the teacher expected the principal to be punctual whenever there was a meeting as a way of demonstrating that she was committed to supporting the partnership. Mr. Ford also acknowledged that the principal was usually busy.

**Supporting and coordinating school-community partnerships**

The principals stated that they were key contact persons for school-community partnerships in their respective schools. They also stated that they were in-charge of the operation of school-community partnerships even though they were not in a position to identify all the partnerships occurring in their schools. Collaboration between the principal and teachers involved in partnerships appeared to boost the activeness of the school-community partnership. In both schools, the absence of a partnership coordinating committee may have been compensated for by close working relationships. At Chester Collegiate, the principal worked closely with the translation committee and the steel band. A teacher at Chester Collegiate said he believed it was the responsibility of the principal to support school-community partnerships:

> I think that the principal, I can speak from my observation…part of the job of the principal is to show enthusiasm for school community partnerships and to encourage staff to pursue the various school community partnerships based on their interests

Ms. Turner, the principal of Lovington Collegiate defended her role saying:

> I am very involved. I need to know; I would like to know what is happening in my school. I would like to promote the great things are happening in my school if I am not there on the table discussing with the leadership team my teachers will let me know. I support 100% it does not need to be tied to the curriculum. I support students in what they see… Yes I will be very much I need to encourage it.

Teachers in both school cases supported the two principals’ assertions. For instance Mr. Stephen from Chester Collegiate, stated:

> The guy is involved 100 percent. The man gets here early, sometimes he leaves at 7.00 pm. Ok, he is involved because the principal is the manager of this facility,
right. He manages everything going on here right. So he is aware of everything going on, after school bookings, groups to play basketball, he is aware of the PSP, he is aware of the police initiative, he is the basketball coach… ah he coaches as well. The guy comes very early. He is excellent. So I would say he is intimately involved and he is completely in the loop of what is going on.

On the other hand Ms. Kahne from Lovington said:

Ah again specifically am not sure but I know she is a big supporter of any project that is brought forward ah for her approval and she is very good in giving support ah you know if she finds something she will certainly… in physical education if there is a bursary…if there is a company. Recently, we were given money by Jubilee Insurance to buy bicycles. If she is made aware of anything she certainly brings it to the right person to deal with it. Most things …from what I gather, a lot of things come through the principal to be passed to us.

The principal of Chester Collegiate identified ten school-community partnerships out of the eighteen and the principal of Lovington reported fifteen out of ninety. This reporting might be indicative of the principals’ attitudes towards different school-community partnerships. The observation also may be related to the ongoing effect of principal turnover on school-community partnerships. At Chester Collegiate, the principal had been in the school for only two years and was probably still learning about the school-community partnerships. I was able to discern the previous principal’s contribution to these partnerships. The school had a long tradition of principals being in favor of school-community partnerships and the current principal was continuing the tradition as stated by one teacher, Mr. Raymond:

The current principal is very supportive as well Mr. Patrick; so all the principals have been very supportive of this partnership.

The principals in both schools acted as liaisons for school-community partnerships. Teachers and partners consulted them on all matters concerning the school-community partnerships. This particular role was the most emphasized: all the teachers indicated that all matters pertaining to school-community partnerships were supposed to go through the principal. One teacher stated
that either a school-community partnership approached the principal and the principal delegated to an appropriate teacher or a partnership could approach a teacher and then the teacher would take the issue to the principal. Ms. Hewitt at Lovington stated:

> With our principal, there are so many things that go directly to the principal and when she gets information she passes over. It can be bottom up or up to bottom.

**Resource allocation**

According to the principal of Lovington, Ms. Turner, resource allocation was delegated to the teachers. She emphasized this to the extent that it was hard to discern her personal contribution in this area. In contrast, the principal at Chester said that it was his responsibility to provide funds for partnerships. This is one marked difference between the two principals. Nonetheless, Ms. Turner had allocated space in terms of a separate office for partnerships. The nearby college also provided another space for office for a teacher from this school in order to facilitate coop school-community partnerships.

The school-community partnerships not identified by the principal may have been in existence before the current principal and did require direct support from the principal. There were many instances where the principal and teachers stated that the principal provided funds for partnership programs. The fact that the principal provided funds to programs was a startling contradiction to conventional knowledge found in literature that suggests that school-community partnerships bring money to the school, not vice versa. It was also interesting that the principals identified a lack of money as a major problem, making it difficult for one to know where funding for school-community partnerships came from.
Implementing policy

The two principals appreciated the fact that the district school board had recommended a number of school-community partnerships for their schools. They were clearly in support of these partnerships and tried to implement board recommendations. But these recommendations were not always a guarantee. For instance, the principal of Lovington Collegiate remarked that at one point she applied for a partnership that she felt was necessary for her school but the board turned down the request. The scenario at Chester Collegiate was different: the principal had inherited board-mandated school-community partnerships that were becoming costly for the school, but he could not do anything about it. These examples show that it was possible for a school with a long tradition or culture of school-community partnerships to hold on to these partnerships regardless of the cost or views of the current principal.

Evaluating school-community partnerships

The two school cases demonstrated that, apart from the principals validating the fitness of the partnership at the initial stage, there was no continuous monitoring or evaluation of the impact of school-community partnerships. Scholars now increasingly insist on the importance of this process in evaluating the impact of school-community partnerships. Sanders observes,

Finally, the literature on community involvement in schools highlights the importance of reflection and evaluation. Because school-community collaboration is a process and not an event, it is important that partners take time to reflect on and evaluate the quality of their interaction and the implementation of their partnership activities (Sanders, p. 175).

Evidently, although some teachers in both schools acknowledged that school-community partnerships were meeting their goals, some doubted or did not know, or simply failed to understand how the impact could be quantified. Ideally, the principal should periodically evaluate the contribution of school-community partnerships because its his or her responsibility
to compare the goals of an external organization with the needs of the school. This was found to be the missing link in the role of secondary school principals in school-community partnerships. If the practice continues, it can assist new principals who only need the resulting paper trails to understand what has been happening over the years.

The school council could contribute to the evaluation of the role of school-community partnerships but no interviewee made reference to the role of the school council in regard to school-community partnerships. It is important to assess the amount of resource input in school-community partnerships in relation to the expected outcomes. This can only be done through research that can compare the benefits in relation to the school’s objectives in entering into partnerships. As it stands now, there was no way this research could demonstrate that kind of relationship.

This chapter has covered the comparative analysis of the roles of the two principals. An attempt has been made to bring out the salient similarities and differences in terms of relating to the micropolitical conceptual framework and how it accounts for the principal’s roles.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

When I set out to investigate the role of principals in school-community partnerships in secondary schools, one major problem was lack of information in the literature regarding exactly what principals do. In a nutshell, I wanted to find out what secondary school principals do as described by the principals themselves, and what teachers have observed in relation to principals’ roles in creation and maintenance of school-community partnerships. A lot of research has covered the creation of school-community partnerships, factors that facilitate school-community partnerships and how to sustain partnerships. My research therefore deliberately focused on schools that already had school-community partnerships. Research on school-community partnerships has not expounded on the role of principals in secondary schools, even though the principal plays an important and unique role in these partnerships. A lot of research on school-community partnerships has relied on ecological conceptual frameworks and the shared common goals between families, school and community. A micropolitical conceptual framework, on the other hand, focuses on the nature of interactions among the actors within these organizations. Ecological frameworks have laid a foundation for mapping school-community partnership activities in schools but have reached their limits in terms of explaining the processes of interactions among actors, especially given the organizational complexity of secondary schools power issues and self-interest of the agency.

The assumption embedded in a micropolitical conceptual framework interrogates the nature of social interactions between the principal and teachers (as well as non-teaching staff, students and the community at large), shedding light on self-interest, conflict, values and
differences in ideology. Using a micropolitical conceptual framework, it is possible to examine the role of individuals in school-community partnerships and explain why principals support certain causes in the school and not others. This framework also accounts for the variations in practices among secondary schools that are under the same policy; it is able to show how one school-community partnership policy may still unfold.

The research question that guided the study was: what is the role of the principal of secondary schools in establishing and maintaining school community partnerships within the micro political context? To answer this question it was necessary to read literature on the context of secondary schools, secondary school principals in general, school-community partnerships and the micropolitical conceptual framework. Literature on the context of secondary schools provided knowledge about the organizational uniqueness of secondary schools and helped to narrow the scope of research. I did not want to fall into the trap of generalizing schools as if elementary and secondary schools are the same, which previous studies have done. Literature on secondary school principals helped me to gain knowledge on the general roles of principals and how they are located in the organization of the school. This is important because the position in which an individual is placed in an organization may have a bearing on their role in that organization and for the principals in particular, literature demonstrates that they hold key positions of influence. Literature on school-community partnerships provided me with knowledge on the phenomenon I was looking for. This helped to create specific boundaries of what exactly I was looking for in secondary schools.

Literature on micropolitical conceptual framework provided me with knowledge to engage all literature. I read for whole contexts. It provided me with the avenue for what was of interest to me in trying to answer my major research question. I compared the micropolitical
conceptual framework with the ecological conceptual framework and discovered that in order to soundly respond to my major research question and in a way that contributes to scholarship on school-community partnerships, I needed to use micropolitical conceptual framework. One obvious major limitation with the ecological conceptual framework is its understanding of the goals of partnerships when it assumes that organizations find it necessary to work together because of the shared goals. I reason that shared goals alone cannot be cause for collaboration between different organizations. Such an assumption underestimates the nature of interactions among the different stakeholders and the importance of the role of actor as agency with values and beliefs. Similarly, an ecological framework does not go far enough to explain why actors in organizations interact.

Findings

In order to understand the role of individuals in an organization, one needs to interrogate the nature of interactions, interests, power, beliefs and values of the actors. I discovered that the micropolitical conceptual framework does exactly this. Individual interests play a very important role in the implementation of school-community partnerships in secondary schools and principals are especially crucial to shaping them. A principal’s disposition and leadership style facilitates school-community partnerships. Because principals have the ability to control resources, they have the upper hand in ensuring the flourishing of school-community partnership, compared to the resources held by teachers. Even though teachers initiate school-community partnerships, the vibrancy of their partnerships is dependent upon the principal. If the principal’s values favor school-community partnerships, then the partnerships might be visible in the school. The principal will demonstrate his/her values through the leadership style he or she enacts in the school. These are the micropolitics that unfold in schools.
This study revealed that secondary school principals undertake their duties in an environment that is highly complex and demanding. For example:

■ The role of the secondary school principal in school-community partnerships is fraught with sophisticated political maneuvers on a daily basis. There are many acts of alignment and balancing their values, visions and teachers’ values and visions, including other stakeholders’ values too.

■ The role of the principal in secondary school-community partnerships is constrained and determined by the policy environment of the district school board. The district school board mandate contributes to shaping the overall agenda for reforms for schools and people are to a great extent obligated to implement what is delegated. The extent of success of the performances of the reforms would depend on the leadership styles enacted by individuals in different schools.

■ The secondary school principal’s role in school-community partnership is part of his or her role as a school manager and partly as a result of the leadership abilities that principal enacted in the school. For instance, principals are not required to initiate partnerships but the ability to do so stems from self-interest and has a lot to do with what principals envision for the success of their schools.

■ The role of the secondary school principal in school-community partnerships is associated with interpersonal leadership skills such as trust, respect, communication, motivation, mentoring, empowering, building relationships and setting an example. Most of the partnerships occurring in the schools were a result of nurturing relationships between principals and teachers. This study found that secondary school principals who initiated school community partnerships set examples for teachers to emulate and to participate in partnership activities. In the two case studies, principals had set example for the teachers by initiating school community partnerships.
Secondary school principals’ roles in school-community partnerships are tied to their daily activities, in collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders, the district school board, community agencies, ministry of education and individuals.

Secondary school principal’s roles in school-community partnerships are related to the principals’ overall vision to improve the students’ academic performance. This acts as a momentum for teachers to emulate the principals’ roles manifested most in school-community partnerships that are student-focused.

The role of the secondary principal in school-community partnerships is to create a harmonious, academically enabling environment for students and teachers to work by intervening at certain points during their routines. This role entails working with different teachers with different opinions and views and empowering them to make their contribution to the school.

The secondary school principals’ roles in school-community partnerships are influenced by the advantage of their power position as head of the organization, a position that comes along with discrentional power privileges for decision-making. The role of the principal is manifested clearly in resource allocation. From my study, the use of positional power is not coercive but is instead based on negotiation.

The roles of principals in school-community partnerships are not impacted by the length of period of one’s tenure as a principal but it seems to be correlated with years of teaching experience of the staff at the school. In my research, I found out that at least many teachers who were involved in the school community partnerships in the two case study schools had been teaching for a while and understood the needs of students well.
The district school board policy on school-community partnerships creates the environment for existence of these school-community partnerships. The policy empowers individuals as it defines the scope of what individuals can or cannot do in the school. It enhances the discretionary powers of the principal to the effect that, when compounded with the principal’s values, leads to the formation of school-community partnerships. But if the principal’s values do not recognize the value of school-community partnerships, teachers’ interest alone might not go far because the principal might not support that cause. The school culture, shaped by the principal’s leadership, determines the extent of site policy implementation. What happens in every school regardless of the policy in place, is directly related to values and actions of actors in a school, including the values of the principal and his or her actions towards certain policies.

The limitations of the study

The micropolitical conceptual framework had not previously been applied to the study of school-community partnerships; hence the study was an exploratory in nature. There could be limitations inherent to my role as a researcher - individual bias, cultural differences, time constraints to finish the dissertation on time, researcher effects on the site and vice versa. I planned to recruit up to twenty-two participants but it was not possible. I was to contend with four less from the expected number. I had reached the saturation point in terms of the number in the sense that the principals in both case studies indicated before the beginning of interviews that not many teachers were involved in school community partnerships. A few potential participants declined to participate in the interview.

Another limitation is in relation to the use of terms such as “principal” and “head teacher.” These terms are used differently in literature in different parts of the world and are
likely to create confusion as they show different interpretation of roles of individuals in schools in different places. For example, Ball (1987) uses the term “head teacher” in Britain whereas in Canada it is the title of “principal,” yet both terms refer to individuals who head schools. In this study, the two titles are used to mean the same thing. There are always human errors in interpretation and communication of information, although I have done my best to diligently minimize any foreseen human errors in data collection, analysis and reporting, paying attention to details and the vigorous demands of qualitative research methodology techniques. There are limitations in qualitative case study research especially when it comes to making generalization of the research findings. Qualitative case studies are done on a small scale with few participants. Communities in which schools are situated are varied and therefore there could be other factors that can affect the role of principals that were not considered in this study and they could not be captured because of conceptual framework employed.

Implications for research

This study has provided more clarity regarding the role of principals in secondary school-community partnerships but little on the direct and measurable impact of school-community partnerships on students. As a recommendation for further study, it will be worth the effort to gain a deeper understanding of the measurable contribution of school-community partnerships to students by conducting research that focuses on the recipients of school-community partnerships. A survey of former students from schools with active partnerships can go a long way to provide an assessment of the contribution of partnerships to the academic success of students. This will entail asking questions different from what this study focused on. Even though principals and teachers were asked about the contribution of school-community
partnerships to student achievement, the information is incomplete if the views of students are not taken into consideration. This was the same recommendation Hands 2005 made when she stated:

There was need for specific examples from the educators as to the direct benefits to the student from community involvement: that is educators might consider providing a track record of partnership results for the students. (p.192).

This leads me to make another recommendation for further study: evaluation of the contribution of partnerships. Given that many school-community partnerships involve organizations that have specific objectives to accomplish, one possible way to assess the contribution of school-community partnerships will be to conduct research on partnerships themselves to see whether tools are in place to measure the achievement of organizational goals and how those goals align with the school objectives in participating in the school-community partnerships. An even better strategy would be to compare school and partner organizations’ objective.

Micropolitical theoretical framework stills struggles to find popular acceptance as a powerful theoretical lens for examining leadership concepts in education administration. With increasing application of it in research, it might herald new insights and energize the expansion of knowledge in the field of education administration.

Costs associated with the running of partnerships in the schools are things that have to be examined in order to understand the net benefit of the contribution of partnerships. This could be in terms of time spent by the principal, teachers, students and all those involved and the amount of other resources deployed that is not accounted for. However, it is well documented that partnerships are a symbiotic kind of relationship that means those parties involved benefit
mutually from the partnership activity. Research into all these can yield a lot of knowledge for betterment of the process of partnerships

**Implications for practice**

At times principals may be well meaning in portraying their schools in a certain way that make their schools to look good but in essence that may not be helpful for the school. The best way probably is to accept certain situations the way they are and in doing so a positive change may occur. Principals may attempt in the hope of maintaining good public image but in reality that effort may exacerbate the problem. For instance problems of racism, social diversity, special needy cases and poverty are minimized to bring out the impression that such problems do not affect the students. This might be related to the principal’s beliefs or values. If a principal does not value social diversity and inclusiveness then it can be hard to implement programs around these issues.

Many partnership activities happening in schools are signs of sophistication and organizational specialization in the society responding to change. Partnerships may represent an innovation in social organization in the structural organization of school, apart from what has been understood from the past. In the wake of declining government funding for public institutions and generally increasing competition for scarce resources among different social institutions, partnerships are providing an avenue for public schools to mobilize financial and material resources to meet their challenges. In the face of ever dwindling resources for public institutions, it is imperative that school personnel learn how to undertake environmental scan to harness the support they can get to achieve the goals of educating students. Harnessing the
potential that is found in the environment of the school demands principals and teachers to sharpen skills that enable that to happen.

Teacher involvement is important in the school-community partnerships. In my research I learned that teachers were involved in initiation, leading the partnerships and accepting responsibility from the principal. The involvement has implication for the teachers to realize the importance of mutual cooperation within the teaching profession. Teaching students is a collaborative activity between the principal, teachers, students and the external environment. It does not just focus on curriculum implementation in the classroom. Teachers preparing to take up teaching responsibilities must understand that invisible and un-stated responsibilities might occur apart from just teaching students. Incorporating this knowledge into the training of teachers is important. Teachers’ involvement depending on personal initiative points to limitless opportunity for every teacher in a school to contribute to the success of students in many different ways apart from teaching in the classroom.

Practitioners have enormous opportunity to shape the success of students if their interest and values focus to the betterment of students. In my research, the teachers involved in the hospital partnership demonstrated close working relationships with their principals and this is in line with the micropolitical conceptual framework which presupposes that principals who exhibit interpersonal leadership style and adversarial style can work with willing teaching staff. The principals should be willing to accept divergence of views among the teaching staff and in so doing accommodate teachers who not participating in partnerships. These teacher can then support those who take initiative especially if they belief the initiative is important. The need for reducing or bridging subject specialization boundaries is important for the teaching of students. The principal to teacher and teacher-to-teacher interaction are crucial for student success in the
school. These relationships seem to be the cornerstone of good relationships with the outside partners.

A recent Ministry of Education of Ontario Forum called *Closing the Gap of Academic Achievement* in February 2009 recommended school-community partnerships as one strategy for solving the problems schools face in helping students graduate with the expected results. The idea of closing the academic achievement gap is based on the assumption that there are small gaps to achieve academic success. Literature on school-community partnerships supports the view that they are meant to improve schools by creating an environment for boosting student performance. This study has provided an opportunity to evaluate the school’s efforts in school-community partnerships and found out that school-community partnerships are not evaluated regularly for their performance. There is need for principals and teachers to focus on aligning the schools’ objectives and the objectives of the organizations partnering with the school.
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Appendix A: Interview questionnaire Principal Interview Protocol.

1. What specific programs are implemented by school community partnership? Please describe each of the school community partnerships at this school. Probe: what are they intended to do?

2. What is your relationship with any school community partnership in the school? How have you been involved in any of them?

3. Does socio-economic status of community around this school affect partnerships? How so?

4. Does student population diversity around the school affect partnerships? How so?

5. How do the different academic departments map onto the partnerships?

6. How are you involved in the school community partnerships that operate in the school? Probe questions: How would you characterize your relationships with teachers? What do teachers think about the partnerships?

7. What has been challenging about setting up the partnerships? What has been helpful?

8. Do you think partnerships are meeting their goals?
Appendix B: Teacher interview protocol

1. What specific programs are implemented by school community partnership? Please describe each of the school community partnerships at this school.
   Probe: what are they intended to do?

2. What is your relationship with any school community partnership in the school? How have you been involved in any of them?

3. Does socio-economic status of community around this school affect partnerships? How so?

4. How do the different academic departments map onto the partnerships?

5. How has the Principal been involved in developing school community partnerships? Probe questions: What did the Principal do that was helpful? What did the Principal do that was problematic?

6. Are there other ways the Principal affects the way school community partnerships works?

7. Do you see partnerships making difference for kids and what are the consequences for teachers?

8. Do you think partnerships are meeting their goals?
Appendix C: Consent Forms

[Printed on OISE/UT letterhead]

[Date]

[Principal/Administrator name]

[Address]

Dear [Principal/Administrator name]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research study, “The role of Principals in the micro-political context of secondary schools in establishing and maintaining school-community partnerships.” This letter will provide an outline of the research study and also a request for informed consent to participate in interview related to the research.

Many schools are attempting to develop bonds between their schools and their communities. Currently, it is unclear what the role of the Principal is in establishing partnerships with community organizations. The major goal of my study is to understand the role of secondary school Principal in the process of establishing partnerships with community organizations. I will examine the process by which Principals select potential partners and create partnerships through collaborative activities. I wish to learn about the successes and challenges Principals face in the course of the partnership initiation process. I will also look at goals of the community partnerships and examine the variables in schools that appear to facilitate or hinder efforts to establish partnerships. My hope is that the findings from this study will provide insight into the role of Principals in developing partnerships in schools.

This study is being conducted by Joseph Mulongo, a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), under the supervision of Professor Nina Bascia. Your school was chosen as one of the two that will be participating in this study,
based on your school’s successful establishment of partnerships. As a key member of your school, your views on the process of establishing these types of partnerships are important to the research.

To understand the role Principals play in establishing partnerships, it is essential to examine the experiences of the Principal and teachers in the school where partnerships are occurring. I would like to conduct an interview with you and teachers who have participated in partnerships within the school. I anticipate conducting approximately 11 interviews in a school. The interviews will last approximately 45 minutes. I will schedule these interviews at times that are convenient for you and your school staff. Interviews will be taped and transcribed verbatim; however, only my research supervisor and I will have access to the audiotapes, interview transcripts, documents and field notes. All information will be kept in strict confidence. The audio taped interviews, interview transcripts, documents and notes will be stored in a locked file drawer at OISE/UT during the study and for five years after the completion of the study. The data (i.e., the audiotapes, transcripts, etc.) will then be destroyed. Please note that the school name and the identities of all study participants will remain confidential in any reports related to this study. Pseudonyms will be used instead of real names in all of my reports.

I would also like to collect copies of school documents (i.e., meeting minutes, correspondences etc) that are relevant to partnership activities occurring in the school during my visit to interview you and teachers if possible.

While I fully appreciate your busy schedule, I would like to request your approval in order for you to participate in interviews for this study. Although you have agreed to have your school participates in this study, your participation in an interview is strictly voluntary, and so you do not need to provide reasons for not participating. You may also decline to answer any specific
question/s in the interviews, or withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Additionally, you will receive a copy of interview transcript to view, correct or change and approve as true record before the Principal investigator use it. It will be sent to you via e-mail within two months of the interview. If you would like to edit your responses, any changes will need to be sent back to me within two weeks of receipt. Finally, you may request, via telephone or e-mail, a summary of the study’s findings. If you are willing to participate in this research, please fill out the attached form and return it to I within two weeks of receipt. Please keep a copy for yourself.

I will make every effort to ensure that this study is a worthwhile experience for you and the school. My hope is you will enjoy the opportunity to reflect upon your experiences. If I can be of assistance in any other way, please let me know. The information that you provide during the interview will be included in a dissertation, in conformity with the requirements of a doctor of Education degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I may also present or publish the data gathered in this study for other audiences (i.e., conferences, journal articles, etc.) The identities of all school community partners will remain confidential at all times.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the study, please contact me at the address on the letterhead, by telephone at 416-854 6093, or via e-mail at joseph.mulongo@utoronto.ca. Further queries may be directed to my research supervisor, Prof. Nina Bascia, by telephone at 416-978-1159, or via e-mail at nbascia@oise.utoronto.ca or to the Office of Research Ethics e-mail ethics.review@utoronto.ca or fax (416-946-5763).

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Thank you for your time and effort.
Best regards,

Joseph Mulongo

By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Name: ------------------------------------------- School: ---------------------------------------------

Signature: -------------------------------------- Date: ---------------------------------------------

Please initial that you consent to having your school involved in the study: ------------

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audio taped: ------------------------------

Please initial if you would like a copy of your transcript: ------------------------------------

Please initial if you would like a summary of the findings of the study upon completion:  
------------------------------------------
Appendix D: Letter of invitation to participate in Research Study from the Principal

Letter of Introduction to do Research from the Principal to the Teachers

Dear--------------

This letter is written as an introduction to a research study Joseph Mulongo is conducting as partial fulfillment towards a Doctor of Educational Administration degree he is completing through the Ontario Institute of the Studies for Education of the University of Toronto. Joseph has received the approval of the school board to conduct this research. His research examines the role of Principals in school community partnerships process.

A review of literature indicates Principals play an important role in school community partnerships. However, there is limited knowledge about the specific role they play in the process.

All the information you provide to Joseph will be kept in the strictest of confidence and you will not be identified in his research or the resulting doctoral dissertation. No one at school will know that you participated in the research.

If you are willing to participate, please sign and return the enclosed Informed Consent to Participate Form to Joseph in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Upon confirmation of your willingness to participate in his research, Joseph will be telephoning you to discuss the research in more detail.

If you have any specific questions that you would like answered prior to becoming involved in the research, please feel free to contact Joseph at jmulongo@oise.utoronto.ca, (416 9268671) in confidence and at your convenience.

Sincerely yours, Principal
Appendix E: Teacher’s Consent Form

[Printed on OISE/UT letterhead]

[Date]

[Teacher name]

[Address]

Dear [Teacher name]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study of school-community partnerships. This letter serves as a description of the study, and it also asks for your informed consent to participate in interviews related to the study.

Many schools are attempting to develop bonds between their schools and their communities. Currently, it is not clear what the role of the Principal is in establishing partnerships with community organizations. The major goal of my study is to understand the role of secondary school Principal in the process of establishing partnerships with community organizations. I will examine the process by which Principals participate in the selection of potential partners and create partnerships. I wish to learn about the successes and challenges Principals face in the course of the partnership initiation process. I will also look at goals of the community partnerships and examine the school level factors that appear to facilitate or hinder efforts to establish partnerships. My hope in the findings from this study will provide insight into the role of the Principals in developing and supporting partnerships in schools.

This study is being conducted by Joseph Mulongo, a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), under the supervision of professor Nina Bascia. Your school was chosen as one of the two that will be participating in this study,
based on your school’s successful establishment of partnerships. As key member of your school, your views on the process of establishing these types of partnerships are important to the research.

To understand the role Principals play in establishing partnerships, it is essential to examine the experiences of the Principal and teachers in the school where partnerships are occurring. I would like to conduct an interview with you and teachers who have participated in the partnerships on the school. I anticipate conducting approximately 11 interviews in a school. The interviews will last approximately 45 minutes. I will schedule these interviews at times that are convenient for you and your school staff. Interviews will be taped and transcribed verbatim; however, only my research supervisor and I will have access to the audiotapes, interview transcripts, documents and field notes. All information will be kept in strict confidence. The audio taped interviews, interview transcripts, documents and notes will be stored in a locked file drawer at OISE/UT during the study and for five years after the completion of the study. The data (i.e., the audiotapes, transcripts, etc.) will then be destroyed. Please note that the school name and the identities of all study participants will remain confidential in any reports related to this study. Pseudonyms will be used instead of real names in all of my reports.

I would also like to collect copies of school documents (i.e., meeting minutes, correspondences etc.) that are relevant to partnership activities occurring in the school during my visit to interview you if possible.

I need your active approval in order for you to participate in interviews for this study. Although you have agreed to participate in this study, your participation in an interview is strictly voluntary, so you do not need to give any reasons for not participating. You may also decline to answer any questions in the interviews, or withdraw from the study at any time without negative
consequences. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Additionally, you may request that any information whether it is written form or audiotape be eliminated from the project. If you wish, you may have a copy of your transcript. It will be sent to you via e-mail within two months of the interview. If you would like to edit your responses, any changes will need to be sent back to me within two weeks of receipt. Finally, you may request, via telephone or e-mail, a summary of the study’s findings. If you are willing to participate in this research, please fill out the attached form and return it to me within two weeks of receipt. Please keep a copy for yourself.

I will make every effort to ensure that study is a worthwhile experience for you and the school. My hope is you will enjoy the opportunity to reflect upon your experiences. If I can be of assistance in any other way, please let me know. The information that you provide during the interview will be included in a dissertation, in conformity with the requirements of a doctor of Education degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I may also present or publish the data gathered in this study for other audiences (i.e., conferences, journal articles, etc.) The identities of all school community partners will remain confidential at all times.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the study, please contact me at the address on the letterhead, by telephone at 416-926-8671, or via e-mail at joseph.mulongo@utoronto.ca. Further queries may be directed to my research supervisor, Prof. Nina Bascia, through e-mail at nbascia@oise.utoronto.ca

Thank you for your time and effort.

Best regards,

Joseph Mulongo
By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Name: ------------------------------------------- School: ---------------------------------------------

Signature: ------------------------ Date: --------------------------------------------------------

Please initial that you consent to having your school involved in the study: ------------

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audio taped: -----------------------------

Please initial if you would like a copy of your transcript: -------------------------------

Please initial if you would like a summary of the findings of the study upon completion:
Appendix F: Telephone script for conducting Teachers

Hello, my name is Joseph Mulongo, a doctoral student from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto. I want to acknowledge your response to my request for participants for my study.

I want to thank you for accepting to participate in my study. I would to know if you have any questions regarding the study.

Thanks.

I would like us to set up a date for the interview. Please advise me which will be the best day, time and place we can meet to have the interview.

Thank you very much for your time.