LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN MAINE PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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BY

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DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to the excellent educators who spend their careers shaping the minds and lives of their students. You will never be paid what you are worth because what you do is simply priceless. Thank you for your hard work and commitment.

To the inspiration for this thesis, my favorite teacher of all time, Doris A. Herrick, you’ll always be the best leader and teacher in my eyes. I love you, Mom.
PREFACE

For me, being in a school has always felt like being in a second home. After high school, I became a full time student, and at the conclusion of my undergraduate education, I continued my life “in school” by getting a job at my alma mater, the University of Southern Maine. My time in school began earlier than most and extended beyond the standard classroom lessons. My mom has been a teacher in my hometown for over 35 years. I would spend parts of my childhood summers hanging out in her classroom, helping her arrange the desks, and making displays on her bulletin boards. I loved those moments of being my mom’s mini assistant! I thought my mom’s job was just fun.

As I got older, I realized that her job involved much more than organizing school supplies, designing bulletin board displays, and photocopying worksheets. She spent 14 years working as a 4th grade teacher, and then decided to become a middle school teacher when a position became available. Many people thought she was crazy. After all, fourth graders typically like their teachers, whereas middle school students are too busy dealing with their own physical, hormonal, and social evolution to like anyone!

I was amazed by my mom’s patience with her students. She seemed to have a natural way of understanding how their minds worked. She admitted that although she sometimes missed the sweetness of nine year olds, she enjoyed the conversations she was able to have with her middle school students. They had a much more sophisticated understanding of the world than most people would ever give them credit for; they weren’t always the self-centered, highly dramatic little beings as they are often deemed!
As I began to think about ideas for my master’s thesis in leadership studies, the topic of student leadership kept coming to the forefront of my mind. I determined that I would explore what public middle schools in Maine were teaching students about leadership and how leadership behaviors were reinforced both formally and informally in the classroom setting. I wanted to examine what was going on in the general education classrooms at the middle school level to encourage and support our future local, state, and national leaders. There are fantastic extracurricular activities, advanced placement courses, and other special events to develop leadership skills in students, but I wanted to look at what was going on for the average child in a typical classroom.

I strongly suspected that there wouldn’t be much specified in curricula or standards regarding leadership competencies middle schoolers must meet. I knew, however, that there was far more going on informally in the classrooms and in the assignments the teachers were creating…and I was right. Like my mom, there are many other talented educators in the state of Maine who value their middle school students as competent, creative, intelligent young leaders, and they aim to develop those skills further.
ABSTRACT

A statewide survey of Maine public teachers of grades seven and eight was conducted to examine how leadership development skills are taught, encouraged, and developed formally and informally. Teachers were asked their opinions on the importance of working towards developing leadership skills in their students and what methods and techniques they utilize in doing so. Questions regarding the development of curricula and flexibility of adapting curricula were also asked of educators. A total of 348 teachers in all 16 Maine counties completed the survey.

Results of the qualitative and quantitative survey data indicated that while the general population of Maine public middle school educators value the importance of helping their students develop leadership skills, time limitations and state imposed learning standards lead towards feelings of restrictedness in what is taught. Several respondents, however, explained how they incorporate leadership development in their subject-specific lessons and during informal class time. There were differences noted by the educators in the ease of being able to integrate leadership lessons in the curricula depending upon the primary subject matter taught.
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REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Middle school students have the capacity to understand the importance of working with others, the significance of interpersonal influence, and the impact of good and bad leaders on their followers and those around them. Research is needed to examine how school systems, particularly at the middle school level, are facilitating a learning process in the general educational curriculum to develop and enhance leadership abilities and skills in their students. With a large portion of their days spent in classrooms, children have ample time and opportunities to learn about effective leadership skills and to practice them. Determining how teachers, educational administrators, and curriculum coordinators build classroom instructional time to focus on leadership skill development, both formally in planned assignments and activities and informally in behavioral modeling and norming, will give a greater understanding of how much attention is paid to the skill, development, and empowerment of society’s future leaders.

Why Leadership?

Culp and Cox (2002) state that “during the first two millennia, leadership was an adult-focused concept, and little, if any, attention was given to leadership development of youth. As society develops, it is important to consider that youth, as well as adults, must participate in leadership development activities in the next century” (p. 47). Teaching youth to be sufficient problem solvers can give them both the skills and confidence to be community leaders (O’Brien & Kohlmeier, 2003).

For generations, children and adolescents have publicly expressed their views on local, state, and national issues such as armed conflicts, the environment, and international relations. Thus, they have the abilities to express opinions, persuade others,
and comprehend complex situations. They simply need the instruction, theoretical principles, and venues to practice leadership skills. Although debates have occurred for decades regarding whether leadership is an innate quality one possesses or something that can be learned, it is clear that leadership skills can be studied and practiced. A study by O’Brien and Kohlmeier (2003) indicated that children in the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades had a clear sense of the qualities they expected from a good leader. Wormeli (2006) describes strategies for the effective instruction of middle school students. One of his key points is the need to consider the developmental needs of middle school age children in the classroom. For instance, it is invaluable to provide young people with positions of responsibility in their school community to allow them to understand and appreciate positive contributions. It is also important to emphasize and re-emphasize classroom and school rules to help students understand that they need to be able to function as members of a civilized society and community.

**Teaching Leadership**

Educators often encourage behaviors that are congruent with their own opinions of effective leadership behaviors exhibited by students in their classrooms. Chang (2003) describes this notion by stating that “as social referents in the classroom context, teachers’ attitudes and behaviors help define a child’s social reputation” (p. 545). Thus, in their roles as educators, role models, disciplinarians, and caretakers, teachers’ opinions can have a large impact on their students. Fischer (2003) discusses the ways children’s perceptions of their own powers are influenced by their culture, specifically in terms of the media. She describes the idea that students and teachers may be in conflict due to differences in cultural perspectives of power and roles. It is therefore clear that educators
have a compelling role in teaching and influencing our future leaders. Clear objectives
and outcomes should be considered when developing leadership skills in their students.

In the past, a select few children were given many opportunities to practice
leadership skills at school and often received no official training. Beginning in the 1990s,
school administrators and educators began embracing the idea of allowing student leaders
to meet with school boards, give public presentations, implement service projects, and
interview new teachers (Sherrill, 2000). There is more of an emphasis today on the
importance of school leaders working with student leaders when the student body is
particularly large to create a more inclusive school community.

Recently, researchers and practitioners have promoted curricula to carry themes
of leadership, community, and positive personal relationships throughout the entire
school. Kidron and Fleischman (2006) state:

The importance of personal relationships for all children, along with the
increased significance of peer relationships for early adolescents, suggests that
educators can have a tremendous influence on students’ social growth by
creating a school-wide culture in which each student has opportunities to see
pro-social behaviors modeled by other students and by adults (p. 90).

San Antonio and Salzfass (2007) echo this statement by promoting the use of social-
emotional curricula to foster school-wide relationships and healthy emotional
development and behaviors in middle school children.

Some schools that have implemented leadership programs have seen multiple
benefits and positive results. Lordon and Sapone (2001) indicate that the school
described in their article has seen a decrease in discipline referrals and an increase in
school satisfaction since implementing a leadership program three years prior. Through workshops, advisory sessions, and school and community service activities, students are able to develop leadership skills, communicate effectively, solve problems, make decisions, and build relationships. Cahill (2006) discusses a curricular and after school leadership program at one middle school in Millburn, New Jersey. After having a peer leadership program which only allowed the highest performing 8th graders to participate, teachers decided that it made more sense to allow all students to participate to develop their leadership potential. Students attend leadership classes beginning in the sixth grade to learn skills in conflict resolution; they learn about character development and values in the seventh grade; and they become peer leaders, teachers, and mentors of the younger students when they reach the eighth grade. The school follows the Social Change Model of Leadership Development which “focuses on leadership as a synergistic process rather than a role” and identifies seven core values for individual development (Cahill, 2006, p.38).

**Curriculum Development**

National education standards that drive state and local school curriculum development often lack in specifically requiring leadership development programming for students (O’Brien & Kohlmeier, 2003). Yet, requirements often do entail the mastery of skills that are beneficial to effective leadership development (Pass & Campbell, 2006). Karnes and Stephens (1999) further indicate that it is fairly simple to incorporate leadership development skills in existing curricula and lessons in a variety of subjects. They emphasize that the educators need an awareness of leadership skills in order to recognize opportunities to supplement lessons or discuss leadership skills in the
classroom.

Theoretical approaches toward leadership are sometimes woven into curricula, although not as much for those in primary and middle level grades. Yet, educators need to make connections in their classrooms of both theory and practice to make the greatest use of resources and to have the greatest impact on their students (Danzig, 1999). Beane (1991) describes the need for integrated, interdisciplinary middle school curricula. Allowing students to have input in curriculum development and ask personally meaningful questions promotes a quality learning experience. The use of themed activities and lessons developed by the students rather than using only the interests of educators or the manipulation of pre-conceived subject areas is beneficial to students. Like the themes discussed by Beane, Brown (2002) describes a self-directed learning program for middle school students based on themes that capture the interests of the students. Educators have roles as facilitators in guiding their students learning and projects, but students are in charge of developing their curricula and assignments to demonstrate their comprehension.

Curriculum development focusing on leadership requires a keen creation of equilibrium. Educators and curriculum developers must “find a balance of structural flexibility that gives opportunity to students to direct and shape the emergent curriculum, and yet, is rigid enough so as to not allow the action to collapse into chaos” (Fels, 2002, p. 5). A challenge is in place when classroom teachers must let go of some control of the curriculum and put some of the control into the hands of the students in order for students to practice and develop their leadership skills.
Kerfoot (1998) argues that “reality teaches leadership through trial and error, successes and failure. Unfortunately, classroom learning is not sufficient to teach leadership” (p. 145). With more education research indicating that hands-on learning may be more beneficial to students at all ages and in all course subjects, the specific study of leadership in more experimental ways has made its way into research and published reports. Herron and Major (2004) describe problem-based learning as a way to help students gain knowledge and time management skills by problem-solving in real time and real life unlike other classroom assignments that allow students to have generous amounts of time to make decisions. In real life cases and situations, students must be resourceful, collaborative, and think on their feet as leaders must do on a daily basis.

**Subject-Focused Leadership Experiences**

Leadership skills can be taught in numerous ways and in conjunction with other subject matters in a cross-disciplinary manner. By using past experiences of well-known leaders in history classes, current events and local issues in civics and social studies classes, and literary and other creative works in literature, language arts, and drama classes, educators can use multiple methods and approaches to enlighten their students in leadership studies. Even more subject matters may have appropriate lessons of leadership readily available, yet the research literature is limited on such matters. Two subject areas that flourish with leadership studies potential and proven methods are discussed below.

**Social Sciences/Civics/History**

History, social studies, and civics courses often contain ample discussion, reading assignments, and projects built into their respective curricula surrounding national and
international leaders. Often in these courses, however, there is a disregard in assignments for examining the leadership qualities and talents that make leaders effective or ineffective (Pass & Campbell, 2006). O’Brien and Kohlmeier (2003) encourage educators to take those courses a step further by being “purposeful not only in helping young people learn about individuals in leadership position[s], but also in developing their willingness and ability to assume leadership roles” (p. 164). Using biographical information, case studies, and memoirs of leaders in the form of stories can have an impact on potential young leaders. Yet, the stories of practitioners are often excluded from the key materials of a discipline or considered simply unimportant or unscholarly (Danzig, 1999).

**Drama and Literature**

Drama and literature provide students with complex and, sometimes, extreme examples of fictional leaders. Fels (2002) writes:

- language arts activities within drama such as persuasive speech, writing in role, problem-solving through creative and critical role-play, and improvised narration all create moments where students can observe and embody the arguments fielded, the choices possible, the results of actions taken (p. 3).

Additionally, such activities allow students to understand various perspectives and rationalize potential outcomes for all parties involved. Being able to empathize and weigh the positive and negative aspects of decisions are key qualities of effective leaders.

Moreover, literature allows students to use their comprehension and communication skills to solve problems, verbalize ideas, and discuss their opinions with others. McMahon and Goatley (1995) examined fifth grade students participating in a
literature-based reading program referred to as Book Club. The authors describe how these peer-led groups allow students to develop their communication, critical thinking, and general leadership skills. The traditional approach of a teacher facilitating a class discussion actually limits the amount of student participation due to the number of students who must respond one at a time. Although, initially, students replicated the more traditional model in their small group, as one student would take on the role of “teacher” and other students would respond to her questions, toward the end of the study, interactions began to shift to a practice of shared leadership.

In sum, the literature on teaching and developing leadership skills in children, particularly those below high school age, is scant. However, the existing literature does indicate that classroom teachers can use their course subject matters to not only teach students about leaders and their traits, but also to provide students with hands-on, creative experiences and activities to hone their own leadership potential. School principals are also beginning to focus on creating and fostering a community of young leaders and socially conscious citizens by implementing school-wide leadership-related curricula. As Woyach (1992) writes:

The role that schools have in providing opportunities for leadership development and in building students’ image of leadership require schools to seriously consider how changes in schooling affect the development of the next generation of leaders. The decline of club programs in some schools, because of funding and scheduling problems, should be of concern to people interested in leadership development. On the other hand, trends toward site-based management offer
intriguing new opportunities for involving students in the governance of the school community (p. 5).

The importance of leadership development of our youngest citizens in a strategic and thoughtfully planned manner is clearly becoming more apparent to educators, curriculum development professionals, and educational administrators.
**THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The research study was conducted to determine how selected Maine public middle school teachers work towards developing leadership skills in their students and if it is an intentional goal of educators to develop those skills.

**Sub-problems**

1. The first sub-problem was to determine what methods or techniques selected Maine middle school teachers use to enhance or develop leadership abilities in their students.

2. The second sub-problem was to examine what qualities selected Maine middle school teachers recognize and promote as good leadership skills and abilities in their students.

3. The third sub-problem was to analyze any distinct differences in academic disciplines and their related curricula in support of leadership development in Maine public middle school students in selected schools.

4. The fourth sub-problem was to determine to what extent Maine public middle school teachers consider leadership development as a priority in their lessons and in their classroom management.

**Hypotheses**

1. The first hypothesis was that there is limited, explicit leadership development programming in Maine middle school curricula.

2. The second hypothesis was that Maine public middle school educators recognize and promote good leadership skills in their students despite a lack of defined outcomes in their curricula.
3. The third hypothesis was that teachers of particular subject areas support leadership development more frequently than others, but the majority of teachers facilitate leadership skill building in their classrooms regardless of subject matter.

Limitations of the Study

The study was not longitudinal or evaluative to determine the strengths and weaknesses of leadership development efforts, but rather an examination and analysis of one point in time.

• The study was limited to general classroom, curricular activities and teaching methods.
• The study did not examine leadership programs, courses, or curricula for children in gifted and talented or special education programs.
• The study did not examine extracurricular clubs and activities or athletic teams.
• The study examined only Maine public middle schools, and not private schools, magnet schools, or alternative schools.

Definitions of Terms

Leadership skills. This study defines leadership skills as mechanisms that give one ethical influence or the ability to inspire others to achieve goals. Skills such as, but not limited to, effective listening, synthesizing information for presentation or clarification purposes, encouraging collaboration, motivating others, understanding the needs of others, behaving ethically, and actively participating to achieve group goals are examples of leadership skills.
Middle school. Because individual Maine schools vary in terms of which grade levels encompass their middle schools, this study defines middle school students as those who are in grades 7 and 8.

Assumptions

1. The first assumption is that leadership development in children is significant for the leadership abilities of those individuals when they reach adulthood.

2. The second assumption is that leadership skills can be both taught and learned.

3. The third assumption is that Maine educators facilitate some leadership development in their students.

The Importance of the Study

Leadership skills are important for organizations, workplaces, communities, and families. Little research has examined how school systems, especially at the middle levels, are facilitating a learning process in the general educational curriculum to develop and enhance leadership abilities and skills in their students. Middle school students, in general, are in an age-appropriate range to understand the importance of working with others, the significance of interpersonal influence, and the impact of good and bad leaders on their followers and those around them. With a large portion of their days spent in classrooms, children have ample time and opportunities to learn about effective leadership skills and practice them. Determining how teachers, educational administrators, and curriculum development professionals use instructional time will give a greater understanding of how much attention is paid to the skills and development of society’s future leaders.
**Research Project Timeline**

The project was conducted over a seven month period and is described in general terms as follows:

*October 2007-December 2007:* The researcher drafted the survey instrument and its accompanying information, finalized the research plan, and applied for IRB approval.

*December 2007-January 2008:* The researcher made necessary modifications per the IRB, began to obtain email addresses of Maine public middle school teachers from the State of Maine Department of Education, and designed the web-based survey.

*January 2008-February 2008:* The researcher finished obtaining email addresses, distributed the survey, and collected the statewide survey data.

*February 2008-April 2008:* The researcher conducted the data analysis of the surveys and updated the literature review.

*April 2008-May 2008:* The researcher wrote up findings in thesis, obtained comments from readers/advisors, and edited as needed.
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The researcher completed an exploratory research project to determine how selected Maine public middle school teachers work towards developing leadership skills in their students, if it is an intentional goal of educators to develop those skills, and what barriers—including subject matter—may limit their ability to teach leadership skills.

Data were collected using a statewide survey to gather both qualitative and quantitative information from Maine public middle school classroom teachers. The details of the survey are described below in detail. The purpose of this research was exploratory and is intended to add to the body of research and literature on student leadership development by conducting a thorough examination of the hypotheses as described previously in this report.

Population

Determining the exact number of general classroom seventh and eighth grade teachers in Maine presented a bit of a challenge. The state collects this information, but due to attrition and changes throughout the school year, the information collected quickly becomes outdated. However, according to the Maine Department of Education’s Maine Education Data Management System (MEDMS), in January of 2007, there were 1,860 public seventh and eighth grade teachers in the state.

The Maine Department of Education does not keep track of educators’ email addresses—only names and school mailing addresses. This required the researcher to manually look for the email addresses of the educators. This was done by visiting each school’s website and collecting the email addresses for their staff. The number of
teachers who were able to be contacted and were, in fact teachers of 7th and 8th grade students, was 1,760.

**Data Collection and Instrumentation**

*Statewide Survey.* Survey questions were developed based on the literature review conducted by the researcher. The general subject matter of the survey was curriculum development procedures and key insights, examples, and evidence of successful leadership development practices. The survey was a comfortable length (less than 20 minutes) and questions were thoughtfully presented to gain ample information while limiting the time burden of participants.

The statewide survey was sent electronically to all public Maine middle school general education teachers with publicly published email addresses. Potential respondents were provided with the information regarding how to access the secure, online survey. The decision to use a web-based survey was made by the researcher due to its ease of use for both the survey taker and the researcher and also due to its lack of expense. Because educators are typically technologically savvy, have access to the Internet, and are apt to filling out forms online, the web-based survey technology seemed appropriate for and likely to yield a favorable response rate from the subjects. In order to further assist in obtaining a favorable response rate, the researcher created an optional form for respondents to complete for the chance to win a gift card in appreciation for their participation.

Given the busy nature of school schedules, the researcher gained insight from a personal key informant to determine a timeframe in which teachers, generally, would be
most able to respond to the survey. It was determined that early February would be an adequate time.

**Survey Questions.** A copy of the survey instrument can be seen in Appendix A of this document. Questions were developed to fall under the following three general categories:

1. Curriculum Development Procedures and Policies
   
   **Questions under this topic include:**
   - Who develops curricula at your school?
   - What standards or guidelines are followed in the development of curricula?
   - How much flexibility to classroom teachers have in developing course curricula?

2. The Importance and Value of Leadership Development in Middle School Students
   
   **Questions under this topic include:**
   - What is leadership?
   - Is the study and practice of leadership defined as an area in which middle school students must be competent?
   - Do you feel it is your role as a teacher to develop leadership skills in your students?
   - Does the subject that you teach limit you in terms of student leadership development?

3. Leadership Development Examples
   
   **Questions under this topic include:**
   - How do students exhibit leadership in your classroom?
   - How do you work towards developing leadership skills in your students?
   - What assignments, activities, or methods have you used to foster their leadership development?

**Data Analysis of the Statewide Survey**

The statewide survey of Maine public middle school teachers was developed and accessed through SurveyMonkey, an online tool that allows researchers to develop,
collect, and analyze surveys. The surveys were coded and analyzed using SPSS. Although SurveyMonkey contains an analysis feature, the researcher was able to get a richer analysis using SPSS. Responses are summarized and reported in the form of percentages, frequencies, cross tabulations, and other descriptive statistics later in this document.

Several open-ended questions were developed to gain a more robust understanding of the quantitative information gathered. The responses to those questions were examined and coded for key leadership attributes as described in the data collection section of this report to determine the emergence of themes. The themes were pulled from the text and reported on later in this document to supplement and expand upon the quantitative data collected from the statewide survey of middle school teachers.

**Confidentiality**

Strict measures were taken to protect the confidentiality of study participants. Statewide surveys contained a complete explanation of the purpose of the study and that responses would not be directly linked to the individuals responding to the questions. All identifying materials from the surveys were stored in locked cabinets. Electronic documentation was retained on a secure computer and was in a password-protected account. Master lists of participants’ names will be destroyed at the end of the project period. These procedures were assessed and approved by the University of Southern Maine’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants were given the contact information of the University’s representative of the IRB in the event that they had questions about their rights as human subjects in a study.
ANALYSIS

Electronic surveys were successfully sent to a population of 1,760 teachers of grades seven and eight. Of the 1,760 teachers, 348 completed the survey for a response rate of 19.77 percent. It is possible that an inherent bias exists in the respondent population; those who responded to the survey likely have a stronger interest in student leadership in the classroom than those who did not elect to participate. A profile of the teacher respondent population is summarized below.

Profile of Teacher Respondent Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Androscoggin</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennebec</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penobscot</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aroostook</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waldo</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagadahoc</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hancock</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piscataquis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although not exact in order, the teacher population is fairly similar to the geographic and student population of the counties; the more densely populated counties have a greater teacher representation in the survey results than the more rural counties.

**Figure 1: Number of Years Teaching**

For approximately how many years have you been actively teaching as a certified educator?

The population of educators responding to the survey indicates that they are seasoned professionals. Over 62% have been teaching for more than 10 years and over one-third of the population has been actively teaching for 21 or more years.
The majority of respondents teach the four major subjects of education:

English/Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, History/Social Studies, and Science.

Several educators selected more than one subject as more schools are using interdisciplinary methods or are saving salary costs by hiring fewer teachers. Although most middle schools have courses in all of the additional subjects shown in Figure 2, it is unclear why more teachers of those subjects didn’t respond. It is possible, due to the more “hands-on” nature of courses in physical education, the arts, and home economics, for example, the educators are less likely to use their computers throughout the course of
the day as opposed to the other subjects that require students to be frequently engaged in
desk work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>73</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about formal training in leadership, less than one-quarter of respondents indicated that they had been trained. Several of those who had been trained further indicated that their training consisted of Master’s level courses in leadership, teacher in-service trainings with a leadership focus, church-sponsored leadership development activities, mentoring and facilitation courses, and outdoor leadership training, for example. A few respondents indicated that life experience was sufficient training in the area of leadership.

**Profile of Classroom Population**

It was important to get a sense of the classroom population the respondents work in on a daily basis. Therefore, teachers were asked about the number of students in their classrooms and in the middle school population of their schools. Tables 3 and 4 display the results of those questions.
Just over half of the respondents indicated that their average class consisted of 16-20 students. A total of 93.6 percent of teachers indicated that their average class size was between 11 and 25 students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: What is the average number of students per class you teach?

According to the respondents, 82.7 percent teach in schools with a middle school student population of 500 students or less.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 100 students</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-300 students</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-500 students</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-800 students</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800-1000 students</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: What is the approximate combined population of 7th and 8th grade students at your school?
Curriculum Development

Several questions were asked of the respondents to determine how curricula are developed in their schools. Questions were asked to specifically determine who is involved and how much flexibility is given to classroom teachers in making modifications. The following charts and tables indicate the responses teachers gave when asked about curriculum development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will notice in Table 5, just less than one-quarter of respondents failed to answer this question. Several teachers who did respond indicated that they were simply not sure if their students were required to be competent in the area of leadership. It is possible that the missing responses were due to more teachers who were unsure of the answer to the question. Several respondents indicated that competency in leadership was “implied” by Maine’s learning standards or “strongly encouraged” in the curricula. Examples given by teachers as ways students were expected to be competent related to leadership are through: peer advisory groups, respectful communication, collaboration, citizenship, volunteerism, inclusion, and anti-bullying programs. Some respondents stated that leadership was developed primarily in extracurricular activities or through special programs, events, or activities held annually.
When asked about the amount of flexibility they have in adapting curricula to add competencies in their own classrooms, nearly half of the respondents indicated that they have significant flexibility. Less than one percent of teachers felt that they had no flexibility. It is possible that this freedom in adapting curricula and adding competencies is related to the high number of highly experienced teachers represented in the survey respondents. (See the Discussion section of this document for further analysis on this particular issue.)
Figure 4: Role to Develop Leadership Skills in Students

Do you feel it is your role as a teacher to develop leadership skills in your students?

Figure 4 shows that over three-quarters of survey respondents indicated that they felt it was part of their role to develop leadership skills in their middle school students. Only 7 percent indicated that leadership development was not part of their role.

The comments section provided in the survey form after this question was asked resulted in some interesting anecdotes from the teachers. Several who indicated that they were not sure if they felt it was their role as a teacher to develop leadership skills in their students and those who responded with no, stated that they believed it was the role of parents to develop such skills. Other teachers felt that they could encourage leadership skills, but did not think of it as a priority. Many teachers, regardless of their response,
described the pressure that they felt to accomplish their lesson plans derived to meet standards set out in the curricula. One teacher stated:

“I can encourage it but I do not feel that I MUST teach it; there is just so much time and so much material that needs to be covered.”

For those who answered in the affirmative, many teachers indicated that they incorporated leadership skill development in their lesson plans. They highlighted the importance of modeling leadership skills for their students, encouraging collaboration and teamwork, and supporting students in advocating for themselves. One teacher wrote:

“My students are the leaders of tomorrow, and I try to get them to be leaders, as well as productive and contributing members of society.”

Figure 5: Perceived Importance of Leadership Development Skills for Middle School Students
As displayed in Figure 5, nearly 78 percent of teachers responding to the question believe that it is important or very important for middle school students to learn about and develop leadership skills as part of their general education. One teacher who felt that it was very important, simply stated:

“I believe that leadership skills are essential to citizenship. All students have strengths, and they can express leadership in various ways.”

Less than one percent of respondents found the study of leadership for middle school students to be unimportant, and just over one-fifth of respondents felt it was somewhat important. One teacher wrote:

“I think this is addressed in other parts of the school and not my responsibility.”

Figure 6: Responsibility for Developing Curricula
When asked who is responsible for developing school curricula, middle school teachers had a variety of responses and a number of combinations. The majority indicated that teaching staff had some role in the development of the curricula they taught, followed by a curriculum development coordinator. Principals, assistant principals, superintendents, and other administrators have a role in some schools. Although many teachers selected multiple individuals, other schools specifically have curriculum development committees that may consist of the stakeholders several of the survey respondents selected individually. In the “other” category, respondents wrote in that the responsibility fell under, for example: a literacy coordinator, the school board, or that state standards indicate what is taught.

**Subject Matter Limitations**

One of the hypotheses of this project was that leadership development skills may be more challenging for some teachers to incorporate into their classrooms/curricula depending on the subjects they teach. For instance, many middle school history or social studies teachers have units in their curricula that focus on military and/or political leaders. This provides students with concrete lessons in examples of good and poor leadership traits, skills, and activities, depending on the leader being discussed.

Two questions were asked in the survey of Maine middle school teachers to examine the issue of subject matter limitations in teaching or incorporating leadership development. The results of those questions are as follows and further analyzed in the discussion section of this document.
Over half of the respondents indicated that there were leadership lessons specific to the subject that they teach which could be demonstrated in the classroom. Just over five percent of the respondents stated that there were no leadership lessons that could be taught related to the subject they teach. A breakdown of how teachers of specific subjects responded to this question can be found in the discussion section of this document.
The responses to the question displayed in Figure 8 are interesting when compared to those in Figure 7. Just over half of the respondents felt that the subject they teach does not limit them in providing leadership lessons to their students—a number (58.33%) similar to those who stated that there were leadership lessons specific to the subject they teach which could be demonstrated in the classroom. Just less than one-fifth (18.39%) of respondents felt that their subject limits them in being able to provide leadership lessons to their students—a number higher than those who indicated that there were no leadership lessons that could be demonstrated to students specific to their subject.
(5.75%). Like the data displayed in Figure 7, the information in Figure 8 is further analyzed and described in the discussion section of this document.

**Definitions of Leadership**

I made a conscious decision when I developed the survey instrument not to provide educators with a definition of leadership. There are several definitions I could have selected from, and I considered creating my own. However, it seemed to me that I would get richer, more honest data if I allowed the respondents to explain their own definitions of leadership. Several teachers took the time to describe in their own words what leadership means. The definitions fell into six major themes or skill sets. A selection of the nearly 41 percent of responses is as follows.

**Inspirational/Motivational/Role Model**

- “Being a good role model, setting examples for others, setting goals for yourself, working hard to achieve goals.”
- “Embracing, supporting, and modeling behaviors that contribute to the general welfare.”
- “Modeling of decisions and behaviors that are healthy and intelligent.”
- “Leadership is being a person who inspires others to be and do better.”
- “Leadership within a classroom is demonstrated when a student represents him or herself as a member of the community which others can depend upon, feel safe with and will help others learn from mistakes to make smart choices for both themselves and those around them.”

**Servant Leader/Supportive of the Group**

- “The ability to bring the best skills and contributions of the people you are working with to collaborate for the good of all.”
- “Someone who is a team player, always there to help others out and listen to them.”
• “The ability to lead individuals to perform at their individual best and to function as a group.”

• “Leadership is being able to work with others and bring out their best. It is being able to make things happen by enlisting the help of others.”

• “Leadership is the ability to get others and yourself to achieve more together than what would have been possible for individuals to achieve working on their own.”

• “The active and creative participation one takes in their peers’ and communities’ lives to better the lives of others.”

**Non-Conformist/Holds True to Convictions/Upholds Strong Morals and Values**

• “I believe it's the ability to know what's right, to make a personal commitment to following it, despite the ridicule of others.”

• “Leadership is the ability to resist external pressures to conform to others’ beliefs and lifestyles and to promote the ideas and practices that you believe in by serving as an example that others might wish to follow.”

• “The ability to think and act ethically for oneself and on behalf of others.”

• “Leadership is an ability to have a broad perspective with enough experience and wisdom to be able to lead a group of people in a positive direction. Leadership is empowering others to do the right thing.”

• “Ability to stand up for your beliefs and guide those around you toward becoming better citizens through modeling and communication.”

**Demonstrates Initiative/Follows Through on Plans/Possesses Needed Skills**

• “Being able to take personal responsibility, to see opportunities and to assume responsibility when trying to meet goals. To maximize success in any given area by being positive, working well with others and synthesizing multiple points of view.”

• “Ability to take responsibility for things and encourage others to do so as well.”

• “I define leadership as one having goals/visions and having the necessary skills to utilize all available resources to achieve that goal.”

• “Ability to lead; ability to take control of situations and cope with them using learned strategies.”
• “A person with an overview of a situation who can organize what needs to be done and inspire the group to do it.”

• “One who is assertive, an independent thinker, and has the ability to be objective and make informed decisions.”

**Proficient Communicator**

• “A clear communicator who is self-directed in problem solving; demonstrates reliability and flexibility; works well in collaboration; others look to this person for insight, encouragement, and guidance.”

• “Leadership is the ability to communicate effectively and facilitate group work. It is also the ability to step to the front (figuratively and sometimes literally) of a group and guide them towards a given outcome. The outcome may be defined by the group or by others.”

**Qualities of a Good Student Leader**

Teachers were asked what they saw as qualities of a good student leader. Not surprisingly, the ideas the respondents conveyed in their personal definitions of leadership were similar to the qualities they see in their student leaders. A sample of responses is as follows:

• “A clear communicator who is self-directed in problem solving; demonstrates reliability and flexibility; works well in collaboration; others look to this person for insight, encouragement, and guidance; willing to learn new things.”

• “A good student leader at this grade level is relatively good at recognizing the different strengths and aptitudes of the people with whom he or she is working. This leader tries to include everyone in the conversation and the decisions reached by the group. This is not always successful, but the attempt is there. When there are conflicts, the good student leader tries to work them out equitably within the group, and only resorts to teacher intervention when absolutely necessary to keeping peace within the group.”

• “A good student socially and academically. The student should be one who works to achieve success in grades and one who isn’t worried or swayed by stereotypes, or peer pressure.”

• “Being a role model for peers, having the ability to motivate and organize them to complete tasks, having good communications skills to get along with all types of people - students and adults.”
• “Understands the task, demonstrates that she or he can do the job, makes sure that group members do their jobs, communicates expectations and holds classmates accountable. Knows when to ask for help.”

• “Focused, a listener, a mediator, has a good work ethic, friendly, all around good natured.”

• “Capable of leading with humor, getting along with others - all sorts of cliques and groups, calling peers on cruel behavior.”

• “Does his/her best, does what is asked, makes good decisions, encourages other to do so as well, gets along with others, is not bossy.”

• “Good student leaders are hard working, honest, stick to the task even when things don't go perfectly, and are able to communicate with others. Good leaders allow others to lead depending on their strengths. Good leaders are listeners, observers, and above all else, workers.”

• “I believe a good student leader is one who has a vision and works in a positive manner to help other students take ownership in this shared vision. In addition, a good student leader knows how to delegate roles and help others use their strengths for the benefit of the group.”

• “I believe the qualities of a good student leader are based on motives, dedication, and willingness to follow through. Sometimes the less "traditional academic" students will excel in a Service-Learning experience. When given a "real" community need or problem, and one not "required", it's sometimes interesting to see which "leaders" emerge.”

Several of the respondents highlighted that good student leaders show respect for their fellow students. Middle school is often a peak time of “clique” development and bullying. It was clear that teachers have a deep concern about such behavior and look for student leaders who not only shy away from exclusivity, but also are not afraid to speak out against it.

**How Middle School Teachers Develop Leadership Skills in Their Students**

Educators were asked how they work towards developing leadership skills in their students in a formal or informal manner and what types of activities or methods they use in developing those skills. Frequently, teachers responded that team or group work
allows their students to practice leadership skills in the form of helping others come to a consensus, working as a unit, keeping students on task, communicating, sharing ideas, and accomplishing the task at hand. Some teachers mentioned that they assign specific roles to students working in groups to ensure that various skills are developed as those roles are rotated over the course of the school year.

The use of roundtable, advisory, or peer mentoring groups is becoming more common and was described as being a helpful tool in developing student leaders as described by a teacher who shared this comment:

“I try to bring out the best in each of my students. In my Roundtable (advisory group), each student leads our Morning Meeting in 8th grade. In 7th grade, I lead it and model what it should look like. In 8th grade, the students are required in my RT to lead the group. It brings out the best in most of them. Some don’t do very well at first, but by the second semester they really understand the importance of it.”

To further develop leadership skills in the form of communication, several teachers indicated that they encourage class participation. Others stated that they require students to give oral presentations to give them practice in public speaking. One teacher gave a thoughtful response related to communication skills:

“I encourage them to say/write what they feel about an issue; urge them to take a stand with regard to something they feel passionate about.”

Several teachers stated that they develop leadership skills in their students by modeling appropriate behavior. One teacher provided this insightful comment:

“The most significant way for me to lead is by example. I do not want my students to drink or smoke, use profanity, so I do not use it in my life. I want them to know that each of them is special. I show this through respect for them and our environment. In our discussions of the current political process, I ask, ‘What qualities do you think it takes to be a good president?’”
They also indicated that they encourage the behaviors of students who are modeling good leadership skills. One teacher wrote that leadership skills were developed in the classroom by:

“pinpointing correct things students are doing, by acknowledging good effort, by using a teachable moment to explain a good choice someone has made”.

Some teachers explained that they use the subject matter they are teaching to get students to think about what makes a good leader or a good person, in general. For instance, one teacher stated:

“As a reading teacher, I encourage students to look at the characters in the books that they read and decide if they want to be like that person later in life. This generates thought and discussion about what they want to be like as an adult. Conversations continue from there”.

Several teachers described that they encourage students to think independently, creatively, and critically. One teacher described this in stating:

“I teach them to think for themselves...Students often hear me say, ‘think!’ or ‘step back and think about this’ I know it sounds simple, but many times it works. Students are just not encouraged to think on their own.”
DISCUSSION

Several of the responses provided by the teachers lead to further analysis. Cross-tabulations were conducted to examine more detail surrounding the responses given. For instance, questions asked regarding subject matter limitations in teaching leadership skills were crossed with the subjects taught of respondents as shown in Table 6 below.

Those who felt most limited in teaching or developing leadership skills in their students were those who teach Home Economics/Consumer Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Languages. The teachers who had the highest percentage of “no” responses—indicated that they did not feel limited in teaching or developing leadership skills in their students were those who teach Health, Computers, and History/Social Studies. Despite there being distinct differences in teachers’ perceptions about the ease of developing leadership skills, overall, the majority of respondents in each subject did not feel limited in developing leadership skills in their students.

Figure 9 displays more data examining subject matter limitations. The figure shows it crossed with number of years of teaching experience. There are no particularly staggering results in the chart, with the exception that it displays that the number of years of experience does not appear to be correlated with one’s ability or inability to feel they can develop leadership skills in their students in spite of the subjects taught.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Missing</th>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>82</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>61.7%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7.7%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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<td>11.8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7.8%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Art/Drama</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys. Education</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.7%</td>
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<td>80%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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Repeatedly, teachers provided comments about feeling that leadership skill development was important and part of their role as educators, but they felt like they had little time to work on that with their students in addition to meeting state requirements—therefore making it a less important part of their role as an educator. This concept resulted in the idea that possibly the number of students in a class might lead to teachers feeling overwhelmed with a lack of time. Figure 10 displays the results of those who responded to the question about teachers’ feelings regarding their role in developing leadership skills in their students crossed with the average number of students in their classes.
The results indicate that class size does not seem to impact the opinion of teachers regarding their role in developing student leadership skills. Those with both the highest and lowest numbers of students in their classes had no respondents that felt that it was not their role to develop leadership skills in their students.

The question of teaching experience and level of perceived flexibility in modifying curricula became a point of curiosity. Were veteran teachers more likely to feel they could adapt curricula than the less experienced teachers? Figure 11 displays the results of this cross-tabulation.
Interestingly, very few respondents felt that they had no flexibility in adapting curricula. Those who did feel that way, however, were those with 16 or more years of experience; none of the less experienced teachers reported feeling that way. The far majority of all levels of experience felt they had significant or some flexibility in adapting curricula or adding competencies.
CONCLUSIONS

This statewide survey provided some interesting data regarding how leadership skills are developed in middle school students. More interesting, however, were the perceptions and anecdotes from the teachers who responded so candidly. The subject of leadership development is clearly something that middle school educators are interested in knowing more about. Several teachers mentioned that they had honestly not thought much about the leadership development of their students, but would consider it more as a result of the survey. Others had clearly given the subject ample thought and were taking several small, but important, steps in developing leadership skills in their students.

Giving students the opportunity to lead discussions, work with other students in group projects, provide community services, and talk about qualities of good leaders they had read about are all examples of activities many teachers were providing to their students that likely have high impact with little additional effort; the activities help in developing strong leaders while still meeting state imposed mandates and requirements that were established to meet other competencies. That kind of effort is effective in accomplishing two important goals with a single lesson or methodology. Based on the data collected in the statewide survey, it is clear that further study would be beneficial in examining leadership education for teachers.

On a personal level, I found myself feeling concerned about the impression that some of the educators had of leadership—and of some of their students—as I was analyzing the survey results. It was not unusual to see comments that said, “not everyone is meant to be a leader” and that it was important for students to be made aware of that.
As someone who has studied leadership for the past three and a half years, I couldn’t disagree more.

We do need followers in this world, and part of being a good leader is to know when it’s time to follow someone else. However, I’m concerned that some of the educators who responded to the survey did not have a lot of confidence in some of their students. Those students are likely the ones who need more encouragement, support, and skills to improve upon their abilities to lead. We all are leaders in various aspects of our lives. One doesn’t have to be the CEO of a major company, the president of the United States, or a professor to be a leader. We have leadership roles in our families, local communities, civic and religious groups, sports teams, workplaces, and more. How often have you taken on a new initiative in your workplace—not because you are the “boss”, but because you realized that something needed to change? It happens all the time. People can and, in my humble opinion, should have the ability to lead regardless of their title—or position in society.

Middle schoolers have a lot of potential to learn relatively sophisticated concepts and ideas—but they are still children who are young, impressionable, and developing their own concepts of self and the world around them. Giving children opportunities to learn and grown are at the crux of education. Will every child in every classroom some day lead a nation? No. But, who’s to say that that one kid who gets D’s in English and has a bad attitude at age 12 doesn’t turn out to be the best leader our country has ever seen?

My hope is that all of our children are given the opportunities and skills to be great thinkers, listeners, collaborators, and analyzers. I want them to feel that they have
the abilities to make positive changes in the world, their country, their communities, their places of employment, and their families. I want them to know that they were given the same chances to learn as everyone else in their class regardless of their grade point averages or behavioral issues.

The far majority of the teachers who responded to the survey understood the importance of developing leadership skills in their middle school students. I am hopeful that the survey made the educators think hard about how leadership is developed in the classroom. The development of leadership skills doesn’t require a special class, a new program, expensive materials, or anything unusual. It’s encouraging the behaviors that one wants in a leader. Most of us look for the same qualities in a leader; we like leaders who listen, collaborate, communicate effectively, are sensible, thoughtful, and understand what needs to be done for the betterment of the group, for example.

I suspect that many of the teachers who responded to the survey don’t even realize how much leadership development they work on every day with their students—because many of the methods used to develop good leaders are often the same as those used to develop good students and good people, in general. I think some may have been overwhelmed if they perceived that I was encouraging them to teach the students *yet another* skill when they already have a feeling of insurmountable pressure put on them by the state standards students must meet. Regardless of what a state mandate says a teacher needs to accomplish in his or her classroom, leadership skill development can be pulled into nearly every classroom experience with very little effort, but a lot of care. I am proud that there are so many caring educators in the state I love, and I appreciate the time they took to share their thoughts on it with me.
APPENDIX A – SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS AND INSTRUMENT

Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

1. Welcome!

Greetings, Maine Middle School Educator:

You are receiving this survey because you are a teacher of children in grades 7 and 8 in a Maine public middle school. Your role is very important and greatly affects children’s lives. By filling out this survey, you will be part of a study to determine the ways leadership development skills are taught or encouraged in Maine’s public middle schools. This survey is being conducted as part of my master’s thesis project at the University of Southern Maine.

Your name was obtained from the public records collected by the Maine Department of Education. Completion of this survey is voluntary and completely confidential. Reports will not include information that will make it possible to identify participants; your name will not be shared with any person, agency or organization.

I know how busy you are; to show my appreciation for your time, everyone who completes the online survey (and completes the raffle form at the completion of the survey) will be entered into a drawing for a $25 Visa pre-paid credit card! The raffle entry form will be separated from the survey ensuring that your responses will not be connected to your name. Once again, you do not need to fill out the raffle entry form at the end of the survey if you are not interested in being entered.

I would also be happy to send you a summary of the survey results upon request.

If you have any questions or would like more information about this research, please don’t hesitate to contact Angie Bordeaux at [email protected] or by email at [email protected]. For more information concerning the rights of a participant in this research project, please contact [email protected], Director of Research Compliance, Office of Research Compliance, USM at [email protected] or by email at [email protected].

This survey should take you less than 20 minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance with this study!

Sincerely,

Angie Bordeaux
### Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

#### 2. Demographic Information

1. **What is your professional title?**

2. **For approximately how many years have you been actively teaching as a certified educator?**
   - Less than 1 year
   - 1-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21 or more years

3. **What grade(s) do you teach in the 2007-2008 academic year?**
   - 7th grade
   - 8th grade
   - Both 7th and 8th grades
   - Other (please specify)

4. **Which subject(s) are you teaching in the 2007-2008 academic year? (Please check all that apply.)**
   - Computers
   - English/Language Arts
   - Foreign Language
   - History/Social Studies
   - Life Studies/Home Economics
   - Mathematics
   - Music/Art/Drama
   - Physical Education
   - Science
   - Technology Education/Industrial Arts
   - Other (please specify)

5. **In which county is your school located?**

6. **What is the approximate combined population of 7th and 8th grade students at your school?**
   - Less than 100 students
   - 101-300 students
   - 301-500 students
   - 501-800 students
   - 800-1000 students
   - More than 1000 students
### Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

7. **What is the average number of students per class you teach?**
## Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

### 3. Curriculum Development

1. **Who is responsible for developing curricula in your school? (Please check all that apply.)**
   - Curriculum development coordinator
   - School superintendent
   - Other school administrator
   - Teaching staff
   - I’m not sure
   - Other (please specify)

2. **How much flexibility do classroom teachers in your school have in adapting the curriculum by adding competencies for students to meet?**
   - No flexibility
   - Very little flexibility
   - Some flexibility
   - Significant flexibility

Comments
Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

4. Leadership Development

1. Is the study and practice of leadership defined as an area in which middle school students in your school must be competent?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Other (please specify)

2. If yes, what competencies related to leadership are you expected to teach?

3. How do you define leadership?

4. Do you feel it is your role as a teacher to develop leadership skills in your students?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I'm not sure

   Comments

5. How important do you think it is for middle school students in the general education classroom to learn about leadership and develop leadership skills?
   - Not important at all
   - Somewhat important
   - Important
   - Very important

   Comments
Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

6. Do you feel there are leadership lessons that can be taught or demonstrated in your classroom that are specific to the subject that you teach?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I’m not sure
   
   Comments

7. Do you feel that the subject you teach limits you in being able to provide leadership lessons to your students?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I’m not sure
   
   Comments

8. Do you have any specific training in leadership, leadership development, or teaching students to be leaders?
   - Yes
   - No
   
   Comments

9. If yes, what type of training do you have?
   
10. How do students exhibit leadership in your classroom?

11. On a formal or informal level, how do you work towards developing leadership skills in your students?

12. What assignments, activities, or methods have you used in the classroom to foster student leadership development?
   
   Comments
Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

13. In your opinion, what are the qualities and behaviors of a good student leader?
Middle School Student Leadership Survey for Teachers

5. Thank you!

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input is incredibly helpful.

If you would like to be entered into the raffle for a $25 Visa pre-paid credit card, please enter your contact information on the following page after you click the "done" button below.

The raffle entry form will be separated from the survey ensuring that your responses will not be connected to your name. Once again, you do not need to fill out the raffle entry form if you are not interested in being entered; simply leave the form blank and exit the survey.

Thank you, again, for your time!
# APPENDIX B – OPTIONAL SURVEY RAFFLE FORM

## Middle School Student Leadership Raffle Form

**1. Optional Raffle Entry Form**

1. Please fill in the following information if you are interested in being entered into a raffle for a $25 Visa pre-paid credit card. If you do not wish to be entered into the raffle, please exit the survey.

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REFERENCES


Sherrill, J. (March 2000). The "middlennium" of student leadership: Evolving within a changing philosophy. *Schools in the Middle, 9*(7), 12-14.
