The Management of Accountability Expectations in Manitoba Schools:
A Study of Eight Elementary School Principals

by

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Abstract

In the past, educational accountability was in the form of fiscal and organizational efficiency. Since the early 1980s, however, the focus of accountability initiatives has shifted to student learning. This is a summary of 8 elementary principals' views about the demands for accountability made of them and their schools, and the ways in which they responded to these expectations. Individual interviews were conducted to gather their perceptions of accountability initiatives underway in Manitoba. Included is a discussion of: (1) the range and intensity of accountability demands perceived by principals, (2) the contradictions experienced by principals as a result of multiple yet differentiated accountability initiatives, as reflected in the distinction in the research literature between market competition, decentralized decision-making, managerial, and professional accountability approaches, and (3) principals' responses to these demands, and the justification used for the strategies that they adopted.

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Chapter I: Introduction

This qualitative research examined the ways in which eight public elementary school principals in Manitoba perceived and responded to demands that they and their staff be held accountable for student learning in their schools.

Rationale for this Research

A significant number of recent educational reform initiatives across Canada and internationally have been designed to hold schools more accountable (Leithwood and Earl, 2000), and along with these developments the operating definition of accountability in public education has undergone something of a renaissance. Prior to the 1980s across North America the emphasis for educational accountability had been placed on fiscal and organizational efficiency. However, Adams and Kirst (1999) noted that "beginning in the mid-1980s, the account citizens increasingly demanded revolved around the academic performance" of students (p. 463). While the expectation that schools should be held more accountable for student learning has been widespread, the actual framework for this new accountability is "far less mature, agreed-upon, and explicit" (Walberg, 2002, p. 156), and has resulted in a lack of agreement around four fundamental questions: (a) who is expected to provide the account, (b) to whom the account is owed, (c) what is to be accounted for, and (d) what are the form and consequences of providing an account (Leithwood, 2003, p. 1).

As a public institution in a democratic society schools have always been held to account (Adams and Kirst, 1999, page 464), and the new focus of accountability

requirements is clearly on student learning. In this regard, questions relating to the

accountable unit—the school—and to the substance of the account—student learning—

have to some degree been resolved, at least in current educational debate. However,

controversy arises over to whom an account is owed, and the form and consequences

that such an account will take. For example, demands for schools to be externally

accountable to the public through such mechanisms as School Councils are juxtaposed

with compelling educational literature on Professional Learning Organizations that

encourage schools to become more internally accountable (Shipps and Firestone, 2003,

para 7). The role of the principal requires that responsibility be taken and leadership

provided at the school level to manage accountability dilemmas such as this.

Creating a school-level approach that balances the contested accountability

questions, of who should receive an account and what should that account look like,

requires some level of prioritization and development of strategies. Stakeholders in

education, including professionals, government, and parents alike, are likely to have

contradicting ideas about how to best accomplish this. Principals must negotiate and

manage these differences. Finding common ground becomes complex, not only because

public and professional groups may have contrasting perspectives, but also because

organizational imperatives are inevitably the result of imperfect government regulations

and policies that are to some degree themselves incoherent and ambiguous (Levin,

2000, para. 13).

Governments develop educational policies within a political process and, as a

result often, "lack a considered conceptual framework in which to drive forward and

deliver their educational agenda" (Levin, 2000, para. 33). One reason for this is that

"much of what governments attend to is not of their own design or preference" (Levin, 2001, para. 15). The same might also be said of the school leader. Principals are faced with demands for accountability mechanisms that represent incongruent alternatives, from constituents in differing arenas of their work, within a context of regulations and policies lacking coherence. "…they are being pulled in many different directions simultaneously" (Leithwood, 2001, p. 228). It is in this milieu that the principal is impelled to carry out the mandates of multiple yet differentiated accountability initiatives.

Leithwood and Earl (2000, para. 33) proposed that these initiatives can be understood within a framework of four accountability alternatives: market competition, decentralized decision-making, managerial, and professional. These alternatives are based on the mechanisms that are used to bring about accountability, and form dissimilar ways to achieve that goal. The difference between the alternatives is characterized by who is owed the account, and by the consequences and form of the account. Essentially, each alternative provides unique answers to the unresolved questions of accountability, and this has meant that new requirements have taken on a variety of structures with each initiative responding somewhat differently to the meaning of accountability (Leithwood and Earl, 2002, p. 2). In this context school principals are likely to find themselves faced with expectations that may contradict or compete with one another both ideologically and practically. Without a coherent approach to accountability, the school leader's work is made more complex. Differing approaches to accountability are distinct from each other, and this may create a tension for them. Principals, by virtue of their position as school leaders, are likely to

experience this feeling intimately. They have a pivotal role in organizing people and

processes so that these accountability requirements are met.

In public schools of Manitoba, the principal ultimately carries the majority of

that responsibility at the school level. Legislation in Manitoba sets out that

> …the principal is in charge of the school in respect of all matters of
>
> organization, management, instruction, and discipline. (Manitoba Statutes,
>
> *Education Administration Act*, Part V, 28(1)).

The locus of leadership resides with the principal, and managing the diversity of ideas

that is represented by a variety of constituents is a challenge for school leaders.

Principals have a central role to play in the new accountability because they are the

players who must respond to differentiated forms of accountability, and must provide

the leadership needed to accomplish the goal of student learning. The question at the

centre of this proposed research will explore how principals perceived and managed

these varying expectations for accountability within their role as leaders in public

elementary schools in Manitoba.

Manitoba Context

Manitoba has unique features that influence the landscape of education. Almost

three-quarters of the population is concentrated in urban centres within 100 kilometres

of the U.S. border, although there are numerous small remote communities in the north.

Manitoba public schools, with a total population of 186,668 (Manitoba Education,

Citizenship and Youth, 2004), are organized into 38 school divisions. As an officially

bilingual province, a separate francophone school division serves those choosing their

programs. In addition, there are several independent schools typically organized around religious beliefs that serve 14,329 students (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004), the majority of whom attend schools in larger urban centres. The province has a significant proportion of Aboriginal and Metis students residing in rural and northern locations, but there is also a population that is concentrated in urban settings and, as a result, schools designed to reflect Aboriginal values operate in Winnipeg. Small pockets of other heritage languages, such as German and Ukrainian, exist in schools as either bilingual or immersion programs. Unlike several other provinces, Manitoba has not undergone the large-scale restructuring of school divisions (Young and Levin, 2002, page 12). Retaining the power to raise revenues through local property taxes and to negotiate collective agreements for their staffs, school divisions are still influential vehicles of delegated educational authority with the ability to shape quite individual educational cultures within their boundaries.

The last 18 years in Manitoba have seen two distinct periods of government in which differing ideologies have held sway. The Conservative party occupied the provincial legislature for a decade beginning in 1988. Since then the New Democratic Party has led the provincial government. Recent school reform initiatives in Manitoba began in 1994 with the release of the first two of a series of policy documents entitled, *Reforming Education: New Directions, A Blueprint for Action,* and *Reforming Education: New Directions, The Action Plan* (Manitoba Education and Training, July 1994 and January 1995). These documents were ostensibly based on extensive consultation with stakeholders, community, and business. This wide consultation, seen as a change in influence away from strictly traditional educational stakeholders to a

broader constituency of parents and business, was reflected in some of the responses to the policy documents. The Manitoba Teachers' Society condemned the government's action in their response to *New Directions*, observing that "The newly released action plan tells us most of our advice went unheeded" (Manitoba Teachers' Society, March, 1995, p. 1), and consequently a climate of distrust between the Manitoba Teachers' Society and government began to form. According to the Minister of Education at the time, *New Directions* was an initiative for educational renewal that

> …not only values the completion of formal learning, but one that more vigorously challenges the entire student body. The (initiative) sets strong, specific provincial directions that aim to revitalize and restore confidence within public education, while enabling schools and their local communities to make decisions that impact positively upon their students (Manitoba Education and Training, January 1995, p. 1).

To achieve these assurances, the *Action Plan* outlined six priority areas: Essential Learning, Standards and Evaluation, School Effectiveness, Parent and Community Involvement, Distance Education and Technology, and Teacher Education. These priority areas were based on a foundation that included greater parent and community voice in school-based decisions, strong provincial central control of curriculum and standards (minimum levels of student achievement), provincial assessments of students and schools, and restructuring of teacher qualifications and compensation. The overall intent was to "enhance the accountability of the educational system to students, parents, and the community" (Manitoba Education and Training, January 1995, p. 4).

In addition to curriculum and assessment, several separate accountability

initiatives were contained within the *Action Plan* including the development of annual

school plans with parent and community involvement, school reports to the community,

school reviews, parents' choice of schools, and school governance councils with

majority representation from parents and community. One action of the plan defined

new responsibilities for principals because "Principals play pivotal role in the

development of effective learning environments" (Manitoba Education and Training,

January 1995, p. 16). The 10 "principals shall" listed in the *Action Plan* included a

requirement for principals to establish Advisory Councils for School Leadership, a

parent/community governance council with limited school personnel involvement, and

to include the Council in planning and financial decision processes (Manitoba

Education and Training, January 1995, pp. 16-17). The role of superintendents in the

renewal of schools was purposefully ambiguous, so that boards would have "more

latitude to look at a variety of administrative models", while school planning was "a

tool for local accountability" (Manitoba Education and Training, January 1995, p. 50).

    Renewing Education: New Directions, A Foundation for Excellence (June,

1995) followed the *Blueprint* and *Action Plan* documents. This directive delineated new

requirements for reporting student marks, provincial standards tests, high school

graduation, time allotments for subjects and courses, and the curriculum development

process. The guiding principles around which the *Foundation for Excellence* was

developed included accountability, which meant "ensuring that the expected educational

outcomes are realized through effective and efficient use of resources" (Manitoba

Education and Training, June 1995, p. 3). Schools were clearly at the centre of the

educational renewal plan. They were expected to meet student achievement standards

established and tested by the province, within an environment that included market

mechanisms such as parent choice of schools, management mechanisms such as

planning and reporting, and decentralized decision-making mechanisms such as

Advisory Councils for School Leadership. In the fall of 1995, the province published its

first report on the progress this renewal. The four-page report began with the statement

"Many parents, teachers, and other Manitobans are concerned about the quality of

education our children are receiving" (Manitoba Education and Training, Fall 1995, p.

1), and then went on to demonstrate the ways in which the educational renewal plan,

targeted at schools, had begun to address these perceived concerns.

The next significant development was the release of *The Teacher Compensation

Process*, a report commissioned by government that made recommendations about the

job descriptions of teachers, authority of principals, a compensation model for

educators, teacher certification, and bargaining of teacher salaries (Manitoba Education

and Training, February 1998). Management mechanisms such as merit pay and job

descriptions for teachers permeated the recommendations. The suggestion to move to

provincial bargaining for all teachers was consistent with the government's centrist

approach taken to educational renewal, but was controversial amongst educators. The

report was not received positively by the professional teachers' group and a paper was

released to arouse interest in teachers about the issues arising from the

recommendations of the report (Manitoba Teachers' Society, February 1998).

Over the same time period as the release of *Renewing Education: New

Directions* documents were released, there were several fiscal initiatives. Funding cuts

were made to public schools while private schools received increases, 'Filmon Fridays'

(days off without pay) reduced teachers' annual earnings, and legislation restricted

collective bargaining of salary items for school personnel (Levin and Wiens, 2004, para.

4). The accountability perspective taken in *Renewing Education: New Directions* was

one that included market approaches (parental choice of schools, publishing school test

results), management approaches (standards, planning), decentralized decision-making

approaches (advisory councils), and yet maintained tight provincial control (standards

and tests, school reviews, fiscal restraints).

When the New Democratic Party took government in 1999, early actions

confirmed that accountability would be interpreted from a different perspective,

although central control over curriculum and standards continued to be strong.

Collective bargaining changes were reversed, provincial tests were overhauled, and

modest funding increases began. A series of discussions across several sectors resulted

in the establishment of six new priority areas: Student Outcomes; School Links with

Stakeholders; Planning and Reporting; Professional Development; Articulation between

Secondary Schools, Higher Education, and the Workplace; and a Foundation of

Research and Evidence for Educational Initiatives. Consultations with educators,

parents, students, and communities were then held to gather responses to the priority

areas (Levin and Wiens, 2003). While these six priority areas looked very similar to

those of the previous government, the strategies used by the new government showed

some significant differences in the approach to accountability. Market mechanisms were

down-played. Student achievement results published by the government took the form

of provincial summaries, the first being *A Profile of Student Learning, Outcomes in*

Manitoba (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, August 2002), and the comparing

of schools provincially was stopped. Decentralized decision-making mechanisms such as school planning were made more professional in approach through the emphasis on linking research to practice. Proposed management forms of accountability, such as teacher job descriptions and merit pay, were shelved.

In June of 2002, the Minister of Education announced a new education accountability policy entitled *Achieving Outcomes: Reporting to Families and Communities*, designed to "…increase accountability and provide more information on the public school system to parents and the community" (Caldwell, Press Release, June 10, 2002). A commitment was made by the province to issue an annual report on student outcomes, and schools would be required to report on "key indicators of success" that could be defined by local school divisions based on their unique circumstances. Unlike the previous government's actions, the Minister announced that "…the department will not do school-by-school comparisons because they do not accurately reflect differences in local goals and circumstances" (Caldwell, Press Release, June 10, 2002). The former Deputy Minister summarized the policies developed since 1999 as attempting:

> …a different approach to reform. Focusing on teaching and learning, respecting all partners, building capacity, and basing our approach on the best available research and evidence... (Levin and Wiens, 2004, p. 39).

Most educators would probably agree that this was a different approach to accountability, even though the New Democratic Party maintained central control over curriculum and standards. The difference was in the role of the professional. Missing from the previous agenda was a professional (internal) accountability approach; this

perspective began to be re-established with the change in government. There was a new focus on professional voices in planning, implementing, and evaluating schools, and professional development of teachers replaced merit pay ideas. Market approaches were downplayed as evidenced by, for example, the cessation of publishing school test results.

Nonetheless, many of pre-1999 developments in educational accountability remained in the Manitoba context. Parent Advisory Councils, Schools of Choice, provincial tests, standards, and School Plans regulations, to name a few, are a legacy of *New Directions*. Modifications and additions to these policies have been made by the current government, and the result is an a la carte collection of accountability requirements (Hopkins and Levin, 2000, para. 36) that stem from divergent policy stances.

While legislation in Manitoba is clear that the principal is responsible for the leadership and operation of the school, regulations do not spell out in what manner their work is to be done (except in very specific circumstances such as school fire drills). Principals have discretion over the ways in which many policies are implemented. For example, Manitoba legislation that impels principals to conduct an annual school planning process requires only that teachers be included (Manitoba Statutes, *Education Administration Act,* Part V). The form and substance of teachers' involvement is left to the design of the principal, within the context of local board direction. Such discretionary practice is wiggle room in which principals manage the gap between accountability requirements and what they understand these mandates to be. This gap and ways to resolve conflicts in policy-public-organizational-professional expectations

are dilemmas that principals face in the new accountability context.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this research project, it is necessary to be clear about the meaning accorded to important terms, even though there may be controversy over the conceptualization in the literature. Within the context of the study, the term *accountability* is intended to mean *accountability for student learning*. Robinson and Temperley (2000) and Leithwood and Earl (2000) found that, in order for there to be accountability and not some other form of responsibility or obligation, there must be some requirement to *report*. Student learning can have varying meanings, but the accountability of concern in this study is the new accountability, which is more tightly focussed on student achievement of formal curricula. So, for the purposes of this study, the criteria by which something is defined as accountability are threefold: (a) that there is a requirement to report or to provide an account, (b) that the account is related to student learning of formal curricula, and (c) that the expectation has emerged within the Manitoba context since 1994. Terms such as *expectation, demand,* and *requirement* are used synonymously throughout this research project.

Student learning is used to refer to student achievement in the prescribed curricula used in Manitoba public schools. This encompasses formal subjects taught by professionals, such as English language arts, mathematics, and the like. Recent curricula typically refer to *student outcomes* as end results of the teaching-learning process, and are defined in Manitoba curriculum documents as:

…concise descriptions of the knowledge and skills that students are expected to

learn in a course or grade level in a subject area. (Manitoba Education and

Training, January 1995, p.6)

In the researcher's experience the term is often used interchangeably with *student*

learning. The term *standards* is defined as "descriptions of the expected levels of

student performance in relation to grade-and subject-specific outcomes" (Manitoba

Education and Training, January 1995, p. 6). An unanticipated discovery during this

study was that principals themselves seem to see *student learning* from a broader

viewpoint, encompassing much more than the official curricula or the attainment of

standards, and this is discussed in Chapter IV.

Framework for Analysis

The public school principal is faced with the challenge of managing

accountability expectations that stem from differing philosophies. Thus, a sense of

competing or conflicting expectations may be created. The accountability alternatives

proposed by Leithwood and Earl (2000) provide four approaches to aid in

understanding these competing or conflicting accountability ideas: (a) market

competition (b) professional, (c) decentralized decision-making, and (d) management

approaches. Each alternative is predicated on a view that greater accountability is

achieved through initiatives intended to cause particular reactions within schools.

Market competition initiatives are intended to increase a sense of responsiveness to the

public's view of educational purposes by increasing parents' control over certain

aspects of education, such as choice of schools. It is typified by notions of

competitiveness, market responsiveness, and parents' having 'a say' in their child's

learning. Market accountability initiatives arise from the public arena and, in Manitoba

at least, have a bureaucratic reality because some have become embedded in legislation.

In the case of a professional accountability approach, actions are more likely to focus on

staff expertise, professional standards, and shared responsibility for student learning.

The professional arena in which principals work is dominated by these types of

expectations. Devolution of authority characterizes decentralized decision-making

accountability, where parents and the community have governance authority within a

site-based approach. Management accountability is concerned with rational planning,

data-based decisions, and a strategic approach to planning and monitoring. Individual

accountability demands may have roots in more than one approach, depending upon the

ways in which expectations have played out in particular locations. For example, school

planning and reports to the community are initiatives in Manitoba that arise as

bureaucratic expectations, but also have dimensions that are intended to increase parent

and community involvement in decision-making. These particular initiatives can be

seen as stemming from both management and market arenas.

This study was concerned with the ways in which *principals* perceived and

responded to these dynamics. From an ideal theoretical point of view, initiatives may be

designed to cause particular responses but the way these play out at the school level

may be somewhat different. The study found, for example, that an initiative was

designed to encourage managerial accountability, the requirement for a Safe School

Committee, but that most of the principals interviewed used strategies from a

decentralized decision-making accountability approach. This was also the case in the

gathering of data about student learning, a managerial expectation, but when used to

inform in part the dialogue with staff and parents about the purposes of school became

more closely aligned with a professional accountability alternative. In order to analyze

the information that principals contributed to this research this study included the four

dynamics of accountability alternatives, and typical divisional and provincial

accountability initiatives could be seen as a collection consisting of expectations arising

variously from the four approaches:

Figure 1: Framework for Analysis

Professional Approaches • Curricular Standards • Divisional and Provincial Assessments	**Market Competition Approaches** • Schools of Choice • School Report to Community • Marketing of Schools
Managerial Approaches • Developing and Using Data	**Decentralized Decision-Making Approaches** • Advisory Councils for School Leadership • School Planning

In Manitoba, Curricular Standards refer to the new curricula that has been introduced in

the since the early 1990s. Embedded in this curricula are outcomes that are expected for

student learning; this is contrasted with learning objectives that characterized previous

documents. Divisional and Provincial Assessments take in the mandated assessments

that are required variously by school divisions and the province, and are typically in

core curricula only occurring at pre-determined points throughout the 12 years of formal

schooling. Schools of Choice is the legislation that allows parents to choose a school

that is outside of the jurisdiction of their neighbourhood school. School Report to the

Community is a requirement that all schools must provide an annual report of the

progress on their school plans, about school programs, and other descriptive

information. Marketing of Schools is typically a division initiative, where schools

engage in public relations and promotion of their schools to potential students within

and outside of their neighbourhood area. Developing and Using Data refers to the

requirement that schools develop, collect, and use data for planning, self-evaluation, and

student programming. Advisory Councils for School Leadership are councils of parents

that act in an advisory role at the school level, and are often referred to as *parent*

advisory councils. School Planning is a requirement made by the province, and includes

not only the planning process but a report on the planning process, submitted annually.

The criteria by which the initiatives were placed into the framework provided by

Leithwood and Earl (2000) are based on the contested questions in accountability: (a) to

whom is the school is accountable? and (b) what is the form/consequence of that

account? In the case of Curricular Standards, the school is intended to be internally

accountable although provincial Standards Tests are meant to serve as periodic checks.

However, between these mandated assessments, professionals have the responsibility,

whether they agree with the curriculum or not, of designing the ways in which

curricular standards play out. Conversely, Advisory Councils for School Leadership are

intended to give authority to external sources, parents and the community, in school-

based decision-making. School Planning has been included in Decentralized Decision-

Making Approaches because schools must include in their Annual School Plan Report

to the government the ways in which they have included parents, students, and the

community in the planning process. The provincial school planning support document

confirms this requirement:

> Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is committed to ensuring that
>
> effective school-based planning occurs across Kindergarten to Senior 4 and that
>
> parents and community members are provided with significant opportunities to
>
> participate in preparing Annual School Plans and Reports. (Manitoba Education,
>
> Citizenship and Youth, 2004. p.1)

Developing and Using Data is a Managerial Approach partly because this is a

bureaucratic requirement, and the form is typical of managerial systems. The Market

Approaches include Schools of Choice, Annual School Report to the Community, and

Marketing of Schools. The first two are required by the province and are intended to

give the community the opportunity for informed decision-making by allowing parents

the right to choose schools, and the information about schools in a consistent way (if not

form). The third, Marketing of Schools, is typically a divisional initiative that requires

schools to engage in public relations activities. In the experience of the researcher,

secondary schools often advertise special programs and registration dates, while

elementary schools more often find themselves conducting Kindergarten orientation

sessions for potential parents or competing internally to attract students to bilingual and

immersion programs. In situations where declining enrolment is an issue, or where

divisions may have an entrepreneurial spirit, marketing of schools may be a more

energetic endeavour. In all three market-competition initiatives, the decision-making is

in the hands of parents, and the results are felt at the school in the form of enrolment

and of justifying program decisions.

Principals have to deal with accountability expectations arising from each of four distinct forms representing diverse ways to focus on student learning. In the past, schools met accountability expectations by demonstrating fiscal and organizational responsibility. Conflicts or ambiguities in these areas have long since been accommodated. However, the recent shift to an emphasis on student learning has made the dynamics of accountability more complex because of the increased public nature of that accountability. "In all cases, the new leadership requires principals to take their school's accountability to the public" (Fullan, 1998, para. 15). This demands from principals different ways to meet expectations, and the research design elicited from them information about the perceptions they have of these responsibilities and the ways that they deal with them.

The Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which selected elementary school principals in Manitoba perceived their role in mediating competing accountability demands/expectations related to student learning in their schools.

Specifically the study addressed the following aspects of accountability:

1. What is the range and intensity of accountability demands that selected principals perceived as being made of them and their schools?

2. What contradictions are experienced by principals which arise from multiple yet differentiated accountability expectations, as reflected in the distinction in the research literature between market competition, decentralized decision-making,

managerial, and professional accountability approaches?

3. What were the ways in which selected principals responded to these demands, and

    how did they justify the strategies that they adopted.

The following Literature Review explores the foundations of accountability and the

application of the new accountability to education. The subsequent Environment and

Methodology chapter provides a review of the environment, and an outline of the way

in which the research was conducted in order that the three research questions were

addressed. The data is presented in the Results chapter following, and a discussion of

implications arising from the findings of this study is described in the final chapter.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Two Ideologies of Accountability: Behavioural and Cognitive

In its simplest definition, accountability is being answerable, responsible for something that has been entrusted. The state of 'being answerable' stems from basic notions of organizational effectiveness. "Every organization has work to do in the real world and some way of measuring how well that work is done" (Caplow, 1983, p. 3). Studies of a causal link between accountability and organizational effectiveness are found in social psychology. Robinson and Timperley (2000) reviewed definitions from this field, and concluded that there are two primary perspectives from which accountability is viewed (p. 2). In the first perspective, accountability is seen as behavioural, where the requirement of reporting produces accountability. The greater the requirement for reporting, the greater is the accountability. Implied in this view is that incentives and sanctions, behavioural stimuli, have positive effects. In the alternative view, accountability is seen as a cognitive process where the reporting function is accompanied by a requirement for justification. In this case, the degree of accountability correlates to the expectations held by others for justification: increased expectations lead to greater accountability. Implied in this perspective is that those who are held accountable "…actively consider the adequacy of their own performance in anticipation of its justification to others" (Robinson and Timperley, 2000, p. 2). Nonetheless, in both of these views accountability is seen as a way to improve effectiveness.

The effectiveness of schools has been on the public agenda in many jurisdictions since the 1980s, and using accountability to encourage school reform has been a popular

choice throughout. In the United States, accountability initiatives over the past 20 years show that school effectiveness is often narrowly defined as academic achievement, and is typically based on wide-scale assessments (Earl and Torrence, 2000, pp. 114-141). Many states have legislated rewards and sanctions for schools based on the reports of these academic assessments. Student learning is narrowly defined by the assessment of core curricula, for example reading and mathematics. Such accountability systems fit the *behavioural* view of accountability where "improvement is motivated by the positively or negatively reinforcing power of other's judgments" (Robinson and Timperley, 2000, p. 2). In the current environment in Canada, there are jurisdictions where accountability initiatives similarly have dimensions that resemble incentives and sanctions (Earl and Torrence, 2000, pp. 1-2). Since 1999, school effectiveness in Manitoba has been defined by describing the main areas of focus, including curriculum, assessment, school choice, finance, professional standards, and site-based management (Levin and Wiens, 2003, pp. 658-665). This approach more closely fits a *cognitive* view of accountability, and the justification inherent in the approach is "…a social process that implies an actual or imagined dialogue about the adequacy of the relevant cognition or action" (Robinson and Timperley, p. 2).

In our democratic society schooling is a public enterprise, and currently it is schools that are being held to account (Elmore and Fuhrman, 2001, p. 67). However, Leithwood and Earl (2000) posited that accountability serves two main functions: (a) improvement of schools, and (b) the production of wider agreement about their purposes (p. 1). Similarly, Levin and Wiens (2003) stated that the outcomes of accountability are twofold: improvement of schools, and public discourse about the

purposes of education. In Manitoba these have recently formed the educational policy

agenda (Levin and Wiens, 2003). In Saskatchewan, wider discussion about the goals of

education contributed to "developing consensus on the principles and elements of its

accountability framework" (Hunter and McCreary, 1999, p. 1). In Ontario, the

government department created to deal with educational accountability eventually

adopted a definition where accountability was seen as

> …a deeply human enterprise that depends on openness; sharing of information,
>
> and ongoing conversations among and between educators, students, parents, and
>
> the community as they explore available information and establish action plans.
>
> (Earl and Torrence, 2000, para. 18).

Many Canadian definitions of accountability take a *cognitive view*. However, any issue

that includes public discussion is by its nature political, and this affects the way that

educational legislators in Canada have crafted accountability systems. A strictly

behavioural approach may be viewed politically as bold, decisive action, while a

cognitive approach may viewed as less popular because results come more slowly

(Levin and Wiens, 2003, para. 32). Elected officials compromise on the details of

accountability systems in order to placate supporters of these divergent views.

> Policymakers often try to appeal to both camps by embracing common standards
>
> and individual variation, numerical comparability and descriptive sensitivity,
>
> assessment to improve student learning and to placate demands for system-wide
>
> accountability. (Earl, 1999, para. 2).

> Tension arises between these conflicting approaches when such compromise

means that elements of more than one are included in an accountability design. In such

a system, the school experiences conflicting ideologies. Principals are left to sort out the

ensuing dilemmas.

> ...school leaders attempting to respond to their government's demands for
>
> change can be excused for feeling that they are being pulled in many different
>
> directions simultaneously. They *are* being pulled in many different directions
>
> simultaneously. (Leithwood, 2001, p. 228).

Principals are likely to experience this tension more acutely because they are legally

responsible for the management of the school. In Manitoba, the *Education*

Administration Act (Manitoba Statutes) sets out the legislated responsibility and

authority of the school principal who is "…in charge of the school in respect of all

matters of organization, management, instruction, and discipline" (Part V, 28(1), M.R.

68/97). Yet the principal is not given carte blanche for the leadership of the school: "A

principal must involve teachers in any planning process that is undertaken at the school"

(Part V, 31, M.R. 68/97). The principal is legally responsible for all areas of school

operation, but it is the collective of teachers together with the principal that must go

about planning for the school's direction. The principal, however, has a key role

because:

> …leadership becomes central to accountability results as leadership is needed to
>
> focus and motivate the range of individuals who influence student learning.
>
> (Adams and Kirst, 1999, p. 482)

> Complicating the experience of accountability requirements at the school level is

the growing evidence that not all accountability measures work. (Levin and Wiens,

2003; Earl and Torrence, 2000; Fullan, 2003). Whether or not or not a specific approach

to accountability positively impacts effectiveness depends on the details of that

requirement.

> …accountability is as likely to trigger compliance or cover-up as it is
>
> improvement and that fostering the latter requires particular types of
>
> accountability processes. (Robinson and Timperley, 2000, p. 2)

Evidence shows that accountability systems with a behavioural approach may not

improve school effectiveness (Jones, 2004, p. 584), one of the anticipated outcomes of

the new accountability. Typically these systems have used wide-scale assessments

accompanied by sanctions and rewards in order to induce educators to adopt more

effective practices. They have not brought about the anticipated increases in school

effectiveness because "…they have not focused on the things that we know can affect

student performance in schools" (Levin and Wiens, 2003, para. 5). As Fullan pointed

out

> …student achievement increases substantially in schools with collaborative
>
> work cultures that foster a professional learning community among teachers and
>
> others, focus continuously on improving instructional practices in light of
>
> student performance data, and link to external standards and staff development
>
> support. (Fullan, 1998, para. 8).

These kinds of actions align with the cognitive view of accountability in which

requirements are intended to stimulate individuals to increase knowledge, enhance

organizational capacity for change, decentralize decision-making, and support risk-

taking. Through this approach, "Educational improvement is stimulated through

multiple opportunities for educators and non-educators to collaborate on the redesign of

teaching and schooling" (Hunter and McCreary, 1999, p. 20). So not only do these

actions impact effectiveness, they also stimulate dialogue; both results are the intended

purposes of accountability systems.

From this exploration of two ideologies, behavioural and cognitive, several

conclusions can be drawn:

(a) When characteristics from both ideologies are present in an array of accountability

requirements, the conflicting ideas create tension,

(b) The current literature on school effectiveness is more congruent with cognitive

approaches to accountability, and

(c) Cognitive approaches to accountability require not only that schools examine

effectiveness with a view to improvement, but also that they must include dialogue with

the community about the purposes of the school.

A Typology of Accountability

Adams and Kirst (1999) proposed a typology of accountability that included six

distinct types (p. 467). Each of the types was described using four attributes: type of

incentive, mechanism used, nature of expectation, and the relationship of the

accountable unit to those requiring the account. The primary distinguishing factor on

which each type is based is the source of authority or control. This typology can be seen

at the school level as having six dimensions, as described by Adams and Kirst (1999,

pp. 467-471).

Bureaucratic Accountability, characterized by prescribed curriculum and texts,

fiscal management, personnel evaluations, established rules and procedures.

Compliance with organizational rules results in rewards; non-compliance in sanctions. The mechanism by which accountability is achieved is largely supervision, and relationships are organized in a hierarchy. Authority derives from bureaucratic rules and the positions held by individuals in the organization.

Legal Accountability includes educational resources (plant, curricular materials), processes (school organization and governance), and student performance related to requirements of the external sources such as the province, school division, union contracts, health and safety guidelines, and so on. Legal sanctions form the motivational aspect, while relationships are created as legislator-to-implementer. Authority stems from legislation, contracts, policy, and quasi-legal sources.

Professional Accountability is concerned with standards of qualifications and practice for people working in the school, and assumes that teachers and school leaders have specialized knowledge and expertise. The locus of authority is with these professionals, and autonomy acts as an incentive. In this case, relationships are typified as expert-to-layperson. Professional development and training form the mechanism for accountability.

Political Accountability occurs in the arena of educational policies that arise from the demands of groups external to the school. Support is the accountability incentive, and the expectation is for responsiveness. Representative-constituent forms of relationships dominate in this type. Authority comes from the majority view, or concentration of power, held by groups and individuals outside of school.

Moral Accountability is evidenced in the commitment that teachers make to the teaching-learning enterprise. It is tenuously connected to professional development as it

relates to a deeper sense of an individual's obligation and accountability. The expectation is effort, and the mechanism is obligation. Affirmation is the form of incentive, and relationships are individual-to-group. Authority resides within the individual professional within the group setting.

Market Accountability occurs when parents exercise choice of school through legislation that allows disregard for school boundaries. Schools become service providers and parents become customers. Choice is the mechanism to hold schools accountable, and consumer loyalty is the incentive in operation. Authority comes from the marketplace and is a function of supply and demand.

This typology enables an assessment of the degree to which accountability requirements are aligned. However, it is in the lack of alignment that conflicting demands occur because "…accountability delegates authority, conveys expectations, and orients the behaviour of agents" (Adams and Kirst, 1999, p. 475). When accountability requirements are drawn from across the typology without consideration of the potential for conflict with one another, schools are faced with mismatched expectations. Shipps and Firestone (2003) examined the conflicts created by dissimilar accountability requirements. They demonstrated that political accountability is in opposition to bureaucratic accountability when "…local constituents insist on greater involvement in decision-making while education agencies require that school implement standardized programs" (para. 10). Professional accountability and bureaucratic accountability work towards opposing purposes when authorities such as school boards do not support best practices for at-risk students due to time and/or resource constraints. Market and moral accountability clash when competition drives

schools to exclude certain students, and to recruit more homogeneous audiences. Competing accountability requirements such as these come at principals "…simultaneously, making their task of creating coherence out of mixed signals vastly more complex than it appears" (Shipps and Firestone, 2003, para. 9). These conflicting requirements increase uncertainty about expectations, authority, and consequences. Such outcomes hinder the very goals of accountability: discussions about the purposes of schooling and how best to achieve them.

Adams and Kirst (1999) also argued that there are two modes of accountability: internal and external, and that "the next advances in accountability design, practice, and research must address fundamental conflicts between external and internal modes of educational accountability" (p. 20). Internal modes arise from professional practice within the school, and external modes are imposed by the system outside of the school. These modes parallel the cognitive and behavioural approaches to accountability. In the behavioural approach, external stimuli cause the desired result. In the cognitive approach, it is within the individual's power to affect a positive outcome. Included in the behavioural approach are bureaucratic, legal, and market types of accountability. Each has characteristics that separate the school from the holder of the account, and each has win/lose aspects to their respective incentives. In the bureaucratic type, for example, incentives mirror the rewards and sanctions inherent in a behavioural approach to accountability. In the market type, the school is seen as service provider separate from parents as customers. On the other hand, moral, political, and professional types can be seen as cognitive approaches to accountability. Each of these three types requires relationships that are characterized by cooperation, dialogue, and a sense of

obligation to one another. The incentives are typically discretion, support, and affirmation, and are less controlling than others. Cognitive forms of accountability are similar with respect to the incentives inherent in the approaches. Accountability systems comprised of different types within the cognitive approach are likely to be more coherent than would a system with requirements taken from both cognitive and behavioral approaches.

Fundamental Questions of Accountability

In a special issue of the *Peabody Journal of* Education devoted to educational accountability, Leithwood and Earl (2000) reframed the types of accountability developed by Adams and Kirst, using questions fundamental to all accountability approaches. These were:

> Who is expected to provide the account? To whom is the account owed? What is to be accounted for? And what are the consequences of providing an account? (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, para. 5)

Who and *to whom* are questions of relationships; *for what* deals with the nature of the accountability expectation; *consequences* speak to the form of the account and to the incentives inherent in providing the account. These four questions help to clarify the discussion because they require that thought be put to the specificity and effects of any accountability requirement, and they take the attributes proposed by Adams and Kirst to an operational level. The accountability questions provide a deeper understanding of the dilemmas that are created when discordant forms of accountability are required of schools.

Who is accountable? This first question involves looking at the range of roles involved in education. Leithwood and Earl argued that it is not appropriate to hold schools entirely responsible for achievement when

> …we know, for example, that family education culture accounts for at least 50% of the variation in student achievement (2000, para. 18).

Linda Darling-Hammond advocated that the answer to the question of *who* should be established at division and provincial levels to make certain that there is in place

> …responsible resourcing of schools so that they can provide adequate education, (and) for ensuring that there is equity in the distribution of those resources, for assuring that there is a means by which qualified, well-prepared staff will be in all schools in those settings (1999, para. 12).

This contains notions of shared accountability, and as such supports the arguments that Leithwood and Earl (2000, para. 16-18) made against sole accountability of schools for students' success.

In Manitoba, it is clear that the principal is legally responsible for ensuring that accountability requirements are met. Not only is the principal generally held accountable for all matters of the school, legislation sets out that principals:

> …must prepare and provide to the Minister, in a form acceptable to the Minister, any information, report or return that the Minister may require. (Manitoba Statutes, *Education Administration Act,* Part V 35(1),)

and, furthermore

> A principal must provide pertinent and meaningful information about the school and related educational matters to parents and the community (Part V 29(1)).

Presumably, school divisions have their own internal policies that mirror these provincial requirements and as such confirm the place of the principal at the centre of issues relating to accountability. Being responsible, according to Leithwood and Earl, is "one of two minimum conditions" (2000, para. 11) needed for accountability to be legitimate. Either an act, or the position held, binds an individual to be accountable. In Manitoba, the principal meets such criteria through legislation.

To whom are schools accountable? This is the second question posed by Leithwood and Earl, and answers to it infer that the requirement for an account is made by a body that has some entitlement: "a legitimate interest can be shown by those expecting an account" (2000, para. 20). Schools

> …have a long and complex chain of accountability—citizens who elect their
>
> legislators to represent their interests, appointed or elected state school board
>
> officials and superintendents, local boards, superintendents, and central office
>
> staff, principals, teachers, and students. (Walberg, 2002, p. 157)

Jones (2004) proposed that the answer to the question of *to whom* should simplify this chain by holding schools accountable to their "primary clients: parents, students, and the local community" (p. 585). He argued that national and state governments should devolve authority for the means and the ends of education to schools and their constituent groups.

For what are schools accountable? This third question posed by Leithwood and Earl is interwoven with the first. Darling-Hammond (1999) advocated that schools are accountable to be "responsive and responsible" and "for making good educational decisions on behalf of children" (para. 12). Jones (2004, p. 586) listed three kinds of

student welfare as well as two professional aspects of education for which schools should be held accountable. Student welfare included: physical and emotional well-being, learning, and equity and access. Professional aspects encompassed teacher learning and school improvement (p. 585). Leithwood and Earl (2000) noted that schools are typically held accountable for "features of the organization and the practices of those within it believed to contribute more or less directly to students' welfare" (para. 25). In addition to student well-being and academic success, Leithwood and Earl (2000) described features that encompass a broad range of organizational characteristics including those that contribute to school effectiveness and the improvement thereof, efficiency, best teaching practices, professional knowledge and skill, and moral conduct. Earl (2001) packaged *for what* answers into four categories: quality, equity, respectful and open relationships, and cost effectiveness. Quality included understanding learning, content knowledge, pedagogical skill, emotional understanding, fundamentals of change, and meta-learning (Earl, 2001, para. 17). Similarly, Froese-Germain stated that *for what* entails the educational program, instructional approaches and selected resources, and assessment plans (2005, para. 4). Across the literature, the *for what* involves schools in being accountable for a wide range of student outcomes, professional attitudes and aptitudes, continuous improvement, and sustained dialogue with parents and community.

 What are the consequences of the account? In the United States, answers have been controversial. This question also relates to the form of the accountability, and in the United States the form was narrowed to performance on commercial, norm-referenced, standardized tests. These tests became "high stakes" activities when

legislators assigned consequences. They rewarded and punished schools based on their aggregate scores, and "*schools* didn't go test crazy; the schools went crazy trying to cope with the zillions of tests imposed on them" (Bracey, 2000, p. 136). Concurrently, advocates for choice in education were able to obtain voucher systems, school governance councils, and other choice mechanisms. State governments began to report publicly the performance of schools based primarily on these test scores, and consequences were made clear. Some states closed schools as a result of poor performance shown by such accountability requirements. This approach is behavioural, and took forms consistent with bureaucratic, legal, and market accountability.

Canada has not generally experienced these penalties to the extent seen in the United States. Much of the accountability requirements that have been adopted in Canada have had unspecified consequences, and as a result consequences have been mild in comparison. When consequences are not spelled out "…it seems likely that some response will occur, but this response often will be muted and almost by definition unpredictable" (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, para. 28). In Manitoba, for example, school reports to the community are now required of schools annually, however there are no defined consequences. Compliance or non-compliance would elicit some reaction, presumably from the community as well as from Manitoba Education, but are not likely to take the form of sanctions or rewards as experienced in the United States. As such, consequences in Manitoba can be seen to stem from moral and professional forms of accountability.

A Fifth Question: What level of accountability is to be provided? Leithwood and Earl added a fifth question fundamental to accountability in their work that emerged in

2002. This question enriched the ongoing dialogue about accountability by introducing

the dimension of levels, and as such provided a view that connects to the behavioural

and cognitive conceptualizations of accountability. Leithwood and Earl (2000, para. 7)

proposed three levels of increasing depth: reporting, explaining, and justifying.

Reporting is one-way communication from the school and takes forms such as

newsletters, handbooks, and public relations materials. Often this type of accountability

is bureaucratic in nature; the system holds expectations that these materials and reports

would be produced by the school. In some cases, particular publications that schools are

required to produce may stem from notions of market accountability—the need to serve

the customer. Leithwood and Earl dismiss this level as an account of student learning.

Even if schools used these devices to provide more depth by *explaining* the rationale

behind actions, processes, programs and the like, schools would still fall short of

providing a true account of student learning. The third level described by Leithwood

and Earl, *justification*, is where such an account is realized, because such

communication from the school would

> …contain not only descriptions and explanations. It also would require
>
> arguments of some sort for why these program and events were the most
>
> appropriate ones for the school to be offering its students. (2000, p. 3).

Those arguments would have arisen from dialogue about the purpose and intent of

initiatives, and would contribute to and come from an understanding of the context of

the school, agreed upon by staff and the community. This level entails professional

accountability where schools are expected to use expert knowledge to develop the

teaching program, and to demonstrate that they have made informed judgments in such

decision-making. *Justification* also entails a moral accountability, where

> Schools operate as learning centers in which moral individuals make faithful
>
> efforts to fulfill the expectations they and others hold for educators (Adams and
>
> Kirst, 1999, p. 471).

Justification also entails political accountability, in that parents' value preferences are

evidenced in the school's programs and procedures.

The justification level proposed by Leithwood and Earl is consistent with the

cognitive approach as described by Robinson and Timperley. The expectation for

justification is where the two conceptions of accountability have commonality. The six

types of accountability proposed by Adams and Kirst can be divided into either

behavioural or cognitive approaches. Similarly, the three levels described by Leithwood

and Earl can be seen as behavioural or cognitive in nature. This means that

accountability initiatives based in the cognitive approach are likely to have justification

as the required level of account. Legal, bureaucratic, and market types typically require

only explanation, and as such would not meet the criteria of a cognitive approach.

Political, professional, and moral types of accountability compel justification as the

level for an account, and so are more typical of a cognitive approach.

The three levels that were proposed by Leithwood and Earl bring an additional

dimension to the understanding of accountability. Accountability has been shown to be

originating from either a behavioural or a cognitive *approach*, and within those two

approaches there can be at least six *types* of accountability systems. The degree to

which requirements of any of the six types is realized depends upon the *level* at which

accountability is demanded and is met.

Alternative Approaches to Accountability

In 2000, Leithwood and Earl proposed four alternative approaches to accountability. Each of the four approaches has unique answers to the accountability questions, and uses *mechanisms* of accountability to form the basis of distinction as contrasted by the *sources of authority* that were used in the typology proposed by Adams and Kirst. The four alternative approaches proposed by Leithwood and Earl (2000) operate at the school site level.

Market Competition involves putting schools in an open-market milieu as the mechanism for accountability, specifically where options for schooling characterize the landscape. This approach "allows parents and students to select schools with which they are more satisfied and which better meet their educational needs" (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, para. 38). In this case, an account is owed by the school to the consumers who have selected it, while the consumers' patronage or lack thereof is the consequence. Schools, in market competition situations, are shaped by "product-client exchanges" (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, para 36). The content and substance of the account are determined by the consumers, and would be at the explanation level.

Decentralization of Decision-Making is based on the premise that the curricula, organization, and values of a school should mirror those of the community it serves. In this case, "the power to make decisions about curriculum, budget, and personnel is in the hands of the parent/community constituents of the school" (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, para. 43) through a locally elected school council. An account is owed to those constituents, is provided by the school, and is concerned with all of the areas of

decentralized decision-making. Justification would be integral to such an account; consequences are likely to be political, such as council members losing in the next election or the replacement of the school leaders by the council. A second form of decentralization occurs when the school principal has increased control over resources and curricula, but is held to account by the school district. In these cases, local school councils act in an advisory capacity, and the account owed is related to efficiency goals coupled with the degree of constituents' satisfaction. Describing is the common level of account in this approach. In both levels, the mechanism is devolution of decision-making.

Professional accountability assumes that the effectiveness of a school is largely a result of professional performance. Such an approach can operate at either the school or the individual teacher level. If at the school level, it plays out as "participatory democracy" (Leithwood and Earl, 2000 para. 50). An account is owed by the teachers for the student results that flow from their use of strategies, resources, and curricula. The account requires justification, but the consequences are not spelled out. If operating at the individual teacher level, the concern is with professional performance in the classroom with respect to teaching and learning strategies. Standards related to teacher and principal qualifications, student learning outcomes, and professional performance occur as part of this focus. The individual professional is held accountable for meeting the standards, and justifying lack of compliance is expected. Consequences are not always clear, although it may be that a non-performing professional would be subject to some form of employment action. The mechanism in professional accountability is standards.

Managerial approaches have a strategic orientation to school effectiveness through school planning, use of data, and rationalization of the organization. The school is held accountable, although the management and leadership role of principals makes their contribution most significant. Accounts with justification are provided vertically up through the system, and the school is held responsible for achieving the goals set out in plans at several levels. Consequences accrue to school leaders and to teachers, although less so, in traditional bureaucratic forms. The mechanism here is goal-setting and planning.

These four approaches do not necessarily encompass all six types proposed by Adams and Kirst, but they do represent recent accountability conceptualizations related to student learning. Legal and bureaucratic accountability have been expected of schools since their inception. Elements of moral and professional accountability from Adams and Kirst are found in Leithwood and Earl's professional approach. Political accountability is present in decentralized decision-making and in managerial approaches. Professional accountability is a category in both theoretical frameworks, and relates directly to student learning. Market accountability in Adams and Kirst is parallel to the market competition approach described by Leithwood and Earl.

Of the four alternatives proposed by Leithwood and Earl, professional is more congruent with the *cognitive* view, while market and decentralized decision-making can be seen as aligned with a *behavioural* approach to accountability. The managerial alternative may be seen, depending upon implementation of initiatives, as being either cognitive or behavioural. In Manitoba, the planning aspect of managerial is made more cognitive in approach because of the legislated requirement that principals must include

teachers in school plans. Initiatives in Manitoba have created expectations that parents

and the community will also be involved. As such there is a cognitively-focused

emphasis on planning within the managerial approach as it is defined in the Manitoba

context. This may not, however, be the case in all jurisdictions and as such school

planning may be considered as behavioural where the process takes on a more

bureaucratic stance.

When examining the mix of accountability requirements in Manitoba, it may be

difficult to distinguish behavioural approaches from one another, but as a group they are

more easily differentiated from the cognitive approach. For example, market

competition is easily contrasted with the professional alternative. Allowing parents to

choose schools is quite different in characteristics of mechanism and authority from a

situation where the school collaboratively develops professional development plans for

a chosen reading intervention. However, within each of behavioural and cognitive

approaches, accountability alternatives may overlap. For example: When examining

student reading data with teachers in order to develop action plans, is the principal

adopting a managerial or professional stance? Ambiguity such as this can be clarified by

the proposed research because it was anticipated that principals would explain their

actions. To that end, it may be useful to see the four accountability alternatives as within

a frame that divides them into either cognitive or behavioural approaches. Based on the

literature of Leithwood and Earl (2000) and Robinson and Timperley (2000), the

alternative approaches to accountability can be categorized as either behavioural or

cognitive, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Categorization of Four Approaches to Accountability.

Behavioural Approach:	Cognitive Approach:
Market Competition	Managerial, with justification
Decentralized Decision-Making	Professional

It should be noted that the managerial alternative may not seem to fit perfectly into the

cognitive approach, but in Manitoba there is rationale to categorize it so. The added

dimensions of parent, community, student, and staff involvement in the planning

process required in Manitoba adds the level of justification to the managerial

alternative. For example, the province has used the services of the Manitoba School

Improvement Program (MSIP) to conduct school planning workshops with school

teams from a variety of grade configurations from across the province. Known by

Manitoba educators for its learning community approach, the MSIP involvement in

training educators in school planning indicates that such undertakings are not intended

to be merely internal in nature.

In the end, the literature has indicated that there are divergent ideas about the

origins of authority, the mechanisms, and about the form/consequences of educational

accountability for student learning. The framework of alternative approaches proposed

by Leithwood and Earl is perhaps the most useful for the purposes of this proposed

research. The four accountability approaches within their conceptualization relate to the

controversial aspects of the current accountability environment. Those aspects are

embodied in the unresolved questions of accountability: To whom should school be accountable? and, What is the form and consequences of their account? The proposed research was designed to explore the ways in which eight elementary principals in Manitoba understand and react to pressures for competing and conflicting answers to these questions.

Summary

This review of the literature has examined several of the recent conceptualizations of accountability, beginning with a differentiation between behavioural and cognitive perspectives. This differentiation originates in social psychology where the relationship of accountability to effectiveness has been studied. The typology proposed by Adams and Kirst was summarized in order to describe accountability conceptualizations within the educational context. Some of these accountabilities have had long-standing prominence, such as legal and bureaucratic, and accommodations have been made; ambiguities have for the most part been resolved. However, there has been a shift in demand for more public forms of accountability, such as market competition, at the same time as schools are being encouraged to adopt more professional accountability approaches. This shift has created controversy over questions of *who* is owed an account, and in what *form* and with what *consequences* will that account take. Fundamental questions of accountability, as discussed by Leithwood and Earl, applied the types of accountability to the school unit. A description of the levels of accountability, as proposed by Leithwood and Earl, was connected to the social psychology conceptualization of accountability. Four accountability

alternatives, proposed by Leithwood and Earl, were described and categorized. A rationale was given to place managerial accountability within the cognitive conceptualization. In all, the element missing from the discussion of accountability has been the viewpoint of the principal. What are the ways in which principals' perceive the variety of expectations that they are confronted with? Given those perceptions, what strategies do they use to manage the expectations? What contradictions arising from multiple yet differentiated accountability expectations are experienced by principals? These are the core questions that the research intended to explore.

Chapter III: Environment and Methodology

Situating the Researcher

In this qualitative research project, the researcher and participants interacted during data collection through personal interviews. This interaction makes it necessary to acknowledge the stance of the researcher by providing background on this researcher. My career began as a teacher and later department head at the high school level. I entered school administration 18 years ago as a vice-principal at a large comprehensive high school. I have since held positions as a divisional Coordinator of Continuing Education, a divisional Coordinator of Cooperative Education, and as a vice-principal at both a 7-S1 school and a K-8 school. My last six years of work have been as principal of an elementary (K-6) school. At the time of writing, I am on an educational leave-of-absence in order to complete post-graduate studies.

I developed an interest in accountability issues over the last decade as a graduate student taking courses in educational administration. I found that there were gaps between theory and my work as a school administrator, particularly when I moved to a school characterized by low-income, single-parent families, and issues created by families moving in and out of the neighbourhood throughout the school year. With the emergence of new research about brain development and learning, it did not make sense to me that these children achieved at much lower rates than those from middle and higher socio-economic communities in our division. I began to question the ways in which we measured achievement, and the genesis of the popular methods for assessing and communicating the value added by individual schools. Literature led me to understand that recent accountability initiatives were intended to increase school

effectiveness, yet I was unsure that this was the outcome in my particular setting. Since many schools in Manitoba seemed to be able to make significant strides toward increasing student outcomes, I became interested in how other elementary principals experience accountability initiatives, and the strategies that they use to respond. I felt that if I could learn from them, it would assist me in getting it right for the children at my particular school. The end result is this research project in which elementary principals share those aspects of accountability.

Environmental Considerations: Developments in Manitoba

In addition to situating the researcher, qualitative research necessitates a discussion of the larger context in which the study took place (Altheide and Johnson, 1994, p. 497). There have been at least eight initiatives taken since 1999 around which the researcher anticipated discussion from participants, and these were:

(a) *Advisory Councils for School Leadership,* where parents councils take on an advisory capacity in the management of the school,

(b) *Annual School Plans*, a requirement to conduct planning processes and submit a report of these processes to the division and province,

(c) *School Reports to the Community*, an annual report on progress made on the school plan, about programs, and containing descriptions about the school.

(d) *Provincial and Divisional Assessments*, mandated tests, typically in core curricula, required at specified grades and times,

(e) *Schools of Choice*, where parents may elect to send their children to schools outside of the neighbourhood area,

(f) *Standards for Curricula*, which act as benchmarks for student learning within prescribed curricula.

(g) *Developing and Using Data*, an initiative where schools are required to create, collect, and use data for planning and programming purposes,

(h) *Marketing of Schools*, typically promotional activities designed to garner enrolment from outside of the neighbourhood area.

These initiatives represent a range of accountability requirements that fall within all four of the accountability alternatives as proposed by Leithwood and Earl (2000). For example, Advisory Councils for School Leadership is a Decentralized Decision-Making initiative. These Councils were initiated in order to give parents a legitimate voice in many school matters, and the original conceptualization gave parents shared decision-making in "…school plans and budgets, school reviews, curriculum, and processes involved in staff hiring and assignment." (Manitoba Education and Training, 1994, p. 1). A second example, Annual School Plans began as a Managerial initiative. Plans started with prescriptive approach for involving staff, parents, the community, and students (Manitoba Education and Training, 1996, p. 5), but were later modified to become a tool for schools to create "…consensus among partners about educational purpose and direction" and "…effective relationships among school staff and parents" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2004, p. 1.4). The latter purposes of Annual School Plans included collaborative dialogue, and the second version of the support document was tied much more closely to research and evidence on planning and school effectiveness. For these reasons, Annual School Plans would fall within the Managerial quadrant of the Framework for Analysis .

In all of the initiatives, however, principals use their judgment and discretion to manage expectations of each. In fact, principals described alternative perspectives different from the examples given. The initiatives chosen represent an array broad enough so that participants would have opportunity to discuss the unique ways in which they have managed the collective of accountability expectations that the initiatives represent.

Acknowledging School Division Culture

In the original research design, two divisions were selected to participate because they represented relatively dissimilar responses to accountability agendas. Due to a lack of volunteers, however, the design was modified to reflect a mix of rural and urban divisions with varying approaches to accountability. In the end four divisions participated, two of which were urban and two rural. In order to acknowledge the influence that the culture of a school division may have on principals' responses to accountability initiatives, the four participating divisions are described in the following two sections.

Two urban divisions. Both of the urban divisions had approximately 9000 students, and the differences in demographics were few. Division A had declining enrolment of a primarily middle class clientele that had forced school closures. Aging housing stock in large areas of the division had resulted in affordable housing for lower income families. The majority of residents of the division did not have school-aged children. Division B, conversely, had experienced population growth over several years, and had added a number of new school buildings as a result. The community in

Division B was very diverse, with a wide variety of cultures, languages, and Canadian heritages. There were pockets of low- and high-income housing, but in general the demographics were characteristic of middle class neighbourhoods.

The significant difference in the urban divisions was found in their approaches to accountability. The mission statement of the Division A was:

> …to present the opportunity for each student to prepare for the future according to his or her ability, interest and initiative. This preparation is directed toward the development of responsible, tolerant, and creative citizens able to participate in a democratic society. (Division A website, 2006, home page).

This was contrasted with the mission statement of Division B, which stated that the school division was:

> …a Community of Learners, everyone of whom shares responsibility to assist children in acquiring an education which will enable them to lead fulfilling lives within the world as moral people and contributing members of society. (Division B website, 2006, home page).

The emphasis in Division A was clearly on providing an *opportunity to learn*, and inferred that it was the *individual's* responsibility to take advantage of that opportunity. Division B, on the other hand, visibly acknowledged that the responsibility was a *shared* one, and that the division was a learning community. Responsibility is a function of accountability, and reflects an orientation to accountability. In Froese-Germain's (2005) review of the notions of *accountability by culture* and *accountability by contract*, he differentiated the two by the ways in which each assured quality. Accountability by culture is characterized by relationships and common commitments with the

community, whereas accountability by contract is typified by external expectations and prescribed performance standards (Froese-Germain, 2005, paras. 18-22). Division A's mission statement reflected notions of accountability by contract, whereas Division B's mission statement echoed the characteristics of accountability by culture.

Two rural divisions. Divisions C and D were located proximally to Winnipeg. In both divisions there existed a segment of the population that commuted to the urban centre, for work purposes. Division C was slightly larger, with enrolment of approximately 5000 students in a mix of small urban, suburban, farming, and lakeshore communities. Division D, although somewhat smaller with a population of 1700 students, had a similar mix of farming, lakeshore, and small urban communities. Both had a wide range of socio-economic patterns, and each also had increasing populations of seasonal residents. At the time of writing, both divisions had recently started or completed building new schools in order to accommodate changes in demographics.

The websites of the two rural divisions reveal subtle differences in their approach to accountability. While Division C's mission statement says that they are "committed to providing quality educational programs for all students" (Division C website, 2006, homepage), Division D's states that "in partnership with its community, provides quality learning opportunities for all students in a safe and caring environment" (Division D website, 2006, homepage). The rural divisions' websites contain less policy information than the urban divisions. Division C lists the division goals for the school year, while Division D lists statistics related to enrolment, budget, and distance driven each day to transport pupils, among other similar details. According to Froese-German (2005), the website of Division C, with its goals, would reflect

attitudes consistent with accountability by contract, whereas Division D, with its mission statement inclusive of community, would have characteristics of accountability by culture.

Accountability Approaches. Although this analysis of school divisions' orientation to accountability is necessarily cursive, it does suggest that Divisions A and C have characteristics consistent with accountability by contract, and Divisions B and D with accountability by culture. As evidenced in the interviews, discussed later, the influence of the school division is important to principals' response to accountability expectations. Within the context of this study, these orientations can be seen through the lens of accountability alternatives proposed by Leithwood and Earl (2000). Division A, with an emphasis on test results, external standards, and comparisons to means is congruent with market accountability approaches. Division B stressed shared responsibility, teacher decision-making, and community dialogue so is aligned with professional accountability alternatives. Division C featured their goals on the website, and this is characteristic of managerial accountability approaches. Finally, Division D included the community as partners, so this would be congruent with decentralized decision-making approached to accountability. While the sample size in this study is not large enough to make generalizations about the effect of particular division orientations, it is nonetheless interesting within the Manitoba context to note that divisions similar in size and other characteristics can have very different approaches to accountability. Because the research was concerned with *principals*' perceptions of and responses to accountability expectations, the divisional milieu must be acknowledged. In order to avoid gathering only *divisional* effects, the study was designed to intentionally gather

perceptions and responses from differing environments. The design of the research

builds in opportunities for principals to consider these divisional influences, and leaves

open for future research the effects of divisional approaches to accountability on

principals' work.

Design of the Study

The study was designed as naturalistic research (Williams, 1996,) conducted in

the work environment of participants, as qualitative by using the personal interview as

data collection instrument, and also had an aspect of the historical method because

participants were asked to provide information from memory. This study was applied

research, in that it examined application in the field of current accountability theory, as

seen through the perspective of eight elementary school principals. The research was

based on constructivist epistemology where elementary principals are individuals who

make meaning through interactions with the world around them. Data collection was

conducted by means of two information-gathering methods: a search of the professional

literature relating to educational accountability including the Manitoba context, and

personal interviews with a set of eight elementary principals. Using a comparative

method, responses from the personal interviews have been interpreted through a

framework derived from the literature review. Follow-up interviews, conducted with the

interviewees, included an exploration of their responses as distinguished by the

framework. Feedback and revised perceptions were gathered in the second interview.

The two goals of recent Manitoba accountability initiatives have been: (a) to

promote dialogue about the purposes of education, and (b) to increase the effectiveness

of public schooling (Levin and Wiens, 2003, para. 8-9). The primary intent of the

research was to illuminate our understanding of educational accountability by

examining the perspective of school leaders, in order to enable improvement in attaining

these goals. Naturalistic inquiry, or qualitative research, was suited to these intents

because

> Naturalistic inquiry presupposes that communities, schools, and social settings
>
> of any variety, have pluralistic sets of values that may from time to time cause
>
> conflict in the management of social enterprises… (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.
>
> 156).

Chapter IV will show that participants' perceptions reflect plurality in the range of

accountability demands, and that these may represent contradictions for principals.

Recruitment of Participants

Originally, it was intended that the participants in the study would consist of six

public school elementary principals in Manitoba, three each from one of two selected

divisions. Criteria for participants were: public school elementary principals who have a

minimum of five years' experience in school administration, and three of those years as

principal at the current school. However, due to the lack of availability of volunteers

from one of the two targeted divisions, the study design was modified. After

consultation with the Thesis Committee, the project focused on eight public elementary

school principals, four from two urban divisions, and four from two rural divisions. A

mix of male and female participants was recruited.

The researcher contacted by letter superintendents of all school divisions to

explain the nature of the study. The two original divisions were urban divisions, and both had agreed to participate. A copy of the introductory letter to superintendents is contained in Appendix A. A follow-up telephone call was made to ensure that the superintendents had received the letter, and to answer any questions that they may have had about the research. This process was conducted until an additional two rural divisions had agreed to participate. The study proceeded once there was a complement of two rural and two urban divisions participating, with a total minimum eight principals who met the criteria.

The researcher requested that superintendents identify potential volunteers and provide a comprehensive list of all principals who met the criteria outlined earlier. The researcher contacted individuals on the lists to secure their commitment to participate, and to provide them with background information. This contact was continued until there was a total of nine volunteers across four divisions who were willing to participate. The researcher emailed the Letter of Consent and Instructions (see Appendix B) and a one-page Background (see Appendix C) to the volunteers for their information and review in advance of the first interview.

Description of Participants

Nine individuals participated in initial aspects of the study, one was disqualified, and eight remained involved to the end of the project. In order to preserve confidentiality, names of participants, schools, school divisions, and identifying organizations are omitted. One principal was disqualified after the first interview, because it was discovered during the course of the interview that the individual did not

meet the criteria as outlined previously. This individual had not been in the current

school placement for a minimum of three years. After consultation with the Thesis

Committee the individual was disqualified, and was subsequently contacted by the

researcher to explain the disqualification.

Profiles of the participants, summarized in Table 2, were developed in questions

Table 2: Participant Profiles

Code	Sex	Division	School Organization	Years of Experience		Preparation in Accountability Initiatives
				Current	Previous	
Alf	Male	A	K-5	10	11	Divisional administrators' meetings
Brava	Female	A	K-5	8		From superintendent
Charlene	Female	A	K-5	5	15	Government documents
Dell	Male	C	K-6	7	21	Government documents Divisional administrators' meetings Inservicing/workshops
Eldon	Male	C	K-6	9	9	Attending meetings Inservices Divisional administrators' meetings Elementary principals' meetings
Felix	Disqualified					
Glen	Male	D	K-4	3	33	Workshops – divisional, provincial Divisional administrators' meetings Conferences (MAP/COSL) Required professional reading
Holly	Female	B	K-5	5	9	Division information Government Workshop (COSL)
Isaac	Male	D	K-8	5	0	Divisional administrators' meetings

1 through 4 of the first interview. In the first column *Code* identifies one individual

from another through the use of pseudonyms. In graphs contained in the Appendixes,

participants are identified by the first initial of their pseudonym. Gender is outlined in

the second column. *Division* indicates which of the four divisions the participant is

from. *School organization* refers to the pattern of grades in the current school at which

the participant is assigned. *Current* under *Years of Experience* shows the years at the

current school in the role of principal, and *Previous* shows the number of years'

experience in all school administration roles prior to the current assignment. The final

column summarizes the descriptions made by principals about the ways in which they

became skilled or knowledgeable about accountability initiatives.

The interviews were generally conducted in the principal's office or in a nearby

conference room. In Holly's case, the first interview was conducted in location of

convenience to the researcher and the participant. This was the conference room of a

school at which neither interviewer nor interviewee recently worked. In all cases, there

were a minimum of interruptions and extraneous noises. It was clear to the researcher

that principals had taken steps to ensure that the interviews were confidential and

proceeded without disruption. In one case, Isaac left the door open but rose and closed it

after a few minutes of interview had elapsed.

Data Collection

Two interviews were conducted with each participant, and the interviews were

approximately six weeks apart. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions. The

First interviews lasted between 50 and 90 minutes. The second interviews lasted

between 20 and 30 minutes. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by a

professional transcriber. The questions used in the first interviews are listed in

Appendix D; the questions used in the follow-up interviews are listed in Appendix F.

The appendixes also include an approximate script for the preliminary introductory

comments for the interviews.

Two other forms of data collection were used. During the interviews, the

researcher made field notes of details, responses, and impressions. Additional notes

were made at the close of the interview and/or extemporaneously in the car. A rating

scale (see Appendix H), designed to assess the intensity of eight Manitoba

accountability initiatives, was administered after the close of the first interview. During

this time, the researcher made additions to the field notes taken during the interviews,

packed up supplies, or sat re-reading notes.

Before the second interview, participants were provided with Highlights From

First Interviews (Appendix B). These highlights summarized participants' responses to

five areas:

(a) Most problematic accountability demands,

(b) Intensity of accountability demands (from the rating scale, Appendix H),

(c) Contradictions between expectations described by principals,

(d) Range of accountability demands, and

(e) Strategies used by principals to respond to accountability demands.

The second interviews gave participants an opportunity to add, delete, or clarify their

own answers to first interview questions and to react to the summary of responses from

all participants. There were few changes from the original interview data, and these were mostly in the form of additions to the list of accountability expectations. Additions were noted on a master, held by the researcher, and have been incorporated into the data used for analysis.

The second interviews also served as an opportunity for the researcher to test the trustworthiness of themes formed from the first interviews. Questions designed to test emerging themes were incorporated into the second interview protocol (see Appendix F).

Data Analysis

Several forms of data analysis of have been employed for this qualitative research project. Qualitative research includes on-going analysis during data collection (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), and anecdotal notes were made on transcriptions of interviews in order to facilitate this. In addition, field notes made during interviews were reviewed during the interview schedule, and emerging themes were noted.

To prepare a summary to give to participants in preparation for the second interview, transcripts were reviewed and coded by hand, using a form of categorical coding where "certain words, phrases, patterns of behaviour, subjects' ways of thinking, and events repeat and stand out" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 161). Categories were developed after looking for themes and patterns, as well as considering the three main research questions: *range* of accountability expectations, *contradictions* between expectations, and *strategies* used to respond to expectations. An example of this coding is shown in an excerpt in Appendix E. Two other categories were added: *source* of

expectation, and *form* of the expectation because these categories related to the same aspects of accountability that remain unresolved (see Literature Review), and because varying sources and forms of expectations may contribute to both contradictions and intensity experienced by principals. The *intensity* of accountability demands was reported by principals on a rating scale (see Appendix H), and analyzed using the scale's numerical values. Graphs were developed to show the results of each participant's rating of intensity of eight accountability expectations currently in force in Manitoba. The first interview themes and intensity results were discussed with the Thesis Committee before the second interview schedule. The coded data was summarized in Highlights From First Interviews, Appendix G, and distributed to participants prior to their second interview.

After the second interview, four types of data analysis were employed. The second interview transcripts were read and coded by hand in the same way as the first interview. Where data collected resulted in changes to the responses given in the first interview, these were noted on the first interview transcripts, on the Highlights From First Interviews master, and in field notes taken during the second interview. These were very few; second interview data rarely conflicted with first interview responses.

In order to bolster the trustworthiness of results, the second analysis that was conducted was a key word search of first interview transcripts. Microsoft Word (trademark) software was used to search three categories: Source of Expectation, Form of Expectation, and Response to Expectation. These categories were developed to ensure that they tied to the main research questions and fit the data from the interviews. Key words and phrases that represented each category were developed through re-

reading of the interviews, and these were clustered into word families. Table 3 shows

the three categories and clusters that represent the key words. Clusters consisted of

several terms synonymous to the key word. For example, the *parent* cluster included

parent, Mother, Father, family, Mom, and Dad.

Table 3: Key Word Search Categories

Source of Expectation	Form of Expectation	Response to Expectation
Parents Cluster: parent, family, Mother, Father, Mom, Dad, adult	*Law* Cluster: law, given, must, require/ment, directive, specify	*Ignore* Cluster: ignore, discontinue, stop, drop, wait, delay, avoid
Students Cluster: student, kid, client	*Internal* Cluster: internal, my self, my own, my sense, from within, my responsibility	*Mediate* Cluster: mediate, negotiate, compromise, convince, persuade, sell, discuss
Staff Cluster: staff, teacher, professional, employee, assistant, para	*Guideline* Cluster: guide-line, choice (but not "no choice"), choose, request	*Communicate* Cluster: tell, communicate, explain, teach, justify, understand, conversation, show
Government Cluster: government, province, buffalo, department, minister, bureaucrat, MET, MECY, document, Healthy Child	*Plan* Cluster: plan, reaction, response, strategy, design, proposal, idea	*Prioritize* Cluster: priority, prioritize, prioritize, important, back burner, screen
Division Cluster: division, district, board, trustee, sup, superintendent, senior admin/istration	*In Person* Cluster: in person, by phone, to the/in my office, to the school, email.	*Delegate* Cluster: ask, volunteer, include, delegate, consult, committee
		Do It Myself Cluster: I do it, take it home, do it myself, fill it in, send it in, protect.

All terms were counted when in context and used by the participant, and the *all word*

forms feature of the search tool was used. For example, in the Response category a

cluster entitled *do it myself* was created, and the word *myself* was counted only when it

was used in the context of an expectation or demand. There were occasions, although

few, where inference of a term was counted as usage. In these cases, usage was counted

when the interviewer asked a direct follow-up question using the key word (for

example, "Is one of your strategies is to mediate?"), and the participant responded

affirmatively, but did not use the key word. The results of the key word search were

graphed using Excel (trademark) software (see Appendix K). Words were counted when

in context, and varying word forms were allowed, for example *mediate* and *mediation*

were both allowed. *Source of Expectation* category was intended to elicit the number of

times that the participant used a word or phrase representing who is making

accountability demands of schools. *Form of Expectations* represented the way in which

expectations became known to principals. *Response to Expectation* represented the

reactions of principals to accountability expectations as they arose.

The third analysis that was conducted to deepen understanding of the list of

strategies (used by principals in response to accountability expectations) gleaned from

the interviews. For the purposes of creating Highlights From First Interviews, the

strategies were simply listed generally in the order they occurred. In order to compare

these to the framework provided by the literature (Leithwood and Earl, 2002), strategies

were categorized into particular accountability approaches and placed on a table (see

Chapter IV). The total incidents were then graphed to show the frequency with which

participants reported that they used a particular strategy.   The themes identified from

the reading of the transcripts were confirmed by this analysis.

The fourth analysis of the data from all transcripts involved a two-pronged

approach, representing two frameworks for accountability: the four alternative

approaches to accountability, as described by Leithwood and Earl (2002); and the dual

conceptualizations of accountability (Robinson and Temperley, 2000) were both used

for the analysis. This two-pronged approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the

ways in which the application of accountability theory occurred in the field represented

by the eight participants.

Trustworthiness

Naturalistic research situated in the qualitative frame requires that attention be

paid to trustworthiness (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 186), a key characteristic parallel to

validity and reliability in the scientific, or quantitative, frame. In order to achieve

trustworthiness attention must be paid to four essential elements: credibility (truth

value), fittingness (applicability), auditability (consistency), and confirmability

(neutrality) (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 104). This research addressed these elements of

trustworthiness in several ways.

Credibility. Credibility was enhanced through the use of the second interview,

where questions allowed for participants and the researcher to engage in a "member

check" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 186). The second interview protocol (Appendix F)

afforded opportunities for the participants to clarify and expand their responses and, at

the same time, allowed the researcher to "cross-examine" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.

186) the participants. Cross-examination was also attended to during the first interview

by asking participants to provide evidence or examples to support a particular response.

The interview transcripts show evidence of rich and varied examples provided by

participants. Credibility was facilitated by the fact that the interviews were lengthy, up

to 120 minutes total interview time with some participants, and were structured in two

sessions with each participant with at least five weeks' time between. Credibility was

further addressed by providing participants with the Highlights From First Interviews so

that they could respond and react to the emerging trends in the data. A two-pronged

analysis of the data transcribed from the interviews enhanced credibility because it

represents two different frameworks of accountability (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, and

Robinson and Temperley, 2000). Analyzing and the re-analyzing according to a second

different conceptual framework formed an internal check of the analysis (Guba and

Lincoln, 1981, p. 106) by enabling data to be viewed across two models. Credibility

was improved by collecting data from four separate school divisions. The principals

represented, in essence, different data sources because the environments in which they

had experienced accountability requirements were distinct from one another.

Triangulation. The four divisions for whom participants were employed as

principals represented a range of approaches to accountability, and this aspect of the

research design provided a quasi "structural corroboration" through triangulation (Guba

and Lincoln, p. 105). The first interview included a rating scale instrument on which

participants recorded the intensity of accountability demands, and then compared that

intensity to other demands made of them in their role as principal (see Appendix H).

This instrument captured intensity on a scale, but also helped to verify the participant's

interview responses against the same participant's own numerical and comparative

rating. This assisted in reducing uncertainty in interpretation. The internal process of the

second interview provided triangulation, whereby each participant was given the initial

analysis of the first set of interviews and then asked to compare, contrast, and comment

on their own individual answers as related to the set, and to the set itself.

Credibility of the participants themselves was addressed in the criteria for participation. Participants must have had at least five years' administrative experience, with three of those as principal at the current school assigned. This ensured that all participants had a consistent minimum experience as school administrators, and had been in their current assignment as principal recently and for enough time to have encountered the full range of accountability requirements. In fact, one of the participants (Felix), was disqualified after it was discovered that the individual did not meet this criteria. The "Hawthorne Effect" was minimized through the use of two separate interviews, and through cross-examination at the time of each interview, and in the second interview itself.

Fittingness. Naturalistic inquiry is concerned with providing descriptions of multiple realities, in order to develop some form of working hypothesis (Guba and Lincoln, pp. 118-120). The research design included interviews that were structured in the manner of discussion in order to ensure that participants had opportunity to fully describe their experiences. The eight interviews included principals from four different divisions, two rural and two urban, two divisions with dissimilar approaches, to ensure that multiple realities could emerge. The Highlights From First Interviews was given to participants prior to the second interviews, together with the responses and reactions of participants to that analysis, facilitated the emergence of themes and potential implications. Finally, the context within which the research was conducted added to fittingness. In Manitoba public schools it has been a little over a decade since a major shift in accountability began (see Literature Review). A criterion for volunteers to participate was that they had at least five years' administrative experience, with three in

their current school assignment. This helped to add to fittingness because principals

have had time to wrestle with dilemmas, learn about requirements, and refine their

approaches. Another aspect of the study was that of historical methodology, because

principals were asked to recall experiences with accountability from their current work,

and since all have been principals for at least three years of this past decade, the

experiences were fairly recent. This immediacy added to the fittingness of the research.

Audit. In order to improve the extent to which the research can be relied upon,

another form of triangulation was used. An audit, employed to bolster the validity of

results, took the form of a second, independent analysis of interview data from a

random sample representing approximately 12% of the total interview data. The second

rater was a "knowledgeable judge" (Guba and Lincoln, p. 122); in this case, a retired

principal with 27 years' experience in educational administration. Academic

qualifications of the second rater included Honors B.A., B.Ed., Master of Elementary

Education, and Special Education Resource Certification. The second rater chose at

random one of the alphabetic letters representing the participants, and was given the

interview protocol and transcripts for both first and second interviews conducted with

the chosen participant. The second rater was asked to complete an analysis similar to

that done by the researcher for comparison purposes. The form developed for this

purpose is contained in Appendix I. Ethical standards were be upheld through the use of

disguise prior to releasing the transcript sample to the second rater. The comments

provided by the second rater are reflected in the Results section.

Confirmability. Neutrality and objectivity, necessary for confirmability, were

attended to through the use of an audit and through the use of the rating scale. Cross-

examination and member checks, done during the interviews, also served confirmability goals. In addition, the data from the interviews was checked with other sources for congruence, notably Shipps and Firestone (2003) and Leithwood and Earl (2000 and 2002), where the effect of current accountability expectations on schools and principals has been peripherally noted.

The methodology summarized in this section shows attention to design features that are congruent with qualitative research (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). The following Results chapter describes application of the analysis design to the data collected, and demonstrates that the themes arising from the research were facilitated by the methodology.

Delimitations

This study was not designed to be an analysis of the degree to which constituents and stakeholders believe that accountability requirements have been met. This was not an assessment of the effectiveness of schools, nor of the effectiveness of any one division's orientation to accountability. This was not intended to be an exploration of how schools seek to improve. Rather, it was limited to the perceptions of elementary principals who are working in schools at a time in which competing accountability mandates are hot topics in educational arenas, government, and the media.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which selected elementary school principals in Manitoba perceive their role in mediating accountability demands/expectations related to student learning in their schools. Specifically the study intended to address the following aspects of their perceptions:

1. The range and intensity of accountability demands that selected principals perceived as being made of them and their schools.

2. The contradictions experienced by principals which arise from multiple yet differentiated accountability expectations, as reflected in the distinction in the research literature between market competition, decentralized decision-making, managerial, and professional accountability approaches.

3. The responses that principals had to these demands, and the ways that selected principals justified the strategies that they adopted.

The two sets of interviews and completed intensity rating scales provided data that were analyzed in a number of ways, as outlined in the previous chapter. This section will summarize the data collected within a framework created by these questions, and a final discussion of the results will be in Chapter V.

Research Question 1: Range and Intensity of Accountability Demands

Range. An early substantive question in the first interview dealt with the range of accountability expectations that principals perceived as being made of them and their schools. This question elicited responses primarily focussed on the expectations

stemming from government initiatives.

> We are bombarded for accountability by the department of education. We just
>
> get bundles and bundles of stuff to do. (Glen, first interview, 2006)

This was echoed by other participants in various ways throughout the interviews.

Principals, in general, indicated that the focus of these government-created

accountabilities had also changed over time.

> …it's different than when I was an administrator 15 years ago or even 10 years
>
> ago. There's more of these accountability things that you're always doing so you
>
> have less and less time to be the classroom supervisor to see whether your
>
> curriculum and things are being dealt with—so less time is now being spent
>
> being a curriculum leader and more time is being spent being accountable to the
>
> government in regards to curriculum change, safety of schools, bullying in
>
> schools, reporting to the community, meeting the needs of the parent advisory
>
> councils, and I guess the list could go on and on. (Dell, first interview, 2006)

This would indicate that at least one principal felt that there are increased demands for

accountability, and that there has been a shift in the nature of that accountability.

The range of expectations in its entirety as described by principals follows on

Table 4. It is interesting to note that their perceived expectations cover much broader

territory than *accountability for student learning* would entail, as considered within the

context of this study. In order to ensure that pre-interview readings and information

were clear, the items on Table 4 were presented to the participants prior to the second

interview so that they could add, delete, disagree with, or clarify their own responses

and the responses of others. There were no disagreements nor deletions made during

the second interviews, although a few items were added. Table 4 includes additions that

participants made in the second interview.

Table 4: Range of Accountability Demands as Reported by Principals

Report to Community	School Profile	Comparing Assessment Data
Marketing of School	Schools of Choice	Safe School Committee
Code of Conduct	Financial & Budget	Technology & Web-site
Workplace Health & Safety	Staffing & Assignments	Bill 13 & Special Needs Students
Resolving Disputes	Division Strategic Plan	Emergency Preparedness
Division Policy Manual	Nutrition Policy	Early Development Instrument
Parent Advisory Council	Standards	Professional Conversations
Divisional Assessment	Reflective Practice	Leadership & Sharing
Student-led Conferences	Paperwork	Helping students learn to be people
Student Behaviour & Discipline	Behaviour Plans	Individual Education Plans
Program Evaluation	School Goals	Dress Code
Allergies/Anaphylaxis	Grade Configurations	Providing quantitative data
Staffing Levels	School Improvement Planning	Building Maintenance
Staff & Teacher Evaluation	Restitution (behaviour)	Annual School Plan
Staffing Committee	Extra & Co-curricular activities	Curriculum
Portfolios	Standards Tests	Grade 3 Assessment
Staff Professional Development	Curriculum Leadership	New Curriculum
Ongoing stakeholders' dialogue	Pathing for the school	Parenting
Student Report Cards	Curriculum Alignment	Teaching parents about school
Technology at home	Informing the community	Community involvement
Parenting Workshops	Breakfast and Lunch programs	Struggling learners
Support to families	Fairness of student opportunities	Student safety beyond school
Teaching parents how student learn	Professional Learning Communities	Social and emotional programming
Staff Individual Improvement Plans	Intervention for behaviours outside of school	
Communication about student learning	Educational assistant support in classrooms	
Parent involvement in child's educational decisions-special needs		
Giving parents information about the community		

It was predictable that the list generated by participants would contain the majority of

accountability initiatives underway in education in Manitoba. However, it was

surprising to hear principals list a number of expectations that have their genesis in

government departments other than education. Principals identified initiatives such as

the EDI (Early Development Instrument, an assessment of kindergarten students'

readiness for school), Workplace Health and Safety, Healthy Child Manitoba, and the

Department of Labour. Participants were asked about this in the second interview. They

all felt that there were not only accountability expectations originating from Manitoba

Education, but also from an expanded set of government departments, that this did not

seem to be coordinated in any way, and that these all related to student learning.

> All kinds of government departments are sending us documents: safe schools,
>
> health and nutrition programs. I think we were up to 5 yesterday, different
>
> documents (Eldon, second interview).

Several other organizations were noted as having expectations that principals would

carry out some form of task without being consulted. These included Sport Manitoba

and Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. Two principals noted that many of these

types of expectations come directly to the principal and that the school board office was

often unaware of these demands until the principals informed superintendents about the

correspondence that had been sent to the schools.

All principals took this expanded view of *accountability for student learning*.

This was checked in the second interview to ensure that there had not been a

misunderstanding in the interviews around the particular accountability of concern for

this study. When asked directly about this in the second interview (see Appendix F,

Question 8), all participants explained that all of the accountabilities relate student

learning.

> Because I feel we have such a multifaceted job and that learning is dependent on
>
> so many things. …you can't have accountability for learning if you don't have
>
> the right resources. If you don't have sufficient budget you won't have the right
>
> resources. Or if you don't have a vision, if you don't have some kind of
>
> planning for the future, if you don't have good professional development of your
>
> staff that (will) use those resources, learning is not going to happen. (Brava,
>
> second interview)

Other participants echoed this sense of connectedness among expectations:

> …all will contribute to the students' performance in the classroom. If you look
>
> at safe schools, if a child is emotionally traumatized, they're not going to
>
> perform in the same way. So to be accountable in this area has, I think, a direct
>
> bearing on the child's performance in the classroom. (Charlene, second
>
> interview)

There were two participants (Eldon and Holly) who stated that teachers were really accountable for student learning, while principals had the responsibility to facilitate teachers' work with children and had the accountability for everything else:

> Teachers in the building are competent. They know what to do, they know how
>
> to teach it, they know how to assess it, they know how to relate and
>
> communicate with parents. …So I don't need to do a lot of the work, I'm
>
> accountable but I'm not answerable to anyone for that either when you really
>
> think about that. Whereas, I am answerable to other people on a lot of (the
>
> accountabilities listed by participants)--these other things that are on the list.
>
> (Eldon, second interview)

In Eldon's case, there is a sense that he feels responsible for student learning but is removed from the actual teaching-learning process, yet feels answerable for a wide variety of expectations. These may be the expectations where someone is checking up. In Manitoba, there are no personal or professional consequences accruing to the principal from student learning results, whether or not someone follows up. Careers, salaries, and school resources are not affected, neither positively or negatively, by student achievement or lack thereof. A second principal put it this way

I can't be responsible for the learning of every child in this school. What I can

be responsible for is providing for a rich educational experience based on the

staff that we hire, based on the materials that we have, based on the

programming and the professional development. That accountability for student

learning rests with the teacher. (Holly, second interview)

This would indicate that at least two principals felt that they were personally

accountable for many things on the list, but that student learning was really in the

teachers' realm. These excerpts illustrate that there is some difference between being

simply responsible for something, and being required to provide an account. Certainly,

principals feel a sense of personal and professional responsibility, but the new

accountability paradigm is based on an account being provided. In the United States, for

example, this demand is increasingly made by governments with serious consequences

attached (Shipps and Firestone, 2003). So a sense of responsibility is different from an

expectation for accountability. In relation to the range of accountabilities given by

principals in the interviews, one reacted when the researcher stated that the range

looked more like the everyday things that principals do, more like a list of

responsibilities:

Schools still have to operate and they have to operate efficiently within

budgetary concerns and expectations from the divisional board office. Those

things are just add-ons to our real job, which is instructional leadership. (Isaac,

second interview)

This would indicate that Eldon and Holly have a different view of their role related to

instructional leadership than that held by Isaac. Two other participants, Brava and Glen,

recommended that principals should find a balance between accountability that is more strictly related to learning and those initiatives that are seen as less so. "I think sometimes we get caught up with some trivial expectations rather than the purpose we're here for" (Glen, second interview). Other areas of Glen's interview showed that he was definitely thinking about the teaching-learning process and of student learning. These statements indicate that principals are thinking about their role as one that requires them to deal with a wide variety of expectations from many sources for which they feel responsible, but that these are not *accountability for student learning* as defined within the context of this study and derived from the literature.

In all cases, principals' reactions to the summary of accountability demands as provided by them in interviews showed that they felt that they were responsible to answer for a number of *inputs*, such as budget, resources, professional development, community involvement, while it was teachers who were really responsible for student learning, the *output* of schooling. The operating definition of *accountability* at the school level is not clear, particularly when it is narrowed to that of *accountability for student learning*. Principals tended to see accountability as synonymous with responsibility. In the second interview, the researcher pointed out that the list of strategies that principals had reportedly used to deal with accountability looked very much like the everyday responsibilities of school leaders, and not strictly accountability for student learning. Participants agreed with the researcher's observation, and felt that they were *accountable* for everything they do. There is evidence in the literature, however, that in some jurisdictions, schools and their principals are held accountable for not only student learning but also for a variety of organizational characteristics as

defined by school divisions, management efficiencies, moral behaviour, professional

knowledge and its application, planning for change and improvement, and use of best

practices in conduct of duties (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, para. 25). These do not,

however, meet the criteria of *accountability for student learning* as outlined earlier for

the purposes of this study. It may be that principals' sense of being accountable is

heightened when they think that there will be some consequence attached. For example,

Alf talked about the way that schools in the neighbourhood cooperate to provide similar

extra curricular activities in order to meet an expectation from parents that schools will

all have similar programs (Alf, first interview, 2006). What really happens, however, is

that parents from different schools talk with each other and compare schools' activities,

and then bring anomalies to the principal's attention or, worse, make a complaint to a

school trustee. They check; the principal feels obligated to respond. Principals'

responses occur as a result of feedback, not in response to an imperative that guides

decisions. This is not *accountability for student learning* because there is no

requirement to report, as defined for this research, but it is something that principals

seem to feel answerable for because someone may follow up.

 Categorization of the Range. The Framework for Analysis, discussed in Chapter

I, showed the four alternative approaches to accountability as described by Leithwood

and Earl (2000). In order to apply this Framework to the responses, the first step was to

categorize the list of accountability demands identified by participants. This was done

prior to the second interview, and then given to participants for their reactions,

additions, deletions, and so on. Some interpretation was necessary in order to apply the

typology, and the interview transcripts were relied on in some cases to provide

contextual information. The results for each participant are contained in the Highlights

From First Interviews (see Appendix G). After comments were collected in the second

interview, an attempt was made to summarize the accountability expectations by

category. This was not an easy process, as there seemed to be several responses given

by principals that could be categorized in more than one way. In addition, some

expectations voiced by principals did not meet the three criteria for *accountability for*

student learning: (a) a requirement to report, (b) related to student learning of formal

curricula, and (c) in the Manitoba context since 1994. Table 4 showed that principals

interpreted a wide range of expectations as demands made to account for student

learning. This demonstrates the ambiguity about accountability at the school level, and

some of the responses from principals indicate a lack of recognition that one of the

purposes of the new accountability is school improvement (Leithwood, 2000), and that

a second is to increase public dialogue about the purposes of public schooling (Levin

and Wiens, 2003). One participant used the example of kindergarten teachers having to

conduct the Early Development Instrument (EDI), an assessment of a child's readiness

for school, as required by the department of education. This principal felt that the

information was not useful to the school because it was really accountability for the

experiences that children had before school enrolment, and simply burdened the school

with trying to get this information to the appropriate agencies and services in the

community. While this is certainly true, the EDI has also been correlated to school

success (Janus and Offord, 2000), and as such data produced by the EDI can be used for

planning by teachers as a particular cohort of children moves through the system. The

use of these results to inform the teaching-learning process, and/or a school's plan, can

be valuable to improving student learning. This was not a unique example; three other

principals all related examples that seemed to indicate a similar lack of appreciation for

accountability as the new school improvement paradigm (Leithwood, 2000).

Neither division nor length of experience seemed to affect principals' views. All

confirmed that they felt that all items on the list were related to student learning.

Nonetheless, there were several that are more bureaucratic in nature, for example

Workplace Health & Safety. This particular expectation is not closely connected to

student learning at the elementary level, concerning itself mainly with adult committees,

playground equipment and building facility safety, and use of hazardous materials.

There were also a number of similar responses that can be seen as simply different

aspects of the same accountability initiative. The criteria used for the purposes of this

study to identify *accountability for student learning*, has *reporting* as a requirement for

defining responsibility as accountability. Applying this criterion to principals'

responses, eliminating duplication, and removing those that are simply responsibilities,

narrows the field of *accountability for student learning* expectations as follows:

Table 5: Accountability Demands by Approach

Market Approaches:	Managerial Approaches:	Decentralized Decision-Making Approaches:	Professional Approaches:

Marketing of School
School Profile
Schools of Choice
Comparing Assessment
  Data
Report to Community
	Staff & Teacher
	  Evaluation
	School Plan & Goals
	Program Evaluation
	Using Quantitative Data
		Parent Advisory Council
		Safe School Committee
		Staffing Committee
		Special Needs - Bill 13
			Curricular Standards
			Standards Tests
			Individualized Education
			  & Behaviour Plans
			Professional Learning
			  Communities
			Student Report Cards
			Grade 3 Assessment
			Staff Professional Devel-
			  opment

Table 5 gives a more tightly focussed picture of structured accountability initiatives, as reported by elementary principals in the study. The responses are limited to those that carry a reporting requirement, are linked to student learning, and are in force within the Manitoba context since 1994. In some cases, like responses were combined (School Plan and School Goals, for example, were listed as one). The range of expectations remaining crosses all four approaches as described by Leithwood and Earl (2000). The *source* of expectations is narrower because other non-education branches of government have been deleted, and now reflects only provincial education, divisional, and school-level accountability. Most of the initiatives listed on Table 5 were readily categorized according to the four approaches. This was not the case for Standards Tests, Curricular Standards, and the Grade 3 Assessment. In Manitoba, these are mandated by the province, and results are gathered by divisions and reported to the education ministry. They are, however, not published as is the case in some other jurisdictions (Elmore and Fuhrman, 2001). It could be argued that these should be considered a management approach or, if the results were published, a market competition approach. However, Leithwood and Earl (2000) argued that professional approaches are based on the premise that the outcomes of schools are largely a result of teachers' practice, and one result of the professional approach has been the standards movement where curricula and instructional strategies are the focus.

While there may be room for disagreement about the placement in the typology of any particular accountability initiative, an interesting group of principals' perceived expectations was made up of those that seemed to stem from a more personal sense of obligation. As Isaac put it:

We are having a lot of social problems in society now-a-days with a lot of one-

parent families; we have a lot of drugs and alcohol within two-parent families;

we have a lot of kids who are coming to school with a lot of emotional problems

and we try to deal with them but the accountability and the expectation is that

we're going to deal with them and we're going to do a really good job of it.

(Isaac, first interview)

Isaac went on to talk about feeling accountable for mitigating these external influences

on children's learning. Other principals echoed this sense of feeling responsible for

aspects of children's lives outside of the school. Leithwood and Earl (2000) weighed

whether or not a personal sense of obligation constituted a form of accountability.

…an account may also be considered obligatory on moral grounds. That is, the

person or group providing the account may feel that the actions for which they

are responsible carry with them an obligation to account by virtue of the special

nature of the responsibility (Leithwood and Earl, 2000, para. 29).

In order for the researcher to better understand this group of expectations that principals

felt, feedback was sought in the second interview. These expectations were placed into a

separate category, the "Extra Category of Responses", and participants were asked to

comment on this in the second interview.

The Extra Category of Responses, a copy of which was discussed with

participants is shown as Table 6. This Extra Category of Responses reflected those

comments made by about expectations coming to them from parents and the community

which seemed to be mainly concerned with the well-being of students and their families

outside of the school day. Taken together, these examples seemed to indicate that

Table 6: Extra Category of Responses

Partici-pant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cate-gory X	Responsibility for student learning Tell parents how kids learn Technology at home – parents and students	Responsibility to inform community and motivate them for EDI follow up	Support to families Commu-nity involve-ment Breakfast and lunch programs	Bill 13 in the way that it relates to parents' involvement in an individual child's educational decisions	Fairness of student opportunities Parenting Discipline outside of school Student safety beyond school	Social and emotional programming for problems Helping students learn to be people	Learning, especially for those kids who are struggling EA support in classes Communi-cation about student learning Parenting workshops	Giving parents infor-mation about the commu-nity

principals felt that they and their schools were being expected to take on more

community well-being and family support activities, and that these demands were

coming through channels that were often not organized nor recognized by the system in

any way. "And so the school to some degree does pick up more than it's fair share" was

the way one principal summed up this phenomenon in the second interview, "(because)

the schools are being expected to do like almost family support" (Brava, second

interview). When this was checked in the second interview, principals confirmed that

they felt that they were personally responsible to fulfill these expectations. Leithwood

and Earl relied on the work of Wagner (1987, as cited in Leithwood and Earl, 2000,

para. 31) to illustrate that, even though a professional might feel obligated to take

certain actions or respond in some way, there is no *accountability* without the

requirement of at the very least a simple report or description. So, while principals felt

that they were responsible for meeting these expectations, this would not be considered

accountability, and because they do not carry any reporting requirement have not been

included in Table 5. It is worth noting that when principals described disgruntled

parents, the next step these people typically took was to elevate the problem by

complaining to the superintendent. This may be the characteristic of the examples in

the Extra Category of Responses that made them important enough for principals to

spend time discussing with the researcher. This may also speak to the power of

bureaucratic accountability, embodied in this case by telling one's supervisor, and may

give one possible explanation for embedding accountability initiatives in bureaucratic

mechanisms. For example, principals from three of the four divisions talked about using

Professional Learning Communities in their school, and two stated that these were a

divisional requirement requiring reporting. It would take further exploration to find out

how that plays out at the school level--when a school effectiveness initiative such as

professional learning communities become a bureaucratic requirement similar to

accountability initiatives such as Standards Tests.

In any event, principals took interview time to talk about the expectations that

parents, families, and agencies have for increasing support, guidance, and cooperation

on issues outside of curricular learning. They all thought that issues in this area were

detractors that impinged on students' ability to achieve. Within the context of this

research, principals certainly have not resolved the accountability question, *for what* are

they accountable, unless it is that they feel accountable for everything. Even though

governments and divisions seemed to have settled on *student learning*, school leaders

conceptualize this in a much broader and more inclusive view than is evidenced by

structured accountability initiatives. This reinforces the sense that *accountability for*

student learning carries multiple meanings depending on, perhaps, where one is situated.

The range of expectations for accountability that principals identified through their interviews crossed all of the categories of approaches to accountability as identified by Leithwood and Earl (2000). Three important aspects of that range are worth noting. Firstly, principals felt that a very broad range of expectations related to student learning. Principals in the study tended to see that their jobs and the work of the school were multidimensional, and that all of the expectations and requirements that came to the school affected learning in some way. This may be because principals have not developed a cohesive working definition of accountability for student learning. Another interesting phenomenon that surfaced during the interviews was that there are a growing number of government departments and agencies outside of education that have expectations of schools. These expectations are, however, mostly bureaucratic in nature, and these expectations often come directly to the school bypassing the division offices. Thirdly, principals identified a range of expectations which originated from parents, families, and social agencies for which they felt a degree of personal responsibility. These expectations were made known to the school largely on an individual basis, but were seen by principals as detractors from student learning. Principals felt the weight of these expectations as personal accountability. The four approaches described by Leithwood and Earl (2000) do not explicitly encompass this internal sense of accountability felt by principals, but nonetheless seem to be important to principals as reflected by the amount of interview time taken to describe it. Perhaps it is because there are abstract personal consequences experienced by principals when

these expectations are not satisfied, for example effects on reputation. For the purposes

of the study, however, these expectations were not treated as within the realm of

accountability for student learning. The new accountability concerned in this study is

the structured form of accountability that has a reporting function, and is intended to

bring about improvement in school effectiveness and an increase in dialogue about the

purposes of schooling.

   Intensity of Accountability Demands. The intensity of accountability demands,

as perceived by principals, was reported on a rating scale (Appendix H) completed by

participants at the end of the first interview, and then summarized, distributed, and

discussed in the second interview. The full results of the rating scale are graphed and

contained in Appendix J. Principals were asked to rate the intensity of accountability

expectations in practice in Manitoba—first compared to each other, and then compared

to all of the responsibilities they have as principals. For the most part, the intensity

rating given to a particular accountability initiative was the same as the intensity when

compared to all other aspects of their job. The rating scale ranged from 1 through 5,

where 1 was low intensity, and 5 was high intensity. Low intensity represented

expectations that principals felt as least arduous, or required of them little activity. High

intensity, on the other hand, meant that a requirement was felt strongly, and required a

great degree of their attention and strength of action. The mean intensity, for both

accountability initiatives compared to each other and compared to all other

responsibilities, is shown in Figure 2. Mean 1 shows the average intensity felt by

principals for each of the eight accountability initiatives *compared to each other.* Mean

2 shows the average intensity felt by principals for the eight accountability initiatives as

Figure 2: Mean Intensity Ratings for Eight Accountability Initiatives
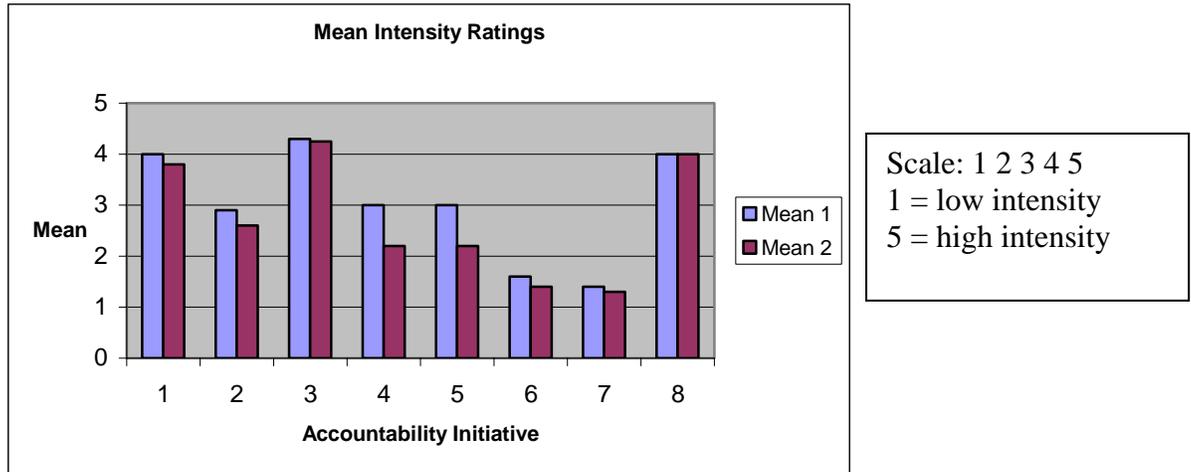
compared to all other responsibilities in their jobs. Meeting Curricular Standards,

Accountability Initiative 3, was the most intensely felt accountability initiative. Most

principals commented on student learning as the criteria by which they prioritized

expectations from government, divisional, parental, and staff sources. Principals saw

curricula and standards as most closely connected to student learning compared to all

other accountability initiatives on the rating scale. This was consistent across all

participants. The lowest rating was given by a Holly, who rated most items on the rating

scale as either level 1 or level 2 intensity (indicating low intensity overall).

Initiative 1, Developing Annual School Plans, was rated as higher intensity than

most of the others. Several principals commented on, and voluntarily showed

documents or evidence, of creative and complex planning processes that were designed

to include a variety of constituents in the process. Some frustration was expressed by

principals in schools where parents were reluctant to be involved. There were, however,

a smaller number who talked about simply filling in the provincial school planning

report form and getting it in on time, as if this was disconnected from the actual

planning process. It seemed that the reporting of the process was less important to principals than the dynamics of the process itself.

On average, principals' rating of the intensity of Initiative 8, Developing and Using Data, was at the same level as that experienced in annual planning and meeting curricular standards. Most principals rated this at a level 3 intensity or higher. There was frustration expressed about school-based data by one principal, but all felt that this was a fairly intense demand.

The intensity rating of Annual School Report to the Community, Initiative 2, was less than that of school plans, data, and meeting standards, but still somewhat higher than other accountability initiatives. Principals commented on issues that they felt were unforeseen by the government, such as translating into multiple languages or repeating information that had been given in other ways, which they had to resolve in order to fulfill this requirement.

The greatest variation in ratings was given to Provincial and Divisional Assessments, Initiative 4. Here, participants ranged through all levels of intensity, and also had the greatest divergence in ratings compared to the rest of their job (see Appendix J for detail). Assessments appear to be taken as regular procedure by several principals, and so their rating was correspondingly low. However, it seemed that there were principals who feel this accountability as highly intense, giving it top ratings. Divisional assessment expectations were mentioned by seven of the eight principals. Somewhat less variation but still worth noting occurred in the rating of Advisory Council for School Leadership (Parent Council), Initiative 5. Two rated this as highest intensity, and two rated it as lowest intensity. It seemed that community made a

difference, as opposed to division. One principal indicated that low ratings occurred

where there was trust by the community in the principal, and that this might occur as a

result of longer term principal's assignments in a school or residing within the

neighbourhood of the school. Almost all did feel some degree of intensity in the

expectation of parent councils, the exception being one principal who did not have a

parent advisory council of any kind. The participant alluded to some history, but did not

want to discuss it as part of the interviews.

The lowest intensity was felt in Schools of Choice, Initiative 6, and Promotional

Activities, Initiative 7. In the first interview, not a single principal mentioned Schools

of Choice as an issue within the discussion of accountability initiatives. There was some

confusion as to the meaning of Promotional Activities, and so for the purposes of this

research, this item will not be discussed.

At the end of the rating scale, principals were given the opportunity to add other

accountability expectations that they might wish to. Bill 13 (legislation to address

special needs students), student safety, and provincial legislation were three areas most

frequently added. Bill 13 was a hot topic at the time of the interviews, and principals

were grappling with the requirements for parental involvement and providing

appropriate programming. Student safety was mentioned in the examples, and these

demands often came from parents, although the Safe Schools Committee requirement

was a new accountability initiative that year. Six of the eight participants added

provincial mandates in some way, and rated this as a fairly highly intense set of

expectations. This may relate to the number and frequency of communications from

government, and to the variety of government departments involved in requiring

schools to perform specific tasks. One principal when asked in what way were expectations for accountability made known to him, responded that they come "in a big box that gets delivered every month" (Eldon, first interview), referring to the monthly correspondence package sent to schools from the education branch of government. This package typically includes a variety of information about workshops, curriculum, support services to schools, and the like. This participant's response would confirm that there is ambiguity around accountability expectations.

Research Question 2: Contradictions.

The second research question was intended to explore the contradictions that arise for principals as a result of multiple yet differentiated accountability expectations. This aspect of the research explores the unique perspective of school principals who are faced with finding ways to respond to resolve contradictions.

Looking at accountability from the inside, as it is experienced in a school or district, reveals that public school leaders already face multiple, simultaneous obligations that often conflict (Shipps and Firestone, 2003, p. 1).

If these obligations have inherent characteristics that conflict with one another, the ways that principals perceive and respond to is important.

The first method used to understand the experiences of principals was to analyze the interviews using the questions inherent in accountability demands (who is accountable, to whom, for what purpose, and in what form is the account to be made). As discussed in the Literature Review, new accountability trends increasingly identify the school as the accountable unit, and student learning, typically narrowed to

achievement in the formal curricula, as the focus of that account over the past decade or

so. However, as described earlier, *student learning* is an ambiguous concept at the

school level, and *accountability for student learning* does not have a commonly held

construct among principals in the study. In the literature there remains controversy over

to whom are schools are accountable, and of the *form* in which the account is to be

provided. A key word analysis was performed of the first interview transcripts in order

to confirm the emphasis with which participants discussed the genesis and

characteristics of accountability demands. The details of the Key Word Search results

are contained in Appendix K.

Figure 3 shows a summary of the frequency of *source* key word search results.

Figure 3: Sources of Accountability Expectations
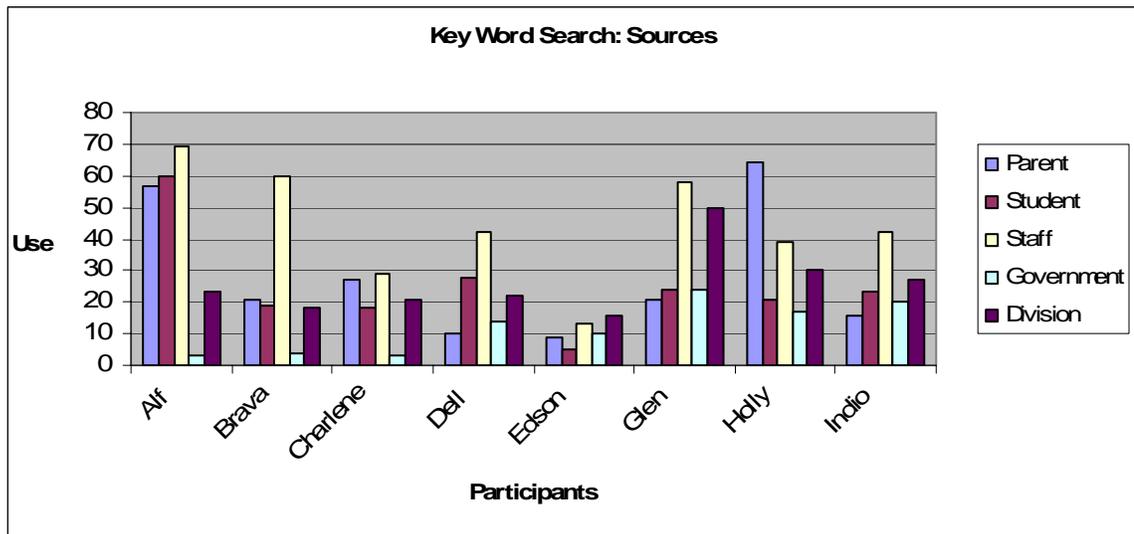
Parents were frequently cited by participants as the source of accountability

expectations. This makes sense in light of the broad working view that principals hold

of the meaning of accountability for student learning. Their interviews were rich with

examples of parents who had made demands of the school--to change a child's teacher,

to monitor behaviour differently, to provide particular classroom help for a child, and the like. Even when nudged away from these expectations by the researcher, principals' talk continued to be focussed on relationships with parents and students. These examples, however, do not meet the criteria of *accountability for student learning* within the context of this study. Nonetheless, this is clearly a time-consuming and problematic area dealing with the tricky business of satisfying parents who have varying expectations of school. This was taken into account in the interpretation by looking at separately the references made by principals to parent councils, the formal voice of parents and one of the accountability initiatives in force in Manitoba. Below are the results showing references to parent advisory councils as a subset of all references to parents (the full detail is shown in Appendix K). It is evident that parent advisory

Figure 4: Parent Advisory Council Subset
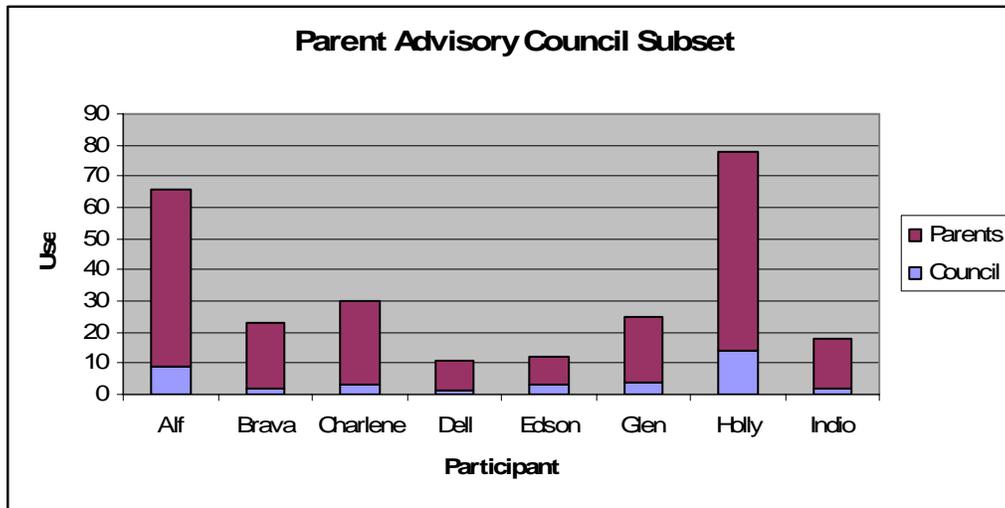
councils constitute a very minor source for expectations of *accountability for student learning*, as shown in Figure 4 above. The division was cited more frequently as a source of accountability expectations than was government, even though principals said that correspondence from the government was typically accountability in nature.

However, most qualified that by saying that they felt much more accountable to their division. For example, Grade 3 Assessments were reported to the division, but the division completed an aggregate report and submitted that to the government, and results were discussed at the divisional level. This was true also for School Plans. Similarly, most divisions had created a template for the School Report to the Community, and schools followed this guideline. Generally principals talked with a higher degree of frequency about their division than about government. This may be due to the fact that the participants in the study all reported having a school administrators' council, where committees were formed to discuss and develop responses to accountability issues and review results. This would be consistent with the perspectives posited by Robinson and Temperley (2000). When accountability is from the cognitive perspective, it requires justification and that assumes a social dialogue. In the descriptions provided by participants, several accountability initiatives were processed through a group that performed this function. This is important to note because not all accountability initiative responses are handled in this way by the participants. As demonstrated in the Literature Review, the cognitive perspective is more closely aligned with school improvement and effectiveness. If principals respond in a behavioural stance, then the likelihood of increasing effectiveness is diminished. As well, principals' reports, from the Grade 3 Standards Tests to the School Report to the Community, are typically sent to the school board office either in addition to the government or as a first step before being submitted to government. The *reporting* is most often done directly to the school division, and perhaps this is one of the reasons why principals feel more accountable to the division than to the government. The

reporting function of the accountability involves the supervisor, in this case also the

employer, and this might naturally cause one to feel more accountable.

Staff was cited most frequently in the Sources key word search. However, this

was often in the context of protecting staff from undue distractions. Principals reported

that they had to screen things from staff, and that they could not take everything to

teachers. They did not specifically state that staff was the group most demanding of

accountability; instead, principals talked about the need to prioritize and proceed to staff

with only those initiatives that were most closely related to the classroom, presumably

meaning student learning. It would seem from these interviews that principals feel

responsible to staff to ensure that external demands did not impede the work in

classrooms, and that there was need for justification of some sort to teachers when work

had to be done by staff related to accountability expectations.

The *forms* of the accountability demands made of schools as perceived by

participants were revealed in the interviews. Figure 5 shows a summary of the *forms* in

which expectations become known to principals. The majority of accountability

demands were seen by principals as having some legal or quasi-legal form. Principals

talked about "the great white buffalo" (Dell, first interview), and about initiatives as

being a given, a requirement, a directive, or a law. These were, in general, expectations

that came from the division and from the province. While most grumbled about

increasing expectations and workload, there was only one dissenting voice who felt

that it was necessary to question accountability requirements that originated from

government by asking "whether it fits philosophically with what I believe as a teacher,

Figure 5: Forms of Accountability

Key Word Search: Forms
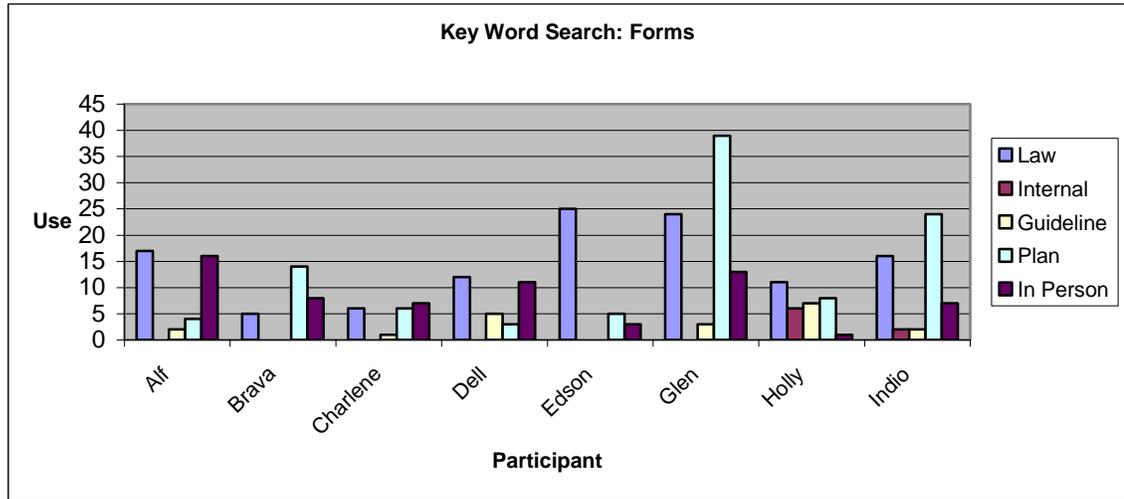
and as an administrator, and whether it fits for my community" (Holly, first interview).

Nonetheless, most principals saw the form of accountability initiatives as being from a

bureaucratic stance—these requirements were not optional and carried with them some

undefined consequence similar to that of other school principal's functions.

Principals reported that accountability also came to them in the form of the

school and divisional plans. Cited almost as frequently as directives, plans were

considered by most participants as important accountability mechanisms. Plans helped

to keep the school focussed on particular initiatives or work, and all included teachers in

their school planning. Depending on the division, parents and the community were

involved in the form of surveys, through parent advisory councils, or in discussion

processes developed by the school. None, it seemed, included parents in direct,

decision-influencing capacity in the creation of the school plan. This may be due to the

impact of the school division itself. When asked about the role of the school division in

a school's response to accountability initiatives, all reported that the division had great

influence. Two participants, from different divisions, used the word *huge* to describe the impact of the division. One division, it was noted, had had a 38-page strategic plan that required schools make progress in a number of areas. This was seen as over-planning, and those schools felt they were not able to have meaningful site plans because there was little room left for local planning once provincial priorities were established and division strategic plans were in place. A practical principal in this situation might not set about to involve parents in decision-making roles because the danger would be that expectations would increase even more with parents' involvement. Participants also noted that changes in Superintendents affected the division's stance with respect to accountability, and that this impacted on schools' response to accountability initiatives to a great degree. All principals talked about the influence of the Superintendent, although this varied between negative, positive, and neutral comments.

An additional form for providing an account, it seems, was the development and use of data. Participants talked very little about using data to inform planning or for reporting purposes. There was some acknowledgement by principals that a particular division had decreased its emphasis on assessment data, particularly the comparing of data between schools, since the retirement of the former Superintendent. One participant expressed frustration with school-based data, and indicated that such data is unreliable due to the latitude of judgment taken by those who generate it, yet the school was expected to continue to gather and use the data in a meaningful way. For example, data on student behaviour was seen as questionable because different staff persons had different views on what should be recorded for data purposes. This speaks to the importance of developing common understandings and expectations in individual

schools around ambiguous concepts such as *disrespectful*, or *citizenship*. Nevertheless, data was also one of the forms in which principals were asked to provide an account.

Accountability for student learning, according to participants, comes in the form of requirements from the province and the division, and those from the division often parallel and make operational those required by the province. While the government requires forms to be completed, the more detailed requirements for accountability are made by the division and become embedded in policy and practice at that level. Some forms of accountability may have been modified by the division. For example, Schools of Choice is an accountability mechanism embedded in legislation, and one division had created an internal policy to restrict choice during Kindergarten so that schools could create unique programs suited to the local audiences that schools serve. Some forms of accountability were expanded by the division. Most participants reported that their school divisions have divisional assessment programs, and these were seen as more meaningful than the standards tests required by the government because they were more informative for teaching purposes. Most divisions required parental involvement at least at a feedback level if not at a planning level. One division, it should be noted, requires that principals have ongoing conversations about the purpose and process of schooling with staff, community, and parents. This was far more extensive an expectation for parent involvement than in the other divisions. Similarly, principals take accountability initiatives in hand and massage them to make sense in their context. For example, a Decentralized Decision-Making initiative in Manitoba, parent advisory councils, has been used by principals in the study for various purposes that are more Professional in approach such as school planning.

This analysis of the sources and forms of accountability expectations confirms that principals are the point at which expectations come to the school from multiple sources and in varying ways. While principals' perceptions include requirements that are not, for the purposes of this research, considered *accountability for student learning* the analysis shows that parents and students are the most frequent source of expectations. This is worth noting because the new accountability tends to ignore these other duties (Shipps and Firestone, 2001, p. 1), and it is clear from the frequency and earnestness that participants discussed them that these personally-felt responsibilities are an important part of their work as principals.

Even though there were multiple sources and forms, participants reported very little sense of contradiction or conflict when asked directly. However, they did talk about issues that arose because of accountability expectations. For example, one principal felt frustrated because in spite of their efforts to involve parents in school planning, none seemed interested or able to attend visioning sessions (Brava, first interview). Energy was spent preparing for this session, teachers had been involved, yet there were no attendees. This could mean that it was bad timing, or that parents were preoccupied with more pressing matters, or it could be that parents are quite satisfied with the way that schooling is conducted in her building. In Manitoba, there is a sense that parents are, by and large, satisfied with the outcomes of public schools (Levin and Wiens, 2003, para. 23), and the evidence for this is more a lack of controversy than direct. Has Manitoba taken an approach that truly satisfies new ideas about public accountability, or is it that accountability in this province is at an earlier stage of development than jurisdictions where sanctions and rewards are serious consequences?

Further investigation into this aspect of accountability in Manitoba would be a worthwhile endeavour and would add to our understanding of accountability in this context.

There were some other tensions that principals talked about arising from accountability expectations. For example, more than one talked about the school planning requirement within the context of divisional and provincial planning, and the problems encountered by over-planning at higher levels, particularly from the division. This created a difficulty for principals because they felt there was little or no room to engage in authentic planning at the site level. School planning, in Manitoba at least, has an orientation similar to the professional accountability approach because of the legal requirement to involve teachers. Most principals reported dynamic and creative site-based planning processes that guided the school through the next year. In addition, the level of intensity that principals felt in the planning process was higher than other accountability expectations. So it would seem that school planning is an important activity undertaken with professional staff and others, and within the context of this study, required a degree of autonomy in order that local and site-based priorities could be addressed. Yet some principals reported that a requirement to follow division and provincial plans was, they felt, in some cases too restrictive. Principals were asked about restrictiveness of expectations in the second interviews. Almost all agreed that the most problematic accountability initiatives were ones where there was a lot of detail and structure spelled out, and this left schools without latitude to interpret and implement in ways that seemed most appropriate for a particular school. Shipps and Firestone (2003) explained this type of situation as a conflict between professional and managerial

(bureaucratic) accountabilities, where "agency functionaries ignore or mistrust professional standards of good practice" (p. 3). Such conflict, it seemed, arose when principals were required to fulfill an expectation that either did not fit for their particular school or was not seen as a priority, and that conflict was embodied in staff and parents' objections. There is, in such examples, a contradiction between professional autonomy and bureaucratic mandates.

The area where principals most frequently reported a sense of tension around expectations was related to developing and using data. The reliability of school-based data was questioned by at least one principal, and reporting such data to the community was seen by the participant as counter-productive. Developing trusting relationships with the community was described by principals as an important part of meeting accountability expectations; using and publishing site-based data, some felt, did not further that end because the data could be misleading. Principals talked about the myriad of variables that affect student outcomes over which the school had little control or input, and that data did not reflect these characteristics. All principals gave examples of this. Holly talked at length, using the McLeans' Magazine rating of universities as a parallel, where institutions that may have desirable qualities which were not included in the magazine's scale and so received abysmal ratings when compared to other universities. In a sense, principals were talking about the difficulty in measuring the value added by a school, and about the lack of agreement about the qualities of a school that are worthwhile. Additionally, another participant commented on the tension created in the school planning process when the need for data-based decision-making was introduced. This is not surprising in the experience of the researcher. This may simply

be due to a lack of familiarity with developing and using data; it has only been in the

past few years that school have generally been required to report student achievement

data, behaviour data, and the like. Schools are data-rich environments, but developing

data literacy and using data for decision-making is a relatively new phenomenon in

elementary schools. Principals also reported a high degree of intensity felt in meeting

the expectations for developing and using data. It has been the experience of the

researcher that such a skill is not typically included in theoretical preparation,

administrative professional development, nor personal professional development of

principals. Yet, schools are being asked by several jurisdictions to provide quantitative

data to support planning, programs, and school initiatives. The reality is also that

quantitative data does not capture the qualities that may be held in highest regard at the

elementary school level, such as equity, empathy, and the development of student

efficaciousness. Finally, it may also be that the act of creating and using data has

inherent contradictions. If data is seen from a professional accountability approach, then

schools would use data to inform planning and adjust instruction. On the other hand,

data could also be from managerial and market competition approaches, where it is used

as a bureaucratic tool to assign rewards, or to inform the public about the relative worth

of a school. This contradiction occurs in the way data is used at the school and district

level, and may represent a conflict among professional and other accountability

approaches. Data, it seems, can be at least a double-edged sword and so it is

understandable that principals would feel a sense of tension around the activities related

to developing and using data in school planning.

      Meeting curricular standards, also rated by principals as highly intense, was seen

by some participants as an area of tension or conflict. Some of the difficulties reported were more about implementation such as: changing time lines, uncertainty from the province, lack of resources to implement, and the like. On the other hand, there were at least two principals who talked specifically about the needs of students in a particular school, and the relative arbitrariness of the curriculum. More than one principal described frustration at being unable to be the desired curriculum leader because of the management expectations in their role as principals. Principals talked frequently about teachers' views differing from provincial and divisional mandates, and that this created difficulties in school planning, data development, reporting to the community, and other school activities. This embodies several contradictions in accountability approaches. The lack of flexibility in curricula may contradict with the ways that teachers would prefer to implement the ideals of Manitoba curricula which is subtitled *Success for All Learners*. Politicizing schools through parent advisory councils and including them in planning may be a source of conflict over priorities. Developing and using data to inform instruction can be problematic if schools are required to report data in annual school reports to the community. In each of these cases, there is a contradiction between professional approaches and others. Perhaps this is because professional approaches are more internal in nature, and the others have external control as a common characteristic. This contradiction is important to note because "…a small but growing body of evidence suggests that schools where children really learn feature a strong sense of internal accountability" (Shipps and Firestone, 2003, p. 3).

Assessments were mentioned by two principals, and these produced tension because the provincial assessments seem to some principals to be contrary to the

purposes of the division's assessments. This was likely due to the fact that the division in question had undertaken a particular model of assessment that did not take into account other assessment initiatives, such as the grade 3 provincial assessment requirement.

On the whole, principals interviewed did not describe a great variety of contradictions or conflict stemming from multiple yet differentiated accountability initiatives. Their responses in interviews would indicate that in Manitoba, in so far as the elementary principals interviewed are concerned, accountability initiatives are relatively independent from one another. That is, they are able to manage the demands of initiatives, even though they arise variously from the different ideologies described by Leithwood and Earl (2000). It could be that principals see each of these as *musts* and take accountability demands as unequivocal, or that the contradictions that are experienced are not deep enough to cause them concern. The only caveat to that is the area of developing and using data for planning and decision-making, and the context of planning within any particular division. More study of this area would have to be undertaken to determine whether or not the difficulties felt by principals in this area were from underlying differences in accountability approaches, or from the fact that data may be one of the newer accountability expectations for schools and planning may have grown more sophisticated at the divisional level.

Framework for Analysis Applied. The range of structured demands for accountability for student learning within the framework of Leithwood and Earl (2000) was represented in Table 5. Adding to that is the principals' perceptions of the source of the demands. These have been added and are represented in Figure 6 on the next page.

Robinson and Temperley. The two perspectives posited by Robinson and

Temperley (2000) were *behavioural* and *cognitive*, with the difference being that the

Figure 6: Framework for Analysis Applied.

Professional Approaches Sources: government, division, staff 1. Professional Learning Communities 2. Staff Professional Development 3. Student Report Cards 4. Curricular Standards 5. Standards Tests 6. Grade 3 Assessment 7. Individualized Education & Behaviour Plans	**Market Competition Approaches** Sources: government, division 1. Schools of Choice 2. Comparing Assessment Data 3. Report to Community 4. School Profile 5. Marketing of School
Managerial Approaches Sources: government and division 1. Staff & Teacher Evaluation 2. School Plan and Goals 3. Program Evaluation 4. Using Quantitative Data	**Decentralized Decision-Making Approaches** Sources: government, division, parents 1. Parent Advisory Council 2. Safe School Committee 3. Staffing Committee 4. Bill 13 – Special Needs Students

accountability from the cognitive perspective required justification. The accountability

expectations contained in Figure 6 show that the majority of requirements carry some

form of justification, particularly those in the Professional Approaches, Decentralized

Decision-Making Approaches, and Managerial Approaches. The anticipation of

justification, according to Robinson and Temperley (2000), is the force that impacts on

behaviour. In the case of accountability initiatives, that justification is most often in the

form of a dialogue, for example in the case of professional learning communities where

sustained pedagogical discussions are at the core of their purposes. Justification is

present whether the dialogue is real or is imagined; it is the *anticipation* of the

justification that is a defining characteristic of the cognitive perspective. Those in the

Professional approach frequently carry an explicit requirement for dialogue, for

example Student Report Cards require dialogue with parents. In Manitoba,

Decentralized Decision-Making approaches are less about school governance councils than is the case in other jurisdictions, notably the United States. Instead, participation and voice seem to be characteristics of Decentralized Decision-making here, as evidenced by the data given by participants. The Managerial approaches that surfaced in this analysis were those that require, to some degree at least, dialogue as would be given in establishing priorities for school planning.

It can be said that, from the perceptions of principals in this study, the accountability for student learning in Manitoba takes on a decidedly cognitive perspective. This is important because the cognitive perspective is more closely aligned with those qualities that have been demonstrated to positively affect student performance (Fullan, 1998, para. 9). Principals' perceptions may also bear this out. When asked directly in the first interview (Appendix D, Question 7, probe b) about the criteria that principals use to prioritize accountability expectations, all participants responded by talking about student learning, in particular that done in the classroom, and assessment. This would, perhaps, differentiate prescribed curricula from all of the other things that principals included in their apparent definition of *student learning*. Principals reported that the most problematic accountability initiatives were those where there was little room for manoeuvring at the site level. This included situations where complex divisional strategic plans were expected to be carried out at the school level. This may be seen as a contradiction between professional autonomy and bureaucratic imperatives, as described earlier. These types of expectations required of schools little dialogue between the *source* of the expectation and the school—and accordingly, less justification and so more behavioural in perspective. Professional input, it seems, is an

important aspect of the work carried out by principals. Additionally, participants found

conflict in the expectation to provide data, and the need to develop data that

encompassed the wide range of outcomes of schooling and the broader construct

principals hold of student learning. More than one participant described the tension

between providing misleading, or misrepresentative, data to the community and the

need to develop trusting relationships with parents and families from their school.

Principals who seemed to have the least difficulty with accountability initiatives

took a mostly cognitive-perspective approach to deal with expectations. These

participants talked about tying those expectations to the curriculum and using existing

processes or structures and professional development as strategies. They interpreted

these expectations from a cognitive perspective in implementation at the school level.

For example, the requirement that schools create and distribute an annual Report to the

Community could be seen as accountability from a behavioural perspective. However,

Holly undertook conversations with the community in order to determine the content

that parents wanted to have in the Report. This made the act of putting the Report

together an endeavour much more cognitive in nature.

Leithwood and Earl. In 2000, Leithwood and Earl described their four

alternative approaches to accountability, and subsequently they wrote individually and

collectively about the difficulties that may be caused for principals who are faced with a

mix of incongruent accountability imperatives with roots in several approaches

(Leithwood, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003; Earl 2001). Figure 6 clearly demonstrates that

the principals in this study are faced with accountability approaches that cross all four

alternatives. Even though the current government has attempted to restore the

professional perspective in the provincial approach to accountability (Levin and Wiens, 2003, para 32-33), recent initiatives have been undertaken in Market Competition, (Report to Community) and Decentralized Decision-Making (Safe School Committee) approaches. More accountability expectations described by principals fell into the Professional approach than alternative approaches, although as discussed previously, there may be some room to categorize initiatives such as Curricular Standards and Standards Tests somewhat differently. Professional Learning Communities were in all cases divisional accountability initiatives, and schools were required to report on the activities undertaken by these groups. In descriptive ways, participants stated that the initiatives in the Professional approach were those that received highest priority because they were closest to the classroom, meaning formal curricula and assessments. It would seem that Manitoba is experiencing the full range of approaches as defined by Leithwood and Earl (2000).

Little sense of contradiction or tension was reported by participants when asked about possible conflicts between and among initiatives. Although the previous section outlined several conflicts arising from contradictory approaches, it seemed from the interviews that principals did not experience these conflicts acutely. It is possible that this is because, in Manitoba at any rate, the relative stability of government over the past decade has resulted in a similar accountability *perspective* (as defined by Robinson and Temperley, 2000) underlying nearly all of the accountability initiatives developed. For example, a Market Competition initiative such as schools' Report to the Community might be more Professional in approach when the guidelines are generous, allowing a great deal of schools and divisions to consult with the community and

professionals about the content of the Report. Similarly, including Parent Advisory

Councils as in integral part of the school planning process minimizes the Decentralized

Decision-making roots of this initiative and, instead, brings a Professional approach

dimension to it.

Even though Leithwood and Earl distinguish between four approaches, this may

not be the way in which principals experience accountability imperatives. Participants'

descriptions of contradictions between and among initiatives were often conflicts

between Professional approaches and one or more of the others. It may be that

professional autonomy, or the lack thereof, is the underlying characteristic of any

accountability initiative that determines whether or not implementation is problematic

for principals. Principals' talk included several references to screening things from

teachers, and protecting them from things that did not relate directly to the classroom.

This might suggest that principals see one of their important functions is to guard the

professional autonomy of teachers, so that there are the least number of intrusions into

the world of the classroom. If this is the case, then the most problematic contradictions

for principals are between professional approaches and any of the others, because these

are the conflicts that cross the boundaries of professional autonomy.

Another possible explanation for little conflict or contradiction across the range

of expectations reported by participants may be the lack of defined consequences

attached to the majority of these initiatives. Of the accountability initiatives shown in

Figure 6, very few have any direct consequence for the principal, or for the school.

Even in the case of Schools of Choice, where parents may choose schools different from

their neighbourhood based on among other things perceived differences in quality, at

least one division had created policy to mitigate those effects on schools. Principals

reported that comparing of assessment data was no longer done, but this was included in

Figure 6 because it was practice until very recently in at least one division. This is not

the case in other jurisdictions, where "high stakes testing" and comparing results causes

great personal and professional consequences for principals and teachers (Bracy, 2000

and 2001). There is a trend in other provinces in Canada to adopt a consequences

approach (Leithwood, 2001a), even though consequences, as attached to accountability

initiatives in other jurisdictions, have not been found to have the desired effects on

student learning (Leithwood, 2003). Manitoba has not adopted this aspect of the new

accountability, and this may be the underlying reason why principals do not perceive a

great deal of contradiction between differentiated approaches.

Framework Analysis Summarized. The preceding section demonstrated that

there are a variety of accountability imperatives perceived by principals in Manitoba,

and these cross all four of the alternative accountability approaches described by

Leithwood and Earl (2000). However, most of these expectations can be seen as

residing in the cognitive perspective of accountability (Robinson and Temperley, 2000)

because there is an element of justification in each, and this justification frequently

takes the form of some sort of dialogue. Some principals in the study reported that they

used strategies congruent with a cognitive perspective in spite of the nature of the

accountability initiative.

In Manitoba there are initiatives residing in all four of the approaches to

accountability as described by Leithwood and Earl (2000). Principals described more

accountability initiatives that fell within the Professional approach than others.

However, some of the most recent, notably Safe Schools Committee and Report to the

Community, could be categorized in approaches that are not Professional in nature.

Professional autonomy surfaced as a characteristic that is potentially the feature

determining whether or not principals experience contradictions or tensions between

accountability approaches. Alternatively, the lack of consequences may be the factor

that influences principals' perceptions of contradictions or tensions. As Leithwood and

Earl (2000) described, the consequences attached to an account also help to differentiate

approaches from one another. In the Manitoba situation in general, consequences have

not been attached to most accountability initiatives and this is different from other

jurisdictions in Canada and the United States.

Research Question 3: Responses and Strategies Used by Principals.

The third research question was intended to explore the ways in which principals

responded to accountability imperatives, the strategies they used to meet expectations,

and the justification that they held for their actions.

Responses. The responses to accountability were set up in categories in the

research design. These were: ignore, mediate, communicate, prioritize, delegate, and

do-it-myself. The analysis of transcripts and a Key Word Search performed for each of

these types of responses (graphed results are contained in Appendix K) showed that

principals used communication techniques as the most frequent response. This included

telling, explaining, teaching, justifying, helping others to understand, and having

conversations with staff, parents, and the community. It seems that principals, when

asked to account for student learning, respond with dialogue. This is congruent not only

with principals' expanded view of student learning, and so the need to discuss the

myriad of variables that affect an account given, but also confirms that principals are

key individuals in the leadership necessary to respond to accountability expectations.

Principals become the access point for accounts required, even though participants said

that they felt that it is teachers who are accountable for student learning. Conversely,

some principals expressed frustration at not being able to spend more time being

instructional leaders. Perhaps it is that the new accountability requires of principals a

different kind of instructional leadership. For example, this might include the use of

data to inform teaching and planning, an expectation which principals experienced as

highly intense. Leithwood (2001) suggested that the environment in which principals'

work has implications for the kinds of leadership practices that they should use. Given

that "…the context created by educational policies is among the most powerful

influences on the nature of their work" (Leithwood, 2001, p. 227), it follows that the

new accountability context should require some significant changes. Strategies

stemming from accepted forms of leadership, such as instructional leadership and

transformational leadership, are "a necessary but not sufficient part of an effective

leader's repertoire" (Leithwood, 2001, p. 227), and should be complemented with

practices that are required by accountability contexts. It is not surprising that, in a

transition to an accountability context, principals would feel some frustration over not

being able maintain leadership practices in the same way as before.

The entire range of responses was used by principals, although only one

indicated that literally *ignoring* had been a response, and that lasted only until the

division required some action (Holly, first interview). Most delayed, or put on the back

burner, demands for accountability that they felt were not as closely connected to student learning as others. One participant reported that some were dealt with in a do-it-myself approach, and there were several responses that included delegating to teachers and/or other administrative personnel in the school. Principals with extensive school division strategic plans reported prioritizing as a response much more frequently than did participants from other divisions.

Inasmuch as principals saw student learning as a broad concept and inclusive of all types of accountabilities, including things such as finances and maintenance, they did infer that there were some requirements that were more closely connected to student learning than others. It would seem that principals based their response on an individually perceived notion of the importance of the initiative relative to the degree to which it affected implementation of curriculum in the classroom.

Strategies. The third research question was designed to explore not only the responses that principals might make to accountability imperatives, but also to look at the strategies that they used. In Leithwood's (2001) review of leadership practices necessary for new accountability contexts, he noted that there were both anticipated and unanticipated leadership practices caused by each of the four approaches to accountability (pp. 219-220). The following section describes the strategies that principals used in reaction to accountability initiatives, and compares these to the practices as identified by Leithwood (2001, and Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach, 2002).

Principals talked about a variety of ways that they have dealt with accountability demands, totalling 131 over the course of the first interviews. The entire list is

contained in Highlights From First Interviews, in Appendix G. Many are similar in

nature to one another, and so the list was categorized in order to facilitate analysis. Ten

categories were developed, strategies were sorted and frequencies were graphed, below.

Figure 7: Strategies Used by Category
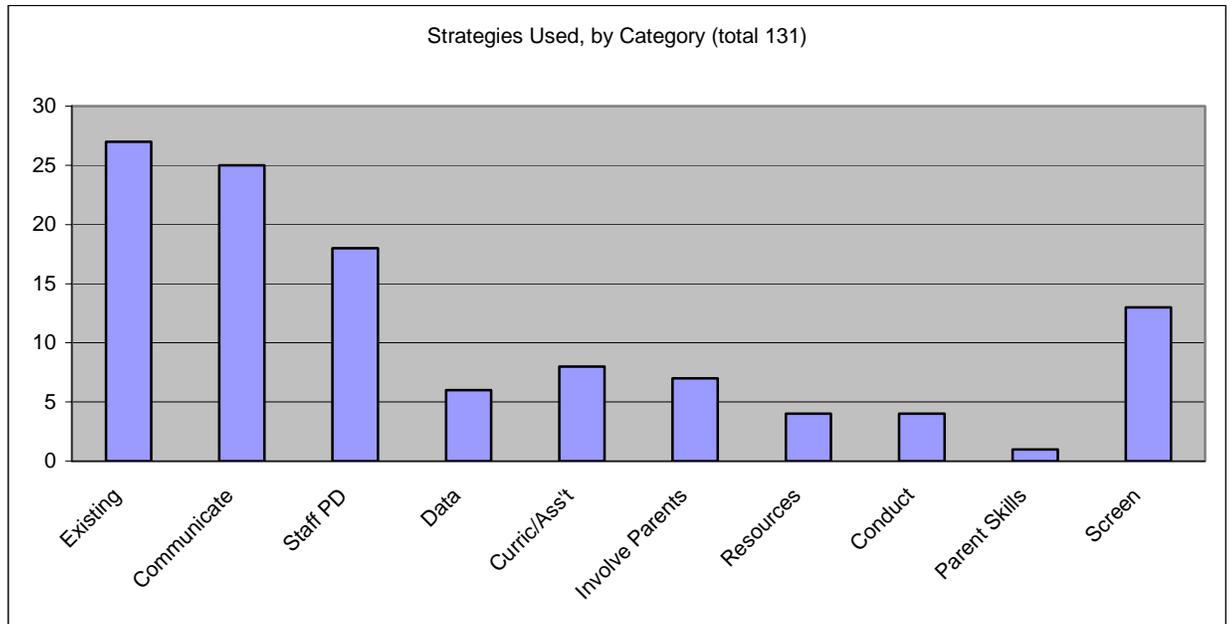
The first type, Existing Strategies, was used to gather those actions that typified using

existing structures or processes already in use within the school such as forming

committees, referring a requirement to a professional learning community, and the like.

This was the most frequent cited action taken by principals. In one example, a recent

provincial directive required that all schools have a Safe School Committee consisting

of parents, teachers, and other involvement. Several participants reported that they had

designated the parent advisory council to be the Safe School Committee rather than

form a new committee as directed by the communication, and instead had a standing

item on the council agenda for Safe School items. One principal said that the division

had contacted the provincial Minister's office in order to ensure that this strategy would

meet the requirements set out by the province, and the division received approval (Dell, first interview). Clearly, this was use of an existing structure to meet the requirements of a new accountability initiative. Using an existing structure could be considered within the realm of strategic management, one of the anticipated leadership practices required by Management approaches to accountability (Leithwood, 2001, p. 220).

Not surprisingly, given principals' use of communication as a response, the second most frequent strategy that principals used to respond to accountability imperatives was to Communicate, meaning the use of communication practices and actions. These included such things as printed hand-outs, open parent information evenings, dialogue with staff, and others. Some of these, such a publishing school goals in the student handbook and the use of school newsletters, might also be considered as use of an existing structure/process. However, principals' talk about this group of strategies seemed to be more closely aligned with the communication response that seemed to be their response of choice. The leadership practices outlined by Leithwood (2001) confirm that communication is probably a key skill and a frequent strategy required in accountability contexts. Market approaches to accountability require that principals adopt leadership practices that effectively allow them to deal with people who hold a wide range of perspectives. In addition, Professional approaches require that principals are skilled in the ways to develop professional learning communities, which rely heavily on commitment and conversation. Thirdly, Management approaches necessitate involvement of stakeholders, and the ability to effectively communicate would be an important asset to implementing these approaches.

Professional development (Staff PD) activities were the third most-often cited

strategy that principals used. This ranged from professional readings for staff, to setting

aside time at staff meetings to discuss special topics, and to using professional learning

communities (PLC). It is interesting that professional learning communities were used

in a committee-like approach, and were mentioned by five of the eight participants.

However, PLCs are required by divisions, as reported by participants, and not by

government. It would require further research to determine the rationale for PLCs in

divisions where they are required. It could be that PLCs fall within a professional

accountability approach, and this might be preferred by divisions and/or schools with

respect to improvement of school effectiveness. Two of the complex practices described

by Leithwood (2001) needed to respond to Professional approaches to accountability

are: (1) creating professional learning communities, and (2) distributing leadership to

staff (p. 220). These would both require that staff has developed the capacity to be

productively engaged in PLCs and to assume leadership roles. Both of these activities

require learning and development, so that principals' focus on staff professional

development as a primary strategy is congruent with Leithwood's interpretation.

The fourth strategy, Prioritizing, was used by principals to determine which

initiatives received attention, and which were placed 'on the back burner'. Participants

reported that they based their criteria for prioritizing on the degree to which an initiative

was connected to curriculum.

> …anything that happens in the classroom has to be related to some general
>
> outcomes of the curriculum, whether it be language arts, science, social studies,
>
> math, whatever. Anything aside from that my message has always been to the

teachers it's a waste of time…it's got to be connected somehow to the

curriculum. (Alf, first interview)

This sentiment was the case for all principals, and speaks to the justification that

principals hold for the responses they take. When asked by which criteria they

prioritized accountability expectations, most principals said that those most closely

related to student learning received priority. It was within this context that participants

reported delaying expectations that were not connected to learning in the classroom,

screening things before taking them to the teachers, and ignoring procedures in order to

get things done or to get things to teachers that they might need. It is important to note

that within a prioritizing context, principals also related incidents where school

initiatives were discontinued because of increased accountability. For example, in one

case a participant said that swimming instruction in physical education had been

discontinued because of increased regulations (Isaac, first interview). Another reported

that initiatives in the school plan were dropped when requirements from the province or

division were added ad hoc during the school year (Glen, first interview). Prioritizing

also included meeting accountability expectations on face but not necessarily in

substance, resulting in situations where a demand was not met with all of the required

components. This was described as using imperatives as guidelines, rather than as

directives. Contrary to this, were two principals who indicated that they prioritized

based on the source of the expectation—if an account is required by the division or the

province, then it is given top priority. However, this represented a minority opinion in

the interviews.

The remaining strategies used by principals included finding resources outside

of the school, changing the way that student conduct was handled, developing and using data, curriculum and assessment activities, involving parents, and teaching parents about student learning/behaviour.

When discussed in the second interviews, none chose to add to the list but several commented that they felt that having the list was valuable, so that they could learn from others. The researcher pointed out that the list of strategies looked very much like all of the things that people do in their role as principal, and not specifically as strategies to respond to calls for accountability. Participants agreed that, in fact, the list represented activities and strategies commonly used for a variety of purposes in the work as principals. It seemed that when principals were confronted with accountability imperatives, they found a way to adjust without really altering the structure of the ways things are done.

> If I think about all the accountability expectations…governmental expectations that have come to land squarely on the desk of principals at this point, I would say that my particular strategy is to look at that and say how does this fit with what we do here. How can we make this work without making it something that doesn't fit with what we already do? (Holly, second interview).

Participants, when asked if they had advice for others administrators, in general suggested that principals develop a routine for each new accountability expectation by making the activity part of what is typically done at the school. Literature about the new accountability indicates that, in spite of the inherent intent to improve schools, schooling has actually changed very little (Elmore and Fuhrman, 2001. pp. 70-72).

The most highly intense accountability expectations, as reported by participants,

were curriculum and assessment, developing and using data, and school planning. It is

interesting to note that the most frequent strategies used align with their reports of

intensity. Staff professional development relates to curriculum and assessment, as well

as developing and using data. Use of data, as an expectation, may be dependent on or

affect communication strategies. School planning, as an imperative, requires all three of

the most frequently used strategies: communication, staff professional development, and

use of existing structures and processes. Finally, the approaches described by

Leithwood (2001) require leadership practices that include these three strategies.

   Justification. The third research question entails examining the justification used

by principals for the strategies that they adopted in response to accountability

imperatives. As stated previously, the criterion by which principals chose to prioritize

expectations was the degree to which any requirement affected the classroom. This was

the consistent justification across all principals, with the additional caveat indicated by

two—that government and divisional requirements were undisputed priorities. These

dissenting principals may have simply been more candid. In the experience of the

researcher, when push comes to shove in the world of schools, *all* governmental and

divisional directives take priority over other expectations and plans. This would indicate

that accountability imperatives that stem from provincial and local policy have

significant potential to impact schools. However, considering that the purposes of the

new accountability include improving effectiveness of schools and increasing dialogue

about the purpose of schools, it is surprising that none of the participants talked about

justifying strategies based on either of these criteria. In general, principals' perceptions

of accountability expectations were that they were not closely related to the work of

teachers and students. This may be the reason that in other jurisdictions accountability initiatives have not led to school improvement (Leithwood and Earl, 2001). Principals expressed frustration over having to fulfill requirements that did not suit the needs of their particular students, and saw most accountability expectations as management tasks, not related to student learning, that distracted them from their more important work with curriculum and teachers.

> … if I don't have teachers doing the right thing in the classroom and doing it for the right reasons and moving down that path of having diversified learning so that there is appropriate activities for all different kinds of kids, then I'm not doing my job (Brava, first interview)

Based on this view of their role, principals chose their strategies and responses for most requirements. Given this, it might be appropriate to hold principals accountable for the amount of time spent in professional and curriculum/ assessment activities.

Audit

The final analysis conducted was done by an inter-rated in an audit-style approach. The form used by the second rater is contained in Appendix I, and shows the way in which the audit was conducted. The second rater chose one transcript at random, and used the form given to analyze the data. The second rater was given both the first and second interview transcripts from interviews with the same participant (Eldon). In addition, the second rater was supplied with the same one-page background prepared for participants prior to the first interview.

The second rater identified the following themes:

(a) Areas of accountability are expanding, coming from many agencies and jurisdictions without an evident overall plan,

(b) Screening, ignoring, and prioritizing are frequent strategies,

(c) Paper trail requirements are not connected to student learning, and

(d) Expectations beyond school mandate for support to families and children is increasing.

The results of categorizing expectations based on the four approaches (Leithwood and Earl, 2000) showed that there was consistency between the researcher's analysis and the second rater's reading of the transcript. It should be noted that the second rater categorized as Market Competition approaches the expectations of schools that are family support in nature, such as the school being a hub for social service agencies.

Chapter V: Discussion

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which selected elementary school principals in Manitoba perceived their role in mediating accountability demands and expectations related to student learning in their schools. Specifically the study addressed the following aspects of accountability:

1. What was the range and intensity of accountability demands that selected principals perceived as being made of them and their schools?

2. What contradictions were experienced by principals which arose from multiple yet differentiated accountability expectations, as reflected in the distinction in the research literature between market competition, decentralized decision-making, managerial, and professional accountability approaches?

3. What were the ways in which selected principals responded to these demands, and how did they justify the strategies that they adopted?

The analysis of the research has provided a number of themes related to these questions.

Range and Intensity of Accountability Demands. Participants reported a wide range of accountability demands, defining student learning very broadly, and using accountability as almost synonymous with responsibility. A category of demands was described by all principals that encompassed their sense of personal responsibility to meet expectations for family and community support actions. The range reported was limited using three criteria for accountability: (1) that there was a reporting requirement, (2) that the expectation related to student learning of formal curricula, and (3) that the imperative existed within the Manitoba context since 1994. A final list of accountability

initiatives meeting these criteria was categorized using the four alternative approaches

to accountability and shown in Figure 4.

Principals rated the intensity of accountability demands as compared to one

another, and as compared to all other aspects of their job. There was little change in

intensity from one comparison base to another. The most intensely felt demands were in

the area of meeting curricular standards, school planning, and developing and using

data. Principals frequently used student learning as the criteria by which they prioritized

expectations. School planning may have been intensely felt because of the variety of

stakeholders that necessarily needed to be involved. Developing and using data may be

a recent phenomenon for elementary schools, and several expressed frustration over the

inability of typical data systems to represent all of the qualities of the school.

Contradictions arising from multiple and differentiated expectations. Little

conflict was reported between and among demands, although participants expressed

frustration when perceived over-planning at higher levels restricted site-based plans.

The most problematic demands were those that were detailed and restrictive, allowing

little room for movement and interpretation at the school level. Providing incomplete or

shallow data about the school was a concern for principals because this seemed to

conflict with developing trusting relationships with parents and the community. This

may arise due to the lack of existing data structures to measure the value-added that a

school provides, and to measure the qualitative attributes of any particular school.

Finally, there seemed to be some tension around curricular standards and individual

student's or school's priorities. Bill 13, a recent government initiative to provide

inclusive programming for special needs students, may have contributed to the

frequency with which principals talked about this tension.

The Framework for Analysis Applied, Figure 6, was discussed from the point of view on accountability taken by Robinson and Temperley (2000), and Leithwood and Earl (2000). Within the context of the study, the reported accountability imperatives showed a definite trend to the cognitive perspective. Principals' strategies also tended to be from a cognitive perspective on accountability. Accountability expectations that are in force in Manitoba encompass all four approaches to accountability (Leithwood and Earl, 2000). The majority of contradictions felt by principals were between Professional approaches and any or all of the other approaches. This may be due to the amount to which any initiative impinged on professional autonomy. Some contradictions between approaches were identified; however these did not seem to be of great concern to principals. In Manitoba, accountability initiatives do not typically have personal or professional consequences attached; responses to an account are likely to be vague and undefined. Alternatively, this may be a contributing factor to the lack of conflict that principals' experience with respect to accountability initiatives that are varying in approach.

Responses and Strategies. Principals responded in a variety of ways, but primarily they were *communicating, mediating,* and *prioritizing.* These responses can be summarized as *accommodation.* The most frequently used strategies, discussed following, support this view. Principals, by and large, try to find ways to meet the expectation by transmuting it, and by persuading others to see it from that perspective. Only one principal tried to ignore an accountability imperative, but was unable to do this in the long run. This was also the only person whose talk bordered on rebelling.

The strategies used by principals were often those that existed within the school already, such as committees or staff meetings. In fact, existing process and structures were the most common strategies employed by principals. Principals' second most frequent response to accountability demands were in the communication realm, and this also incorporated the importance of developing positive relationships with parents and students. Professional development strategies were frequently used by principals, and this related closely to curriculum and assessment strategies. These three types of strategies, of 10 developed, represented over half of the strategies used by principals and they are consistent with several of the leadership practices that Leithwood (2001) said were necessary in the new accountability context.

The criterion by which principals developed a response and chose a strategy, they said was the degree to which any expectation was related to the classroom learning. This was clearly stated by all participants. In some cases, principals interpreted initiatives less directly tied to student work through curriculum, in order to make the activities more meaningful to the classroom and teacher. Principals agreed that the list of strategies used was typical of the activities that they might undertake to complete many of their job requirements.

Discussion

Accountability, in today's educational context, is a complex construct variously applied from different philosophical approaches. Due to the nature of their role in schools, principals are at the centre of the storm created by this complexity and diversity. While it seemed that some of the issues around the new accountability were

settled, such schools being designated as the unit of account, there remains more

fundamental questions to answer. The purpose of schooling is at the root of the

ambiguity because without a shared vision of that, prevailing political ideology holds

sway. In many educational settings, schools are asked to account for a tightly

constricted range of student learning outcomes. Principals in this study continually

reinforced that schools are about much more than test results in reading or mathematics,

and their definitions for *student learning* reflect that. Discussion about the purposes of

school, an anticipated result of accountability, is occurring in the principal's office with

parents or in the staff rooms of schools during meetings. This informal dialogue has the

principal as the key player at the school level faced with mediating conflicts and

tensions between multiple yet differentiated expectations. Furthermore, there are several

key aspects of accountability that surfaced through the work of this research project.

The first, and probably most important, is that there exists a significant

ambiguity about the meaning of accountability itself. This relates to the lack of vision

about the purposes of schooling, and also to a personal dimension of accountability that

principals described. In the absence of a commonly held understanding about the

meaning of accountability, principals feel that everything is connected to student

learning. While there might be some rationale for them to take this view point, it is

diametrically opposed to the notion that *student learning* can be encapsulated by

reading and math tests. When these principals described what they meant by *student*

learning, they were really talking about far more than intellectual achievement. They

include the informal curricula: moral, critical, and personal development of citizens.

The responsibility that principals felt for students extended beyond the school day and

curricular issues, and they reported feeling accountable to parents and the community

for issues arising in this realm. If this is the case, then there are implications for thinking

about approaches to accountability, and the location of this sense of personal

accountability that principals described. This is worth further consideration because "the

most important accountability relationships are the ones that (educators) have with

students and parents (Earl, 2001, para. 10). Within the context of the work of Leithwood

and Earl (2000), there needs to be an accommodation, perhaps to the view of

Professional approaches to accountability, in order to situate this sense of personal

accountability.

     There is a tension between professional accountability and public

accountability. In the conflicts and contradictions described by principals, frequent

sources of tension could be seen between Professional accountability initiatives and the

others, namely Market Competition, Decentralized Decision-Making, and Managerial.

The main difference between Professional and other approaches can be seen to be

resulting from the *internal* nature of professional accountability, and the *external* nature

of the others. This can be seen from the view of Robinson and Temperley (2000) as the

difference between cognitive and behavioural forms of accountability. Professional

approaches to accountability align most closely with cognitive forms of accountability

whereas the other three approaches have roots in behavioural forms of accountability.

This may be an important differentiation, in that the framework provided by Robinson

and Temperley addresses the most common source of tension experienced by principals

in this study: professional approaches are not by nature congruent with other

approaches. For example, principals in this study reported that the influence on

principals' responses to accountability of school divisions is significant. This has implications for the ways in which school boards and the province craft accountability initiatives. In divisions where strategic plans were extensive, schools felt unable to develop local plans to address their unique situations. Internal planning was stymied by external influences. These issues can be seen as a tension between professional and public accountability. The degree to which an initiative impinged on professional autonomy seems to be an important characteristic in determining whether or not a particular expectation is problematic for principals. This, however, may not necessarily be a negative aspect of accountability. It may be that striking a balance is what is important, and that balance may be between professional approaches that reflect cognitive forms of accountability and external approaches that are behavioural in form. The idea that institutions in our society can be trusted implicitly has long since been eroded by controversy, misconduct, and abuses of one sort or another. When principals say that they see classroom learning as top priority, does their actual behaviour bear that out? The work of classroom supervision, instructional leadership, and curriculum implementation is difficult and time consuming. The public, in our democratic society, should have the right to ask for an account. On the other hand, professionals who have specialized knowledge and experience should have the latitude to design teaching-learning experiences as they see fit. It is balancing these two aspects of accountability that school divisions and governments should concern themselves with when considering accountability initiatives.

Accountability in Manitoba seems to have achieved a balance which satisfies the public and allows schools a degree of autonomy. The lack of controversy may be an

indicator of public satisfaction with education in Manitoba, although it is possible that

this could be a sign of apathy or resignation. The latter is not likely, given the frequency

with which satisfaction surveys used by schools receive positive feedback (Alf, Brava,

Charlene, Glen, Edson, first interviews). Other indicators include a small, fairly stable

number of parents who home school, enroll their children in private schools, and who

opt for Schools of Choice. School leaders seem to have found some equilibrium with

respect to accountability initiatives. In the experience of the researcher, principals in

Manitoba have not rebelled against accountability initiatives as they emerged. This may

be because professional consequences such as merit pay or school closure are not

attached to accountability initiatives, but it may also be because principals have been

given the room to transform non-professional approaches. Principals massaged, for

example Decentralized Decision-Making approaches such as Parent Advisory Councils,

into a quasi-Professional approach by the ways that they chose to respond and the

strategies they chose to use. In addition, accountability mechanisms such as standards

testing seem to have satisfied the narrower interests of the global economy, because,

once again, there is an absence of controversy in Manitoba. This relative stability begs a

question, however. In many jurisdictions, including some Canadian contexts, the

accountability is tipped decidedly in favour of public approaches. Has Manitoba taken

route different from others, striking a balance that maintains both public confidence and

professional commitment, or is it more that Manitoba is simply earlier along the

developmental continuum of the new accountability? Further research is needed to

address this question, and would help to inform future initiatives in Manitoba.

The new accountability attracts the attention of principals (Elmore and Fuhrman, 2001,

p. 68), in large part because they play a pivotal role in mediating the conversations that result from such initiatives. Principals respond to accountability demands in a variety of ways, some of which may be situational and some of which may result from the individual meanings each attached to *accountability for student learning*. Professional autonomy matters, as does principals' sense of personal accountability for the broad education of students. Both internal and external forms of accountability are in operation, and it may be that maintaining a balance at the school level between the two is the greatest challenge for principals.

Implications

   Implications for Practice. At a very practical level, it would seem from this study that the tension felt by elementary principals around data needs addressing. Implied in the interviews with principals is a need for professional development in the creation, representation, and use of data. At another level, and perhaps more importantly, results suggest that principals would benefit from enhancing skills in the conversations that are needed with constituents in order to develop common understandings about data, and agreements around the kinds of data sets that need to be created and the ways in which they will be used. This speaks to the one of the purposes intended by accountability initiatives: to facilitate dialogue about the purposes of public schooling. The development and use of data is one of the fronts along which that dialogue should likely occur.

   At the level of the individual school principal, there is a second important implication for practice. The ambiguity around conceptualizations of *accountability for student learning*, and the concurrent governance trends, suggests that school principals

need to have an understanding of the key aspects of the current accountability discourse. An understanding of the frameworks for viewing and understanding alternative forms of accountability, whether that is the four alternative approaches suggested by Leithwood and Earl (2000) or the dual forms described by Robinson and Temperley (2000) or both, would enable school administrators to recognize patterns and themes in accountability expectations. The implication for public school principals is to locate their work as school leaders, and their conceptualizations of *student learning*, within this era of the new accountability. Equipped with that kind of knowledge, principals are more likely to be able to craft responses to expectations for accountability in ways that determine a best fit for their unique school situations.

Implications for Research. At the outset, this study was designed to capture the experiences of public *elementary* school principals in Manitoba. It may be that experiences of senior secondary school administrators might differ because of the proximity of graduates to others who judge the worth of their schooling, such as post-secondary institutions and employers, and because students themselves are able to critique their school experience. Principals of independent schools may also describe their experiences differently from those in this study. In any event, the perspective of principals is important because they are key individuals who must design ways to resolve the issues created by expectations for accountability. Further study of principals in other contexts might improve our understanding of a wider variety of ways that this plays out in schools.

Secondly, suggested by the findings of this study is the importance of the role that school divisions play in schools' responses to demands for accountability. Further

exploration of the impact of the school divisions might help to illuminate the ways in which principals and their schools respond to accountability initiatives. There might be value in looking at jurisdictions which operate without school divisions, such as independent schools within Manitoba or schools in countries such as New Zealand where public education is conducted without a school district structure, in order to compare the ways in which principals experience accountability imperatives.

A third implication for research is to look more closely at principals' conceptualizations of responsibility and accountability. The whole sense of personal responsibility for concerns of children and families beyond prescribed curricula was a strong theme that came through from principals in this study. There needs to be further examination to determine where within the conceptual frameworks of accountability that such a sense lies. Furthermore, the suggestion made by principals in this study that responsibility is almost synonymous with accountability raises questions. The literature indicates that in order for a responsibility to be considered accountability, there must be a requirement or anticipated requirement of reporting. What effect does the Manitoba context, absent of high stakes such as career determination as consequences of reporting, have on principals' perceptions of responsibility and accountability? From another viewpoint, this notion also indicates that there is a need to deepen our understanding of professional approaches to accountability (Leithwood and Earl, 2000), in particular those aspects that are concerned with the individual's internalized sense of responsibility.

Finally, the results of this study indicate that the framework posed by Robinson and Temperley may be of value in understanding the root of tensions that principals

experienced between professional approaches and the other three forms of accountability expectations. It would seem that internal modes, embodied by professional approaches, are conflicted with external forms because these other forms are rooted in behavourial conceptualizations of accountability and internal forms in cognitive conceptualizations. The demarcation between cognitive and behavioural accountability is in the internal/external forms that any expectation may take. Exploration of this area of congruence between the two frameworks may help to deeper our understanding of the professional approaches as described by Leithwood and Earl (2000), and to situate the personal sense of responsibility that principals described in this study.

Implications for the Researcher. As a researcher, I must acknowledge that internalizing the understandings from this study will take some time and, necessarily, continued work with the contents of it through extended writing and representations. Additionally, this work has raised questions that may result in my involvement in further research into the ways in which the new accountability plays out in the field and in my own day-to-day work as principal. I have a sense that as the new improvement paradigm for institutions and government, accountability is going to continue to be a contested terrain. As a researcher I am interested to explore further and learn from the perspective of school leaders as they work in accountability contexts.

A personal objective of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of accountability perspectives and the ways in which these presented in the field to other principals in settings similar to that of the researcher. This goal was met, and in doing so has provided me with a focussed lens through which accountability initiatives can be

viewed. This is important to my work as a public school elementary principal because it is morally and legally my responsibility to provide the leadership necessary to respond to these initiatives in ways that provides the best benefits for the children at my school. Getting it right for these children and their families entails a blend of embracing, mediating, and buffering the effects of varying yet differentiated accountability imperatives that flow from sources both internal and external to the school and its community. In order that the two goals of the new accountability—increased public discourse about the purposes of school, and increased effectiveness of schools—are served by the leadership that I must provide and encourage in others, it is important for me to have this depth of understanding. I am now able to think more critically about these imperatives as they arise, and to situate the everyday work I do as school principal within this new era of accountability.

Appendix A: Letter to Superintendents
Date

Dear Superintendent

Re: Permission to Conduct Research

I am writing to ask for your support in proposed study that I am undertaking towards requirements for a Master's Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Manitoba. As part of that research, I would like to interview up to three experienced elementary school principals from your division.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which public elementary school principals manage accountability expectations. Accountability in this context means requirements that are designed to ensure the effectiveness of school efforts toward student learning. This study will examine Manitoba public elementary school principals' views on:

- What sorts of accountability expectations do they experience, from what sources do these expectations arise, and in what form are these requirements to be met.
- To what extent are these accountability expectations independent, competing, or contradictory, and the complexities that might arise from multiple accountability imperatives.
- The ways in which principals manage these demands and how they explain the strategies that they adopt.

Attached is a summary of the area of my work, containing the focus of this study and the central research questions.

I am asking that you provide a comprehensive list from your division of potential volunteers who meet the following criteria:
1. Elementary School Principal (K-4, K-5, K-6, K-8, or K-S1)
2. Five years' experience, or more, as a school administrator (at any level).
3. Three years' experience at their current elementary school.

In order to ensure their anonymity, I will randomly select principals from the list and ask for volunteers until I have up to three principals who have agreed to participate. Names of participants as well as any identifying characteristics will be changed to protect identities. Volunteers will not be paid for their participation. Interviews with each of the three volunteers will be held in 2 one-hour sessions, at a time and place convenient to each person. This may be during the day, evening, or on weekends depending upon volunteers' preferences. These interviews will be held in March/April.

Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. I will be the only person who will hear the tapes and read the field notes that I make. The tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study, approximately four months after the interviews. I will not be asking to see any reports, documents, records, nor evaluations of schools or students.

. . . 2

Re: Permission to Conduct Research
Date
Page 2

The scope of this study will involve interviews with elementary principals from urban and rural school divisions. The names of the school divisions will not be used in any reporting of the results, and descriptions will keep confidential the identities of the school divisions.

I am hopeful that the study will contribute to the ongoing debate about educational accountability by providing the perspective of the elementary school principal, and that the results will inform policy developers about the ways that accountability initiatives play out at the school level. Participating in this study will ensure that the views of principals from your school division are represented. I will provide to you and to participants a summary of the results at the conclusion of the study.

I will contact you by telephone by March 15 in order to answer any questions that you may have or to provide you with any further background information that you may require. If you would prefer to speak to me prior to that date, please feel free to call me at home at xxx-xxx-xxxx, or contact me by email at xxxxxxxxxx@xxxx.xx. I am on an unpaid leave-of-absence from the Lord Selkirk School Division for 2005-06, and consequently available at any time to talk with you.

I appreciate your support for this research, and look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely

Gayle M. Halliwell

Attachment

Appendix B: Letter of Consent and Instructions

Date

Dear Principal

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research study, entitled **Managing Accountability Expectations in Manitoba Schools: A Study of Eight Elementary School Principals**, and to outline instructions to you. I am undertaking this project as part of requirements towards a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration, at the University of Manitoba. Permission to contact principals in your division was provided to me by (name). I will keep confidential the names of principals who have agreed to participate.

This letter of consent and instructions, a copy of which will be given to you for your records, is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you an overview of what the research is about, the criteria for your involvement, and what your commitment is should you agree to be a participant. If you would like more detail about any of the aspects described below, or information not included here, feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and completely, and to understand the additional information that I may give to you**.**

Purpose of the Research: The purpose of this study is to explore how public school elementary principals manage accountability expectations and strategies they use at their schools to resolve independent, competing, and contradictory accountability expectations. Participants in this study will be eight principals, representing different school divisions, all of whom have had 5 years' experience as a school administrator with 3 years as a school principal at their current school.

Procedure Involving Participants: If you participate in this study, two interviews with you will be conducted, and these will be not less than three weeks apart. The researcher, Gayle Halliwell, will conduct the interviews, and each will last approximately one hour, and not exceed one and a half hours. The time and place of the interviews will be arranged at your convenience. If you wish to telephone me, and it is long distance for you, I will cover the costs of any calling that you might incur in your efforts to understand the nature of and your participation in this project.

Attached is a one-page summary of my thesis area in order that you may read some background for the study. During the first interview, I will ask you questions about your views of expectations for accountability in Manitoba. Next, I will ask you to discuss the ways in which these expectations have impacted your work as principal. If you choose to continue in the study, I will return for a second interview. When I return for the second interview, within approximately four weeks, I will ask you to respond to a summary I have made of the analysis from the initial interviews, and I may ask you for further details about responses you made in the first interview. I will then give you opportunity to make any additional comments you may have. You may stop the interviews at any point, refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, and you may without penalty or consequence withdraw from the study at any time.

Risk: There should be no risk involved greater than you might experience in the normal conduct of everyday life.

Date
Page 2

Benefits of Participating: The study will contribute to the literature on educational accountability by providing the perspective of elementary principals, and will inform policy developers about the ways in which accountability initiatives have impact at the school level. Your participation will ensure that views you hold about educational accountability are represented in reports of the study

Recording and Transcription: I will tape record both the initial and follow-up interviews with you, and then transcribe the information for analysis.

Confidentiality of Information: I will make every effort to keep confidential your involvement in this research project. I will assign you a pseudonym on all transcripts, field notes, or written reports and summaries of the study. I will use a fictional name for your school division, although some of the information may be public knowledge and it may identify the school division you discuss. I will not be asking to see any reports, documents, or evaluations of your school nor students. I will disguise any information that would uniquely identify you or your school division, if and when it occurs in the transcription of or field notes. In all cases, I will be the only person who will hear the tape recordings of your interview and read the field notes. The tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the study, approximately four months after the interviews have been conducted.

Feedback about the Research: I will provide you with a summary of the results of this research at the conclusion of the project.

General Comments: This letter and attached consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you basic idea of what the research is about, and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

If you are willing to accept this invitation, please read the attached Consent Form. An email reply from you accepting this invitation will be your initial consent. Following receipt of your email, I will call you to set up an appointment for the first interview. You may sign the hard copy of the Consent Form at the first interview, and a copy will be left with you for your records. Should you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at home (xxx-xxx-xxxx) or by email at xxxxxxxxxx@xxxx.xx.

Sincerely

Gayle M. Halliwell

Attachments

Consent Form

Research Project:
Managing Accountability Expectations in Manitoba Schools: A Study of Eight Elementary School Principals

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and you agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release me as the researcher or involved institutions from our legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Researcher's Contact Information: Gayle Halliwell
                                            Home telephone:xxx-xxx-xxxx
                                              Email address: _____

Researcher's University Supervisor: Dr. Jon Young
                                              Office number: 204-474-9017; Email: youngjc@umanitoba.ca

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Boards. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or email margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records.

Participant's Name _____
Your mailing address (To send a hard copy of this form, as well as the summary of the results of the study):

_____

_____   _____
       Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
       Researcher's Signature   Date

For the second interview:
Your signature below indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and you to agree to continue as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release me as the researcher or involved institutions from our legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name _____

_____   _____
       Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
       Researcher's Signature   Date

Appendix C: Background
(This was sent to participants as background information prior to the first interview.)

Intent:
      This project will explore the perceptions and practices of public elementary school principals as they respond accountability initiatives in Manitoba that require that principals and teachers be held accountable for student learning in their schools.

Background:
      A significant number of recent educational reform initiatives have been designed to hold schools more accountable (Leithwood & Earl, 2000), and along with these developments the operating definition of accountability in public education has shifted. Prior to the 1990s, emphasis had been placed on fiscal and organizational efficiency. However, Adams and Kirst (1999) noted that "beginning in the mid-1980s, the account citizens increasingly demanded revolved around the academic performance" of students (p. 463). This shift has resulted in a lack of agreement around four fundamental questions: (1) who is expected to provide the account, (ii) to whom the account is owed, (iii) what is to be accounted for, and (iv) what are the consequences of providing an account (Leithwood, 2003, p. 1).
      As a public institution in a democratic society schools must necessarily be held accountable (Adams and Kirst, 1999). With the new focus of accountability requirements clearly on student learning, questions relating to the accountable unit and the content of the account have seemingly been resolved for now. However, controversy arises over to whom an account is owed, and over the form and consequences of that account. For example, demands for schools to be externally accountable to the public are juxtaposed with compelling educational literature encouraging schools to become more internally accountable (Shipps and Firestone, 2003).
      Principals in public schools must work within organizational, public, and professional arenas. Developing an approach to accountability requires some level of agreement, and constituents in each arena have contradicting ideas about the answers. Leithwood and Earl (2000) proposed that such ideas can be understood within a framework of four accountability alternatives: market, decentralized decision-making, managerial, and professional. These alternatives are based on the mechanisms that are used to bring about accountability, and form dissimilar ways to achieve that goal. The variance between the alternatives lies in who is owed the account, and form that the account will take.
      In the Manitoba context, accountability arose as a public issue in the early 1990s. The document entitled *Reforming Education: New Directions* signaled the shift in accountability for Manitoba teachers and principals. Since its publication, a number of initiatives have been undertaken with a goal to increasing accountability by schools for student learning, including Schools of Choice, provincial testing, Advisory Councils for School Leadership, and more. Public school principals are faced with demands for accountability mechanisms that represent disparate alternatives, from constituents in three overlapping arenas of their work, within a context of a set of policies lacking in coherence. How do principals perceive and respond to these expectations for accountability?

Appendix D: First Interview Questions

I will start by getting a little background about your experience as a school principal. I will then ask you several questions, and I would like you to say as much as you would like to help me understand your responses. If possible, please provide examples to help explain your responses.

1. What professional preparation and years of experience do you have as a school principal?

2. How long have you been at this school as principal?

3. If you have administrative experiences at other schools, and/or at other grade configurations, what might those be?

Now I would like you to begin responding to the research questions. The abstract that I sent to you indicated that a democratic society expects that public schools are accountable, but there has been a shift in emphasis from accountability for organizational efficiency to that of student learning. I described that a lack of consensus about two aspects of accountability, *to whom* schools are accountable and *what purposes* does an account serve, has resulted in a variety of educational policy initiatives focused on accountability requirements for Manitoba public schools. I would like to know how you think about and deal with this in your work as principal.

4. I am interested in knowing how you as the school leader have been able to become prepared (skilled, knowledgeable) about accountability expectations. What did you do to find out about accountability initiatives as they developed? For example, did you consult any other administrators, department of education staff, research, or professional sources? Did you attend workshops or sessions? Please tell me all of the sources that may have helped you prepare to meet the requirements of these initiatives.

5. What do you see are the main accountability expectations that you and your teachers are required to meet?
- Who is holds these expectations of the school?
- In what ways do these expectations come to you and the school?
- What is the form and substance of these expectations?

6. To what extent do you experience contradictions between and among these expectations? For example, you may have experienced a situation where parents wanted certain things included in the school plan, but teachers did not agree. A second example might be disagreements amongst staff about the value and use of provincial testing.
- Which accountability initiatives are most problematic for you as principal?
- Describe the difficulties that problematic accountability initiatives cause for you?
- Are there some accountability initiatives that seem to be counterproductive to the work of your school?

7. What strategies do you as principal use to respond to accountability expectations?
- How do you organize people, resources, and processes to meet accountability expectations?
- What criteria do you use to prioritize accountability expectations?

- Describe any accountability expectations that you choose to avoid or ignore, and tell me your rationale.

8. How significant is the role played by your school division with respect to your school's responses to accountability expectations?

9. Are there any recommendations that you might make to help school leaders as they manage accountability expectations in their schools?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to add, or is there additional information regarding accountability expectations that you think I should take into consideration?

Those are all of my questions. As a close to this interview, I have a rating scale that I would like you to complete. I am interested in understanding the intensity of accountability expectations experienced by you, compared to accountability expectations themselves and to other demands made of you, in your role as principal. It should only take a few minutes, and I will pack up my materials while you complete this. If you have any questions, or would prefer to omit any items on the scale, you are free to do so.

Appendix E: Categorical Coding Excerpt

The following is an excerpt from a transcript of the first interview with Alf. Categorical coding was done by hand, using categories developed on re-readings of the total of all transcripts.

Categories: Range (referring to the range of accountability expectations as described by principals), Conflict (referring to the experience of conflict or tension between accountability initiatives), Strategies (referring to the ways in which principals responded to accountability demands). "Most problematic" accountability demand was identified. Additional categories included: Source (referring to the origin of the demand for an account), and Form (referring to the way in which the demand came to the principal).

Alf   …our former CEO had a saying that you can't expect what you don't inspect. So (the division) was very much into making sure that everything was going the way it was and counting or being accountable that way. Now it is more we are left to our professional integrity, our professional judgment that things are going well, that the kids are learning, that the classes – the students are engaging in learning and we are. There is less of a divisional expectation of accountability and more of making sure the parents know we are accountable for the learning of their kids. And in fact the parents are very vocal about this in this community especially.

Rsrchr   OK

Alf   This is a community where it is middle to upper middle class community for the most part and parents have a high expectation of the school that their kids will learn and that this takes place. That is our primary function in the community is to make sure that happens.

R   You mentioned test marks, so what other things do you see as sort of accountability expectations for your school.

Alf   Especially in the area of kids who have learning problems there is a great…a very vocal element out there, the parents whose children need help are very vocal and letting us know that if they feel their kids aren't getting the help that they need. So whether it is through lobbying for more funding for the kids, for the special needs kids…you know for the L2 and so on kids, or if (for) more Ed Assistants in the classroom. In (our division) we have a unit staffing formula which is

very, very detailed to 4 decimal places--it defines the amount of staff we can have in the school.

So we have to staff our school to make sure we have enough classroom teachers but also make

sure we have enough student assistants and educational assistants out there to help the kids that

need help. So there is a big push for that, from the parents…they are very vocal about this. And

rightly so…they lobby for their kids; they are advocating for their kids who need help and they

come to me and say, "you know why aren't we getting more assistant help in the classroom".

R   I was reading your staff board to see, just to gauge what your staffing levels were like in terms of

support.

Alf   Well we have 4 Ed Assistants, two student assistants who are a lower level in terms of pay scale

and expectation. They do more one on one tutoring with the kids.   For example, we have a

math enhancement program at the kindergarten level now and that person goes in there in the

kindergarten class and works with the kids and works with all the kids in there. She can't do the

same kinds of things our Ed Assistants do but she (they) play a very valuable role.

R   So you mentioned that parents come in here and kind of put a fist on the desk and say… Are

there other ways that these expectations come to you from the parents?

Alf   Through Parent Council. We have a very active parent council who do not only a lot of

fundraising and organizing volunteer for us but they expect to hear…they want to hear…what

we are doing in the schools, what kind of programs we have…what kind of academic programs

we have, what kinds of co-curricular programs we have.   Why the teachers are away on in-

service days. They want to know why the 10 days that we have to look after our kids. And you

don't have to look after them. So we go to the parent council and through our newsletters.

Every month we send out a monthly newsletter you know with 10 or 11 pages of information for

the parents plus the teachers are expected to communicate with the parents through some means

either through a classroom newsletter, or through daily contacts with some of the parents. Not

only the parents of the kids that need help, but to all the parents. Just to touch base with them

and to let them know this is what is happening. We have the agenda system for Grades 3, 4 and

5 where the kids are expected to bring these agendas home, signed by the parents, back to the

teachers, the teacher signs them and all the work that they have for that next day or for the next

little while is indicated in the agenda book. There is a lot of…..I have a very high expectation of

the teachers to do that and they do.

R   So do all of those kinds of demands from parents come to this office or do they come other

ways. Do they come divisionally as well?

Alf   They mostly come through the schools somehow. In fact, (our superintendent) was just kidding

me the other day. (The superintendent) had a call from a disgruntled parent. The superintendent

says, "I have been here 4 years and this is the first time someone has called me." The

superintendent figured this must have been really serious. It wasn't. The guy was a bit of a wing

nut but he needed to be heard and he didn't feel that I heard him and so he went to see (the

superintendent) and (the superintendent) just passed him back to me. But yeah, so it is mostly

through the school, either through the teachers being contacted or the Vice Principal or me.

R   So, digging a little deeper then. To what extent do you find that there are some contradictions

between some of these expectations. You mentioned, for example, that you have a staffing

formula that you have to keep to and yet you have parents who are advocating that there should

be more support staff to certain children or groups of children. I have some other examples that I

thought of, too. Sometimes staff disagree about the value of the testing and why it should be

occurring so you end up with those discussions, yet you are required to do the testing. The staff

may say that this doesn't fit with what we think should be happening. Or where parents think

something should be happening in the school plan but staff don't see it that way. Can you talk

about those things?

Alf   As a principal, and my vice-principal and I, we have to often do a lot of, not negotiating, but

explaining why, what restrictions we work under. Why we can't have an EA in every

classroom. Why we have to be more restricted in the amount of extra help we can give. One of

the things that we have a philosophy, or I have a philosophy that I try to maximize the teaching

staff--classroom teachers--to make the classrooms smaller so that the teachers have less kids in

the classroom. The trade off is that they have less EA time available.   But you make it very

clear to the teacher that for them to get this benefit they have to really differentiate in instruction.

And so we insist, we make sure, the teachers are teaching to all the kids in the class--smaller

number, but they differentiate their instruction. And then we go to the parents and explain to them, "We can't have an EA in your child's classroom but your child's teacher has less kids so she can spend more time one on one with your child." But this all has to be explained to the parents. And that is that we do. We try to sell them on the idea that it is better to have more classroom teacher time available for your kid. That is the trade off. It is a philosophy that we believe in and so far, for the most part, parents accept that. I know they say, "You run the school, you know what you are doing. We'll accept the fact that you have limited resources". In general this is what they say, "You have limited resources so use them the way you feel will have the most benefit for all the kids and hopefully my kid will be included in that."

R   Which accountability initiatives are most problematic for you as principal?

Alf   The most problematic is dealing with parents who children need something extra. For the most part, parents are quite happy with what their children are getting here. They communicate that quite well, quite vividly to us.   Every year we put out a questionnaire…a survey….like a report card…and we take 25 – 30% of the families and we send them out this 4 – 5 page survey and they are asked all kinds of questions about their level of satisfaction with all the things that we do at the school. And we rate very, very highly on that. Any of the comments we get from them, we get a lot of comments on the survey, we try to act on them.   For example, the survey we did last month there was a feeling amongst the respondents, 8 out of 52, had a problem with the kind of triad conferencing we do--with the kids with their portfolios in the classroom with their teacher and parents. They want more time one on one with the teacher. We tell them that, and we have always told them this, if you want more time with the teacher just talk to the teacher and arrange to see the teacher. But obviously these 8 parents didn't read the newsletter or what. But they wanted more time so we are going to get back to them, to all the parents, and just tell them if you want to talk to the teacher they are available just contact them and let them know you would like to talk to them either that evening or later on. So we act upon the things that are suggested to us; we do the best we can to try and accommodate the situation.

Appendix F: Second Interview Questions

1. Looking at the highlights of the data from the first interviews, how does the summary represent the comments you made in the first interview?
- Do you have any general or specific comments that you would like to make?
- Were there any surprises for you?
- Were there any confirmations for you?

2. Does the range reflect all of the initiatives that you perceive are accountability expectations?
- Would you like to add any?
- Are there any that you would disagree with?
- Are there any from your list that you would like to clarify or expand upon?

3. You will notice that I have a "category X". These seemed to me to be expectations that did not fit into the categories provided by the literature. They seem to relate mostly to family concerns, social and emotional issues, conflicts with parents over their child's behaviour and academic programs, and the like. Could you help me to understand more clearly what these expectations are about?

4. I am interested in what seems to be very little sense of conflict or competing demands that principals expressed to me in the first interviews. Do I have this accurately, or is there more about this that I should know?

5. If I could now draw your attention to the list of strategies that I heard principals tell me that they use to respond to accountability demands. Are there any strategies that should be added or deleted?
- Do you want to comment on or expand on any of these?

6. I seem to get the idea that principals in general see all of the things that come from the province and the division (for the most part) to be "accountability" initiatives or demands. Is that the case?

7. I also seem to understand that principals prioritize their work on accountability expectations based on whether or not a particular expectation is in the realm of curriculum and assessment (that is assessment for learning, formative assessment). If it is not in this realm, then it is lower priority. Is this the case for you?

8. Finally, can I ask you to comment on something that surprised me. My materials and scripts were intended to get information from principals about accountability for student learning, yet it seems to me that principals talked about many other accountability areas in their jobs. I am wondering about this. Why do you think this happened?

9. Do you have anything else that you would like to add or think that I should know to help me better understand principals' perceptions of accountability expectations?

Appendix G: Highlights From First Interview

Most Problematic Accountability Demands
Parents who want their child's progress compared to others
Accountability initiatives where all the detail is done and there is no room to move (and this includes curriculum as well as others)
Standards tests
None; it is all in a day's work
Parents whose kid needs something extra
Not being treated with dignity and with integrity (by those who are making the demands)
Comparing test/assessment scores with other schools

Intensity of Accountability Demands
Most intense: Meeting curricular standards
                        Developing and using data
                        Developing annual school plans
Least intense: Schools of Choice
                        Promotional activities
Notable: - Bill 13 added by 3 people
                    - Safety added by 3 people
- "Provincial mandates; provincial legislation;
Great Buffalo" – in most
intense grouping

Eight items were on the intensity rating scale:
1. Developing Annual School Plans
2. Annual Report to the Community
3. Meeting Curricular Standards
4. Provincial and divisional assessments
5. Advisory Councils/Parent Councils
6. Schools of Choice
7. Promotional Activities
8. Developing and Using Data

Conflicts between expectations experienced by principals
Involving parents and community vs. no shows at evening/afternoon sessions on school planning path
Divisional transfers for principals vs. developing trusting relationships with the community
Parental expectations for EA time in the classroom vs. staffing classrooms so that the teachers have less kids in each class
School planning vs provincial priorities and divisional strategic plans
School improvement planning vs mandates from province and division
Reporting to communities vs developing data that is reliable
School planning based on data vs data systems that are questionable
School planning/reporting based on data vs lack of control over many variables that affect outcomes
Classroom visits/visibility vs office-based work/telephone/forms/data
Divisional/provincial priorities vs teachers' views of what should be a priority in curriculum
Government and divisional documents are givens vs. what kids in a particular school need
Curriculum implementation and school planning vs changing timelines, lobby groups who get things changed, uncertainly from province
Teacher resistance to an initiative vs divisional mandates
Annual planning vs long-range vision from province and/or division
Provincial assessments vs assessments developed "for learning" within the division

Range of Accountability Demands

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Market Approaches	Report to Community Comparison of test/assess't data	Report to Community	School Profiles	Report to Community	Marketing Schools of Choice (done in the past, less so now)	Report to the Community	Schools of Choice Report to the Community Comparison of test/assess't data	Comparison of test/assessment data Report to Community School Profile
Managerial	Safe School Code of Conduct Financial	Technology Budget Division Strategic Plan Special Needs Resolving Disputes Policy Manual Safe Schools EDI Nutrition Policy	Safe School Budget Alignment with division Staffing Safe School Divisional Plan	Bill 13 Workplace Health & Safety procedures/forms Emergency Preparedness Safe School Paperwork	Student Behaviour Behaviour Plan IEPs Program Evaluation School Goals Emergency Preparedness Dress Code Allergies Nutrition	Bill 13 Grade configurations Nutrition Behaviour Plan Safe School Providing quantitative data Technology	Staff assignment Budget Staffing levels	Improvement Plan Behaviour plan IEP Bill 13 Finances Maintenance Staffing Staff Evaluation
Decentralized Decision-Making	Parent Council	Parent Council School Plan	Parent Council School Plan	Parent Council School Plan	Parent Council Staffing Committee	(does not have a Parent Council) School Plan	Parent Council - extra and co- curricular activities - programs - inservices - 10 days/yr	School Plan Parent Council
Professional	Professional Conversations - with students, staff, and board office PLC Student-led conferences Leadership sharing Reflective practice Standards Testing/assessment	PLCs Curriculum Teaching parents about school Student-led conferences Portfolios Standards tests Gr 3 Assessment Individual Improvement Plans (staff) Teacher Evaluation	Curriculum Aboriginal document Divisional assessments	Gr. 3 Assessment Standards testing Curriculum leadership New curriculum Professional development of staff	Report cards Dialogue Assessment PLCs	Divisional assessments Student led conferences Portfolios Report cards Curriculum EY Literacy Plan – divisional Student Engagement	Divisional assessments Portfolios Triad conferencing Dialog PLC Curriculum	Exams PLC Portfolios Pathing Report Cards Dialog and conversations Assessment Curriculum alignment

Partici-pant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cate-gory X	Responsibil-ity for student learning Tell parents how kids learn	Responsibil-ity to inform community and motivate them for EDI follow up	Support to families Community involve-ment Breakfast and lunch programs	Bill 13 in the way that it relates to parents' involve-ment in an individual child's education-al decisions	Fairness of student opportuni-ties Parenting Discipline outside of school Student safety beyond school	Social and emotional programming for problems Helping students learn to be people	Learning, especially for those kids who are struggling EA support in classrooms Communication about student learning	Giving parents information about the community.

Strategies that principals use to meet accountability expectations:

Dialogue with staff, with parents
Committees
Annual Surveys to staff, parents, students
Using budget to buy release time
Discussions – individual with teachers
School support services team; regular meetings
Review assessment practices with individual teachers
Walk abouts; cruising; visiting classrooms
Providing curricular resources
Providing targeted professional development (group)
Individual staff improvement plans
School PD committee, plan
Providing Professional readings to staff
Standardizing expectations for student behaviour
Staff - curriculum alignment; flow chart for writing traits
Collecting samples of student materials
Developing rubrics for assessment
Prioritize based on criteria "what is closest to the classroom"
Saving some pd budget for principal's determination
Applying for grants
Publishing school goals in handbook
Opening of school conferences 1-1 with parents
Develop a routine/framework the first time, then it becomes part of what you do (eg report to community)
Get involved in divisional committees that are deciding these things/providing leadership
Offer to chair a committee to get something done
Setting aside time at regular staff meetings for special topics/for professional development
Categorizing staff meetings: one for managerial issues, one for professional development
Divisional limits/parameters on schools of choice
Conversations with parents over a long period of time; keeping the dialog going
Lobbying for more funding for the kids (special needs)
Monthly newsletter
Classroom newsletters
Daily contacts with some parents
Agenda system for communication
Negotiating with parents about extra help in the classroom
Selling ideas to parents, such as smaller classes instead of more EAs
Accommodating parents who have needs outside of the system, such as meeting more frequently with teachers
Parent involvement

Email between parents, teachers, principal
Teachers' reports at Parent Council
Assemblies open to parents
Parent involvement in staffing committee
Parent involvement in budget committee
Reports at Parent Council from Budget and Staffing committees
Divisional restrictions on Schools of Choice—examples: No K, no adding of classes due to Schools of Choice enrolment
Using data from parent surveys for school planning
Divisional plan aligned with provincial priorities, school plan aligned with divisional plan
Aligning plans and activities with other schools in the same area
Protecting teachers from things that do not relate directly to the classroom
Ensuring that curriculum documents, pd, and conversations take priority
Being visible and in contact with kids—going out at recess, knowing their names, going on field trips with them
Being visible and in contact with parents
Discipline kids with dignity; using Restitution Theory
Mediating kids in conflict; parents in conflict over their kids
Get a feel for whether staff support an initiative—bring it to a staff meeting and decide together whether it gets lots of energy or whether it is something that one or two people/the principal can do in less time with less energy
Providing time to teachers to contribute to divisional and provincial initiatives
Using professional learning community/committee to prioritize initiatives
Discontinuing programs that have been regulated too closely such as swimming
Giving less priority to those initiatives that seem to result from incidents in other jurisdictions, school safety for example
Providing data to community, parents, staff
Integrating the initiative into what we already are doing—figuring out how to get it done without changing what we do.
Don't take everything to staff; screen them from things that are not directly related to the classroom
School planning around only those things that are in the divisional plan
School Team meeting to look at report card results
Monitoring of plans by groups from the division that are outside of the school
Administrative team meetings across the division, in the family of schools, and/or with like grade configurations
Reviewing the school plan every 3 or 4 months to check on progress
Providing release time for teachers
Buying books and materials that facilitate curriculum changes/outcomes in the classroom
Division does the marketing of schools, mostly for high schools
Identical Kindergarten presentations across the division
Character education
Doing more of the parenting, acting as role models for parents, advising parents on parenting
Division paces and supports changes so that it is more reasonable; sometimes starting ahead of time so that we have time
Teacher supervision
Providing professional development for staff other than teachers and EAs
Administrative team meetings decide how the division will approach new mandates from province
Reports, requirements sent to school division and division collates and sends in
Covering classes so teachers can do assessments
Grade sharing (one up/down) so that teachers know students' profiles
Professional development committee develops plan based on teachers' individual pd plans and school plan
Being stubborn—doing something even though it isn't in the divisional plan/provincial priority
Developing routines so that teachers/staff have time to fit in accountability expectations
Priorizing provincial and divisional documents first
Delay doing some things that are not connected to learning in the classroom

Screen things before taking them to the teachers

Ignoring procedures such as purchasing, in order to get things done/get things to teachers that they need

Take it to parents—let them know what the expectations are by telling them about aspects of the school

Asking parent council to contribute to initiatives that require resources, such as artists, playground, technology, etc.

Asking parent council to find ways to bring the community into the information circue about the school/EDI results, etc.

Going to municipal council to let them know EDI results

Being a member of committees that develop divisional policy

Involving teachers in changes that directly affect their work: report card committee, assessment policy committee

Choosing a theoretical framework within which initiatives fit: eg. understanding by design gives context to assessment

Community vision meetings—school and division

Finding ways to bring in extra resources to the school

Approving individual teacher pd requests based on personal professional development plans

Division grants to encourage adoption of initiatives

Dropping other things that were in the school plan (initiated in house) when a new initiative from the province comes along so that we are not overloaded and work is realistic

Parent forum on particular issues that arise as a result of government mandates/directives such as Code of Conduct

Meeting requirements on face, but not necessarily in substance so that something doesn't necessarily have the all of the components and language that the government has specified but we did do it.

Compromise; helping teachers find a compromise position with parents and with the community

Meetings with staff group and parent groups

Persuasion—of both staff and parents to ideas, to develop common understandings

Find ways for teachers to use things that are familiar to them, to use their professional judgement in meeting expectations (assessment for example) Let teachers use the tools that they think work well for their children

Asking parent groups to design the school report to the community content framework

Using existing structures, such as parent council

Having informational nights for parents

See whether something from the government fits philosophically with my beliefs as a teacher and as an administrator—question it first

Take things from province as a given, must do the Great Buffalo orders

I tried to ignore one expectation, but in the end did it.

Taking the accountability expectations as guidelines, instead of to-the-letter directives

Talking to large groups of parents instead of meeting with individual parents about, for example, the grade 3 assessment.

Appendix H: Intensity Rating Scale

Participant Code: ___

Definition: Intensity is the quality or state of being intense; very great strength, force.
Existing or being of very high degree; very strong; extreme.
Of action, activity, strenuous, eager, ardent.
Having or showing strong feeling, purpose.   (from Webster's)

The following, regarded as accountability-based initiatives, have been developed in the past decade or so in Manitoba. Rate the comparative intensity of expectations you feel about each as school principal. On the left, compare the intensity to one another. On the right, compare the intensity to other responsibilities you have as school principal (staff supervision, student discipline, parent-school relations, fiscal management, etc.).

Circle the scale rating that best describes the intensity of the expectation.

Scale: 1 = Not intense   5 = Highly intense

Intensity: Compared to One Another Low-----High	Accountability Initiative	Intensity: Compared to Other Responsibilities Low----------High
1 2 3 4 5	Developing Annual School Plans, reporting on planning process, and including teachers, parents, and community in the process.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Developing Annual School Report to the Community, including the broad distribution of the reports to the community.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Meeting provincial and divisional curricular standards, including focussing on outcomes.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Completing provincial and divisional evaluations, including the publication of results.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Working with Advisory Councils for School Leadership, or parent advisory councils, and their participation in matters affecting school policies and procedures.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Offering Schools of Choice, where students may elect to leave or be admitted to your school.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Conducting promotional activities, to attract students from other schools or for public relations purposes.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Developing and using data for school planning, improvement of instruction, annual reports, public relations or other purposes.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5	Add any other accountability expectations that you might wish to: _____ _____	1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix I: Second Rater Form

The purpose of the second rater is to enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis of research data. The following instructions to the second rater will follow the analysis of interview scripts used in the research project entitled, "Managing Accountability Expectations in Manitoba Schools: A Study of Eight Elementary School Principals" (titled revised May 11, 2006).

Second rater: _____ Contact phone: _____

Graduate degree held: _____ Contact email: _____

Years experience as Manitoba school principal: _____

1. Thesis statement of purpose and questions are contained in the text box at the right.

2. Read the one-page synopsis of background to the research project, attachment A.

3. Randomly select one First Interviews from the list of 8:
A   B   C   D   E   G   H   I

4. Read the First Interview, using the interview record script, attachment B, if needed.

5. Analyze one of the two interviews by providing written, or recorded, answers to the following questions:

6. What would be included in the range of accountability demands as stated by the participant?

7. Enter these demands on the form, attachment C, representing the four types of accountability expectations as reflected in the research.

8. Identify any conflicts or competing demands that the participant may have identified in the interview.

9. List/describe the ways in which the participant responds to the accountability demands.

> This proposed qualitative research will examine the ways in which six public elementary school principals in Manitoba perceive and respond to demands that they and their staff be held accountable for student learning in their schools. Specifically the study will address the following questions:
> 1. What is the range and intensity of accountability demands that selected principals perceive as being made of them and their schools?
> 2. To what extent do these demands reflect independent, competing, or contradictory expectations and requirements, as reflected in the distinction in the research literature between market competition, decentralized decision-making, managerial, and professional accountability approaches?
> 3. How do selected principals respond to these demands, and how do they justify the strategies that they adopt?

10. Describe any justifications or explanations that the participant may have for given for the particular strategies the participant described.

11. Read the second interview script.

12. Describe any themes that may emerge or occur to you in light of both interview scripts.

Use as many additional sheets/forms as you may need.
(Three attachments are included: 1) One-page Abstract; 2) First and second interview Questions; and 3) Accountability Approaches Frame)

Appendix J: Intensity Rating Scale Results

Procedure:

After the interview questions were completed participants were asked to complete a rating scale containing 8 accountability initiatives. The rating scale contained two sections:

to compare the intensity of accountability initiatives to one another

to compare the intensity of accountability initiatives to other responsibilities of the job of principal. Participants were encouraged to add any other accountability initiatives that they may have felt were missed, and to rate the intensity of those as well.

Results:

The following graphs show the rating of intensity that each of the 9 participants gave to the 8 questions.

Question 1: Developing Annual School Plans
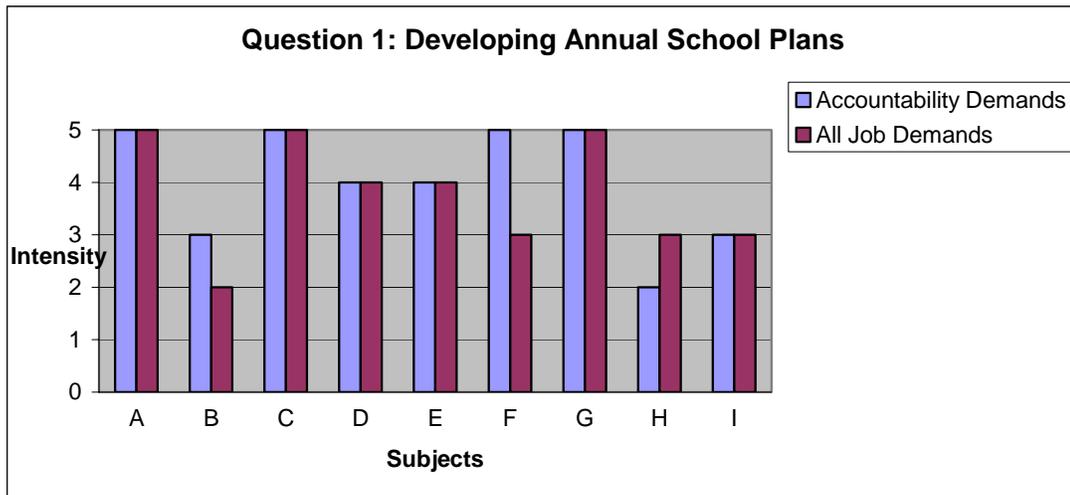
Question 1 asked principals to think about the intensity of developing annual school plans, reporting on the planning process, and including teachers, parents and community in that process. Compared to the other questions, the intensity felt by principals to annual school planning expectations was rated higher than most others. Several principals commented on, and showed documents/evidence, of creative and complex planning processes that clearly were designed to include as many voices in the process as feasible. There were, however, a smaller number who talked about simply filling in the provincial School Planning Report form and getting it in on time.

This graph also demonstrates that most principals did not vary greatly their rating of intensity of accountability initiatives when compared to the other responsibilities of their jobs (such as staff supervision, student discipline, parent-school relationships, fiscal management, and the like). This lack of variance is a pattern that exists across all of the 8 accountability initiatives listed on the rating scale, and to the ones added by principals themselves. That is, if a principal rated the intensity of an accountability initiative compared to other initiatives as a 5, there was a strong likelihood that the individual would give a similar intensity rating to even when compared to the rest of their responsibilities. This would indicate that if an accountability initiative is experienced as low intensity, then that holds true across all other aspects of the job. More significant, of course, are those initiatives that are experienced as high intensity demands. These hold their high intensity rating, even when compared with other responsibilities of the principal.

Question 2 asked principals to rate the intensity of developing an annual school report to the community, including the broad distribution of the reports.

Question 2: Annual School Report to the Community

Accountability Demands
All Job Demands

Intensi (y-axis: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
Subjects (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I)
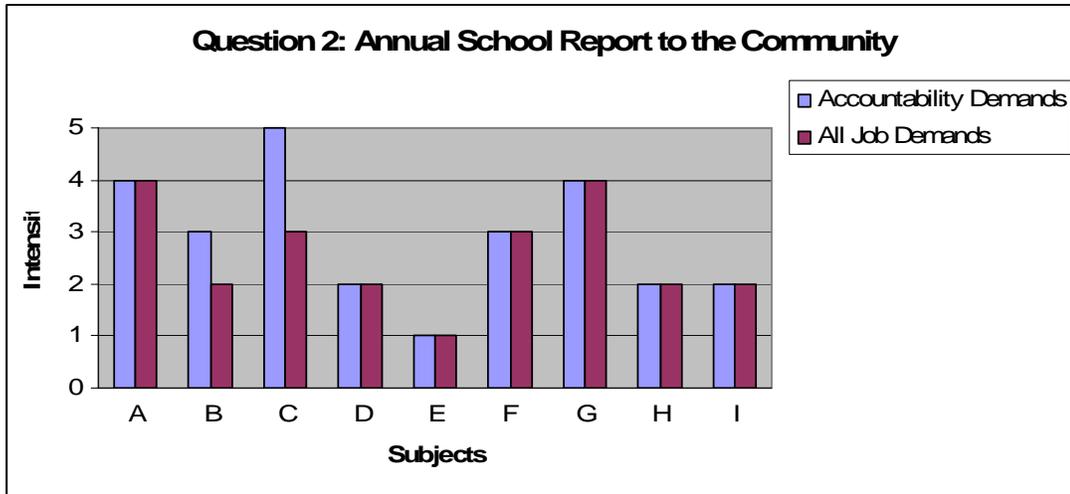
Reporting to the community was rated as less intense than developing annual school plans, but still somewhat higher than other accountability initiatives. Principals commented on issues that they felt were not foreseen, such as translating the report into several languages, which they had to resolve in order to fulfill this requirement.

Question 3 asked principals to rate the intensity they felt in completing divisional and provincial curricular standards, including focussing on outcomes.

Question 3: Meeting Curricular Standards

Accountability Demands
All Job Demands

Intensity (y-axis: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
Subjects (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I)
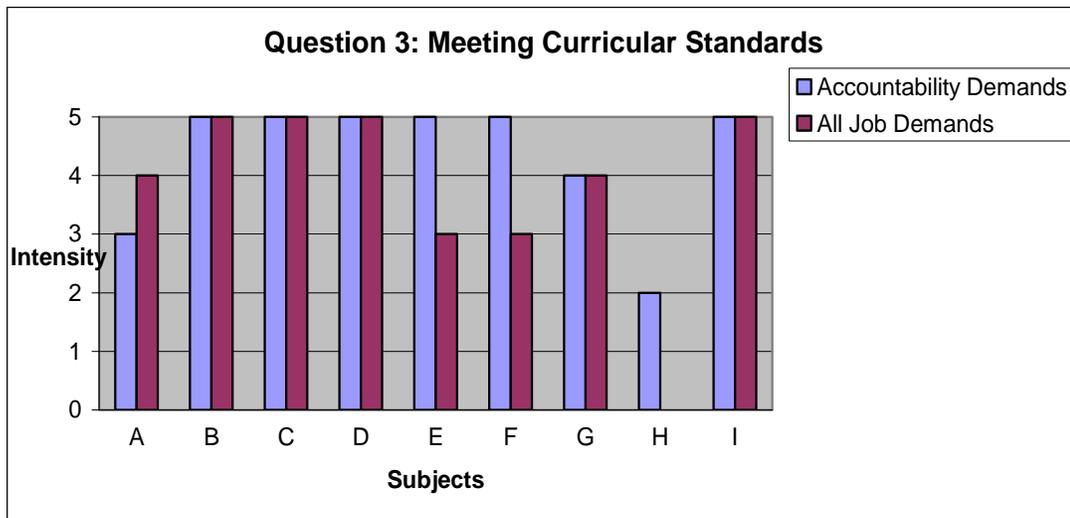
Meeting curricular standards was the most intensely felt accountability initiative. Most principals commented on student learning as the criteria by which they prioritized expectations from provincial, divisional, parental, and staff sources. Many principals saw curricula and standards as most closely connected to student learning as compared to all other accountability initiatives listed (and added) to the rating scale.

In Question 4, completing provincial and divisional evaluations, including the publication of results, was rated comparatively lower in intensity than school planning and meeting curricular standards.

Question 4: Provincial and Divisional Assessments

Intensity (y-axis, 0 to 5), Subjects (x-axis, A through I). Legend: Accountability Demands, All Job Demands.
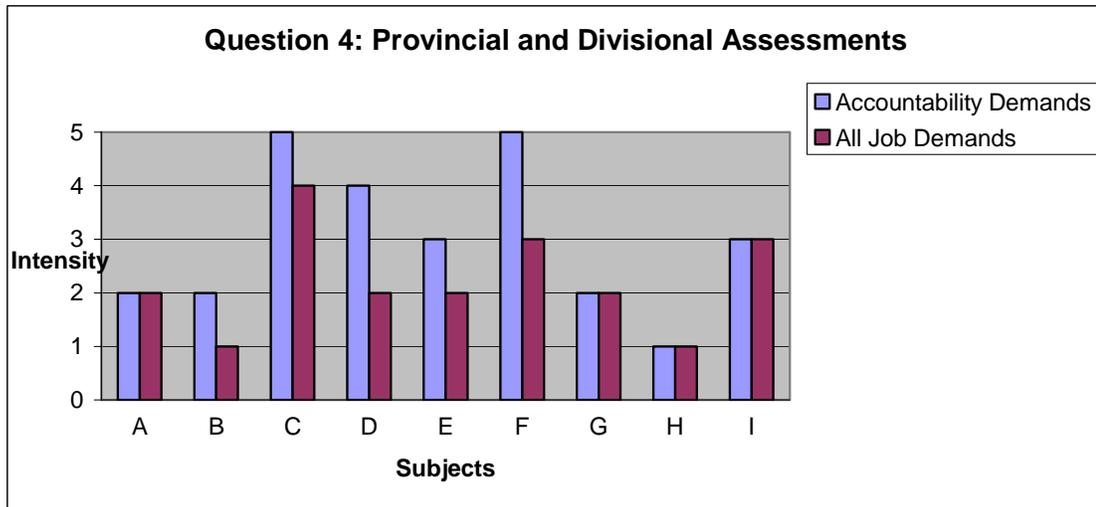
Question 4 also showed the greatest number (4) of participants showing a variance in rating the intensity of accountability initiatives to one another as compared to the rest of their responsibilities as principals.

The intensity of working with Advisory Councils for School Leadership, or parent advisory councils, including their participation in matters affecting school policies/procedures was rated in Question 5.

Question 5: Advisory Council for School Leadership/Parent Council

Intensity (y-axis, 0 to 5), Subjects (x-axis, A through I). Legend: Accountability Demands, All Job Demands.
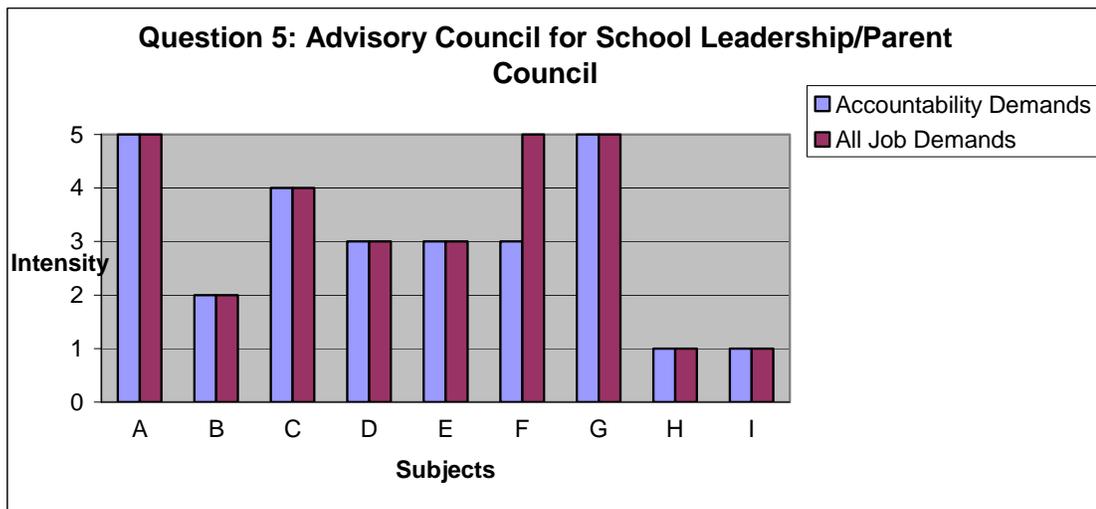
Interestingly, four principals rated this as high intensity (5 or 4), even when compared with other responsibilities of the job, and three principals rated this as low intensity (2 or 1). This polarization of opinion indicates a need for further exploration.

Schools of Choice was fairly consistently rated as low intensity by principals. Question 6 asked them to consider Schools of Choice "where students may elect to leave or be admitted to your school" so that they

were reminded of both scenarios within the initiative.

Question 6: Schools of Choice
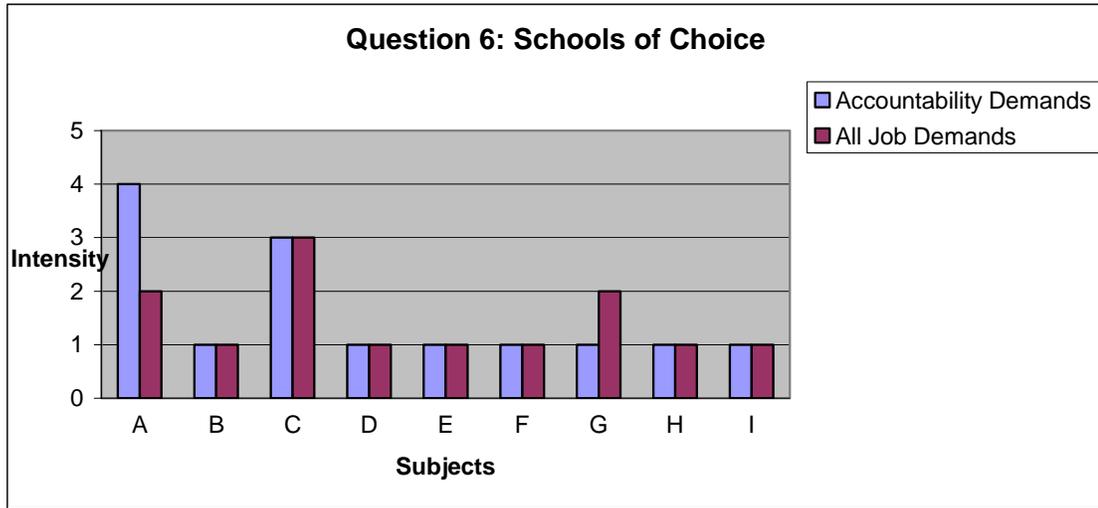
Schools of Choice was given the second lowest intensity rating by most participants. In the first interviews, not a single principal mentioned schools of choice as an issue within the discussion of accountability imperatives.

Similarly, conducting promotional activities, to attract students from other schools or for public relations purposes, was rated as the lowest intensity.

Question 7: Promotional Activities
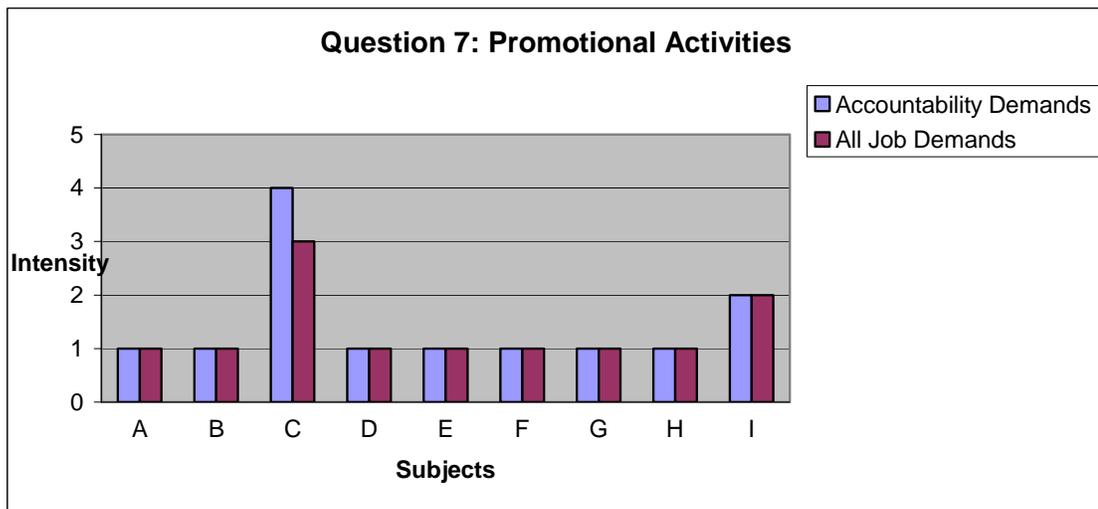
In Question 8, principals were asked to rate the intensity experienced in developing data for school planning, improvement of instruction, annual report, public relations, or other purposes. The ratings for the intensity of this accountability initiative were very high.

Question 8: Developing and Using Data
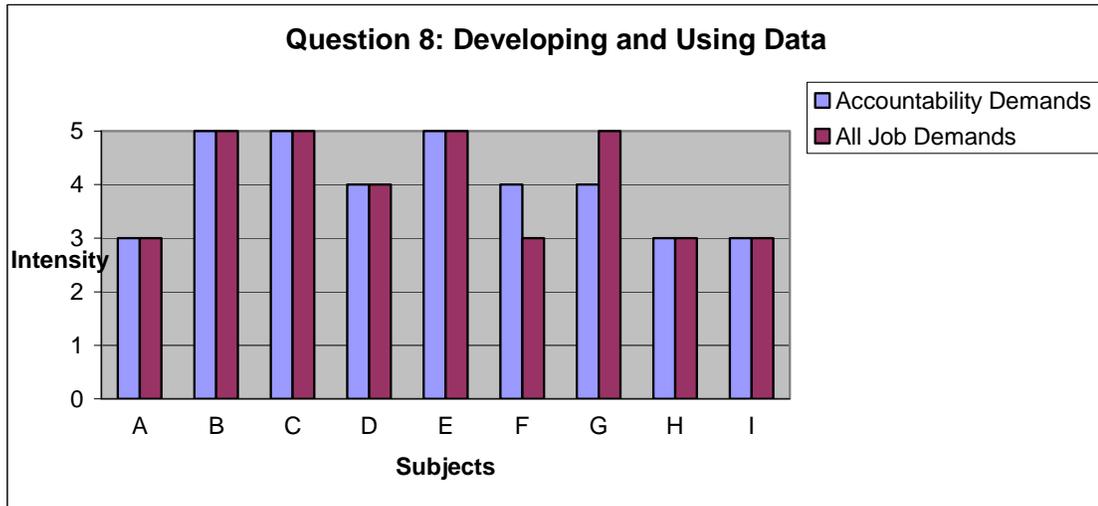
On average, principals rated the intensity of developing and using data to be at the same level as that experienced in annual school planning and meeting curricular standards.

It would appear that of the accountability initiatives listed on the rating scale principals felt most intensely the demands of annual school planning, meeting curricular standards, and developing and using data. The data indicates that this may also hold true when these are compared not only to one another, but to the other aspects of the job of principal.

At the end of the rating scale sheet, principals were given the opportunity to add other accountability expectations that they might wish to. One principal listed EDI (Early Development Instrument), and rated the intensity as 3 compared to other accountability initiatives, but only as a 1 compared to other responsibilities in their role as principal. One other principal listed staff growth and evaluation, and commented that this was very closely connected to meeting curricular standards. This participant rated staff growth and evaluation as intensity of 5 in both categories of response. There some items added by more than one participant, and these included Bill 13, Student Safety, and Provincial Mandates or Legislation (although in the latter, various terms were used to describe this). The following three graphs show these additional accountability expectations:

Question 8: Other (i) Bill 13

Question 8: Other (ii) Safety

Question 8: Other (iii) Provincial Mandates/Legislation
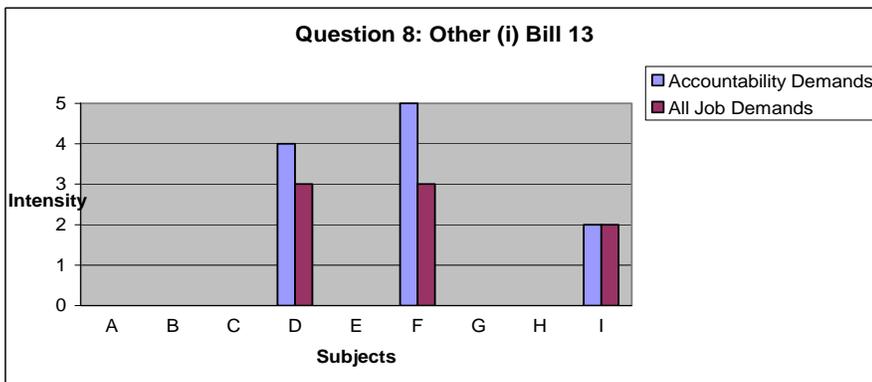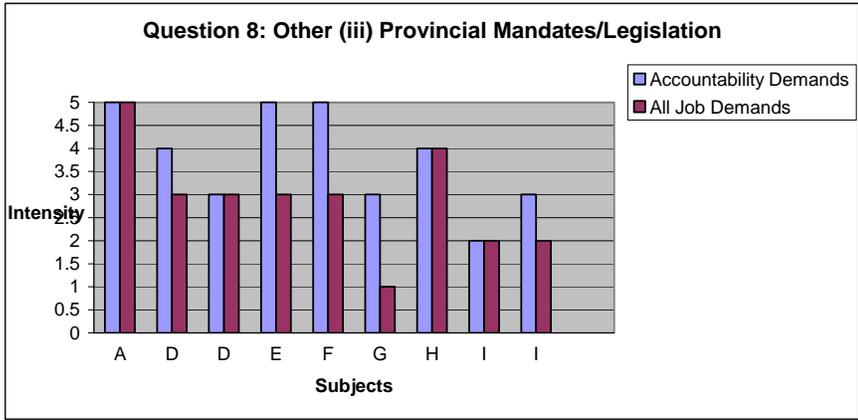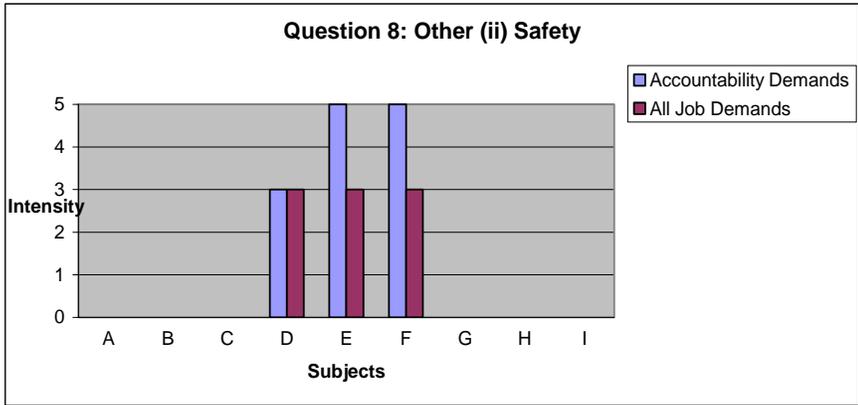
In Provincial Mandates/Legislation, five principals varied their intensity rating from one category of response to the other. This might indicate that they felt that while such a group of accountability initiatives was worth adding within the overall range of accountability initiatives listed, this group was not as intense. when compared to the other responsibilities that they had. More interesting if that principals felt that they had to add provincial legislation, or government mandates, as a separate item on the rating scale.

Appendix K: Key Word Search Results

1. Key Word Search: Sources
The *Sources* group of key word clusters shows usage of nouns used by participants to represent parents, students, staff, government, and school division. Nouns were not counted if they were part of participants' background and experience (asked in Questions 1-3 of Interview 1). Compound nouns, such as "student teacher" was counted only once, and in the cluster best representing the participants' intent as gleaned from the context. The summary of all participants' responses in all clusters of the Sources search is shown as:
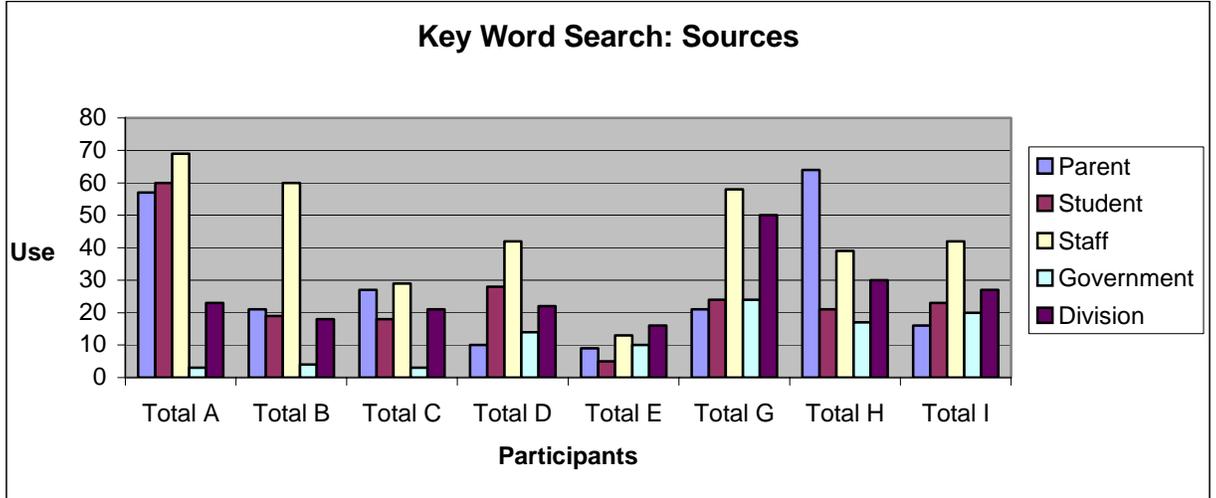
Results by Cluster:
Following are the cluster details and the results by cluster for the key word search Sources group.

Cluster 1: Parents
Key word cluster (all forms of words): parent, family, Mother, Mom, Dad, Father, adult (in context).
Key subset phrases: parent council, parent advisory council, parent group, PAC, ACSL, advisory council for school leadership.
The lower section of each bar shows the subset for *parent council* subset.
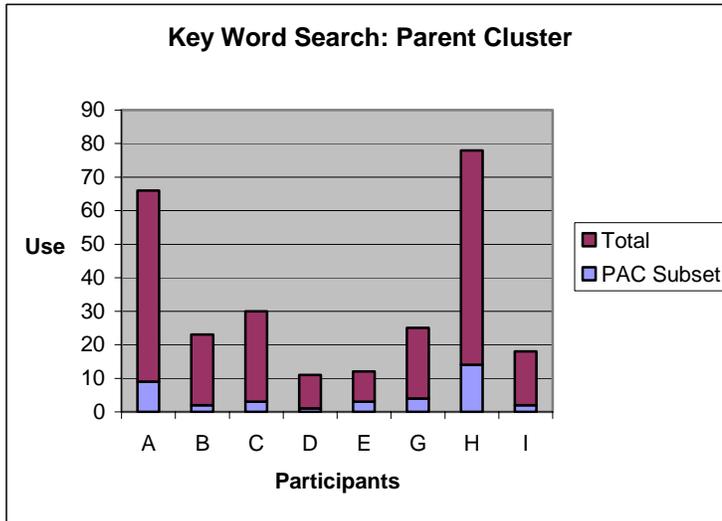
Cluster 2: Students
Key word cluster (all forms): student, kid, client
Incidents were not included if the word "*student*" constituted part of a staff position, for example "student assistant" (meaning educational assistant, paraprofessional).

Key Word Search: Student Cluster

A bar chart titled "Key Word Search: Student Cluster" with vertical axis labeled "Use" ranging from 0 to 70, and horizontal axis labeled "Participant" with categories A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I. Legend: Total. Values approximately: A = 60, B = 19, C = 18, D = 28, E = 5, G = 24, H = 21, I = 23.
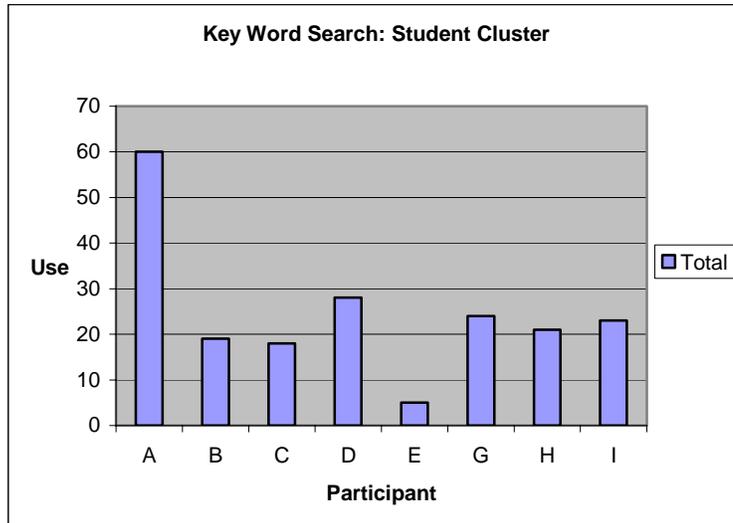
Cluster 3: Staff
Key word cluster (all forms): staff, teacher, professional, employee, assistant, para
Terms such as "professional staff" were counted as only 1 incident. Omitted were descriptions of the participants' background and education (Questions 1-3).
Results:

Key Word Search: Staff Cluster

A bar chart titled "Key Word Search: Staff Cluster" with vertical axis labeled "Use" ranging from 0 to 80, and horizontal axis labeled "Participant" with categories A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I. Legend: Usage. Values approximately: A = 69, B = 60, C = 29, D = 42, E = 13, G = 58, H = 39, I = 42.
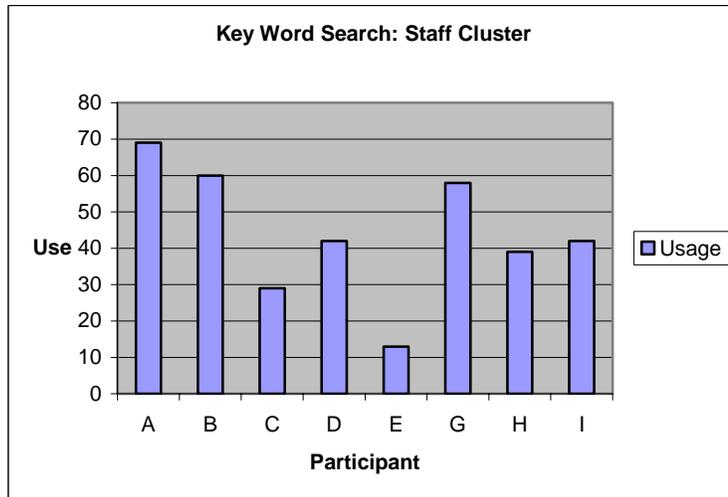
Cluster 4: Government
Key word cluster (all forms): government, province, buffalo, department (of education), minister (of education), bureaucrat, Manitoba (as in MET, MECY), document, Healthy Child.
Counted as one incident, "*government document*". The term "*Manitoba*" was not counted when it occurred as a geographical reference (example: I came to Manitoba in 1987).
Results:

Key Word Search: Government Cluster
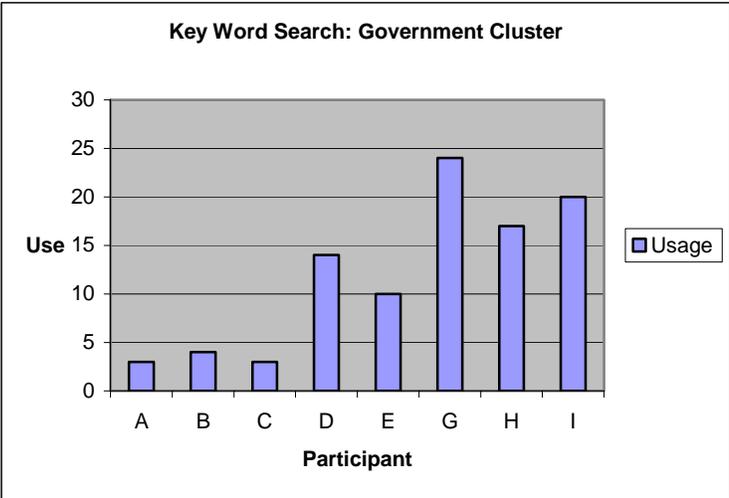
Cluster 5: Division
Keyword cluster (all forms): division, district, board, trustee, sup, superintendent, senior admin/istration.

Key Word Search: Division Cluster
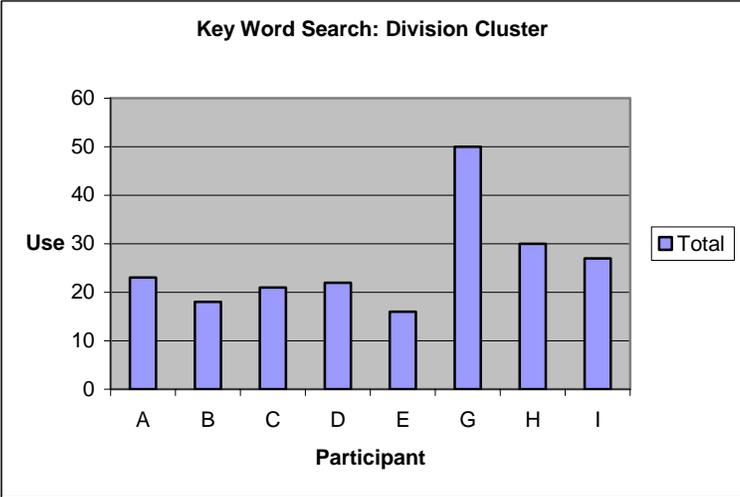
2. Key Word Search: Responses

The *Responses* group of key word clusters shows usage of verbs used by participants to represent the ways in which they respond to accountability expectations, as stated in their interviews. Verbs were not counted if they were not related, within context, to an expectations (For example, this usage would not be counted: I will stop in to see him.) Verbs were counted if the context indicated a particular response through inference. (For example, this usage would be counted: Interviewer asks "Do you ignore that?", and participant answers, "Yes, I do."). The summary of all participants' responses in all clusters of the Sources search is shown as:

Key Word Search: Responses

Use (y-axis, 0–45)

Legend: Ignore, Mediate, Communicate, Priorize, Delegate, Do It Myself

Participant: Total A, Total B, Total C, Total D, Total E, Total G, Total H, Total I
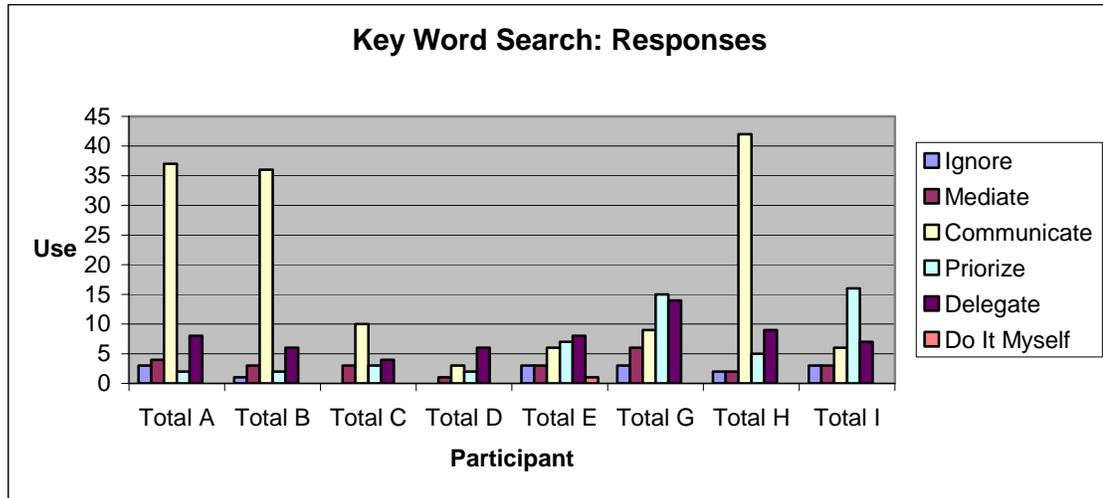
Results by Cluster

Following are the cluster details and the results by cluster for the key word search Responses group.

Cluster 6: Ignore
Key word cluster (all forms of words): ignore, discontinue, stop, drop, wait, delay, avoid.
The word "ignore" was counted when used positively (For example: I ignore that), but not when used negatively (For example: I don't ignore that).

Key Word Search: Ignore

Use (y-axis, 0–10)

Legend: Total

Participant: A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I
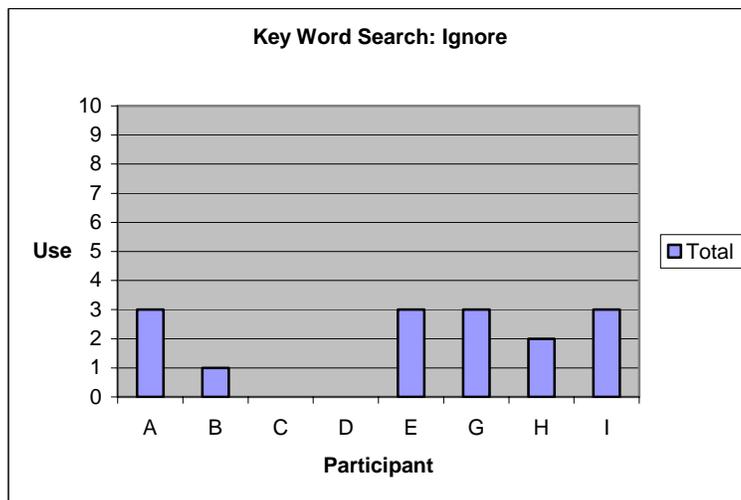
Cluster 7: Mediate
Key word cluster (all forms): mediate, negotiate, compromise, convince, persuade, sell, discuss.
Words were counted if inferred through a positive answer to a direct question. (For example: Does that mean compromise is one of your strategies? Participant answer: Yes.)

Key Word Search: Mediate
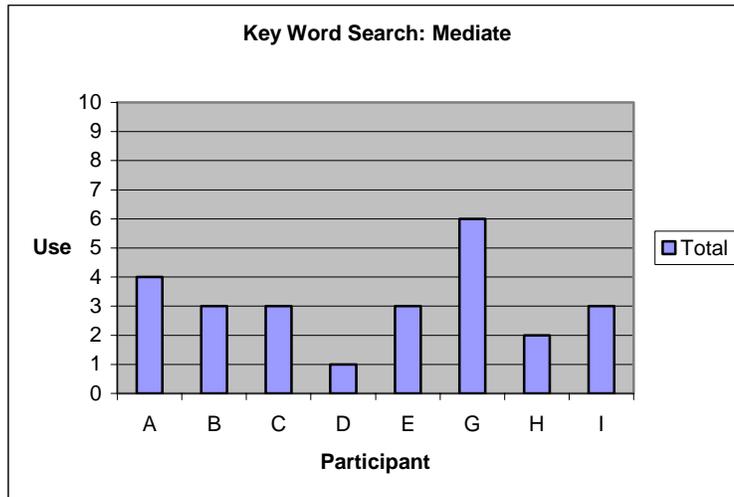
Cluster 8: Communicate
Key word cluster (all forms): communicate, tell, explain, teach, justify, understand, conversation, show.
Context was used to ensure that the use of the verb was intended by the participant to be a strategy, particularly in the case of the term "understand" (ie. Help parents to understand, give teachers an understanding of…)

Key Word Search: Communicate
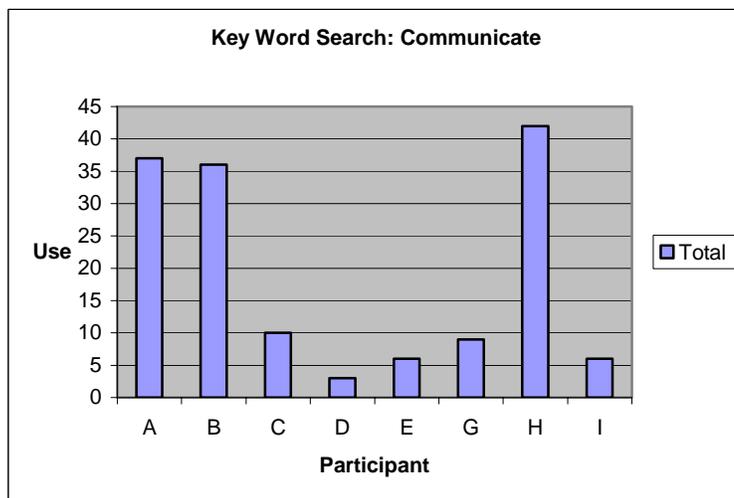
Cluster 9: Prioritize
Key word cluster (all forms): priority, prioritize, prioritize, important, back burner, screen.

Key Word Search: Prioritize
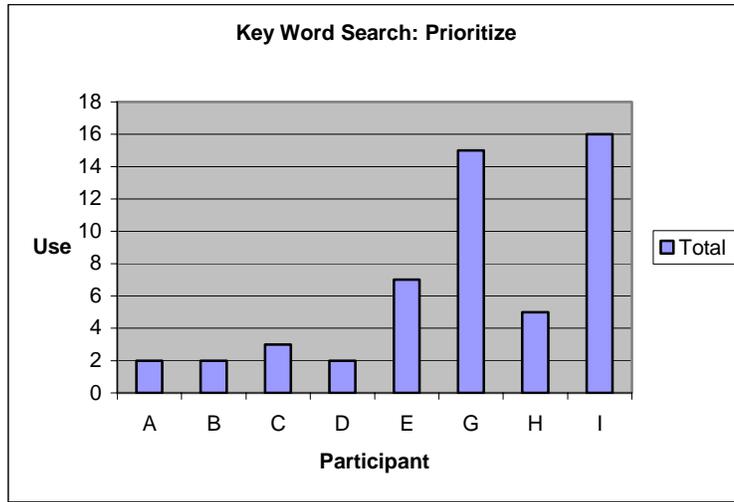
Cluster 10: Delegate
Key word cluster (all forms): volunteer, include, ask, delegate, consult, committee.

Key Word Search: Delegate
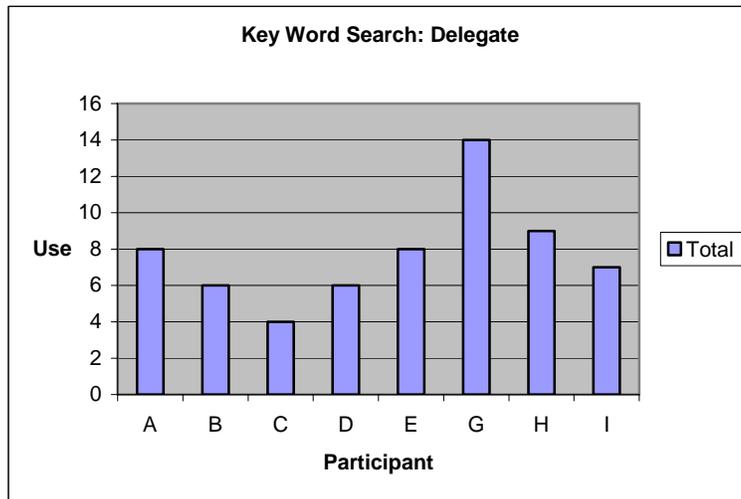
Cluster 11: Do It Myself
Key word cluster (all forms): I do it, take it home, do it myself, fill it in, send it in, protect.

Key word search: Do It Myself

Use	

Participant

(chart x-axis labels: A   B   C   D   E   G   H   I; y-axis 0–10; legend: Total)
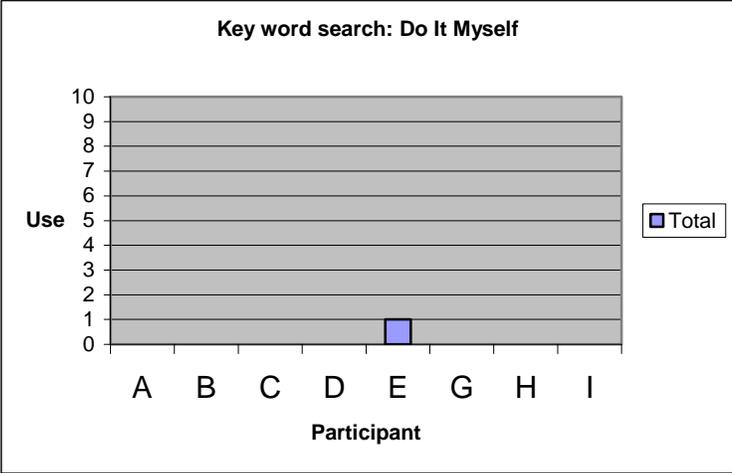
3. Key Word Search: Forms
The *Forms* group of key word clusters shows usage of nouns/verbs used by participants to represent the ways in which accountability expectations come to them, as stated in their interviews. The summary of all participants' responses in all clusters of the Forms search is shown as:

Key Word Search: Forms
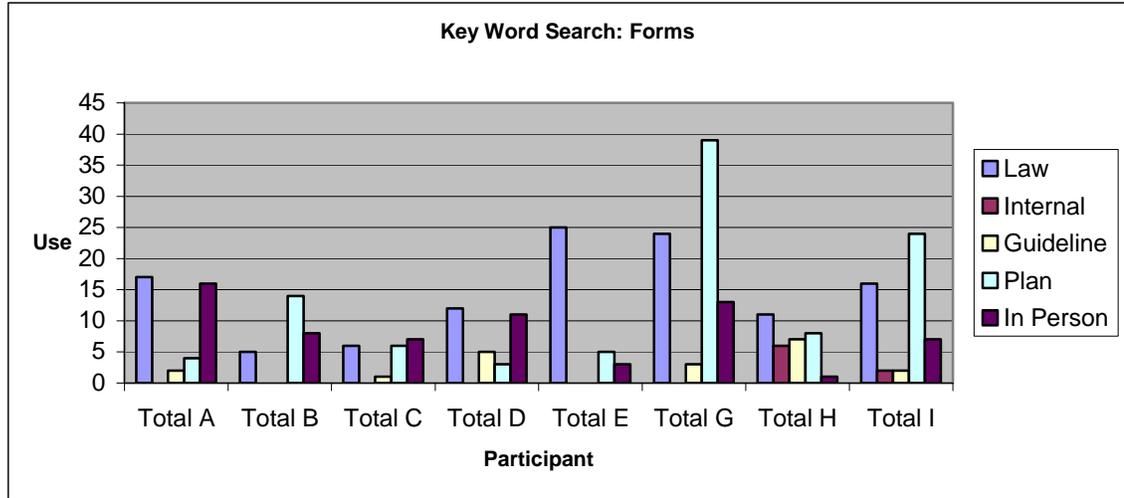

Results by Cluster
Cluster 12: Law
Key words: law, given must require/ment, directive, specify

Key Word Search: Law
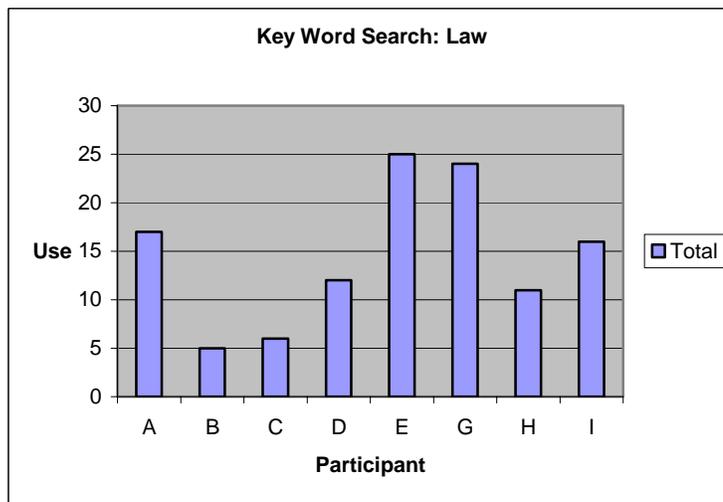
Cluster 13: Internal
Key words: internal, self, my own, my sense, from within, my responsibility.

Key Word Search: Internal
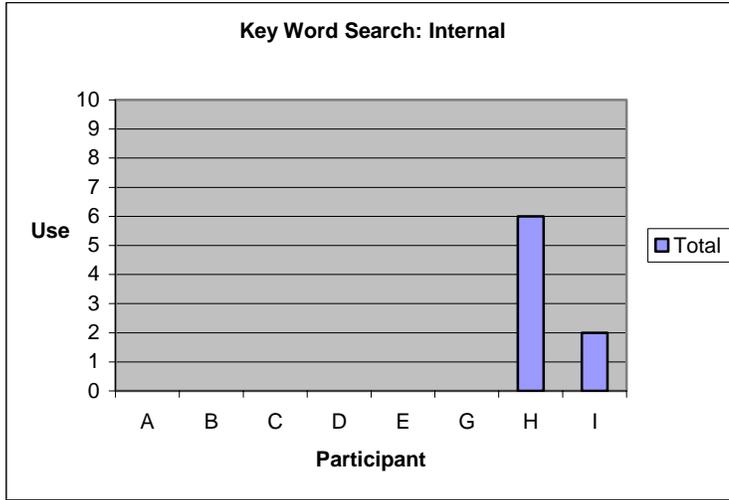
Cluster 14: Guideline
Key words: guideline, choice (but not "no choice"), choose, request.

**Key Word Search: Guideline**
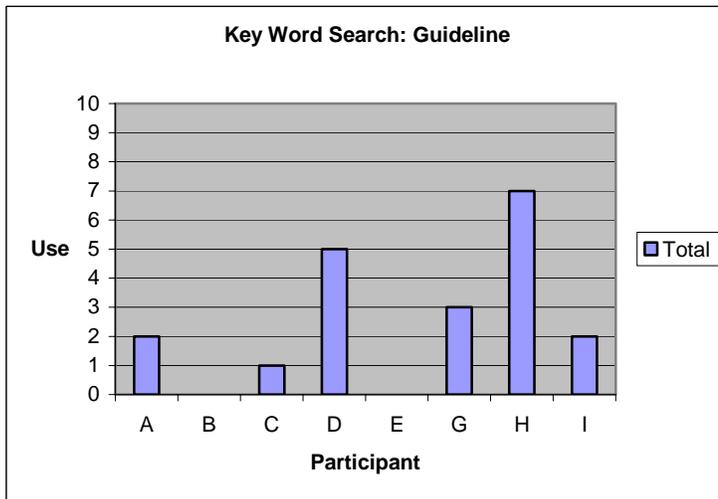
Cluster 15: Plan
Key words: plan, reaction, response, strategy, design, proposal, idea.
"Plan" was counted when in context only. This would not be counted, for example: I plan to go.

Key Word Search: Plan
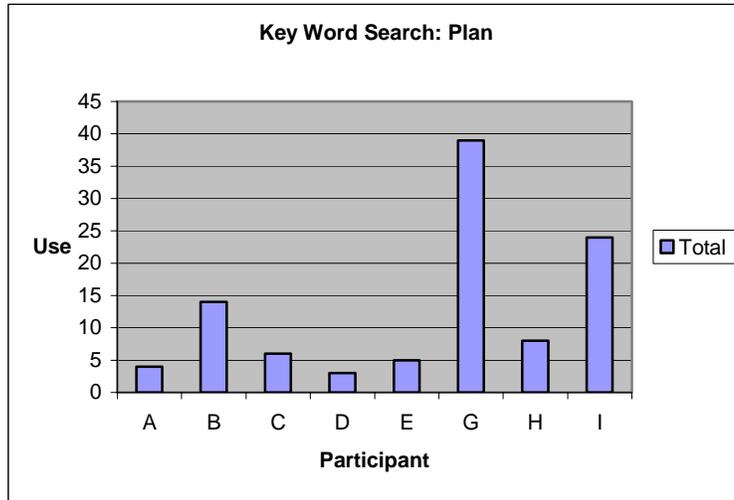
Cluster 16: In Person
Key words: in person, by phone, to the/my office, to the school, email.

Key Word Search: In Person
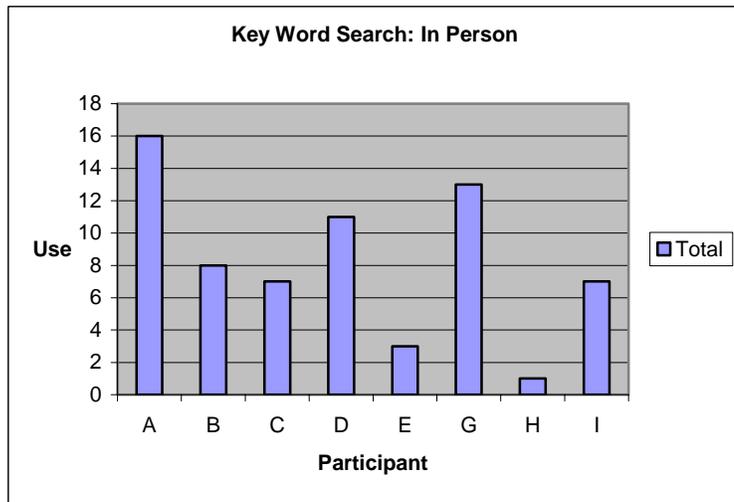
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