

**RENEWABLE RESOURCES: USING
STUDENTS FOR SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT**

DARRYL RAYMOND SEGUIN

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe how a student leadership option class at the junior high level can be used to improve the atmosphere in schools. This particular study was conducted using an action research approach to highlight efforts to modify the current junior high leadership option course at a small rural school in Alberta to help students become more involved in leadership activities that positively affected the atmosphere in the school. Students in the course had the freedom to use their individual talents and skills to carry out projects and activities that enhanced the atmosphere in the school. The students in the leadership course were involved in school enhancement projects, reflective journal writing, social skills teaching, civic responsibilities, the study of literature in regards to outstanding leaders, and peer teaching opportunities. Activities were completed individually and in small groups. By using children as resources to improve the atmosphere in the school, ownership, responsibility, and accountability developed in the students. As these characteristics developed, more appropriate behavior resulted and a better learning environment was created. The junior high students became more positive role models for the younger children in the school as they learned the importance of setting a positive example. Students behaved more responsibly as they learned more about their role in the school and how their daily, individual choices affected the entire school. Students enjoyed their school year more by attending a school where respect, responsibility, and ownership were taught and practiced.

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Chapter One

Introduction

One of the biggest problems that teachers, students, and parents have with public education is the general lack of respect in the school setting. Teachers complain that students do not talk respectfully to them, do not take care of school materials issued to them, and do not treat fellow classmates kindly. Students complain about bullying and unkind comments and actions of their schoolmates. Parents are upset that others at the school are not treating their child fairly or respectfully. This lack of respect for others, property, and schoolwork in general has contributed to a deteriorating atmosphere in schools. Calls for changes to improve the atmosphere in schools are a yearly focal point in many school enhancement plans. In fact, in some areas of Canada, school atmosphere improvement projects are mandated.

In Alberta, schools have been legislated to provide a safe and caring environment for children. The premise is that children and staff who do not feel safe in a school setting will not be able to fully focus on learning, which is the goal of education. The Alberta School Act was amended in June 1999 to include a section on safe and caring schools. Section 28(7) reads "A board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board is provided a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours" (p. 39).

Teaching is a profession requiring reflection. A good teacher is constantly reflecting and thinking about how to improve upon practice. At other times, reflections focus on what did not go well, and why. It was during a time of reflection on Crestomere

that my thoughts first began to develop around the idea of possible changes in a leadership option course presently offered at Crestomere School.

Crestomere School is a small rural kindergarten to grade nine school located in the Wolf Creek School Division in Central Alberta. I am currently the Assistant Principal, a position that I have held for the past three years. I have taught a junior high leadership option class during that time. I assumed the class as part of my teaching assignment when I first came to Crestomere and have run the option class in a very informal way. Beginning in August of 2002, I became the new Principal of Crestomere School. This new position put an increased responsibility on me to ensure that the school is operating in an exciting and productive way.

The students who attend Crestomere are bussed in to school from surrounding acreages and farms. Our school day for students begins at 8:15 a.m. when the busses arrive and concludes at 3:10 p.m. when the busses depart. We operate on a six-day cycle that offers eight forty-minute classes per day. The current student population is one hundred and sixty. The school is constructed on two levels. Elementary students are mainly upstairs and the junior high students are downstairs. Crestomere School has an outdoor arena, an outdoor volleyball court, outdoor basketball hoops, a huge field, and a recently renovated playground area that the students use during recess and lunch hour.

Since I teach the leadership class and I became be the Principal of Crestomere School in August of 2002, I felt that I could have a stronger influence on the school climate. As Kelley (1980) states, "Strong leadership by the principal is an important factor in improving school climate..." (p. 4).

Statement of the research question. At the Central Alberta Teacher's Convention in February 2002, I attended a session on school leadership option classes. From this presentation, I thought about how the Crestomere leadership option class could change. More specifically, I thought of how the leadership option class could be utilized better to help create an increased positive atmosphere in the school. In return, I felt, this positive atmosphere would provide the setting for increased academic achievement.

So the question arose, 'How can a junior high student leadership option class be used to improve or enhance the atmosphere of the school as a learning community?' While attending the presentation on leadership option classes I felt very strongly that our school leadership class could do considerably more. Some additional questions arose as I pondered the original question. What exactly is a good school climate? What does it look like? What conditions must exist for an effective school atmosphere? Who are the stakeholders involved in creating and improving school climate? These were some of the supplementary questions that guided my research study.

Significance of the problem. Crestomere School, like any school, has a number of areas where improvements can take place. Recently, there has been a lot of concern expressed by parents, teachers, and students over some students' choice of behavior outside of class time. During this unstructured time, some students are choosing to engage in inappropriate activities or are involved in teasing or mistreating other students.

As well, an attitude of disrespect among the students in the school is of concern. Students in the school are mistreating library books, school agendas, and other school equipment. Some students are also choosing not to work diligently during class time, causing a disruption in the class that detracts from the learning of others. Some very

disrespectful comments have been made to other students and disrespect for rules is becoming more of a frequent occurrence. Students walk inside the school and leave their outside shoes on even though we have a rule that clearly states that dirty footwear must not be worn in the school. Students are leaving the school to go outside from the wrong exits, and choosing to do things during free time which are inappropriate for school. Some students are leaving the library with books that they neglected to sign out.

Recent Crestomere School satisfaction surveys also indicate that some improvements are needed (See Appendix F). The 2000-2001 Crestomere School Satisfaction Survey results suggest that old methods may not be working any more and new methods and ideas should be generated to address the areas of concern. Staff, students, and parents make reference to being dissatisfied with the current behavior of the students attending Crestomere School and with how discipline is handled. Parents are dissatisfied with the overall quality of education their children are receiving. There is also an indication of a need for an improvement in the atmosphere of the school, for a change in student attitude and behavior, and respect for rules, people, and the building.

The importance of this project melded with my vision of the school. That is, I wanted to see students treating school materials with care, working diligently in class, completing homework on a regular basis, and enjoying their time at school. I expected the students to follow common rules such as talking respectfully to teachers and fellow classmates, and doing their best on all assignments. I wanted to see the older children make good decisions and be great examples for the younger children in the school. In addition, I wanted to see the leadership class move from its current focus of being

involved in “odd jobs” and some civic projects to a class whose members really focus on being good examples and role models for the other students of the school.

I had a vision of junior high students taking on leadership roles within the school. The positive leadership provided by the students themselves would be the key to reversing a trend toward unacceptable behavior and disrespectful attitudes among the students of Crestomere School. The youth in the option class can be a powerful resource to help create the kind of atmosphere that would be beneficial to everyone involved, would support a safe and caring environment, and allow all children to feel secure. In turn, I felt these things would encourage individual students to develop self-confidence and a stronger commitment to their academic work.

Greater enthusiasm results when students make a connection with their teachers and realize that their teachers care about them and want the best for them. Cooperation can be enhanced; school spirit can then be improved. As students come to realize the relationship between demonstrating respect for others, responsibility for themselves, and accountability for their actions, improvements in the school atmosphere and academic results can develop.

Leadership classes defined. Leadership classes vary from school to school, based on the needs of the school and the teacher in charge of facilitating the class. Currently, at Crestomere School, junior high students in grades seven to nine choose to sign up for the leadership class as one of three options available to them. This class operates for half of the school year. The class meets every second day. Each class is forty minutes in length.

Most leadership classes in schools operate as an option class in high school. Fewer function at a junior high level. The students in leadership classes can take on

many roles, depending on the philosophy of the class. Generally there are service opportunities in which students can be involved at the school site. At Crestomere, these include organizing community events such as a Terry Fox Run, Operation Christmas Child, and assisting in local Santas Anonymous projects. The proceeds raised from these various activities support local, provincial, national, or international agencies. Some schools have their leadership class students acquire skills of organizing and running a formal meeting. There are a number of other possibilities for leadership classes, and the content of the course is largely determined by the needs of the school in which the class operates.

Using students as resources for improvement. I felt for some time that the current leadership class at my school contained a group of students with a number of talents and skills that could be used more effectively. I thought that the class could take on a key leadership role in terms of setting a good atmosphere in the school and teaching, demonstrating, and promoting character education in the younger grades. The end result will be to have most, if not all, students in the school develop their talents as leaders. Everyone should be able to experience a sense of pride, success, and empowerment. Such feelings should create a more positive school atmosphere and result in better learning conditions.

Students are the focus of the service towards which education is geared. As well, I believe that the students of any school should be seen as resources to promote a positive school environment. Kielsmeier (1998) challenges educators to, “treat young people as resources and leaders in the community rather than as afflictions requiring treatment” (p. 1). When students are empowered to lead, they learn about themselves and their

relationship to others in their community. Accountability and responsibility develop as students realize that their actions and attitudes affect others.

“Leadership is one of the most studied but least understood of all social phenomena” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) and schools cannot assume that students will acquire leadership skills automatically. Children must be taught and shown by example what characteristics and qualities they need in order to be leaders in their community. As students learn leadership skills and, more importantly, understand how to apply those skills to the world around them, good things can happen in the communities in which they reside.

Studies completed by Karnes & Bean (1990), indicate that school youth leadership activities play an extremely valuable role in promoting leadership involvement as adults. Youth who participate in school fine arts clubs, sports teams, or clubs are more likely to grow up to be involved citizens in their communities.

How to go about change. I thought of a number of ways in which I could tap into the talents and skills of the class members to increase achievement. I wanted to modify the current leadership class and shift its focus to the learning and practice of leadership skills. Students could learn about leadership by studying the characteristics of effective leaders. There would be opportunities for social skills teaching where leadership students will be responsible to teach character education to the younger grades. Civic responsibilities and school enhancement projects would continue to be part of the leadership course. As a final component of the course, I intended to implement reflective journal writing. Students would have the opportunity to take a few moments and think

about the projects they have been involved with and how those projects have benefited others within the school and the community.

Through these various course assignment changes and the leadership conference, I believe that students will be more willing to try to improve the atmosphere and learning environment in the school.

Intended Outcomes. Through this study I hoped to achieve the following:

- 1) Enhanced learning environments with increased academic achievement.
- 2) Positive changes in student attitude toward school and toward each other.
- 3) The development of Junior High students as good role models; and good influences on younger students.
- 4) Moral character development.
- 5) Student ownership of behavior and learning.
- 6) Improved behaviour of students during non-instructional time.
- 7) Increased satisfaction and positive perception of the school among parents.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Improving schools is an educational issue that promotes constant and enduring debate. Volumes have been written in the area of creating and modifying school climate to bring about school improvement. A definition of school climate is offered by Howard, Howell, and Brainard (1987) who state, “A school’s climate is its atmosphere for learning. It includes the feelings people have about school and whether it is a place where learning can occur” (p. 5).

The goal of improving school climate is to increase student, staff, and parental satisfaction with the school and improve productivity of the students when they are learning necessary skills and knowledge. Barth (1990), DuFour & Eaker (1998), Kelley (1980), and Sergiovanni (1992), are just some of the many authors who believe that improving the school climate is a major part of the answer to school improvement.

School climate is not something that just happens; it takes careful planning, lots of hard work, very committed staff, and a principal who has good leadership direction. The characteristics of a school with a good climate might be summarized by the conditions of satisfaction of its members, high levels of productivity, and the existence of good relationships.

Good schools exhibit certain characteristics. DuFour & Eaker (1998) make reference to schools as “professional learning communities”. Sergiovanni (1992) also mentions that schools need to make a shift from organizational structures to communities and that this change may be a solution to school improvement. The ‘learning’ that

DuFour & Eaker (1998) refer to consists of constant action combined with inquisitiveness. The term 'community' implies that a group of people work together to accomplish what they cannot when they are alone. Characteristics identified as part of this 'community' are collegiality, collaboration, and emotional support.

Much of the literature on improving schools deals with the important roles of principals and teachers in creating the climate. Barth (2002) says that, "Probably the most important—and the most difficult—job of an instructional leader is to change the prevailing culture of a school"(p. 6). DuFour (2002) also believes that principals have an important role to play in creating positive learning environments. He says, "I am convinced that a school cannot make the transition to the collaborative, results-oriented culture of a professional learning community without a principal who focuses on learning" (p. 15).

Principals should possess a vision for their school and provide direction and resources for staff to help achieve agreed upon goals. Fullan (2002) contends, "School improvement depends on principals who can foster the conditions necessary for sustained education reform in a complex, rapidly changing society" (p. 20).

The principal of the school inherits a position of authority. Automatically, community members view the role of the principal as a position of power, with major decision-making responsibilities. To earn credibility in this authority position, the principal must do many things. As an instructional leader, the principal must work to be a role model to staff and students, demonstrating the type of behaviour that is expected in the school environment. Pragmatically, the principal should be an initiator of questions. Asking questions is good, but not good enough. A leader must know how and when to

ask the right questions. Questions which direct staff to focus on the vision or mission statement of the school as they are solving their problems are important. Questions which probe for further understanding and clarification are needed. Questions which guide staff and cause thoughtful reflection are helpful.

A shift has taken place in the principal's role from director to facilitator. Lieberman (1995, as cited in DuFour & Eaker 1998) suggests that the role of principal has changed in the 1990s from that of a principal in the earlier factory model system of education.

The 1990's view of leadership calls for principals to act as partners with teachers, involved in a collaborative quest to examine practices and improve schools. Principals are not expected to control teachers but to support them and to create opportunities for them to grow and develop (p. 9). This shift has provided many school staffs with greater feelings of empowerment, resulting in a stronger sense of ownership. Lambert (2002) makes it clear that the roles of other staff members are crucial to the development of school climate. "The days of the principal as the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators" (p. 37).

Increasing public concern about the current state of public schools has created an international movement directed at school reform. In 1983 in the USA a document titled "*A Nation at Risk*" was produced by the government. This document portrayed the American educational system in complete disarray. One response to this document came about in a proposed solution called the Excellence Movement (1983) which called for an increased intensity of graduation requirements, increased testing of students, an increased

number of days in the school year as well as hours in the school day, and increased expectations of teachers before continuing contracts were offered. The methodology associated with the Excellence Movement was that of mandated improvement in a top-down structure. This method for improvement was ironically indicated as being directly responsible for its eventual downfall. The Restructuring Movement of the 1990s, and eventually, the Goals 2000 initiative followed the Excellence Movement. Educators became more optimistic about the effect they would have on improving schools. However, significant changes in education have not materialized and critics of the current situation in education are still calling for improvements.

DuFour & Eaker (1998) state, “If schools are to be significantly more effective...greater emphasis on relationships, shared ideals, and a strong culture—all factors that are critical to school improvement” (p. 15) must exist. DuFour & Eaker believe that the way to achieve significant, meaningful school change is to create ‘professional learning communities’ in each school.

The model of ‘professional learning communities’ as described by DuFour and Eaker involves six main components. They are: shared mission, vision, and values; collective inquiry; collaborative teams, an orientation toward action and a willingness to experiment; commitment to continuous improvement; and a focus on results.

Shared mission, vision, and values address the need for the entire community to possess similar understandings about its reasons for existing. A set of guiding principles determines what people in the school do on a daily basis and how they behave. The shared mission, vision, and values give purpose and direction to the community, moving responsibility from only the one or two people who are in leadership positions.

Collective inquiry is the second component of DuFour & Eaker's (1998) model of professional learning communities. This has to do with members of the community being constantly involved in seeking answers to their questions.

Collaborative teams, the third component, are established when groups of people are actively learning from one another and working toward a common purpose. Working through situations and problems together serves to create momentum for improvement.

Action orientation and experimentation is the fourth component. It involves the members of the community experimenting through engagement and experience to improve teaching and reach their agreed upon goals.

The fifth component is continuous improvement, which involves a commitment from members to always be uncomfortable maintaining the current environment. Members in professional learning organizations are constantly asking questions, looking for ways to become better. Their actions are grounded in the overriding purpose of their organization.

The final component of DuFour & Eaker's model is results orientation, which refers to assessing results on an on-going basis. Results drive purposeful improvement. If an idea or an initiative does not show significant and purposeful improvement it needs to be modified or discontinued.

The literature regarding the use of the student population to create positive changes in the school is limited compared to the literature for involving administrators or staff in creating positive school climates. Karnes & Bean (1990) believe that leadership among students "remains the least discussed of the curricular areas for these students in the literature" (p. 1). The focus of my project was to utilize the student population to

create positive changes in the climate of the school. I anticipated that some important student involvement in school improvement could be achieved through a leadership class.

Student leadership classes are links to the general student population. Barth (1990) states that, “only changes emanating and sustained from within are likely to bring lasting improvement to our schools” (p. xv). Changes from within Crestomere School are for Crestomere School. The changes I hoped to make involve not only administrators, staff, and parents but, most importantly, the students. I agree with many leading authors who observe that when a collaborative effort to improve school climate exists, it becomes achievable and sustainable.

Leadership skills and characteristics. Woyach (1992) describes leaders as those who “hold a position of authority and direct the actions of others by force of personality” (p. 1). Leadership has been a long sought after quality among all groups of people. Throughout time, groups of people have sought out the ‘few’ within their society that have succeeded to inspire confidence and direction for the masses. As Karnes (1990) states, “All cultures need role models and leaders” (p. 1). Young and old are drawn to individuals who possess special qualities they admire.

What motivates people to become leaders? Bennis and Thomas (2002) make reference to the “personal crucible” (p. 87) that many leaders experience. This ‘personal crucible’ consists of individuals’ influential and shaping experiences, which have proven to be very inspirational and serve to motivate the individual to aspire to leadership positions.

Few succeed in developing true leadership qualities, however, it is possible for individuals to learn some leadership qualities. Karnes (1990) states that “leadership is

learned over time through involvement with others” (p. 3). Goleman (2002) also believes that leadership qualities can be learned. He mentions that new leadership skills can be developed through discovery and practice (p. 111). Since leadership qualities to some degree can be learned, and the masses seek out those with leadership abilities, we need to spend more time in schools teaching children to be leaders and allowing them opportunities to experience leadership.

Presently, leadership is not a huge focus of the Alberta curriculum. I believe leadership training needs to be an integral part of the school day, as the youth of today will become the leaders of tomorrow. By investing time now in schools to teach and provide experiences for children to develop leadership skills we are making a wise decision which will benefit us in the years ahead. Leadership training in schools will help prepare today’s youth to make a smooth transition to community leadership opportunities.

The complex task of leaders is outlined by some of the most recent contributions of literature in this area. Bolman and Deal (2002) suggest that leaders need to use open communication, ask questions, be truthful, and be open to feedback. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) discuss the treacherous position of a leader when they state, “leaders challenge what people hold dear—their daily habits, tools, loyalties, and ways of thinking” (p. 2).

Leadership involves experience—experience in completing projects and following through on planned activities. Experience is vital to good leadership. Bennis and Thomas (2002) support this concept. Successful leadership “emerges as a result of an individual’s ability to adapt to a crisis or challenge” (p. 91). The ability to adapt comes only through experience in leadership opportunities. As well, taking time to reflect on

accomplishments allow leaders opportunities to assess what went right or what needs improvement for the next time. Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2002) contend that taking time to reflect on experiences is vitally important in successful leadership when they state that leaders have the “deepest obligation...to engage continuously in a reflective process” (p. 33).

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction. There are a number of different types of research methods available for those wishing to conduct research. Deciding which type of research method would best serve the purpose of this project required me to wade through the volumes of available material on research methodology. Included in the seemingly endless possibilities are methods such as; qualitative, quantitative, narrative, hermeneutics, action research, critical interpretive, ethnographic, descriptive, correlational, experimental, and case study approaches. I quickly noticed that in order to thoroughly report my research I needed to use a research method that allowed for a combination of these research methods in order to most accurately reflect what happened throughout the project.

The impetus behind my research project was provided by the information gathered from the 2001-2002 Crestomere School Satisfaction Survey Results, which revealed a need for improvement in a number of areas. These results were a combination of statistics and written comments so I knew that my research method would have to be one that would allow me to combine both qualitative and quantitative results. In order to accurately compare the previous results to current findings I needed to design a significant portion of my data collection to accurately reflect the same questions that were on the original survey item. I also needed to ensure that I surveyed the same groups of respondents as done in the initial survey. By doing so I would ensure that good quality comparative data resulted. Multiple forms of data and sources of information also occurred or in other words “converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation” (Yin, 1994, p. 92). Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) mention the importance of using the method

of triangulation in creating credibility for your results by substantiating one source of data to another. This triangulation is vitally important to provide credibility to the research project. Not only did I try to provide triangulation in data information sources but also in the types of data collected. From the beginning stages of my project I knew that I would be utilizing numerous pieces of written artifacts in compiling my information in addition to the statistical information provided by the Satisfaction Survey Results. These would include journal entries, self-reflections, and written survey responses by students, staff, and parents.

When considering the reason behind my research project it quickly became very clear to me that an action research method would be the best choice in conducting this project. An action research style of investigation and reporting provided flexibility to allow for both qualitative and quantitative results to be included in the final report. Even after I decided that action research was my preferred method to carry out this project I had to read through numerous definitions and perceptions of action research to decide on a type of action research that would work for the research project I had in mind. Calhoun (1993) supports this by explaining that there are various methods of action research depending on the purpose, intent, and end result of the study. According to McKernan (1996) action research could be scientific, practical, or critical.

In reading through the abundant literature in regards to action research, some authors helped me confirm that the choice to use an action research method was the right thing to do given my study. According to Calhoun (1993) action research can be individual, collaborative, or schoolwide-allowing teachers to study areas of need and meet the challenges they face in the classroom and school.

Charles and Mertler (2002) define action research as “research done to improve a product, procedure, or program in a particular setting, with no intention of generalizing the results” (p. 379). Action research was my preferred method of research because, as Calhoun (1994) notes, it is a way of saying, “Let’s study what’s happening in our school and see if we can make it a better place” (p. 4). This was the intent of my study. I wanted to see how I could make Crestomere School a better place for students, staff, and parents.

Jungck’s (2001) statement regarding action research completed by teachers has given me a more clear understanding of why I chose an action research approach. “Action and teacher research is becoming so linked that...we are seeing the combination referred to as teacher action research” (p. 341). Jungck (2001) also stated that action research “formalizes and systematizes what good teachers tend to do naturally” (p. 341). I also discovered that action research can include a qualitative approach to conducting research that tries to understand human behaviours and characteristics. As I conducted my initial study into the methodology of research I concluded that action research and my project seemed like a perfect fit. This method would allow me to study the identified concern in a way that would compliment my teaching and provide an opportunity to investigate the reasons behind the concern and, in turn, implement possible solutions. It would also give me the direction and opportunity to make adjustments or changes to an existing course and get quick feedback on whether the changes were positive or not. Connelly and Clandinin’s (1988) definition of action research supports my desire to use this approach, “[a]ction research consists of deliberate experimental moves into the future, which change us because of what we learn in the process” (p. 153).

My approach to action research in this project was a result of a reaction to a situation that was occurring in my school. This responsive action research approach fits with Schmuck's (1997) definition of action research as he believes that it can be either proactive or responsive.

Data collection. The collection of data is a very important component of research. It is critical to the credibility of the project that the data collected represented the complete picture of what happened during the study. My surveys involved collecting information from a broad range of participants. I felt that surveying selected students, parents, and all staff members would provide sufficient information and would allow for a good comparison with the original data, however, I also wanted to survey the entire student population to gather a complete picture of the student perception of the school. The information gathered was mainly identified through the use of survey questions. In addition to the survey questionnaires I also collected journal reflections from students participating in the leadership class as well as self-reflections as I took opportunities to record my thoughts as the time went by.

Instrument. In the end I decided to follow the action research method described by Townsend (2000), that suggests a model including twelve stages with the following components:

1. Define the focus or the problem.
2. Collect information.
3. Make sense of the information.
4. Report and discuss.
5. Plan action.

6. Take action.
7. Collect information.
8. Analyze and evaluate in a continuous way.
9. Assess achievement.
10. Publish results and conclusions.
11. Celebrate.
12. Future action.

Data Analysis. Once the data collection was completed the arduous task of data analysis began. I have to say that I was quite anxious to begin the analysis phase of my project. Even before I began comparing the results from the Satisfaction Survey I felt optimistic that significant improvements would be shown in most areas. I began by going through each student survey question by grade and recorded through a tally system where each of the students answers fell. Once a grade had been completed I then calculated how many agree and strongly agree tallies there were for each question and repeated the same for disagree and strongly disagree responses. I converted the total number of responses that fell in each category to percentages and added an extra column to the original Satisfaction Survey Results where I placed the current results. After the student surveys were completed I proceeded to compile the same information from the parent and staff surveys. By placing the two figures side by side one can very quickly and easily compare the survey results. I proceeded to do this comparison for grade six and grade eight students, and parents of students in grade six and eight as they were the ones originally surveyed, as well as all staff members. It is important to note that only two staff members currently surveyed were not involved in the original survey. The

consistency of respondents was very high in this particular study. The information from all of the sources was compiled at the halfway point of the school year. At this point in the school year adjustments were made to the course and the content to fine tune it and allow for a better course to be developed which would in turn continually improve the atmosphere in the school and the perception of parents about the school.

Through the action research process I intended to describe how the participants at Crestomere School affected student behavior and influenced school atmosphere during the first five months of the 2002-2003 school year. My role in this project was that of a facilitator, ensuring that the components of the leadership option course reflected the changes needed to attempt to bring about positive changes in school atmosphere and an improvement in perception of the school. I arranged the course to reflect the change of focus. I decided which “leaders” the class would study. I arranged for class members to run various school and community events. I arranged for the students to participate in a number of other leadership opportunities such as running a school spirit activity, being masters of ceremonies at school assemblies, peer teaching, role-modeling for younger children, and conducting a school wide student survey. I was also responsible for teaching and modeling leadership skills that students used to improve the atmosphere of the school. I attempted to role-model leadership to the students in the course and in the entire school. The participants in this project were the staff and students of Crestomere School, as well as the parents of Crestomere School students.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

Information. The following information may be useful in interpreting the importance of the results of the student, parent, and staff surveys. Two years ago the parents, students, and staff at Crestomere School were surveyed to gain insight on their perceptions regarding Crestomere School. Parents and students in grades, four, six and eight completed the survey two years ago. In order to compare the results the school-generated survey issued this school year contained the same questions as the survey two years ago and it was administered to the same parents and students from two years ago. The return rate for the school-generated survey for 2002-2003 was 47%.

Student survey results. One of the intended outcomes of this research study was to improve student attitudes toward one another. When comparing the Crestomere School Student satisfaction survey results from 2001-2002 to the results from the school generated student survey of 2002-2003 (See Table 1) some notable changes have occurred. In 2001-2002 only 41% of students felt that students at Crestomere School cared about each other, whereas in 2002-2003, 74% of students felt that the students of Crestomere School cared about each other. This is an increase of 33%. In 2001-2002, 59% of students felt that the staff at their school cared about them. In 2002-2003, 83% of students felt that the staff at the school cared about them. I feel that these particular survey results are very important. As more students feel that other students and staff in the school care about them they will have a more positive outlook on school and a greater desire to attend school. Even though there has been only a slight increase at this time in the number of students who indicated that they liked going to our school I believe this

number will increase over the rest of the year as genuine concern for one another takes time to establish.

In 2001-2002, 37% of students indicate that they liked going to school, while in 2002-2003 the positive response rate had risen to 45%. As students continue to demonstrate that they care about each other over time I am confident that this particular survey result will continue to rise.

In response to the other two questions on the student survey the same number of students in both survey years felt that they were safe at school (70%), and the percentage of students who felt students in Crestomere were well-behaved was unchanged (30%). Both of these results are below expectations and show areas for continued improvement and attention. In reflecting on these results, I can see it may take longer to change student perception and behaviour. After only five months perhaps there were too many areas in which I had expected attitudes and perceptions to change.

In the future, students in the leadership class will be able to take the results of the most recent survey and develop a plan to improve upon those results, which were well below acceptable standards and were a cause of concern. [See Table 1]

Table 1. Student Survey Results

		2000-2001	2002-2003
Students care about each other at Crestomere School.	Agree or Strongly Agree	41 %	74%
	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	59 %	26%
The staff at my school care about their students.	Agree or Strongly Agree	72 %	83%
	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	28 %	17%
I feel safe at school.	Agree or Strongly Agree	70 %	69%
	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	30 %	31%
Students in my school like going to our school.	Agree or Strongly Agree	37 %	45%
	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	63 %	55%
The students in my school are well behaved.	Agree or Strongly Agree	30 %	30%
	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	70 %	70%

Parent survey results. The results in the 2002-2003 school year (See Table 2) show positive gains on all six sets of responses in the parent survey. One of the intended outcomes of this study was to show increases in satisfaction and positive perception of the school among parents.

The first question on the survey asked parents whether or not they were happy with the way discipline was handled at the school. In 2001-2002 only 46% of parents were satisfied, compared to 73% of parents in the year 2002-2003. This result indicates that changes seem to be working. I believe that the students are coming to understand more and more as the year progresses that they are responsible for their behaviour. I believe that this message is discussed at home as I have had parents comment that the kids feel they are getting away with less misbehaviour this year than in years past. This

change in attitude seems to be generating a behaviour pattern in which more students are falling in line with expected behaviour and evidencing less discipline problems. As more and more students progress through the leadership class, or are shown appropriate behaviour by the leadership class, more seem to behave appropriately.

Question number two on the survey asked parents if they felt that the school had a safe and caring atmosphere. In 2001-2002, 77% of parents responded that they felt the atmosphere was safe and caring. In 2002-2003, 100% of the parents responded this way. The results of the students perceiving that their peers are treating them better seems to be transferring over into parents' perceptions of the school.

Question three asked parents to grade the school with an A, B, C, or failing grade. In 2002-2003, 28% more parents gave the school an A or B grade than in the earlier survey of 2001-2002. Overall, parents are becoming more satisfied with the school. I believe that a big part of the parents' perception is influenced by the comments made by their children when they discuss how the day at school went.

Question four elicited responses only slightly improved from the survey two years ago. There was a 3% increase in the number of parents happy with the way the school kept them informed about their child's progress. The responses to question five showed that 12% more parents were happy with the behaviour of the students in the school than in the earlier study.

The final survey question dealt with whether or not the parents felt that their children were learning the skills that they need when they leave the school. 22% more parents were satisfied that their children were learning the life skills required. I feel that the leadership class has played an important role in the perception of parents. When

students in a small rural K-9 school go home for the evening they talk with their parents about what happened at school that day. Because the school is a main focal point and meeting place in the rural community what happens within the walls of the school during the day are perhaps more important than in urban centers where there may be more things to occupy the conversation in the evenings.

More effort was spent this year in promoting the events and activities in which the leadership students were involved. For example, the leadership class was instrumental in promoting the monthly character education theme this year. They also highlighted the character trait being emphasized through intercom announcements, poster contests, assemblies, bulletin board displays, power point presentations, and school spirit activities. I think that these efforts helped improve the parents' perception of what the school was doing to promote a safe and caring environment. The leadership class students were also made more visible this year to the student body and the parents through a variety of methods. Parents were able to see leadership students being the Masters of Ceremonies for various events, organizing different functions and participating in school council meetings. I believe the parents perceived that the school was really trying hard to instill leadership skills that would benefit their children beyond school. When parents attended assemblies, events, and concerts they could see very clearly the role of the leadership students in the organizing and preparation work that went in to the production, as well as the role of the leadership students in carrying out the functions.

Table 2 Parent Survey Results

		2000-2001	2002-2003
I am happy with the way in which discipline matters are dealt with by the staff.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	46 %	73%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	54 %	27%
I feel that there is a safe and caring atmosphere at the school.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	77 %	100%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	23 %	0%
What grade would you give Crestomere School?	A	27 %	13%
	B	35 %	67%
	C	31 %	20%
	Fail	8%	0%
I am happy with the way in which the school keeps me informed about my child's progress.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	77 %	80%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	23 %	20%
I am happy with the behavior of students in this school.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	81 %	93%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	19 %	7%
I feel that my child is learning the skills he/she will need when he/she leaves the school.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	65 %	87%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	35 %	13%

Staff survey results. Generally, staff survey results from 2002-2003 were much higher than those of the previous year. The only exception to this trend was the question regarding staff perception of the appropriate behaviour of students in the school. Even though this result was, it was still 11% higher in 2002-2003 than it was in 2001-2002 (See Table 3). I believe that as the leadership students gain a better understanding of their responsibilities for being role models in the school, will help promote even more

positive changes in student behaviour. Once again however, more time will be needed to change staff perception.

Table 3

Staff Survey Results

		20 01	2002- 2003
		20 02	
I am satisfied with the school discipline policy.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	76 %	92%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	24 %	8%
I am happy with the behavior of the students in the school.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	56 %	67%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	44 %	33%
I feel that Crestomere School is a good place to work.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	94 %	100%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	6% %	0%
I think that Crestomere school is a safe place.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	94 %	100%
	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	6% %	0%
I think that there is a caring atmosphere in the school.	Satisfied or Very Satisfied	100 %	100%
	Dissatisfied or very Dissatisfied		

As the leadership course progressed, comments in the students' journals reflected the idea that some students were learning that they needed to take more responsibility for their dissatisfaction with the general behaviour of students in the school. One student wrote that, "To be in the leadership class, it's best to be a good role model for the rest of the school". I responded through my journal entry to one student, saying that, "Your example (behaviour) and quiet way of leading has had a very positive impact on our school. Thank you". I believe that through my conversations with students about their

responsibilities as student leaders in the school, and through discussions in focus groups and full class groups about how their example can affect others, progress was made in the perception of improved student behaviour among staff.

Comprehensive student survey results. In the design of this Master's project, one of the goals was to survey the entire student population to get a better understanding of the student's perceptions and then have leadership students develop a plan to address the concerns of the general student body. The results reported earlier in this test were derived from surveying the parents and students in grades six and eight only.

The results of the Comprehensive Student Survey (See Appendix F) show that most students agree that the other students at Crestomere school treat them with dignity and respect (82%) and that most students feel that the playground is a safe place to play (83%). These results are acceptable, but there is room for improvement.

The responses to questions 3 and 4 are a cause for concern. According to the survey results from 2002-2003, only 61% of students like going to our school, and only 66% of students care about each other. I would like to see these results increase dramatically. In response to this information the leadership class developed a student survey of their own to try and address areas of improvement in the school. The leadership class survey was administered to all students in grades four through nine, asking them what kinds of things they would like to see started, stopped, or continued at Crestomere school. The goal of improving the atmosphere in the school and improving the results on survey questions 3 and 4 was the focus of this survey. From the results of the survey the leadership students determined that the students of Crestomere school would like more dances and would like to have access to a vending machine in the

school. Having more dances and a vending machine would improve their perception of the school and would cause them to enjoy school more. As a focus group from the leadership class we went through a process of trying to gain consensus on what a reasonable number of dances would be; trying to keep in mind that education of students was the most important goal of school. We decided that a couple more in-school dances would be held and that the leadership class would help organize and carry out that activity. Regarding the vending machines, there was a lengthy discussion by staff and school council during which it was eventually determined that as a school we should not acquire a vending machine at this time. Some consideration was given to the types of snacks, treats, and drinks available to students but parents and staff decided that it was in the best interest of students and of the local businesses the school supports not to have a vending machine in the school. This decision was discussed with the students from the leadership class and they, in turn, took the message around to the grades four to nine students.

Other areas of concern were brought up by students through this survey. As the leadership class is continually trying to improve the atmosphere of the school, the leadership students are continuing to discuss the possibilities of implementing some of the changes suggested to help improve the perception and attitudes of all students. For example, responses to question 4 showed that only 66% of students felt that students care about each other at school. Leadership students tried to improve this feeling by offering candygrams for Valentine's Day and by continually working on fun activities, which would build relationships. They also made bulletin board displays, and organized a

presentation and collection of items for students to donate to victims' services in an effort to have students feel that more caring is going on between them.

Survey results showed most students disagreed that students at Crestomere school were well-behaved. This topic is now being addressed with students from the leadership class. Most students, 87%, felt that the service provided by the leadership students had positively affected them by making them more aware of their responsibilities as a student to positively contribute to the school atmosphere. This last result is important. I believe that as students realize they have an impact on the school atmosphere, more will try harder to behave and cooperate.

Leadership class member survey results. I found that by distributing the Leadership Class Member Survey and analyzing the results (See Appendix G) I was better able to get an idea of how the students perceived their efforts in the leadership class. Based on such results each year, I will continue to modify the content and the emphasis of the course. This year, before beginning the leadership course, 60% of students didn't feel like they had very much influence on responsibility for the atmosphere in the school. It seems apparent that if the majority of students in a leadership option course do not feel they have responsibility for, or influence on the school atmosphere there is a good chance that the general population feels this way. With this information, leadership students were able to design presentations and activities for students to show them how they are directly responsible for the atmosphere at the school. This peer teaching was accomplished through an assembly or by individual class teaching of a lesson directed at emphasizing student responsibility and influence. The survey results indicated that after the course 87% of leadership class students felt that

they had opportunities to impact the atmosphere of the school in a positive way. This demonstrates to me that a sense of empowerment developed through participation in the course. 87% of the students in the leadership class also felt that the service they provided throughout the course had a positive impact on the atmosphere of the school. This, too, is evidence of a feeling of empowerment. After completing the course most students, 87% stated they enjoyed taking on a leadership role in the school. This confirms for me that within the school there is a considerable amount of untapped resource potential in our students. Fully, 87% of them enjoyed their experiences in planning, organizing, and carrying out activities in which the rest of the school could be involved. They have the desire and the enthusiasm to take on the challenge of helping to improve their school.

Ninety-three percent of students felt that by signing up for the leadership class they had a responsibility to set an example for the rest of the school in terms of behaviour, attitude towards school work, and school spirit. Students in the leadership class felt that others were looking up to them to show how to act appropriately in the school setting.

Survey results show that while leadership class students felt so positive about their own efforts, they did not see the importance that other students attached to their work. They did not think that other students would agree that leadership students helped others to understand what it means to be respectful, responsible, and caring. However, when the general student body was surveyed, 87% of students responded that the service provided by the leadership class positively affected them. These students felt that they were more aware of their individual responsibility as students to positively contribute to the school atmosphere. One change I will make in the course will be to focus on such

perceptions. Specifically, I will make sure that when leadership students carry out an event they receive feedback on just how important, helpful, and beneficial it was to other students.

Student reflections. By reading the reflections from the students in the leadership class I was able to clearly see the impact the leadership course was having on them. What follow are some excerpts from various journal entries that demonstrate the learning, which took place during the leadership class. The following statements are typical of the honest tone found in almost all entries:

- I have helped the school become a better place with the little things that I have done around the school.
- We have done all of these things (school enhancement projects) because we know that it helps out others. They can't do everything by themselves.
- My behavior isn't all too great because I have a negative look at the school, so I rarely ever tell anyone something positive about this school. I think this mark (self reflection mark) suits me best because of my behavior.

Student responses. Students were asked to respond to the following question:
Are you making a difference in the school by your contributions? Why or why not?

The following selection of student responses were typical:

- I think I am because lots of little kids seem to look up to me more all the time. I don't know why but maybe it is because I talk with them and not just ignore them... Younger kids seem to like me and what I do.
- Overall, I have made this school more positive.

- I helped along with three other people to go over the results of the survey...so that our school could get a better idea of how the kids feel about the activities and atmosphere within the school.
- I think I am making a difference in the school...I helped to get others involved.
- I have worked with the little kids from Grades 2 to 5 and I have helped them with their math and their research on owls. This was quite hard work but I enjoyed it because I got to know some of the younger kids.
- I think that my contributions to the school are making a difference. I have been working on the honesty play (skit) in the last week or so and that has definitely I hope made a difference in some kids attitude. I hope the kids have learned to be more honest and I hope they have learned what to do in a situation where somebody is not telling the truth.
- To be in the leadership class, it's best to be a good role model for the rest of the school.
- I have contributed to discussions about the student surveys and offered ideas to make the school a better place.
- I have helped with a lot of things [around the school] like helping with the elementary play lights. I have been a good role model...doing good in all subjects.

The following quotes, drawn from students' last journal entries, were written in response to some of the following questions:

- 1) How did your contributions to the leadership class improve the climate , tone, and atmosphere in the school?
- 2) How did your behaviour in and out of class reflect the type of attitude of someone in

a leadership position?

- 3) How did you live up to the responsibility to be a role model for the remainder of the school?

Students were given the following written prompts to help them complete their reflections:

1. Did I take any major roles in planning, organizing, and contributing to assemblies or functions in the school, if so which ones?
2. Was I quiet, productive, useful, and did I use appropriate behaviour and make good use of my time for assigned tasks?

A sample of the student responses to the above questions are presented below.

- I tried to be a good role model in and out of class.
- I have contributed to discussions about the student surveys and offered ideas to make the school a better place. I took part in the peer support program, which was out of the leadership class.
- Overall I have made this school more positive.

Student journal responses show the sort of positive impact participation in the leadership class has had on their behaviour. Through their experiences in a leadership position the students felt more responsibility to behave appropriately and set a good example for those around them.

Personal reflections. The following information is taken from the actual journal entries I wrote throughout the duration of this study. As the summer ended and I began preparations for my first year of principalship at Crestomere school I was overwhelmed with the many changes that were about to take place in a few days. I was extremely

concerned that I might not be able to accomplish what I had said I wanted to in my project proposal. There were so many thoughts going through my head that nothing was clear in my mind.

Leadership Reflection #1
September 3rd, 2002

I have a tough group this half of the year. Five of the most difficult junior high boys have chosen to be in the leadership class at the same time. I spent the majority of today's period explaining the course outline to the class along with my expectations for behaviour, assignments, and marking criteria. I stressed the section of the course outline showing that by being in this class they have chosen to be in a leadership position and I explained the responsibility that goes along with that choice. The course outline states that as members of the leadership class they have a tremendous responsibility to help set the climate/tone of the school. Their behaviour inside and outside of scheduled leadership class should reflect the type of attitude of someone in leadership position. By signing up for this class they have chosen to be a role model for all students in the school. I really don't think that the majority of the students in this class truly understand what their involvement in this class means. Hopefully, that will become more clear as the course progresses.

My initial apprehensions and insecurities about achieving success with this particular group of option students was still concerning however, if this first major event was any indication of the future for the rest of the course things will be just fine. I was relieved to get this event behind me. The Terry Fox Run is always a huge event as it is a major undertaking. Student safety is always on my mind as the school population heads off of

school grounds and onto the nearby highway for the event. It was reassuring to know that even though there are some difficult students in this class there are some very capable and reliable students as well...there always is. Renewable resources...hmmm.

Leadership Reflection #2
September 13th, 2002

The leadership class ran the Terry Fox Run today. All in all it was a success. All students, community members, and staff completed the course safely and in time to catch the busses home. This coordination of this run is a huge event; one that takes a great deal of coordination. This run was the first big test for the leadership class this year. Two grade nine girls talked to the school assembly about Terry Fox; his purpose, goals, and the results of his efforts. It was great to see them in that leadership role. I believe that Terry's mission was more important to them after this experience. The leadership students also viewed the Terry Fox Run video and we discussed the qualities and characteristics of good leaders. I found that I had to guide the students in coming up with leadership characteristics by giving them scenarios and asking how they would feel or what they thought of leaders behaving in the way I described.

After the run I stressed the role of everyone in carrying out the smooth operation of the event. We had leaders in charge of signs, donations, course, distribution of treats, clean up, and run results.

Within the first few weeks of the new school year I found that on several occasions I had mixed emotions about the course and the participants. It was not even the end of the first month of school and I was very concerned that the leadership course would not meet my expectations for improvements in student behaviour. I needed to be patient and realize

that significant, lasting changes will take time and consistency. I was also very concerned that I might not be able to dedicate enough time to this course as I was torn in a small school of being a teacher as well as an Administrator. This was a tough position to be in as I am often away at various meetings and I feel that the leadership students need consistency in role modeling and instruction in order for the course to be most effective and achieve the outcomes expected.

Leadership Reflection #3
September 26th, 2002

In the last couple of weeks since the Terry Fox Run we have been working on various jobs around the school. I have tried to explain the purpose of these jobs and how they have contributed to the functioning and atmosphere in the school. I'm wrestling with how to go about changing the behaviour of these five very difficult boys who have chosen to take this class. Their behaviour at recess and lunch has not improved greatly. I was hoping for more change. Perhaps it is still too early to expect a transfer effect from class to spare time.

As a class we will be looking ahead to planning a monthly assembly on Honesty in November and a junior high welcome back party in October.

A fantastic thing occurred this past Monday at our first school council meeting of the year. One of the students from the leadership class volunteered to be the student representative at the meeting. This is the first time that a student has attended a Crestomere School Council meeting in as long as anyone there could remember. The student's role was observational at this point but at the next meeting we will try to get that student representative involved more.

Leadership Reflection #4
October 22nd, 2002

I had a very interesting comment made last night at the School Council meeting that I thought I should write down before I forgot. The School Council Chair mentioned that it was very nice to have a student representative at the meetings. This is the first time ever that this has happened. She thought this was important because this representative can now express the student's views. The Chair also mentioned (after the student representative spoke on various leadership initiatives being implemented during the month of November) that they thought it was great that students will now have a voice. They will now feel like they are being heard and listened to. This came about as a result of an initiative the leadership students are taking to survey the students in regards to what the school should start, stop, or continue in an effort to improve the climate and the atmosphere in the school.

I find it difficult to follow through on the huge requirements and the number of activities happening in the school when I am often away for various meetings as the Principal of the school. Sometimes I feel that another staff member would better operate a class such as this option class. Ideally it would be nice to have a small group of students to work with in a leadership class setting. Right now I have seventeen students and that means that a lot of different events and functions can occur. It's difficult to manage and consult with each of the groups on a regular and meaningful basis.

Leadership Reflection #5
November 21st, 2002

The month of November has been a bumpy roller coaster ride. I've had a few problem students that have taken up the majority of my spare time these past few weeks. I feel that these problem students have been a detriment to this whole character education and leadership initiative. I have carried out a Remembrance Day Program and an assembly with the students from the leadership class but I have not been able to spend as much time preparing them and assisting them with planning, as I would have liked to. I'm feeling very frustrated in my attempts to have students change their behaviour and outlook on school. I am pleased that a number of leadership students have chosen to be part of the Peer Mediation group here at the school. This is a positive outcome, hopefully somewhat attributable to the teachings and discussion in leadership class. We are now looking forward to Santa's Anonymous and the Christmas Concert. We also have a survey developed by the leadership class designed to draw out concerns of the general student body in hopes that the leadership class can take measures to address their concerns and improve the atmosphere of the school.

It did not take much to keep me optimistic at times. In reflection number six I realized that if nothing else was accomplished through this course I would have had the opportunity to let students know how much I cared about them and acknowledged their contributions to the class and to the school. This was a good feeling. One that I think every teacher and administrator should have the opportunity to experience. This is what teaching is all about.

Reflection #6
December 10th, 2002

I have just finished responding to a number of reflections from students. I have come across the realization that one of the biggest advantages of having a class like this one is having the opportunity to respond to the students and take a few minutes to let them know I care. To let them know that staff, community members, and other students notice what they have done and appreciate their help. I think that any chance teachers or administrators have of letting students know they are important has unseen benefits down the road which will improve the school environment. Quick in that it takes little time but powerful in the lasting effects. It's a good use of time to respond to their reflections.

Reflection #7
January 29th, 2003

I have just sent out parent, student, and staff surveys to start the process of comparing the results after the changes this year to the leadership class to the results from the School Satisfaction Results from two years ago.

I have come to many conclusions about the leadership course that will cause me to make adjustments to the course for the next semester. First of all, I can't allow the class to be set up as first choice for grade nines then grade eight, as in the past. I had a tough group to work with because of this system. I'm concerned that this may have affected the results somewhat. I also realized that now these five difficult boys will choose another option and some other teacher will have to struggle with all of them together as I did. This isn't the best way to set up options. I have come to the realization that I should spend more time teaching about leadership and having students study various leaders throughout

history. I have recently come across a book called “Learning to Lead Teams” which I believe will be very useful in making important and significant modifications to the leadership option course. I wish I had discovered this book sooner. I’m anxious to get the surveys returned and to start compiling the information. I’m not very optimistic at this point. I believe that the course is moving in the right direction but I realize that there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Perhaps the greatest result of the changes to the leadership class this year came as unexpected results. I particularly enjoyed the student reflections. This provided me with an opportunity to get a sense of what was going on in the heads of my students, whether or not they were understanding what I was trying to teach them about organization, role modeling, responsibility, making a difference, and so on. The other unexpected benefit was the opportunity the student reflections gave me to write something nice about each individual. Many times a school day goes by without me seizing the opportunity to say something nice to very many students. I found that I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to read and respond to the students’ reflections. As I would respond to their comments about the various activities that they were involved with at that particular time I appreciated the opportunity to write something nice to them; a compliment, suggestion, a thank you for their hard work.

Some of the following quotes were taken from my responses to their journal reflections:

- Great work! Your help is appreciated.
- Thanks for all your help!

- I have noticed some positive improvements in your classroom behaviour as well.
Keep up the good work!
- Your contributions are important and appreciated by staff and students. Keep up the good work!
- It also improves the atmosphere of the school by keeping things restocked, organized, and looking good. This improves the general atmosphere in the school and helps students, staff, and parents, to be pleased and proud of the school.
- I feel you have done a lot too! I appreciate you sharing your talents and leadership qualities with the rest of the school. Good work! ☺
- Your group did a wonderful job! Thank you.
- I appreciate your contributions. If I ever want a job done quickly I know who to get.
- Good! This answer shows me you were thinking more about how doing the jobs were beneficial to others.
- Not only people at the school but now parents, grandparents, friends, and community members know when the games are. This may lead to increased support for our sports teams.
- I was proud of you for being the MC. It is a hard thing to do but you did it! I hope you have learned something from the experience that will help you down the road. The more you do it, the easier it becomes.
- The honesty assembly went fairly well I thought. Your skit helped and the younger kids really enjoyed it.
- I agree with you. You have been very responsible and helpful. I do enjoy having you in class.

- I too believe you have worked hard and have done a great job! You have been a wonderful example to the rest of the students at the school. Keep up the great work!
- Your example (behaviour) and quiet way of leading has had a very positive impact on our school. Thank you.
- You seem very hard on yourself. Most of the time I believe you work well in groups or on your own. Your math assistance was greatly appreciated...I'm sure that the kids enjoyed your help too.
- Don't sell yourself short! You can positively impact this school by your example and by your efforts.
- Thanks for taking on a leadership role in the school. Keep up the good work!
- Often that is what it takes to be a good leader (spending time).
- Remember to try and display leadership qualities throughout your time at school and through your life. You have a lot to offer.
- You were very instrumental in helping the Terry Fox Run be successful. Thanks.
- Thank you so much for sharing your talents with the rest of us. You have many wonderful qualities. Don't ever forget that!

It has taken a full five months for me to begin to realize the changes that have taken place since the start of the school year. Sometimes when you are so involved in a project you cannot see the results of it right away. You need to give it time, realize that it is the right thing to do and then be consistent and patient as it plays out. Sometimes you need to step back and take a good look at where you started, where you have been, and where you are headed. The gathering of information from various survey results proved to be very

enjoyable as I saw the changes in perception that were taking place in students, staff, and parents in regards to the school.

Reflection #8

February 10th, 2003

I have to say I was amazed with the results of the survey. So many things have happened in the last five months. I honestly thought that the majority of the time the message I was trying to instill about personal responsibility and leadership wasn't getting through. The results are incredible. I think that it's beginning to work. Many survey results have shown a dramatic improvement from the results of two years ago. For the last couple of weeks I have been thinking about how I can improve the course and I have thought of a number of ways. The results from the first five months are positive and I believe that with the changes I have been thinking about for the second half of the year the final results of the changes to the leadership class will be even more dramatic by the end of the year. I am anxious to begin working with this new leadership group. I saw a list of the students that have chosen it as their option course. They are a good group and I'm optimistic that we will accomplish many positive things together over the next five months.

By taking the time to write these reflections I have learned many things. Firstly, I have learned that I need to be considerably more patient. My desires to improve the climate at the school were noble, but a tremendously significant and difficult change such as school climate change takes time. I believe that as a school we are headed in the right direction but I have become more realistic as to how quickly this change will take to occur. I believe that to change the climate in the school one would need at least a couple of years, if not more. In a few months I began to see incredible changes beginning but they needed

to be sustained and consistently reinforced in order for long lasting changes to take place. It was a good feeling to see positive results. This has provided me with an increased desire to continue improving upon the course changes that I have implemented in the first five months of the school year. With any change there will be days when you feel like it is going well and there will be others that will cause you to want to throw away the whole plan. By finishing this project I have confirmed that school climate change is possible. It is hard work and takes tremendous commitment on the part of all staff but it does also require the involvement of the student population in order for it to be long lasting.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

As Dickmann and Stanford-Blair (2002) state, “Reality is the ultimate test of theory” (p. 212). The results of this study indicate that students can be used effectively to improve the school environment. Taking the right approach to utilize the strengths of students in a positive, contributory, shared responsibility approach rather than utilizing a demand-compliance model has demonstrated how students can be a valuable resource. In fact they are one of the most significant ingredients to school success and, I believe, only by capitalizing on students strengths can long lasting school improvement be sustained. This study has demonstrated that students have the desire to be involved in leadership-type activities. 87% of the leadership class confirmed this. They felt that by participating in the course they had been instrumental in improving the atmosphere in the school.

Utilizing students for school improvement is a sustainable practice. Each September we have a number of young human beings walk through our doors carrying with them all kinds of talents, strengths, and desires. When that group of students leave in June we know that another group will come again the next September. By tapping into this renewable resource schools can sustain a positive school environment every year.

Each year the activities to improve school atmosphere may change as new students come in to the school and others leave. However, the process for success in using students to improve the school atmosphere remains the same. In my experience this year with the leadership class I have identified the following five key steps to ensure that students can be utilized to improve the atmosphere in the school

- 1) Need: Identify the need for general leadership in the world. Why do we need leadership? Then apply the need for leadership in the world to the need for leadership in the school. Next, determine what the goal of the leadership class will be. In this study the goal of the leadership class was to improve the atmosphere of the school and provide students in the class with opportunities for leadership experience.
- 2) Requirements: What skills and attitudes are necessary to fulfill the task of school improvement? What is leadership? What qualities and attributes do others associate with good leadership? Students must be given opportunities to improve their individual skills in planning, organizing, and carrying out functions that will help to improve the atmosphere in the school.
- 3) Experience: What can a leader do to nurture the intelligence needed to accomplish the task of school improvement? What kinds of opportunities will there be for students to develop their leadership skills? Direct experience in leadership opportunities is perhaps the most powerful influence on the ability of the brain to understand what leadership is.
- 4) Reflection: Students need time to reflect on their activities through small or large group discussions where they can get constructive feedback on their contributions.

Students should also be given the opportunity to write down their thoughts and feelings about the activity they recently carried out. This will allow them to internalize how their contributions have led to school improvement. In addition to students taking time to reflect and respond to the teacher, the teacher needs to take time to reflect on the course and, most importantly, respond to the journal reflections of the leadership class students. In my experience, the opportunity to respond to students' journal entries was perhaps the best use of time. In a few sentences I was able to console, comfort, encourage, challenge, acknowledge, connect with, and thank students for their contributions. Without this opportunity many positive and motivating interactions would have been missed.

- 5) Celebration: Students should take time to celebrate their accomplishments and contributions in improving the school atmosphere. In hindsight I think that time for celebration should be taken immediately following the event, assembly, or function, as well as at the end of the course. At the end, it is also important to emphasize to students how they can continue to make a difference in the school by their positive contributions. I acknowledged their hard work during the class and encouraged them to continue making positive contributions to their school, club, and to their community even after their leadership option course was complete.

Argyris (1990) believes that the job of leaders is to capitalize on the power that comes with the human resource of the organization. The renewable human resource of schools is students. How to utilize students as a resource in a school will change from year to year as students begin their school experience, transfer in or out of a school, graduate, and mature.

Students in the leadership class at Crestomere School were led through these five steps as the course progressed throughout the year from September to January. We began the course by identifying the need for leadership in the world through different activities. One example is the Winter Survival activity from the book by Dickmann and Stanford-Blair on how to lead teams. Another example is the classified advertisements assignment (See Appendix J). By noticing what types of qualities employers emphasized today, students were better able to see the need to work at developing these traits in themselves. These activities focused on the need for leadership in real life experiences. We then discussed how leadership was needed in the school setting. We discussed the different types of leadership; administration, teachers, and students. We focused on the role of students in helping to lead the school. This led to discussions about their personal responsibility and an assurance that they can make a difference in the school by their positive contributions.

Next, the various components and concepts of leadership were taught. This was accomplished by studying and discussing different leaders such as Terry Fox, Harriet Tubman, Winston Churchill, Golda Meire, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Wayne Gretzky, or Mahatma Ghandi.

After the need for leadership was established and a better understanding of leadership was achieved, opportunities for leadership to occur were then provided. Students participated in many leadership activities during this phase of the course. Students organized school spirit activities, bulletin board displays, school wide assemblies, contests, student surveys, and many other activities.

Reflection opportunities were provided at the completion of every event or function organized by the leadership class. This consisted of small focus groups as well as large group discussions. Opportunities to write a short paragraph or two about their experience in leadership and how that experience was contributing to improving the atmosphere of the school were also arranged.

At the end of the course we took time to celebrate our accomplishments. Students were given a leadership opportunity to do some peer teaching on a topic of their own choosing. The lesson ended in a celebration time with students eating sundaes, pies, floats, and other treats.

Peterson & Deal (1998) state “in the strongest schools, leadership comes from many sources” (p. 30). This study has shown very powerfully how students can be an important resource used to improve the atmosphere in the school. When leadership students were able to take on a more responsible and contributory role in the school great things can happen. The results of the surveys have been very productive in displaying the impact of student involvement in improving school atmosphere. Senge (1990) agrees that students are a resource for sustainable improvements in school culture when he says, “Principals can make even more long-lasting contributions, by broadening the base of the leadership of those with whom they work—teachers, parents, students” (p. 46). Students are valuable renewable resources that come to school every year with incredible and diverse talents, skills, and abilities, as well as a strong desire to be involved in their school. A leadership class can effectively be used to channel these talents, skills, abilities, and desires in appropriate ways to improve school atmosphere.

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Appendices
Appendix A
Parent/Guardian Consent Letter

September 3rd, 2002

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am conducting a study of ‘*How can a junior high student leadership option class be used to improve or enhance the atmosphere of the school as a learning community?*’ The purpose of this study is to modify the current junior high leadership option class to include more leadership components. I anticipate that your child and others will benefit from participation in this study by learning new skills of leadership and community involvement. I would like your permission for your child to participate in this study. As part of this research your child will be asked to participate in activities designed by the leadership class to improve school climate as well as complete a student survey in late January indicating whether or not the changes to the leadership class have been useful. Please note that all information will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. When responses are released, they will be reported in summary form only. Further, all names and any other identifying information will not be included in any discussion of the results. You also have the right to withdraw your child from the study without prejudice at any time.

If you choose to do so, please indicate your willingness to allow your child to participate by signing this letter in the space provided below, and return the letter to the school with your child.

I very much appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 783-2141 or email at dseguin@wolfcreek.ab.ca. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study, David Townsend at 403-329-2731 or email at david.townsend@uleth.ca and/or the chair of The University of Lethbridge Faculty of Education Human Subject Research Committee if you wish additional information.

Sincerely,

D. Seguin (Principal)
 Crestomere School
 (403) 783 2141/ dseguin@wolfcreek.ab.ca

 Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Research Project: Renewable Resources: Using Students for School Improvement
Investigator: Darryl Seguin

I agree to allow my child (ren), _____ to
participate in this study. Name of child(ren)
Name of Parent/Guardian: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Leadership Class Member Survey

1. When I began the Leadership option course this year I didn't feel like I had very much influence or responsibility for the atmosphere of the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. After completing the Leadership option class this year I felt like I had opportunities to impact the atmosphere of the school in a positive way. (Character education, School spirit activities, assemblies, and service learning tasks)

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I felt like the service I provided in Leadership class this year had a positive impact on the atmosphere of the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I enjoyed taking on a Leadership role in the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree


5. I think the Leadership class should set an example for the rest of the school in terms of behaviour, attitudes toward school work and school spirit.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I think that the Leadership class has helped students realize what it means to be respectful, responsible, and caring.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I believe that the atmosphere in the school is improving because of the efforts of the Leadership class.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			


6. I feel safe attending Crestomere school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			

7. I am proud to be a student at Crestomere school.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			

8. The students at Crestomere school are well behaved.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			

9. The service provided by the Leadership class positively affected me. By listening to their presentations, watching their skits, and participating in their activities I felt more aware of my responsibility as a student in positively contributing to the school atmosphere.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			

Appendix D

Parent Survey

Please circle the response, which most accurately reflects how you feel about the following elements of school climate at Crestomere School.

1. The way in which discipline matters are handled by the staff of the school.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

2. The caring atmosphere at the school.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

3. The way in which the school keeps me informed about my child's progress.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

4. The behavior of students in this school.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

5. The extent to which your child(ren) is(are) learning the skills needed for success in life after school.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

6. What grade would you give Crestomere School?

A B C Fail

Please add any further comments below that you feel are important and have not been addressed by this survey. Once again, thank you for taking the time to complete the survey and helping us achieve an improved school atmosphere here at Crestomere School.

Appendix E

Staff Survey

Please circle the response, which most accurately reflects how you feel about the following elements of school climate at Crestomere School.

1. The school discipline policy.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

2. The behavior of the students in the school.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

3. Crestomere school as a place to work.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

4. Crestomere School as a safe place.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

5. The caring atmosphere in the school.

Very Satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Please include any other comments that address matters, concerns, ideas or opinions specific to our school climate.

Appendix F

Comprehensive Student Survey Results

SA/A: Strongly Agree/Agree Percentages (%) D/SD: Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Gr. 1		Gr. 2		Gr. 3		Gr. 4		Gr. 5		Gr. 6		Gr. 7		Gr. 8		Gr. 9		Total	
	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD		
1	80	20	100	0	84	16	86	14	100	0	64	36	75	25	69	31	76	24	82	18
2	93	7	85	15	84	16	86	14	89	11	54	46	75	25	80	20	100	0	83	17
3	87	13	85	15	74	26	71	29	78	22	69	31	20	80	25	75	41	59	61	39
4	87	13	85	15	84	16	71	29	44	56	91	9	19	81	63	37	53	47	66	34
5	93	7	93	7	100	0	100	0	78	22	93	7	50	50	75	25	82	18	85	15
6	100	0	100	0	63	37	100	0	75	25	85	15	50	50	56	44	100	0	81	19
7	93	7	93	7	89	11	86	14	78	22	77	23	27	73	56	44	53	47	72	28
8	87	13	46	54	58	42	43	57	44	56	36	64	14	86	25	75	47	53	44	56
9	100	0	93	7	100	0	100	0	100	0	86	14	69	31	62	38	75	25	87	13
Question #	Gr. 1		Gr. 2		Gr. 3		Gr. 4		Gr. 5		Gr. 6		Gr. 7		Gr. 8		Gr. 9		Total	
Surveys returned	15		13		19		7		9		14		16		16		17		110	

- 1) The students at Crestomere school treat me with dignity and respect.
- 2) The playground is a safe place to play.
- 3) Students in my school like going to our school.
- 4) Students care about each other at Crestomere school.
- 5) The teachers at Crestomere school care about the students.
- 6) I feel safe attending Crestomere school.
- 7) I am proud to be a student at Crestomere school.
- 8) The students at Crestomere school are well behaved.
- 9) The service provided by the Leadership class positively affected me. By listening to their presentations, watching their skits, and participating in their activities I felt more aware of my responsibility as a student in positively contributing to the school atmosphere.

Appendix G

Leadership Class Member Survey Results

1. When I began the Leadership option course this year I didn't feel like I had very much influence or responsibility for the atmosphere of the school.	60%	40%
2. After completing the Leadership option class this year I felt like I had opportunities to impact the atmosphere of the school in a positive way. (Character education, School spirit activities, assemblies, and service learning tasks)	87%	13%
3. I felt like the service I provided in Leadership class this year had a positive impact on the atmosphere of the school.	87%	13%
4. I enjoyed taking on a Leadership role in the school.	87%	13%
5. I think the Leadership class should set an example for the rest of the school in terms of behaviour, attitudes toward school work and school spirit.	93%	7%
6. I think that the Leadership class has helped students realize what it means to be respectful, responsible, and caring.	47%	53%
7. I believe that the atmosphere in the school is improving because of the efforts of the Leadership class.	73%	27%
	Strongly Agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree

Appendix H

Terry Fox Lesson

Objective: The students will be able to identify the various characteristics exemplified by Terry Fox as he battled against Cancer and left a legacy in Cancer research with the annual Terry Fox Run.
The students will gain an appreciation of how individuals who possess leadership qualities can have a dramatic affect on the world around them.

- The students will watch the movie: Terry Fox. While watching the video students will list the characteristics demonstrated by Terry Fox while he was battling Cancer.

After the video discuss with the students the characteristics of Terry Fox which contributed to the development of the annual Terry Fox Run.

- motivational
- inspiring
- humble (I am equal to others)
- perseverance
- determination
- hard working
- possessed vision or a dream
- goal oriented
- strong conviction for what he was doing
- had followers

Discuss the fact that each of these students could make a difference in the world as Terry Fox has done. It takes some of the qualities mentioned above but Terry was only one person and he made a difference. He inspires us to do the same.

Plan the Crestomere School/Community Annual Terry Fox Run. Leadership students will play a key role in the set up, promotion, running and clean up of the event. Talk about what needs to be done and go about assigning tasks to various students. In the next

couple of days students will work on their assigned or volunteered for tasks and report back to the group as to their progress, difficulties, areas of help needed, etc.

Tasks

- signs for highway
- someone to wait at the turn around point to direct traffic
- someone to help the students across the highway during the run
- contact police to have present to help slow down traffic
- donation of treats
- take students across the road to the store for free ice cream after the race
- clean up of signs
- clean up of juice boxes, cookies, etc.
- contact the press
- completion of certificates for participation
- applying tattoos to the little children and distribution of tattoos to the older students
- speech about Terry Fox at the school assembly
- safety talk about the course
- promotion of the event in the newsletter
- collection of the donations and counting the donations
- timers and recorders for the run (3km)

After the event discuss the success, problems, etc. in running the event. Emphasize the great contribution of the students in accomplishing the organization of the event. Highlight the team approach to the operation of the event.

Appendix I

Classified Advertisement Lesson

Objective: The students will be able to describe the important characteristics that employers are looking for in the world of work today. The students will gain an appreciation for the school (particularly the leadership class) emphasis on character education and leadership skills.

Explain that the students will need to find 5 current job advertisements from local or international papers or from the Internet which list the qualifications and characteristics of future employees. They will neatly paste these five ads on a piece of foolscap highlighting the important qualifications for the job.

Students will now search through various papers or on the Internet for job advertisements.

Once students have had the time to search the papers or the Internet and find 5 job ads we will discuss the characteristics and qualifications listed. Draw the students attention to the fact that the majority of the jobs that they would like to one day possess are advertising for people possessing people skills, energetic, motivated, hard working type people. These characteristics are present not only for leadership type jobs which most of them would like to be involved with because the pay is higher and they are the ones in charge but also for jobs requiring a lower level of education and specialization.

See examples of job advertisements below.

Director, International Education Policy

Alberta Learning, Edmonton – The Information and Strategic Services Division, Policy Sector has responsibility within Alberta Learning to develop policy options in a wide variety of areas through policy research, analysis, and consultation. Alberta Learning's business plan focuses on well-prepared learners for lifelong learning, work and citizenship, and **effective working relationships** with the learning system, among other goals. The Policy Sector is recruiting to the position of Director, International Education Policy. The Director is responsible for development and management of policy issues and implementation of Alberta's International Education Strategy, released in 2001. The successful candidate will have extensive experience in applying acquired knowledge of policy criteria, policy development, and the **ability to lead** project teams to address and

resolve complex issues. Knowledge and experience in government's policy processes, including stakeholder consultations, the preparation of policy documents for consideration by government, and the development of business plan strategies, are essential.

Qualifications: University degree in a related field plus considerable, directly related experience. Salary: \$59,880 - \$80,760. Closing Date: October 18, 2002.

MANAGER, COMMERCIAL ENGINEERING

CALGARY, ALBERTA – JOB POSTING #2002-DE4EC

Your primary role will be to **manage** the strategic and planning activities related to the addition of new generation and execution of major maintenance by the Project Management group. This will include administering key contracts by managing issues, opportunities and risks. Your additional responsibilities will include developing and implementing specific standards for use within the Project Management department. Your Business or Engineering degree and eight to 10 years of related work experience, including project management, will help ensure your success. Your knowledge and experience with contract administration and specification standardization is complemented by experience in the administration of complex agreements. You are an **outstanding communicator** who is able to **work well both independently and in a team setting**. Your knowledge of the process for selection of or negotiation with engineering will help set you apart from other candidates. Some local and international travel may be required.

Calgary Herald Designer - Editorial Temporary Full Time

The Calgary Herald has an immediate opening for a Designer to join our Editorial Design team. This is a temporary full time position.

The successful candidate will have an ability to produce vibrant news and feature page designs within an overall design style and with **minimal supervision**. The Designer must be able to produce consistently high quality work under tight deadline pressure.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Minimum of 2 years experience in editorial/publication design at a daily newspaper or magazine. Proficiency in Quark Express, Photoshop, Illustrator and Freehand a prerequisite. Quark Copydesk and QPS a benefit. Visual Communication or Photography diploma or degree preferred. **Strong inter-personal and communication skills are a must as is the ability to work in a fast-paced team environment**. Afternoon/evening and weekend shifts required. Applicants who meet the job requirements of this position may apply in writing by no later than Monday, October 21, 2002 to the:

Branch Manager

A Branch Manager is required for our Crowsnest Pass branch in Coleman, Alberta. Responsibilities include managing the day to day operations of the branch; supervising staff; leading the development & achievement of branch growth and sales targets; and overseeing the branch deposit portfolio and lending portfolio. Qualified applicants will have a thorough understanding of credit union/bank operations and principles, and possess skills in the areas of lending, human resource management and sales management. In addition to the above noted skills, an aptitude for business development is vital, paired with demonstrated skills in this area. Applicants should possess a minimum of five years of financial institution experience in progressively senior roles. Previous management/supervisory experience is preferred while post-secondary business education is a definite asset. **Excellent verbal and written communication skills are required. Excellence, leadership, integrity, teamwork** Community Savings offers a stimulating **teamwork-based environment** and a highly competitive compensation package, featuring a very attractive benefit package and a performance-based incentive program. To indicate your interest in joining our team, please submit resumes with salary expectations prior to October 20, 2002:

SUPERINTENDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Reporting to the Deputy Director, Department of Division Services, this senior administrator is responsible for leading and supervising the human resources function in support of the school division's strategic education plan. Working with a committed and professional human resources staff, the successful applicant will welcome the leadership role inherent with one of the province's largest school divisions. The Saskatoon Public School Division provides a high quality education, through its over 2,000 professional and support staff, to 22,000 students in 44 elementary and 8 secondary schools in Saskatoon.

Working in a fast-paced and ever-changing environment, the Superintendent of Human Resources will provide coordination for recruitment and selection processes of the school division, develop human resources policies, administer the division's Employee and Family Assistance Program, conduct collective bargaining on behalf of the Board, oversee the administration of collective agreements and act as a resource person to senior administration on various employee-related matters. The challenge is to identify and implement strategies that will continue to foster an atmosphere of service excellence as well as responding to the changing needs of its various stakeholders.

The ideal candidate will possess an under-graduate degree in Commerce or Business Administration with a major in Human Resource Management, accompanied by a graduate degree in a related field. Preference will be given to applicants with a certified Human Resource Professional designation (CHRP). **A skillful negotiator, effective decision-maker, uncompromising integrity, well-developed influencing and consulting skills, and a team player all qualities integral to this position.**

CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

Exciting opportunity requiring a minimum of 2 years supervisory experience in order to provide proactive direction and support to teams responsible for exceptional customer service and delivery of exchange/wholesale programs to vacation owners. **Strong interpersonal skills** and computer literacy essential together with the ability to assist in development/implementation of customer care programs and database systems.

Hospitality/travel experience considered an asset.

Please forward your resume by October 18, 2002 stating salary expectation to:

Community Counselor

A vacancy exists in Community Mental Health for an individual experienced in working with First Nations members. Position provides excellent opportunity to develop a broad range of clinical skills.

Candidates with a Master's degree in psychology or social work, or a Bachelor's degree and related experience will be considered. Must be able to **work independently** and creatively. Must provide a clear criminal record check. Position to begin immediately.

Forward resume, stating qualifications and salary expectations to:

Trades/ Technical (10/12/02)

BATHROOM INSTALLER /LABOURER Must know basics, **be reliable** and bondable, & have own hand tools.

Trades/ Technical (10/12/02)

143811 Brookfield has an immediate full time opening for a Maintenance Technician II to work with the Calgary Maintenance Group at Fifth Avenue Place. Reporting to the Manager, Maintenance, your primary responsibilities include preventative maintenance tasks on equipment in a 1.6 million square foot Class AA facility, as well as responding to tenant requests, ensuring comfort levels are met. Occasional shift and holiday hours may be required. As the successful candidate, you are a seasoned maintenance engineer with a minimum of five years' experience, holding a Fourth or Fifth Class Power Engineering Certificate. You must have prior experience with various mechanical equipment including pumps, motors, boilers, chillers, air handling equipment and building automation systems. You also have a good working knowledge of Siemens Building Systems. **You possess strong communication, interpersonal and organizational skills.** If you are interested in working in this critical role in a friendly and dynamic environment, please submit your cover letter and resume with salary expectations, no later than Monday, October 21, 2002, in confidence to: Human Resources Brookfield Properties Ltd. 800, 335 8th Avenue SW Calgary, AB T2P 1C9 Fax: 403-770-7030; Email: westernresumes@brookfieldproperties.com We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for interviews will be contacted.

BUILDING OPERATOR - F/T for a Calgary Comm. Real Estate Owner/Mgr. This entry lvl position, reporting to the Operations Mgr., requires an individual to assist in the operations of several comm. properties in Calgary. This hands on position requires **good**

org. & communication skills, with a 4th or 5th class Eng. Cert. pref. Pls submit your resume & starting salary expectations:

CARPET & VINYL INSTALLERS Must be experienced, **reliable**, have own truck & tools.

P/T childcare needed in my home, must be **responsible and reliable** Jennifer/Mike

DENTAL HYGIENIST Our Hygienist has moved away & we need to fill her position, effective immed. 4 days/week, We would prefer full time but would consider part time. Compensation based on exp. & skills. Candidate should be **confident, willing to be part of a team & able to communicate well** with patients regarding all aspects of Dentistry. Our office is modern & attractive. We have an excellent staff & an established family practice. Please fax resume w/cover letter to: Dr. Caroline Krivuzoff-Sanderson

IMMED. f/t position for Assistant Office Manager. Strong accounting background, w/computer experience req'd. Must be professional in appearance, and be a **team player**. Competitive salary, exc. health & benefit plan. Reply in confidence to Box 04992 c/o Red Deer Advocate, 2950 Bremner Ave.,

BRYAN'S SKI AND CYCLE is looking for F.T/P.T, **outgoing, motivated** people w/sales exp. Skiing exp. a must. Salary neg. Drop off resume to Jen at 6722-50 Avenue by October 18, 2002.

NOSSACK FINE MEATS a Central Alberta Processing & Distribution company is currently looking for the right person to fill the position of Central Alberta Sales Representative. This person must have meat related experience, must be a **strong team player, with a positive aggressive attitude**. Resumes must be mailed or faxed in no later than October 16. No phone calls. Thank you all for applying. Only selected applicants will be notified. Fax: 403-343-8066. Attn: Human Resources. 4951A 78th Street, Red Deer, AB, T4P 1N5.