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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR POST BILL-160

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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER AND
ADMINISTRATOR POST *BILL-160*

(Spine title: The Relationship Between Teacher and Administrator Post *Bill-160*)

by

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Graduate Program

in Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario,

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

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Examining the relationship between teacher and administrator post *Bill 160*

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requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

In 1997, the Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris enacted the controversial *Bill 160, The Education Quality Improvement Act* which ultimately amended the Education Act and among other changes to public education, removed school level administrators from teachers' Federations as was already the case in several other Canadian provinces. In the decade that followed, teachers and administrators have had to find ways to work together in an effective manner, despite challenging shifts in the political climate in their schools.

In this research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with retired school administrators who had worked as administrators prior to and post *Bill 160*. I asked them how they perceived their relationship with teachers had shifted their leadership practice. In general, the removal of the administrators from the teachers' Federation did not cause the calamity that many predicted would befall public education. However the administrators in this study found new ways to work with teachers within the rules that were established by *Bill 160*.

Keywords: Bill 160, Educational Leadership, High school administration, Principal-teacher relationships.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 1997, the Mike Harris Progressive Conservative government in Ontario, Canada enacted the controversial *Bill 160, The Education Quality Improvement Act*. The government was elected under a mandate to cut costs and lower taxes through the implementation of a “Common Sense Revolution” (Gidney, 2002, p. 235). They ultimately lowered taxes and cut government program spending in nearly all areas in an attempt to end years of tax and spending increases under the previous New Democrat and Liberal provincial governments (Gidney, 2002, p. 235). The reforms that were to be made in education were to include a 1 billion dollar cut or 22.7 percent reduction in the annual provincial operating grant to schools (Gidney, 2002, p. 242). The impact that these actions had on provincially funded education in Ontario was dramatic.

Bill 160 was part of an omnibus set of legislation that was designed to change many aspects of how education was delivered (Gidney, 2002, p. 248). *Bill 160* centralized control over how tax rates were set, regulated control over class size, instructional hours, the use of non-certificated instructors and reduced the amount of preparation time that some teachers were to have (Gidney, 2002, p.258). With its passage, *Bill 160* created conflict between the government and teacher unions, and also removed school administrators from their respective teacher-union bargaining units (Gidney, 2002, p. 248). By removing administrators from their teacher union, it also put Ontario in line with other Canadian provinces like British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec where administrators were not part of teacher unions. I will be focusing on the impact

of this part of the Bill, as the experience of forcibly removing administrators from a Federation shared by both teacher and administrator may have affected the professional relationship between administrator and teacher. To evaluate any such changes, I interviewed retired administrators and discussed their perspectives of any change that might have occurred in their relationships with teachers post *Bill 160*. The balance of this chapter will discuss some of my own personal experiences with *Bill 160*, share a glimpse into the issues surrounding the *Education Quality Improvement Act*, reveal how I became interested in pursuing this topic and explore some of the questions that I hope to answer in this thesis.

Background

I experienced the impact that *Bill 160* had on high school education and how it affected my daily activities as a history teacher and vice-principal. When I first started teaching in 2000 shortly after the province wide teacher strike in 1997 that lasted 10 school days from October 27th to November 7th, I remember how teachers closely monitored their on-calls (an assigned supervision as directed by the school administration), taught an extra period a day, and engaged in work to rule measures during the days after the enactment of *Bill 160*. *Bill 160* changed the amount of teaching that a secondary teacher was required to teach by increasing the teaching load from 6 out of 8 classes to 7 classes out 8 classes throughout the course of the school year. The teacher strike did not change the workload issue and as a result, teachers were less likely to volunteer for extracurricular activities and also did not want to do any extra work that was not

was not part of their contract. Therefore, they counted every on-call carefully and were quick to let the administration know if they had been assigned too many on-calls as per the local collective agreement.

Work-to-rule measures and other job actions typically came into effect when school boards and teacher unions had difficulty settling a collective agreement. In order to apply pressure on their school board, teachers were encouraged by union representatives to leave the school right after class ended, and supervision of extra-curricular activities, although not stopped outright, was not encouraged. The union felt that if there was enough pressure on the school boards, the government might retract some of more the controversial measures of Bill 160, such as forcing teachers to teach an extra period. Shortly after the last bell, union representatives would roam the hallways encouraging teachers to leave the school. Even though the teachers had been through the tumultuous ordeals of the late 1990s under the Harris regime, some teachers still resisted efforts by the union to encourage teachers to teach to the 'letter of the collective bargaining agreement.' Some teachers still wanted to coach sports, and others wanted to stay after school to prepare lessons for the next day. According to the collective agreement, the activities that teachers did after school were done on a voluntary basis and could be used as a bargaining chip to put pressure on the boards to meet the demands of the teachers. The pressure was designed to encourage dissatisfied parents and students to encourage the boards to give in to the demands of the union. This tactic did not always engender a good public perception of the teaching profession. The Harris government capitalized on this

by running anti-teacher union commercials in the media between October 1997 and September 1998 spending \$6,485,000 on radio, print and TV advertisements (<http://www.oecta.on.ca>, October, 1998).

Although all of these events began to cause me to think about the impact that *Bill 160* might have had on education, the most significant event that gave me cause to think about the implications of *Bill 160* came immediately following my first staff meeting. It was then that some of the details of the distances between teachers and administrators created by *Bill 160* became apparent. I was surprised when at the end of the regular staff meeting the OSSTF (Ontario Secondary School Teacher's Federation hereafter referred to as OSSTF) portion of the meeting began, causing a clear demarcation from the "regular staff meeting" that was led by the administrative team. Without much hesitation, the OSSTF school president otherwise known as branch president stood up and went to the front of the room. The school's administration seemed to know the routine quite well and began to gather their things in preparation to vacate the assembly. As the branch president and the rest of the staff looked on, the administrators hastily and unceremoniously packed up their materials and quickly left the room.

Once they left, the meeting resumed, this time without the administrators leading the program. The topic of the meeting was far different from the usual staff meeting that discussed school needs, programming and school events. Over the years in my experience during the OSSTF portion of the meetings, teachers discussed the school and its administration through the lens of the

union. Teachers argued over supervision, extra-curricular involvement, and the way the school was run. It was as if a shadow administration was being formed that would be ready to challenge the administration should the need arise. As a new teacher, this shocked me. I had not really thought about the social dynamic that existed between the administrators and unionized staff other than the fact that the administrators had hired me, were the school leaders, and had given assistance to me as needed. The notion of administrators as bosses didn't resonate with me at the time. It seemed strange to me that after having conducted a staff meeting, they would be so quickly ushered out of the room without any opportunity to casually discuss items with the staff or to entertain new ideas in a less formal gathering. From discussions with colleagues, I found that this model was not unique; it was being followed across London, the TVDSB, and the rest of the province.

Now that I am an administrator, I find myself paying very close attention to the interactions that I have with teachers on a daily basis. I find myself being very aware of how I use language so as not to imply something that a teacher might interpret as some sort of unwarranted criticism. Should I have a need to criticize a teacher for poor performance, I always provide the individual with the opportunity for Federation representation. I am also very careful about paying close attention to the supervision schedule that I assign to teachers. For instance, under the current collective agreement, I am allowed to assign 30 on-calls to my teachers over the course of the year. If I make a mistake with this, I could find myself in a grievance situation, where a teacher could seek

compensation for having worked beyond the limits stated in the collective agreement. I have also experienced firsthand what it feels like to leave a staff meeting just prior the OSSTF meeting. I felt as if I was holding up the OSSTF portion of the meeting as I gathered my things and vacated the room.

When *Bill 160* was introduced, it was hailed by the government as “another step towards providing students with the highest quality education in Canada in the most cost-effective manner” (www.edu.gov.on.ca, September 22, 1997). The Common Sense Revolution was designed to limit government spending in many different areas. This new era included a gross reduction of provincial spending on education and other public services that the provincial government. Sears referred to this new era as “a lean state...designed to eliminate the waste in work processes by increasing flexibility, reducing the core workforce to a minimum... and contracting-out significant chunks of work” (Sears, 2003, p.2). This shift in public and educational financial policy caused great public debate on many different levels.

The OSSTF had been opposed to *Bill 160* since its inception. As soon as *Bill 160* was released, OSSTF president, Earl Manners issued the following press release:

With the introduction of changes to the Education Act, the government has not changed its goal for public education but is just using a new tool...That goal is to take a further \$1 billion out of public education and sacrifice educators, educational workers and students in the process. (www.osstf.ca, September 22, 1997)

Teachers initially had many concerns with the legislation as it moved through the legislature; the government addressed some of their issues. For

example, the teachers demanded no limit on the right to strike and that their unions maintain a statutory monopoly on the representation of teachers for publicly funded schools. For both issues, the government accepted the Union demands (www.edu.gov.on.ca, November 4th 1997). Those were two of the concerns that were paramount to the OSSTF because without those two concessions, the union would have had their powers dramatically reduced. The right to strike was something that the Federation had only achieved in June of 1975 with *Bill 100*, otherwise known as the "The School Boards and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act" (Gidney, 1999, p. 120). Mandatory membership in the teacher Federations was implemented in 1944, when the Teaching Profession Act was passed (Gidney, 1999, p. 22). Without mandatory membership in the Federation, the effectiveness of the union would be limited. After the government's concessions to the teachers on some key items in *Bill 160*, as presented for first reading, the government indicated that no further concessions could be made.

Another organizational body of teachers, The Ontario College of Teachers, established in 1997 and hereafter known as the OCT, also presented amendments to the proposed legislation that it wanted incorporated into it. The College was given the mandate to act as a governing body that allowed teachers to regulate and govern their own profession in the public interest. After its inception, teachers who wanted to work in publicly funded schools in Ontario had to be certificated to teach in the province and be members of the College (<http://www.oct.ca/about>). The OCT submitted a resolution to the government

that "took a stand against provisions in the Education Quality Improvement Act, 1997 that undermined the College's public accountability for ethical and professional standards in Ontario's classrooms" (<http://www.oct.ca>, December, 1997). In short, the OCT was concerned with parts of *Bill 160* that allowed non-certified teachers into the classroom. The OCT felt that without qualified teachers in the classroom, the quality of education delivered in Ontario would be severely affected. When she was interviewed for an article that was published in the OCT magazine *Professionally Speaking*, the then OCT Registrar Margaret Wilson said, "These amendments deal specifically with professional issues that affect the College's mandate. We were very concerned that these sections would undermine the College's accountability to parents and students for professional standards and ethics" (<http://www.oct.ca>, December 1997). Ultimately, the government removed the four clauses in *Bill 160* with which the OCT disagreed, and continued to review the legislation with other interested parties.

Given that the government had been flexible on certain issues raised by teachers' groups, some hoped that the government would continue to listen and make other amendments to the proposed legislation. A major point of contention for teachers and for the school system administration was the section of *Bill 160* that proposed to remove administrators from the Teachers Bargaining Unit (TBU). In its initial incarnation, *Bill 160* did not mention the removal of school-administrators from the TBU, and it was not until principals and vice-principals supported the teachers in a ten day strike that the government introduced the

language that barred administrators from the union. The Freedom of Association complaint which the OSSTF and Canadian Labour Congress filed against the government in 1998 mentioned this quite specifically.

When *Bill 160* was introduced for first reading on 22 September 1997, it did not include provisions barring principals and vice-principals from membership in the OTF or the OSSTF, nor were they to be removed from the proposed bargaining units....The decision of the government to remove principals and vice-principals from their existing bargaining units is...largely a response to the principals, and vice-principals' participation in the teachers protest against *Bill 160*"
(<http://www.oit.org.pe/sindi/english/casos/can/can10.html>, Feb 02, 1998)

Some have argued that this arguably punitive action taken by the government showed that the government would go to any length to put an end to the strength of the teachers' union. This strength was demonstrated by the fact that the two-week strike was unprecedented in the teacher- government relationship and was supported by administrators. In the past, teacher protest had come in the form of mass resignation, work-to-rule campaigns, one-day strikes (study sessions) boycotts, etc. (Gidney, 1999, p. 118), but never included an extended strike. By removing the administrators from the union, the government, in effect, divided the union at its core, since many of the union leaders were also administrators.

While the government might have seen the removal of principals and vice-principals from the union as a means to reduce claims of collusion among union members, these administrators did not believe that there was a problem. Principals, vice-principals and teachers had created the OSSTF together and the administrators did not want to be forced out of the Federation by the government. For years the OSSTF had supported both teachers and administrators without

problems. Within the OSSTF, the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council issued statements that spoke against the proposed new policy.

OSSPC opposes removing principals from the teachers' Federation," said Brian McKinnon, Chairperson of the Ontario Secondary School Principals' Council. "We are educational leaders with an important professional role to fulfill. We are not, nor do we wish to become, business managers. (www.osstf.on.ca, November 14, 1996)

The idea of removing administrators from the Federation was controversial and ended the long-standing Ontario tradition of teachers and administrators working together under the aegis of the same union. Administrators were afraid that it would damage the job security and protection to which they had become accustomed while working in a unionized environment. Many administrators were also concerned that being removed from the union would dramatically change the working conditions at the school level. They feared that being out of the union would create an "us vs. them" mentality that would make the day-to-day operation of running the school more difficult, thus increasing the administrators' already heavy work load.

Research questions

When *Bill 160* forced secondary school administrators out of the OSSTF, it not only fundamentally changed the organizational hierarchy of the OSSTF, it also changed the working conditions at the secondary school level. To examine the role that *Bill 160* played in teacher-principal relations, three questions shaped this study:

(1) How did the removal of the administrators from the teachers' union affect the nature of the relationship between teachers and administrators as perceived by administrators?

(2) Furthermore, did these changes also affect how principals viewed themselves and carried out their responsibilities?

(3) If so, how did they change their leadership style?

CHAPTER TWO- LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter One provided background and contextual information for the removal of administrators from the federation. It also explained the reason for choosing to examine the evolving relationship between teachers and administrators post *Bill 160*. It answered some of my personal reasons for choosing the topic, and explained the political and economic circumstances of Ontario in the 1990s.

This chapter continues to explore and investigate several policies within *Bill 160* and identify how they affected the workplace of teachers and administrators. This chapter also explores some of the latest leadership frameworks to look for ways in which they may be helpful to administrators to deal with the current post *Bill 160* climate in education.

Literature on *Bill 160*

The body of literature that exists on the topic of *Bill 160* is extensive. *Bill 160* changed the teachers' Federations, modified the workday for teachers, demoralized the work force within the teaching profession and created a host of new challenges for principals and vice-principals (Gidney, 2002, p. 248). The 1990s brought about many reforms as enacted by the conservative policies of Premier Mike Harris. *Bill 160* was merely the educational branch of the sweeping reforms that Ontarians faced and to which they had to adapt. The newspaper headlines of the time echoed the discord between the teachers and the government and other community stakeholders. For instance "*Bill 160* under heavy fire: Education battle hits Ontario legislature: Opposition demands

withdrawal of *Bill 160*" (The Record, Kitchener, Ont. Richard Brennan and Dan Nolan, Nov 18, 1997), "Ontario's students deserve better than *Bill 160*" (The Toronto Star, Steve Peng, Nov 7, 1997)".

Public education was undergoing tremendous changes and it was apparent that teachers and administrators would have to adapt to these changes. Educational theorists such as Owens, Deal and Harris have written extensively about managing and motivating staff in the era of reform. In reading background material from the time several questions arose to me. Would administrators have to adapt their leadership style and find new ways to reach staff in this new organizational arrangement?; did the removal of administrators from teachers' unions affect the nature of the relationship between teachers and administrators, if so how?; what could Boards of Education do to minimize discord and maximize productivity?; further did these changes also affect the way that principals viewed themselves and carried out their responsibilities?

When the OSSTF was formed in 1919, the organization included teachers and administration (www.osstf.on.ca). Although the administrators managed and were responsible for the leadership of the school, within the OSSTF both groups shared leadership and union orthodoxy claimed that both groups worked together to create a working environment that addressed the requirements of the students, teachers and administration.

When administrators were removed from the union in 1997 with the enactment of *Bill 160*, one could have expected that the relationship between teachers and administration would change to some extent perhaps dramatically.

Instead of remaining part of “a cohesive unit”, an “us versus them” mentality quickly presented itself. All of the participants in my research mentioned this new mindset and I also experienced it myself as a teacher.

This new era posed new and challenging problems for administrators because they were now given the task of implementing divisive policies within a difficult professional environment. Furthermore, they were charged with leading disgruntled teachers adapting to drastically changing working conditions. In this strained environment, administration had to motivate staff in a manner that would work to have people transcend these emerging difficulties for the betterment of their students' education. The following discussion outlines the conflict and the ways in which, according to educational theorists, administrators might lead in this new structural arrangement. This brief review of leadership models serves as a backdrop for the analysis of how principals adapted to their changing workplace.

Leadership models

When investigating conflict from an educational standpoint it is important to clarify the type of conflict that is being examined. Conflict within education can come in many forms, such as student versus student, student versus teacher, parent versus teachers and teacher versus administration. Within the context of the changes brought about by *Bill 160*, the conflict in education that became quite evident was the conflict that arose between unions, government, and the high school administration. In light of the educational reforms, high school administrators would now have to function within the confines of a new reality, a

reality that was not necessarily the one they had wanted to implement. It was their job to make sure that the schools ran smoothly and effectively, and the very nature of their positions made them the face of that change at the school level. The principal and vice-principal were the ones who would have to make the decisions that would put into action the newly passed *Bill 160* and this might have caused them to act in new ways, distancing themselves from other more familiar ways of action that might have been seen as being more autocratic and top down.

In his text *Organizational Behaviour in Education*, Owens references Morton Deutch (1973) who stated, "a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur" (Owens, p. 326). In the case of Ontario, this incompatibility germinated in the environment of hostility that *Bill 160* created. Although many elements of the Act troubled the teachers and administrators, such as further funding cuts in education, or the possible lengthening of the school year or day, and increased class size (www.osstf.ca), a significant amount of hostility stemmed from the additional teaching time that the legislation dictated that every secondary school teacher would have in teaching students. This meant that instead of teaching six classes out of eight possible classes in an academic year for a fulltime teacher, the intent of the legislation was to force teachers to deliver curriculum seven periods out of eight (Robertson, 2001, p. 559). This translated into each teacher being required to teach one additional course at some point in the year. As a result of this union leaders encouraged teachers to withdraw their participation in traditionally voluntary activities such as clubs and sports.

Although this action might have relieved some of the pressure that teachers were facing with respect to workload, it only heightened the pressure that principals faced. Principals now had to explain teachers' actions and reasons for these actions to many furious parents. They were also under pressure from their school board and the government to try to keep these activities running.

In an effort to minimize the full impact of this legislation, resourceful administrators tried to find ways to circumvent the intent of the legislation. Through the use of "Creative Insubordination" (Haynes, 1995, p. 21), principals were able to manipulate the mandated 1250 instructional minutes per week by giving teachers scheduled remedial assistance and other school related activities (Robertson, 2001, p. 560) thus avoiding forcing the teachers to teach an extra class. This loophole allowed a principal to schedule remedial time or a time slot where a teacher would be scheduled to be available for a student should the need arise instead of an extra class, thus limiting any extra teacher-pupil contact.

After carefully looking at the language of *Bill 160*, principals also found that they could manipulate the teacher-scheduling timetable to minimize the impact of the Bill. Teacher-friendly principals could also organize the timetable so that it would be possible to have two teachers teaching a class, or possibly to have another teacher regularly relieve the scheduled teacher of the class.

The provincial government did not appreciate this creativity as it did not conform to the cost-saving agenda of the government, which some thought was the true purpose of the Bill (Robertson, 2001, 559). In May of 2000, the government introduced Bill 74 The Education Accountability Act that was

designed to "tighten some loopholes in *Bill 160*" (Majhannovich, 2002, p. 175). Bill 74 mandated that all secondary school teachers must teach an extra class and it ensured that extra-curricular activities would continue by forcing teachers to volunteer for them. This action further aggravated the growing collegial gap between the administrators and the teachers, and both sides were once again displeased with the government and their new legislation.

Principals too, were most unhappy about being given the role of the "heavy" with the power to assign the extra activities on resentful teachers. When *Bill 160* took principals and vice principals out of their Federations, many saw it as a deliberate attempt to weaken the teachers' unions and to drive a wedge between school administrators and their staff. No longer would schools be a collegial place of colleagues working together towards a common goal with the principal as lead teacher. After *Bill 160*, principals became managing administrators, separate from their staffs. Bill 74 drives the wedge in deeper. It will certainly do nothing to improve already sagging morale in the public system. (Majhanovich, 2002,p. 176)

Bill 74 further strained relationships within education and arguably eliminated any gains in relationships with teachers that principals might have achieved. Principals now had to implement a framework unpopular with teachers, thus weakening an already fragile relationship upon which to base their leadership. Creative insubordination would no longer be an option for the principals; they would have to find other ways of dealing with a hostile staff and work environment.

Political leadership

A principal dealing with an adverse work environment can use many specialized frameworks designed to foster effective leadership. These leadership models offer the principal or vice principal a certain set of strategies based on the situation that the principal or vice principal is experiencing. The

model of political leadership as discussed by Deal (2005) offers possible ways to address this educational climate found after *Bill 160*. The conditions that merit a political leadership style almost mirror the conditions created after the educational reforms implemented under the Harris government. The following excerpt highlights some of the conditions that would necessitate this style of leadership.

The setting in which most organizations operate has shifted... from harmonious and supportive to becoming much more cacophonous and contentious. Correspondingly, to survive and thrive, today's leaders need to alter their perceptions and practices. In a world that is politically charged and culturally splintered, organizations long for leaders who are masterful politicians and imaginative and inspirational poets. (Deal, 2005, p. 110)

There are several strategies that a leader who is trying to use Deal's model could take to implement it. His political leadership model can be summarized in the following way.

1. Map the political terrain. 2. Consolidate your power base. 3. Lay out a clear agenda. 4. Move when the time is ripe. 5. Use information as ammunition. 6. Use structure as a political asset. 7. Befriend opponents. 8. Create arenas to air and resolve conflict. 9. What is right is often relative." (Deal, 2005, p. 114)

One of the first tasks under Deal's model is to "map the political terrain" (Deal, 2005, p. 113). Because principals and teachers were initially in the same professional camp politically, this wouldn't appear to be a difficult task to accomplish. As mentioned earlier, both administrators and teachers were against the legislation, however, administrators eventually became the visible face of the legislation because they were the ones responsible to implement its measures. This process became more difficult because the administrators were

no longer part of the union; thus “mapping the political terrain” became increasingly difficult; administrators were no longer able to take part in union meetings or hear concerns voiced by teachers.

Although the political environment at the provincial level has changed for the better since the election of a Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty, administrators may still not be able to gauge the political map of the school when, at the end of a staff meeting, the administrators are required to leave and the OSSTF portion of the meeting continues without them. This exclusion of the administrators from the union meetings furthers the notion that they are a different type of worker. An us versus them mentality, some would argue, is thus enacted symbolically and makes the principal's task of gauging the political climate of the union difficult since administrators are no longer privy to what is being discussed at these meetings. It takes a very special bond of trust between leader and follower for the leader to be able to even broach with teachers the subject of staff morale, let alone to leave understanding and move toward developing practical ways to address any perceived disharmony.

Although getting a feel for the mood of the staff is an important element of this model, other tasks are also necessary to consider. Step seven in Deal's model states “Befriend your opponents” (Deal, 2005, p. 114). By forming a close, yet professional bond with certain teachers, administrators can get an indication of the disposition of the staff. With this information administrators can then decide on which issues to address first, and which issues can be left for later. If a principal is able to befriend key members of the staff who would be willing to

discuss the politics and issues of morale in the school, he/she may also then be able to gauge better the political landscape of the staff, thus fulfilling Deal's step one as well. Since administrators are drawn from the ranks of teachers, there is also a good chance that the administrator might already have a positive relationship with members of the staff. Through this existing relationship, a new administrator might be able to get an immediate grasp of the political landscape of the school rather than having to invest a great deal of time creating new relationships from the beginning.

Poetic leadership

Deal's "poetic leadership" model also speaks to a natural human desire that makes people want to be part of something greater than themselves (Deal, 2005, 115). His poetic model can be summarized in the following way

1. Revisit and renew historical roots.
2. Convey cultural values and beliefs.
3. Recognize heroes and heroines.
4. Convene and encourage rituals.
5. Celebrate key events.
6. Speak in picture words.
7. Tell stories (Deal, 2005, p. 118)

People tend to look towards individuals who can give them a sense of confidence that what they are doing is the right thing to do, especially during difficult times. During the late 1990s, teachers were clearly looking for something or someone who would fulfill this need. Ideally, that something or someone would have given them a sense of belonging they had lost during various action plans; some teachers rallied around the job action, while others resisted the attempts at organization thus dividing the teachers. A leader following Deal's poetic leadership model during these times could have pursued actions that would have brought people together.

The idea of conveying cultural values and beliefs (Deal, 2005, p. 116) was followed by School Boards across Ontario when: they redesigned their logos and created mission statements. After amalgamation, this new identity was important to create a sense of cohesion due to the increased size of the new school boards and the loss of autonomy of some former school districts. School boards went from being relatively small community/county/municipal based boards to large entities where it became more and more difficult for the central administrators to personally know the various teachers and principals working in the system. (Kumar, 2004, p. 130). By creating a new logo and mission statement, the school boards attempted to communicate to teachers and administrators a picture of the new board, which would influence their lives for the foreseeable future. Deal stated, "Most people want more than a pay cheque from their daily labour. They want meaningful work that matters. Cultural values articulate what an organization stands for and offer employees a higher calling, a belief that they are contributing something of value" (Deal, 2005, 116). The mission statement of the TVDSB "A Caring, Learning Community" (www.tvdsb.on.ca) embodied those notions that Deal outlined in his work.

Deal also suggested that leaders should strive to "recognize heroes and heroines" (Deal, 2005, 116), which the TVDSB and the OSSTF both strive to do, albeit independently. For example the OSSTF District Eleven offers teachers the "Bishop Townshend" award, while the TVDSB offers teachers the "Award of Distinction". Both of these organizations understand the need for employee recognition, although there are limitations to what recognition and awards can

achieve. For instance, awards can alienate those who did not receive them but who feel they should have been considered.

Distributed leadership

This political and poetic style of leadership can be an important leadership model for difficult times, yet it is not the only style of leadership of which a leader facing conflict should be aware. Distributed leadership is an effective leadership strategy often employed by principals during tumultuous times and becoming more increasingly employed today. According to Harris, "distributed leadership" was more likely to have a positive effect on student outcomes than leadership which was largely or exclusively top down (Harris, 2005, p. 160). This style of leadership is predicated on the abilities that are held by the members of a staff. If the staff is highly skilled and motivated this can be an effective strategy. On the other hand, if the staff is unskilled and/or unmotivated, this strategy would be ineffective.

Harris outlines the key points of this model (Harris, 2005, p. 168)

- Distributing the responsibility and power for leadership widely throughout the school
- Sharing decision-making power with staff
- Allowing staff to manage their own decision-making committees
- Taking staff opinion into account
- Ensuring effective group problem-solving during meetings of staff
- Providing autonomy for teachers
- Altering working conditions so that staff have collaborative planning time
- Ensuring adequate involvement in decision-making related to new initiatives in the school
- Creating opportunities for staff development.

The idea behind this strategy is to promote a bottom up initiative of change rather than a top down approach. By giving staff members ownership over certain aspects of their jobs, this could be seen as being something that could inspire the staff to be more creative and dedicated. From the administrative point of view, this approach is beneficial because, by establishing a system of leaders and sub-leaders, the principal could delegate responsibility and be less concerned with micro-management.

By 1997, in order to be a teacher in Ontario, teachers had to meet very rigorous educational and professional standards. This is in direct contrast with the levels of education that were required of teachers and administrators at the beginning of the 20th century as outlined in The Hope Report. With this current unprecedented level of education required to enter the profession, teachers now bring with them a wide knowledge base and, in general, professional attitude towards their chosen careers, which are key parts of the necessary requirements to implement a successful distributed leadership strategy.

Principals considering distributed leadership need to understand the implications of this model. Although each principal has to have a certain level of background qualifications, each principal also has unique experiences that they bring with them to administration, not all of which will help them as principals. For instance, they will likely have different backgrounds with respect to the classes that they themselves have taught when they were teachers. These differences can bring with them strengths and weaknesses and it is up to the

leader to determine how they can benefit their staff and community by using their strengths and how they can use the strengths of others on their staff.

However, due to the educational reform legislation, many teachers removed themselves from any position of added responsibility or from volunteer work of any kind, even beyond extra-curricular activities. This obviously made distributed leadership a difficult strategy to implement since another requirement for its successful implementation is motivation by staff to assume leadership as well as progressive levels of experience with it. However, as some teachers were removing themselves from extra or volunteer activities, others saw opportunity in the emergent vacuum. Principals strategically chose key people who could be seen as allies, and whom they saw as effective leaders and educators. By entrusting certain tasks and objectives to leaders from within this group, whether they were introducing new methods of delivering curriculum, or ensuring general workplace safety, principals were relying on teacher's intrinsic sense of professionalism to rise above the harsh political climate in which educators found themselves working.

In essence, the Harris government attacked what the principals were trying to nourish: a sense of professionalism. The ensuing public relations campaign attempted to persuade the public to perceive teachers as being lazy and uncaring towards the children in their trust (www.cbc.ca. 1998 <http://www.cbc.ca/newsinreview/nov98/educat/whatpub.htm>. *Redefining education, showdown in Ontario*). This uncoordinated strategy created troubles for principals since the government attacked the very people that the principals

were trying to encourage to carry on despite the harsh political climate.

“Teachers, the frequent rhetorical targets for governments, have had their autonomy taken away by mandated duties and instructional time, restrictive curriculums and standardized testing” (Sich, 2005, p. 182). This governmental strategy of attack only furthered the aggravation that was quickly becoming endemic in the schools of Ontario.

The Education Act clearly defines the duties of the principal and included in the Act are the very things that the government legislation seemed to be making more difficult for the principal to achieve. For instance, section 265(b) states that “it is the principal’s duty to develop co-operation and co-ordination of effort among the members of the staff of the school”. The strategies mentioned above clearly outline a way in which the principal can achieve this goal, but when the government asked for so much to happen so quickly, such as turning around school cultures, it could be challenging for even the most skilled adept of political or distributed leadership models to make the school function harmoniously.

Clearly a principal would not want to have to resort to using disciplinary measures granted by law and regulations. They had the authority before *Bill 160*, but to use it now would strain the already strained new relationship when dealing with teachers under the new framework of governmental legislation. Underneath all of the administrative strategies that a principal has at his/her disposal, lies the ultimate power to recommend to the board, the termination of a teacher’s contract. If a principal were to frequently use this power, it could further

distance the principal from the staff, especially if other teachers felt that a fellow employee was terminated unfairly.

Summary

When a provincial government seeks to reform education it is forced to deal with the difficult task of creating legislation that maximizes the effectiveness of the system for the educational stakeholders. The provincial government must also realize that when implementing legislation that is controversial and wide-reaching in its scope, the legislation can affect the stakeholders in unpredictable ways. Though the legislative change may cause many unanticipated outcomes, there is always a constant in the equation. That constant is the parties affected: the teachers, the administration and the students. The teachers must educate the students, and the administrators must lead the teachers. This cycle must go on regardless of the political climate of the day. Principals must be able to lead those teachers whether they are part of the same collective bargaining group or not. Successful administrators will find ways to deal with the aforementioned conflict in creative and innovative ways. The onus is on the administrators to keep the school running effectively even in the face of disharmony from the teachers, or even when a government has the potential to pass divisive legislation. Three models that may be useful for principals to use when dealing with difficult school environments have been discussed here. They are useful in understanding how principals dealt with the aftermath of *Bill 160*. Chapter Three discusses the methods used to collect data and sets the groundwork for the later chapters.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of *Bill 160*, obtaining qualitative data from retired school administrators who were school-level administrators before, during and after *Bill 160*. To do this, I selected a qualitative approach because it is the best way to gain detailed information from a small group of people. Berg claims that a qualitative study is ideal for this type of “personal history” research (Berg, 2001, p.81) because the subjects also would likely feel a sort of intrinsic desire to share their educational stories with a researcher. In addition, a semi structured interview format offered me the potential to ask probing follow-up questions that would not be possible in a quantitative study.

I interviewed retired administrators to reduce the likelihood of a conflict of interest with their previous employer; they could respond more freely without fearing repercussions. In particular, I wanted to elicit descriptions of how their relationships with teachers changed in the aftermath of *Bill 160*, the degree to which participants believed that the removal of principals and vice-principals from OSSTF contributed to any changes in relationships between school-level administrators and their teaching staffs, and how any such changes posed challenges or facilitated their everyday experience at work. I also wanted to interview participants who had administration experience prior to and after *Bill 160*. Even though *Bill 160* impacted both the secondary and elementary panels, I chose to research the influence of *Bill 160* on the secondary panel, something

which I observed in my own experience as a secondary teacher and high-school administrator.

All of my subjects had at least three years experience as an administrator before and three years after the enactment of *Bill 160*. Since the candidates whom I interviewed had at least three years of administrative experience before and after the enactment of *Bill 160*, I believed that they would be qualified to share their thoughts on how *Bill 160* affected and influenced the relationship between themselves and their teachers. I employed a purposive sampling strategy, because I wanted to interview people who are experts within this topic area (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 116) namely retired principals and vice-principals who had first-hand experience in their position before and after *Bill 160*.

I used a snowball sampling strategy where I was able to identify a small number of individuals who had the characteristics in which I was interested (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 116). To do this, I asked each participant if they would recommend any other possible principals or vice principals who might be interested in participating in this study. In this way I was able to meet people who satisfied the selection criteria of my research. The retired principals told me they were pleased to take part in the interview and were very forthcoming with suggestions of possible participants for me to interview. Unfortunately, I had to turn down several interested candidates for interviews because they did not meet the criteria for the selection of the interviewees. For instance, I had to turn down participants who had ample experience and valuable information to share about being an administrator, but who had retired prior to *Bill 160*. Other prospective

participants had been retired, but had come out of retirement to work for a short-term contract for their board as an administrator during the period of the interviews, thus disqualifying them from participating in the study.

Although the participants had retired from the Thames Valley District School Board, the majority had done their teaching and administrating prior to *Bill 160* in either the Elgin County School Board or the London Board of Education. Those two boards merged along with the Oxford School Board, as a direct result of *Bill 104*, to form the Thames Valley District School Board. In total, I interviewed nine retired administrators. About half of the interviews took place at the homes of the participants and the others took place in my office after school had ended. One of the administrators had even been a vice-principal at my school and was quite pleased to have the opportunity to come back to his previous work place and office.

The interviews ranged from 45 minutes in length to just over 1 hour and 15 minutes, and I audio-recorded them with a digital recording device. The study was granted ethics approval by the chair of the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Sub-Committee. Beforehand, I gave each participant an information sheet detailing my study and gave them the option of opting out of the interview and study at any time. No participant made use of that option, and all of them seemed to enjoy discussing their career with me. During the course of the interviews, my probing questions often prompted the participants to reveal further information that would not have been elicited in a survey. In some cases, however, the participants had been retired nine years and needed some

prompting to reveal a few more salient details. Ideally I would have liked to interview an equal number of male and female participants because only 22 percent or two of the nine participants were females.

Because the participants were retired, I anticipated that they would not be as reluctant to talk about their experiences, as they might have been if they were still actively employed as principals. From a professional development point of view, I found the interviews to be quite beneficial to me because they gave me a unique opportunity to discuss the role of administrators with retired colleagues who had a wealth of expert knowledge. This gave the activity some real meaning for me beyond the issues of *Bill 160* and allowed me an unprecedented opportunity to ask questions of experts in the field in a completely non-evaluative capacity. They also seemed pleased to give advice to a “rookie” vice-principal.

I began my interviews by getting to know my subject, asking some generic questions about their teaching background and how it evolved into an administrative career. (See Appendix A for the schedule of questions.) Five of my participants had a History teachable, my own primary teachable, so we had something in common from the start. I then proceeded to ascertain the reasons why they retired. Once I established a certain level of comfort with these individuals, I started to ask questions about the effect that *Bill 160* had on their careers. My questions specifically focused on the immediate subject matter of my thesis “Changes in relationships with teachers”.

I hoped to encourage the administrators to share with me information and anecdotes about their relationships with individual teachers prior to and then after

administrators were removed from the union. Due to the difficulties that administrators might have experienced adapting to their new circumstances, my questions focused on their personal experience, and the changes, if any, in their day-to-day operation of their schools. I wanted to see if they had begun to use any of the afore mentioned leadership models.

After each interview, I coded the information, using a list of themes derived from the literature, such as reasons for retiring, challenging relationships with staff members, levels of collaboration between staff and administrator, changes of practice, changing relationships etc... If other patterns in the data emerged which were not captured by these themes, new ones were created. I stopped seeking additional participants when no new themes were found in the data.

Limitations

I only interviewed retired secondary schools from one public school board, and did not include interviews with any administrators from private, Francophone, and Catholic school boards.

As mentioned earlier, there was a disparity between genders in my respondents with two females and seven males. This did not reflect the true gender imbalance of the era considering that in 1997, 35% of administrators were female compared with 65% of administrators who were male. (Ontario MOE. 1997, p.8) Should another study be done that involves male and female high school administrators in the future, the pool of potential participants will be

different given that currently in the TVDSB a gender gap between male and female administrators is greatly reduced.

Another potential weakness of this study is the amount of time that has passed since *Bill 160* has come into effect. It has been over ten years, and some subjects joked that they had a hard time remembering what happened last week let alone 10 years ago; however the similarity of their responses suggests that their memories were not a factor.

Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the study's method of data collection and analysis. In the next chapter I present the analysis of the interview data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

I have grouped the responses to my interview questions into seven main areas to facilitate the discussion surrounding potential changes that may have emerged as a result of *Bill 160*.

1. Participant Background.

This first section deals with the background of the participants, which allowed me to explore why the participants became administrators and what their professional background was before they chose to be an administrator. The identifiable patterns that emerged from their backgrounds were derived from the answers to such questions as: How long were they teachers?; What was their teachable subject area?; How many schools had he/she taught in before they became an administrator?; and How many schools did they administer in their careers? I also sought to understand why they retired and to determine if *Bill 160* had anything to do with their retirement decision.

The decision to move from the classroom to the administrator's office was an important choice made by all the participants interviewed. When these administrators chose the office over the classroom, they did so in an environment that initially allowed them to keep their seniority as administrators within the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation. In 1998 when the Harris government removed administrators from the OSSTF, they were forced to make another choice: to return to the classroom and keep their position in the OSSTF, or to give up their membership in the union and remain a principal or vice-principal. If they gave up their position in the union, not only would they be

effectively giving up the seniority that they had accumulated over a number of years as teachers, but also they would be losing other privileges associated with being in a union, such as collective bargaining and the ability to file grievances. The loss of their positions on the OSSTF seniority list had quite substantial implications considering that the average length of time that the administrators who I interviewed had served 17.2 years before becoming a vice-principal. The administrator with the most teaching experience had taught for 24 years, the one with the least teaching experience had taught for 13 years. These individuals all had a great deal of experience in the classroom prior to becoming administrators, and were all active administrators prior to the implementation of *Bill 160*.

Although the majority of my participants mentioned that they knew of several individuals who had given up administration in favour of a return to the classroom, all of my participants enjoyed the administrative position enough to permanently sever their own, and in many cases, extensive links with the OSSTF.

While no specific teachable subject area is a prerequisite for a teacher to have taught before becoming an administrator, there are some requirements that a potential candidate must have in order to be considered as a potential candidate to administration in Ontario. These requirements are as follows: Qualifications in three divisions, (i.e. Junior division, Grades 4-6; Intermediate, grades 7-10; and Senior grades 10-12); Two specialists certificates, or the equivalent of half of a masters degree; the Principals' Qualifying Program, Part One, to be a vice-principal and Part Two to become a Principal as per Ontario

Regulation 184/97 (www.e-laws.gov.on.ca). All of the candidates met those criteria and many had qualifications in excess of the minimum standard. The participants had administrative experiences in at least 2 different schools and all were experienced in secondary administration. These individuals came from several different teaching backgrounds, although a majority of them listed history as their primary teachable.

When discussing the decision why they chose the career path of administration versus staying in the classroom, several interviewees had the same initial motivation. Four of the nine administrators decided to become administrators, because they had a mentor or a role model who had encouraged them to make the transition from teacher to administrator. Other reasons for becoming administrators included the desire to lead and the opportunity to be creative within a school. Almost all of the administrators mentioned the desire for new challenges, including Participant One who said “It was the challenge. I had exhausted what a student services head could do. I had a department of 20 people at XXXX¹ school, then many at YYYY school. I still had excess energy and I wanted to do more.”

Unlike teachers in the current Ontario educational system, who can spend an entire career at one school, principals and vice-principals tend to be transferred from school to school on a regular basis. While the tenure at the schools varied from one to eight years, all of the administrators whom I

¹ To maintain the anonymity of the participants, I have not identified the participant's schools. I have maintained anonymity by placing a series of capital letters such as XXXX or YYYY in the text in place of the participant's school.

interviewed had been moved on average 3.6 times before they retired. The administrator with the least number of schools had been in two, and the principal with the most had been in six schools. During the interviews I asked one participant why administrators were moved around so much, and he replied, "To limit empire building" opportunities. He went on to explain that if an administrator were kept on at a school too long, his/her influence might become too great in the school and community and thus the board might have trouble at the school and in the community and so the principals were transferred.

All of the participants had completed long careers in education before they retired. The average career as an administrator, not including time as a teacher, was 14.1 years. The administrator with the most experience had 20 years, and the administrator with the least amount of experience had only 5 years.

The decision to retire is not one that is taken lightly. A career in education that can span over three decades can be a hard routine to break. As is the case when anyone retires, especially when educators who have heavily invested themselves in their careers, it should be done with a great deal of thought and careful planning. The board of education recognizes this by conducting seminars to help with the transition to retirement. The mandatory retirement age has been removed in Ontario, thus allowing people to work beyond the age of 65. Educators can typically retire when they reach a certain "factor"; currently an 85 factor, although this was a 90 factor until 1999. The definition of an 85 factor is that the age and years of employment must add up to a total of 85. When it does

so, the teacher or administrator can retire with a full pension. Teachers and administrators would still be able to retire early if they had a combined total of less than 85, but they would do so at the cost of receiving a diminished pension.

The participants in this study all qualified with a retirement factor of either 85 or 90, and several of them actually worked longer than they needed to. This fact underscores the work ethic of these administrators, and their desire to see a job through until it is completed. In fact three of the participants after having retired were actually called back into service to fill in for individuals who were on sick leave. While one in particular worked three years beyond 90 factor, the average time longer than required to receive a full pension was around two years.

Seven of nine claimed that the reason that they retired was due to fatigue. Another two individuals stated that the reason they retired was due to conflict and a different perspective on what they thought the direction of education should be as compared to the direction in which the Ministry of Education was heading.

2. Relationships with teachers prior and post *Bill 160*

The second section of the interview examined the effect that *Bill 160* had on administrator-teacher relationships, particularly on the role administrators were able to play as the school and curriculum leader before and after *Bill 160*. At the time, many articles discussed the notion that *Bill 160* was expected to turn school administrators into "Business Managers". The labeling of administrators as "business managers" implies that administrators would be occupied with the

business side of the school and be even further removed from the teaching and learning than they already were. According to Leithwood et al,

The chance of any reform improving student learning is remote unless . . . school leaders agree with its purposes and appreciate what is required to make it work. Local leaders must, for example, be able to help their colleagues understand how the externally initiated reform might be integrated into local improvement efforts, provide the necessary supports for those whose practices must change, and must win the co-operation and support of parents and others in the local community. (2004, p. 4)

Currently, school boards have initiatives that encourage administrators to continue improving their leadership practices and strategies, including improving teaching strategies, even though they are no longer "in the classroom". These professional development sessions are especially designed to assist those administrators who have been out of the classroom for a while and who are responsible for fostering the improvement of instruction in their schools. Michael Fullan stated that

The conclusion we can draw about the role of the principal is twofold. First, school-wide success, especially with respect to establishing the conditions for continuous improvement, depends on the leadership of the principal – leadership that focuses on the improvement of teaching, closely linked to student achievement; and also leadership that fosters the development of leadership in others who form part of the critical mass of leaders who can carry on improvement into the future. (2006, p. 17)

This suggests that unless administrators are current with their knowledge of best teaching practice, it would be almost impossible for them to conduct meaningful and relevant Teacher Performance Appraisals (TPA), a critical responsibility that is shared by principals and vice-principals.

A) Prior to *Bill160*

When I asked the participants about their relationships with staff prior to *Bill 160*, they unanimously said that they had excellent working relationships with their staff members. The participants reported that they had a collaborative, team-work oriented and collegial relationship. One participant summed it up well when he said

We had a really good relationship. We worked together to come to different decisions; we had a true collegial approach. It was really positive. We didn't always agree with some of the things, but when opportunities arose, we tried out different things. (Participant 2)

The opportunities to strengthen relationships between administrator and teacher did not stop at the school doors at 3:00. Many participants shared stories of having a great time at events attended by both teachers and staff alike. From picnics to Christmas parties, a flourishing social life included both teachers and administrators. As one participant noted,

We always had good parties with staff members. Everyone went and attended regardless of the role. Neighborhood parties were crashed. We would have talks about families, and we were considered friends. We had normal conversations. At school, we had an open door policy. Everyone walked in. (Participant 3)

This collegial attitude was also present at school during the workday. Staff and administrators were "collegial with each other". A participant stated "As an administrator, you were part of the staff. My door was always open, and this didn't change for me. We just had a different role in the Federation. The job of the administrator was to make things easier for the teachers to teach." Another participant exclaimed, "We all worked together doing the same thing".

From the comments of the participants, it is obvious that the relationship between the teachers and administrators was quite strong prior to *Bill 160*. Principals were part of the daily activities of the school day and worked closely with teachers and students to improve student learning.

Although they were part of the same union, one participant noted that the teachers still knew who was their boss. This is an important distinction that must be made, since even before administrators were removed from the union, they were still responsible for teacher performance appraisals, for assigning teacher supervision, and for any sort of disciplinary action that had to be undertaken against a staff member. At the time, the OSSTF represented both the administrator and the teacher, and as several participants pointed out, were responsible for representing the interests of both equally and well. One participant noted

When I had an issue with a teacher involving bringing in a union rep, I always felt that it was we/they. I was in authority and I evaluated the teacher and the union rep supported the teacher. More than once I said. Have you forgotten that you represent me as well as the teacher?
(Participant 4)

This perceived conflict of interest between members became a moot point once the administrators were taken out of the Federation, and as several administrators mentioned, the "sides began to form". Some claimed that it removed the perceived walls of secrecy around teacher misconduct and subsequent disciplinary actions. UWO professor Jerald Paquette shared this idea as one of the principal expert witnesses for the crown in a sworn affidavit as

one of the principal expert witnesses for the crown in the court case between the OTF and the Attorney General in 1997.

As a result, principals and vice-principals exercising supervisory functions, particularly when these functions involve evaluation of the professional performance of teachers, find that union membership places them in a situation of, at best, conflicting loyalties and at worst, conflict of interest. The same is true when principals are called on to provide information to the Ministry of Education and Training that they may regard as prejudicial to the interests of teachers... In short union membership imposes a series of obligations on principals and vice-principals both at the union policy and legal level to abstain from activities prejudicial to teachers' interests. When, however, a teacher is not fulfilling his or her duties under the *Education Act* in an adequate manner, the duties of the principal are to assist, evaluate, and report on the teacher's performance, and, in the event the teacher's performance does not improve, to recommend dismissal of the teacher in question. This is not a sequence of activities congenial to the solidarity of union co-membership and the onus of union membership consequently leads to various aberrations in the way principals exercise their supervisory obligations and to a general unwillingness to embark on teacher discipline except in the most egregious cases of incompetence, absenteeism, lack of diligence, or moral turpitude. (Paquette, 1997)

B) Post *Bill 160*

Although teachers may also have begun to feel apprehension towards speaking with administrators about any challenges that they might be experiencing in the classroom now that they were on the "other side", the participants said that they saw no change in their personal relationships with their teachers immediately following *Bill 160*, but over time, they began to experience change. One participant noted

At a personal level it was the same. Other than that I kept hearing that there would be problems down the road. There was a new feeling of us versus them. I had a feeling that it was against the position of being an administrator and was not a personal attack. (Participant 5)

Another participant said

When looking at the functioning of day to day activities, there was no difference. The only time that there was a difference was, if say there was an issue with a teacher that was in trouble. Then it became easy. Once we left the Federation, it was no longer an issue. (Participant 6)

Although removing administrators might have strained the relationship between the two sides, according to several participants, it did clarify the roles that were held by teachers and administrators. One participant noted

I don't think it changed other than I think they felt that it was more us versus them. We/they. This was really legitimized with *Bill 160*. For instance whenever there was an OSSTF meeting, we were told we were not welcome because we were not members. I remember being shocked. Having to leave and then they talked about us for instance was awkward. I got used to that. It was a blunt change. It contributed to the 'You are admin, we are the employees.' The superintendents said that we are part of the senior administration. We represent the board; we are in this together, with the superintendents, i.e. not in it with the teachers, rather with us. We had never heard that before. (Participant 4)

It seems clear that at a personal level, administrators did not feel any change in their relationships with their staff members directly following the passage of *Bill 160*. However, situations arose that caused discomfort for principals. As the previous participant mentioned, it was quite shocking for the administrators to be asked to leave the meeting when the OSSTF portion would start. As another participant mentioned

I think that the place that I noticed the change was several months after when we were asked to leave the OSSTF meeting after the staff meeting. It made me feel awful. But I understand. I didn't think that they were necessarily talking about the administration. Some groups within the staff would have had angst but I don't believe that it was staff wide. They needed to have private discussions and they had to train the administration. (Participant 3)

Although the staff of several schools would consistently ask the administration to leave the OSSTF portion of a staff meeting, this would not take

place consistently at every school. In the case of one participant, he asked permission to stay for the OSSTF portion of the meeting, and his request was granted. Another principal complied with the request and left the OSSTF meetings but that did not stop him from finding out what happened during the meetings. He stated "They didn't want me at their OSSTF meetings, but I would get feedback from teachers who were at these meetings. Without me there, the branch president could undermine some of the activities that I was trying to undertake" (Participant 7).

This type of workplace exclusion certainly fostered a certain level of distrust between the administrator and the branch president. If it had become known by other staff members that certain staff members were reporting the events of the OSSTF meeting to the principal, it would have caused a further loss of the trust not only between teacher and administrator, but between teachers as well. By undermining the principal to the staff, the branch president was also potentially deepening the growing rift between the federation and the administration.

Another participant said that with the inception of *Bill 160*,

Trust became an issue. I became much more guarded about what I said. Much more measured, and much more guarded. Even though I had some issues, other than not having extra curriculars, at XXXX school, there weren't any problems. But in other buildings, it was horrendous. (Participant 7)

One difference that the participants noted was in how new relationships were formed after *Bill 160* once an administrator was moved to a new school.

One participant mentioned

At XXXX school the branch president would let us know that we were welcome to stay for the Federation part. At YYYYYY school the president would stand and wait for the admin to leave. There was a feeling that we were still part of it at ZZZZ School but at WWW school it was expected that we leave. (Participant 1)

Another participant relayed the following story

Part of my style was to roam the halls between classes and at lunch. It made a big difference. You could solve problems quickly. At other schools, after *Bill 160*, people would arrive 3 minutes before school, or I would see them leave 5 minutes after the bell. Because I was so visible, there was a problem sometimes because teachers thought I was being nosy. They had never seen that before. (Participant 7)

Another participant stated that things were the same right after *Bill 160*, but things changed when she got to her new school.

It wasn't until I got to XXXXX school where I knew no one. If there was an issue at YYYYYY school with a teacher, I heard about it first through the union steward, where at my old schools, I would just have a conversation". (Participant 3)

Just as the background of each principal is different, so is the mood and temperament of each school and staff. Although the administrators stated that they experienced no real change in their personal relationships, they did see a change begin to emerge in their professional relationships over time. These changes were further highlighted by the tenuous political times that were occurring during the years of educational reform in the late 1990s. It also showed the importance of personal connections in the face of forced separation.

3. Principals as educational leaders after *Bill 160*

Five of the respondents said that they perceived no change in the way they felt that their teachers valued them as educational leaders after *Bill 160*.

The majority of administrators stated that they were valued highly before and

afterwards; however, some indicated that they saw their own perception of their role as educational leader change. One of my participants stated that “I did sense that if people were doing things to help the administration of the school, that there was pressure put on them. The other side was also prevalent in that, that was the teacher’s job, not ours” (Participant 5). This we/they perspective hampered the effectiveness of the teacher-administrator relationship because staff members began to question whether or not they should be assisting administrators with various tasks with which they would have previously assisted. This type of job delineation that principals began to feel came all the way from the Ministry, since some administrators started to feel that the Ministry of Education wanted them to be business managers instead of teachers. Given that new perceived Ministry focus, some administrators thought that they should spend more time on what they believed the Ministry wanted rather than helping teachers and pursuing educational leadership roles like they had prior to *Bill 160*. Principals sensed a shift in the morale of the school and were recognizing that things were not exactly the same. One participant stated

I think you could easily say you were valued less because there was less trust, but I don’t know that. I think that would be more of a question for the teachers. When I think of what happens about being valued as an administrator, so much of it depends on your relationships, and what staff sees you doing. I tried to be up front about where we were, what we needed and what I was doing about it. (Participant 7)

In the eyes of many teachers and administrators, there was still a job that needed to be done, but politics seemed to be getting in the way of peak performance. In many cases the hostilities between administrator and teachers

appeared to reflect the times. A beginning of an understanding of the changes and the implications of these changes for their roles was yet to come.

4. Role Changes after *Bill 160*

This group of questions focused generally on how the participants perceived changes in their role as principal after *Bill 160*. For instance, after *Bill 160* did they see themselves as “business managers”, or did they still see themselves as lead teachers or curriculum leaders within the school? In particular in this section of the interview, I wanted the administrators to discuss how the legislation directly changed the way that they were able to operate as administrators and educational leaders.

The Ministry of Education had devised new expectations for school administrators, who were now beginning to wonder how they could implement all of the mandated policy changes into their schools. One of the participants stated that,

Ministry expectation was that you were to be a curriculum leader and facilitator, but the reality was you became a manager. At XXXX school it was like looking after a small town. New roof, New building, Parking lot. Not things you learn in teacher’s college. (Participant 8)

Administrators were finding new challenges with the new tasks being downloaded to them by the Ministry of Education.

Bill 160 was only one of a number of activities. There were many things going on. *160* fit the climate and that was not a healthy thing for education. A lot of things were being downloaded to the administration. Someone had to pick up the slack, and it was the administration that would have to do it. The teacher evaluations that came about as a revised process meant a lot of extra work. We were the ones that did it. (Participant 1)

The managerial aspects of the job have always been present, but as one individual mentioned, these increased in importance and in the time consumed after *Bill 160*. Participants stated that principals were taken away from an educational leadership role and their time was becoming increasingly squandered on things that they perceived to be quite far removed from education.

Well, administrators have complained for years that the job is too much managerial. The Superintendent would say you have to improve the teaching practices to improve student learning. We would say 'Yeah, we have to manage.' We are the ones that are liable. When secretaries steal school money for instance. There are other things that are taking place during the daily routines. VP's get smothered with the daily discipline. Has that changed? No, it has gotten worse. That has been our dilemma. We know we should be focusing on instructional leadership, but we have to do the other stuff, no time in between. Get more Professional Development, but who was planning that? It was the administration at the school and who has time for that? Principals were given less and less discretion. More and more collective agreements that are getting thicker. More rules, care days, HR stuff. It takes up so much time that it made the job demanding. (Participant 5)

Even when administrators tried to become actively involved in fulfilling the responsibilities of being the curriculum leader, they found it increasingly difficult to act as a guide and a mentor to teachers who were struggling with their pedagogy. One participant noted that

The role that changed was that it became difficult to help with teaching. Before you could go in and work with them. Help them. After, we didn't help them. There was a line drawn. It was known that I am evaluating you and your performance. Now we would have to go to the department head. We had to ask them to help. It created time for other issues, not the ones we could help. (Participant 6)

The majority of administrators saw themselves as having more of a managerial role after the implementation of *Bill 160*. This added to confusion at

the work place since the Ministry expected that administrators should also be the educational leaders of the building. "Ministry expectation was that you were to be a curriculum leader and facilitator, but the reality was you became a manager."

(Participant 8)

Given the potential for additional conflict with teachers once the administrators were removed from the union, administrators found themselves having to rely on their interpersonal skills and to reflect upon the writings of educational theorists to provide them with strategies and practices to keep things running smoothly. However, with the changes of *Bill 160*, administrators found themselves with less autonomy than they had before. Several individual participants displayed some frustration when they shared their thoughts around this subject. Their reality contradicted what the Ministry expectations of administrators were. Principals, themselves, had to come to terms with their new roles and some struggled to make a decision about staying in administration in the wake of *Bill 160*. The options available to them were explained clearly

I remember very shortly following *Bill 160*, that all of the administrators were brought together in the gym at the board office and we were told that we were now agents of the board, and no longer part of the OSSTF. We were then given one year to decide if we wanted to stay or go. (Participant 1)

This former administrator told me that he knew personally of several of his administrator colleagues who did not remain in their role and returned to the classroom, even though they were considered to be excellent administrators. These individuals did not want to adapt to the new reality or to leave the relative security of a union.

As the role changed, principals also began to notice that the daily functioning of the school was changing politically, particularly when they had to deal with teachers. The Federation representative now assumed a more influential role within the school. One principal noted that the term "union" began to be heard more often than "Federation". This increased reliance upon the Federation by its members for the resolution of issues and for information would clearly change the nature of the day of a busy administrator. Every decision had to consider if the Federation might become involved.

Not as far as how you operate in the school, but there were obviously some differences. It was very important to have a good relationship with the Federation person who was in the school. Because of mine, I felt that I knew what was going on. It went both ways though. The Federation rep was informed if I thought something needed to happen. They were always aware. No surprises. Consequently there were no surprises for me either. She was a strong, hard line type. But was easy to get along with.
(Participant 9)

The relationship with the Federation seemed to be a key factor in determining the ease with which an administrator could effectively function in each school. This was particularly critical because after *Bill 160* the administration had a different relationship with the staff and the principal had to rely on staff members in new ways. Since principals were the recipients of a large volume of downloaded work, the principals started to download work to department heads and to teachers. This meant, for one principal that "I guess relying on people on staff to help out.... Without providing them pressure."
(Participant 5)

The newly mandated in-school committees were not necessarily designed to make the job easier for principals. The most influential committee was the

staffing committee which among other duties, reviewed teacher assignments with the administration, signed off on line allotments and the teacher supervision, and on the assigned professional activities schedule. This committee is usually made up of the principal, vice-principal, branch president and usually the branch vice-president. The OSSTF set up this type of committee at each school so that the decisions of the principal could be checked to ensure that each member received identical treatment by the administration according to union policy and to the collective agreements. The era of the administrator who had the flexibility to make decisions that were specifically tailored to the school he/she was at was coming to an end, and it was being replaced with the "one-size-fits-all" approach, which was also reflected in the controversial funding formula. The funding formula removed local school board autonomy by eliminating the ability of the school boards to generate their own tax revenue streams. The government also decreased overall educational spending but created a system that would establish a type of horizontal equity through a type of transfer payment scheme. In addition, the Harris government established a very controversial system of funding grants that dictated how much money each individual board of education would receive. This change in the funding formula seemed to indicate that the government assumed the needs of one community were the same as the needs of another (Gidney, 2002, p. 246). This one-size fits all approach was felt by administrators who now had to work within a new set of rules. One former administrator recalled the role that the In-School Staffing committee played:

We had to almost justify some of the things we were doing. We would have to look through the timetables with teachers. Being sure that everyone had the right class in a fair manner. Supervision schedule was all assigned accordingly. That was never in place before. If there were a mistake the staffing committee had to sign off on it. (Participant 1)

All of the participants recognized that procedures, such as a Teacher Performance Appraisal were now much more formalized under the new legislation.

The staffing committee was now there, evaluation-wise and helping teachers changed. There is a very formal process now. When I was first an admin, the process wasn't very formal. If a teacher was struggling, it was less formal. You could sit down and talk. How could we make a difference to set them up with mentors etc... Afterwards things became more formalized. It became more about 'What you do to rank, rate, evaluate and support your teachers'. It was now difficult to do things informally. People were afraid to do things informally. They would be up tight about it so that they couldn't take the help, where as before they were looking at the educational leader perhaps through the evaluation model." (Participant 3)

In the Post *Bill 160* era, all principals now had to follow the same provincial rules, despite any unique characteristics or circumstances in their school as opposed to following the local rules that had been the norm prior to *Bill 160*. For instance, staff in a vocational school would have the same supervisory responsibilities as in an academic school, even though a vocational school might need teachers to spend more time doing hall supervision than would be the case in an academic school. These supervisory responsibilities also varied by the Board. Some local unions had negotiated less supervisory responsibilities, while others had more. Teachers were no longer allowed to be assigned discretionary responsibilities by the principal. Even though previously principals had been able to assign duties to teachers who didn't coach or get involved in other extra

curricular activities to make the workload more equitable among teachers, the new rules meant that all teachers now had to fulfill an equal number of duties, despite anything extra that they might have to offer the school. This could have acted as a disincentive for teachers to get involved in extracurricular activities. Since their workload might now be increasing, the principal lost the discretionary power to assign arbitrary duties to teachers to equalize the workload among staff members. Now that the OSSTF had the authority to check up on the principals' activities and were required to sign off on supervision schedules, principals were being challenged more often, and the number of grievances increased.

5. Changes in relationships with OSSTF

This group of questions dealt specifically with how the participants saw their relationship change with their former union, the OSSTF. Part of the interviews also asked questions that prompted administrators to identify any distinctions that were made between the relationships that administrators had with individual teachers and the relationship with the OSSTF, in general. I have personally observed that some schools have a stronger local Federation presence than others. I expected that through the course of my interviews, administrators who worked at schools with stronger local unions might have had a more difficult time than administrators who were at schools that were less organized or committed to the union cause. If those administrators were at schools that had stronger union presence, I thought that they might have had to employ different leadership strategies to work around the potential of union

confrontation over human resource decisions, thus pitting the administrators directly against the OSSTF.

Six principals responded that they had been in schools with a “strong” union presence and discussed their perceptions about how they were treated by OSSTF and teachers’ unions. The administrators once again stressed the positive aspects that a good relationship with the key teacher leaders in the building can have in ensuring a productive work environment. One participant stated

Both schools were strong union schools. The differences were that at the one, the former branch president had all sorts of roles and we had worked together, and we knew each other. He was extremely influential in the building as an unofficial leader in the building. We had a tremendous relationship. We worked together about many things and I trusted him. He was a valued ally. Even though I had some difficult decisions to make, he wanted to make the school a better place, not just padding his credentials and we worked well together in difficult times. (Participant 7)

Five participants reported that they had established a strong working relationship with key members of OSSTF at the school level that paid dividends when it came to working on a daily basis.

I was only in 3 schools. At XXXX school it was a strong union school. When I arrived at the school, the Federation representative confronted me over a school start time that I introduced. I remember thinking, ‘How will I deal with this?’ Eventually, she became a strong ally. It was still a strong union school though. YYYY school sort of was in many ways, but the union rep was one of my best friends. But it was kept secret. My working relationship with the union was slightly coloured by that relationship. With the right approach, grievances could be avoided. A wedge had been put in to place, but that didn’t give us the right to hammer it in. (Participant 2)

Regardless of the changed and challenging educational climate, most of the administrators in my study indicated that they were able to build strong

relationships with their teachers. It also seemed that each school had key individuals who, regardless of their positions, were determined to work towards a common goal with administration, despite being pressured by a series of limitations imposed on them by their Federation colleagues. One administrator gave the circumstances a positive spin on management-labour relations.

A lot of it had to do with the personalities of the schools, I didn't rule as a dictator as someone who would get a lot of backs up. I was aware through colleagues that some schools had a very hard time with militant teachers. I heard it from my peers. I did see it as a VP when some teachers were giving the P a hard time, and it led to an early retirement. (Participant 8)

Another remarked that "Some differences were that the Federation people became very clear at delineating between evaluator and helper. There was always a Federation rep in the room. As soon as there was an issue, the Federation was brought in" (Participant 6). If the administrator was giving a teacher advice on a teaching strategy within the confines of a teacher performance appraisal, it was more likely to be a Federation issue than if an administrator was simply offering a suggestion after observing a teacher teach.

6. Changes of practice

This section of the interviews examined changes in practice. For instance, did being removed from the union affect the day-to-day way in which the administrators were able to function? I hoped to identify any changes in practice perceived by the retired administrators. Did being out of the union make their day-to-day job harder or easier? Since they were out of the union, did their role as a supervisor become clearer? For instance, did they find that there was less of a conflict of interest on behalf of the union that was supposed to be

representing and protecting both sides should a dispute emerge between the administrator and a teacher? Teacher Performance Appraisals are very significant in delineating the manager-worker relationship between administrator and teacher. Did being out of the union make TPAs easier for the administrators? How did “Work to Rule, Assigned duties, and Extra Curricular Activities” change after *Bill 160*?

Of my participants, the overwhelming majority responded that being removed from the union made their job harder because it became more difficult to develop strong personal and professional relationships with the teachers on their staff. One participant stated that in the new environment, there were “More formal rules of behaviour and relationships. It was needed then, when representation was needed. We also had new rules of engagement. So you knew what to do” (Participant 3).

Another administrator commented that the challenges came from a strong personal level of support for the Federation. This sentiment ran deep with several subjects, consequently they were very much against leaving the Federation.

I think it made it harder from an emotional point of view. I was always a strong Federation person. I remember when the superintendent came to me and said I want you to go to XXXX school. Give me a week. I don't know if I want to continue. I thought it might make the job harder. (Participant 2)

Administrators also knew that there was potential for conflict as a result of the new legislation. This new environment would tax their leadership skills in ways that they thought it would be “Harder to develop trusting relationships with

the official and non official leaders in the school. It would be harder to 'just get it done' rather than having to go through checklists. Much more legalistic and bureaucratic" (Participant 7).

Although the changes instituted by *Bill 160* seemed to be altering the work dynamic to some degree, the majority of participants reported that they did not change their own individual leadership style.

People knew 90 percent more of what was going on. I only knew 10 percent of what was going on. I had to tap into the 90 percent in how to operate the school. My approach was extremely collaborative and open. Consensual, not dictatorial. 95 percent of the decisions were made at the cabinet level, and 5 percent by me. I listened and operated on the assumption that if the problem came to me, it was likely big. Otherwise it wouldn't come to me. (Participant 2)

All participants said that there was a change in the workplace as a direct result of *Bill 160*. Four of them reported that the greatest change was no longer being in the Federation. This left them lacking a sense of camaraderie with the teachers and removed an important source of information. One principal mentioned not being part of the union was like

Being extracted from all things. Not knowing what was happening. There is now a gap. If work action was happening you had to know. If you were going to have to go up a level you needed to know that. Gripping at Federation meetings. You had to have rapport with staff so that they would tell you what was going on. (Participant 6)

Being part of the Federation also gives an employee certain benefits, such as job security and collective bargaining rights. When the administrators were taken out of the Federation, they lost those benefits immediately. " I felt vulnerable. I felt like I no longer had protection, no bargaining rights, like I could

be fired tomorrow. I got used to it after a while, but the differences were in my own mind” (Participant 2).

Being part of a union gave administrators a certain sense of camaraderie with the teachers, and many administrators had been heavily involved in the leadership of the OSSTF. Five of my participants had held significant positions within the OSSTF. Four had been branch presidents and two had held positions at the provincial level. Principals across Ontario had invested significant time and effort into the success of OSSTF and felt like they had a real interest in it. Therefore, when they were removed from the Federation by the government, all of my participants felt varying degrees of displeasure at being removed. They felt a particular displeasure because in its first incarnation, *Bill 160* did not mention removing principals from the teachers’ Federations. The principals felt that their removal was done as a punitive measure because many principals across Ontario supported the teachers in the 10 day walk-out. As one participant stated

I was annoyed. I thought we were being punished because we walked out. We supported the teachers. From my standpoint it was the right thing to do. I agreed with the teachers. The government felt that we were managers of the school. We should be in the school in order to keep it open. (Participant 3)

The principals were in a very difficult position. They might have believed in the cause of the teachers, but they were no longer considered as teachers themselves. They had to make a choice as to whether they should march outside, support their fellow union members and maintain their relationships with

them, or to stay in the building thus potentially fostering feelings of resentment from the teachers. Many administrators walked out with the teachers.

I felt angry. I felt we were being punished vindictively because we were seen to have led the walk out 'The illegal walk out'. The Harris government argued with us. They said we had to stay in. They told us this at the London Principals' Council meeting. I told the staff in a meeting that we were walking with them. The staff leapt to their feet. (Participant 9)

The participants in my study were not pleased with being taken out of the Federation, especially for seemingly punitive reasons. They saw themselves as teachers in the school, but with a different role to play in the building. "I felt annoyed. It didn't seem right. We were teachers. We were doing the same job looking after kids" (Participant 3).

After being removed from the Federation, the principals felt alone and without protection. Being removed from the union might have taken them out of an organization, but it also created the opportunity to join a new entity, the Ontario Principals Council. In the next section, I discuss the void that was created when the principals were removed from the OSSTF, and the role that the OPC started to play in the lives of administrators.

7. Professional opportunities

This final section explores the changes in professional involvement available for these administrators now that they were out of the OSSTF. Through the course of the interviews, administrators shared their perspective on how things changed for them with the creation of the new Ontario Principals Council, hereafter known as the OPC. Did the creation of the OPC fill any gaps that might have been produced when they were taken out of the Federation? I was

interested to determine whether principals were now able to get more accomplished through the OPC, since OPC focuses solely on issues that deal with the professional needs of administration without also having to spend time on issues that are related to the needs of teachers.

As was mentioned earlier, several candidates played a significant role in the OSSTF, and they continued to play a role in the new organization, the OPC. The OPC was designed to support administrators in many of the same ways that the OSSTF supported teachers. Currently, the OPC holds quarterly dinners and also hosts an annual conference, all geared towards administration issues. The OPC also holds workshops, supports members with legal advice, provides professional development and qualification courses and maintains an information rich web site.

When commenting on the quality of professional development (hereafter referred to as PD) previously offered for administrators as compared to what is now offered by the OPC, a participant mentioned "I think the type of PD now by the OPC may be more useful for principals and vice-principals."

Although many of the participants said that OPC PD is useful, several participants mentioned, with fond recollection, an annual conference that was put on by the OSSTF called the "Rare Bird" conference. It brought all of the secondary school vice-principals together once a year and offered practical, engaging PD to the group. "The thing that vice-principals used to do was to go to the OSSTF Rare Bird conference. It was an OSSTF conference for vice-

principals. They were neither teacher nor administrator. People took great delight in calling themselves the Rare Bird” (Participant 5).

This type of PD was useful to the secondary school administrator and is in contrast with the PD that is offered today by the OPC. Today, the only yearly conference is called The Odyssey Conference. All administrators are able to attend whether they are from the secondary or elementary panel. Given the sheer volume of elementary principals as compared to secondary principals, elementary principals dominate the conference and the OPC agenda. “Now they have the Odyssey Conference which is primarily elementary. But in the OSSTF, there were no elementary VPs” (Participant 6). Several participants mentioned that there is currently too much overlap with the elementary school administration and not enough focus on secondary issues, especially now that the Rare Bird Conference is no longer an option. “I attended those but not a lot since 90 percent were elementary. I didn’t have much in common with them. I just didn’t have an interest in supervision on a playground” (Participant 6).

Eight of my participants agreed that the OPC fills a void that was created when administrators were removed from the OSSTF. Since administrators helped to found the OSSTF, they clearly understood the benefits of having a professional organization. It was only a matter of time until an organization like the OPC was created to support administrators. As stated on the OPC website, the purpose of the OPC is to “represent its membership, promote the professional interests of its members, support and protect its members, advocate

on behalf of public education, provide professional growth opportunities for principals and vice-principals” (www.principals.on.ca).

The OPC also provides members with an interactive website with a private section for members only. It also publishes a professional journal called the “Register”. As was mentioned on the website, the OPC supports administrators in a legal capacity, an area that had given administrators some uncertainty after they had lost their legal representation from the OSSTF.

I think it filled a void to the extent that it gives members access to legal advice if there are difficulties. I don't know to what other extent it has. If you get in trouble as a member of OSSTF, you go to your Federation representative. With OPC, it is a lawyer that you deal with. (Participant 2)

The local OPC now also negotiates Working Terms and Conditions collectively on behalf of its members at the local school board level. In fact this year, the local OPC had their contract settled before both the OSSTF and Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario.

Summary

In this chapter I presented the analysis of the interviews from the semi-structured study that I conducted. *Bill 160* did shift the leadership style and practice of administrators and proceeded to challenge principal's authority, which led to the creation of the OPC. Although the participants did not spell it out specifically, many of them described using a type of distributed leadership model in their interactions with their staff. There was more discussion going on between teacher and administrator in issues that dealt with the school staffing committee, and assigned professional activities of teachers. These interactions were now more formalized than they had been in the past given the new role that

the administration had outside of the union. The OPC began to fill the void left once the administrators were removed from the OSSTF. The OPC began to offer administrators legal protection, professional services, and qualification programs. Most participants in my study found the OPC to be a useful and relevant part of their professional lives. In the following chapter I present my conclusions, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will discuss the conclusions that I made as a result of this research. It will also explain what specific findings came out of the data implications for schools and a final summary.

1. What did I learn? What came out of the data that helped to answer the questions?

In 1998, the Education Quality Improvement Act was passed into law. This opened what has often been called the most challenging decade for public education in the history of Ontario. Among other dramatic changes, *Bill 160* removed principals and vice-principals from the OSSTF. This action seemingly placed a wedge between administrator and teacher, and at the time, many people were uncertain if that wedge would create an irreparable gap. It also made the administrators take a "leap of faith": they had to decide if they wanted to remain administrators and be removed from the Federation, or to become teachers and keep their status as OSSTF members. Many administrators had to do some soul searching to decide which path they should choose. While some decided to leave administration to return to teaching, the majority remained on as administrators and decided that even though they were forcibly removed from the Federation by the government, they could still remain effective administrators without that bond with their Federation colleagues. Administrators soon discovered that without membership in the Federation, their working conditions changed, and they would have to alter their leadership style. While they may

have recognized that they needed to change their style, they may not have recognized the changes this shift made in their leadership practices.

Many recent books and articles written by experts on educational leadership such as Fullan, Owens, Davies, Deal and Leithwood share frameworks that are less focused on a top down approach and aim to build teamwork and shared responsibility. This model of leadership seemed to fit the evolving educational landscape of Ontario after *Bill 160*. While the literature from the late 1990's spoke of new ways that principals could work, the government frowned on this type of activity. For this reason administrators were trying to work within the confines of the legislation while minimizing disruptions to the school day wherever possible.

Administrators had to adapt and change their leadership practice to fit the parameters of *Bill 160*. Instead of being able to operate in a model that allowed them to make decisions in a near autocratic manner without having to justify their actions to staff or parents, *Bill 160* caused new organizations to be formed within the school such that principals now had to consult when certain decisions were made. Many administrators to whom I spoke and who followed the principles as outlined in Deal's poetic, political and the distributed leadership models appeared to have the most success operating in the post *Bill 160* environment. This shift in focus is still the case today, and in principals' courses and other leadership programs a key component in the course work is trying to instill within leaders the importance of being able to build capacity from within the group as opposed to forcing it upon the group from the top. Principals qualification courses offered by

the OPC stress the importance of relationship building and having a good knowledge of your staff so that you can improve the learning environment for the students by helping teachers reach their full potential.

During the course of my interviews, I spoke with participants who worked in the “county” and in the “city”. According to participants in my study, geography and school location did not seem to make a difference in the relationship between administrator and teacher. Administrators who served in the “county” and in the “city” had similar stories, and experienced the effects of *Bill 160* with equal measure.

I also wondered if gender might have influenced how female and male administrators worked with their staff post *Bill 160*. Although I only interviewed two female administrators, I did not notice any significant difference in responses in the way that they described the relationship between administrator and staff. Both male and female administrators shared similar stories and experiences, regardless of their gender.

This study has allowed me to explore a wealth of personal histories and experiences from a very turbulent time in Ontario education. The participants answered the questions with interest and engaged in a very meaningful discussion on the *Bill 160* era. Follow up and open ended questions allowed for a relaxed atmosphere that engendered a free flow of ideas from the participants. Each interview began with participants explaining their own personal backgrounds, then they shared their thoughts on what has changed in education since *Bill 160* and revealed that there were some changes in the relationship

between administrators and teachers. In general, they felt that it became harder to create positive relationships with teachers and that a lack of trust was becoming problematic. However over time, and with careful leadership, a positive sentiment has returned to education, and administrators and teachers are once again working collaboratively at schools.

Administrators also saw their role changing and becoming geared towards that of a manager rather than that of a curriculum leader. Participants felt that there was less time to work on projects at the school level and more time was now needed to spend on work that was downloaded from the Ministry of Education.

Principals also saw relationships change from being fully active and participatory within the OSSTF to developing a somewhat adversarial relationship with the OSSTF. The legislation fostered the development of new committees at the school level that would either work with or against the administration of the school, depending on the relationship between the principal and the staff.

New professional organizations like the OPC gave back some stability to the principalship through the support of corporate lawyers and a legal department when administrators experience problems. The OPC also started to offer professional development to administrators and began to take responsibility over local collective bargaining issues. The OPC also began to operate Principal qualification courses thus controlling a segment of the education of new

administrators entering the profession. Recently the OPC has also partnered with an Australian university to start to offer a Masters of Education program.

2. Implications of the findings for schools

Schools and school boards should realize that they have teachers and administrators who are willing to do just about anything to ensure that their school runs effectively. Although there has been conflict in the past, things are moving ahead so that teachers and administrators are finding ways to work together, despite the more obvious differences in their distinct roles as educators. According to my participants, workplaces that function with a culture of collaboration and openness between administrators and staff are the most effective. Administrators seem to be using more of a “distributed leadership” model with their staff and are engendering among their staff a more cohesive work environment, especially since *Bill 160* has caused more opportunities for collaboration between the principal and the teachers. Administrators who give value to their staff and who were willing to work with the staff within the new parameters were the ones who had less friction at work. Administrators also had to be aware of the new issues that had the potential to cause friction such as a new us vs. them mentality, and a newfound lack of trust for the administration.

3. What are the recommendations I would make for further study?

For future study, I would like to see if there is a correlation between the decline in the number of new administrators and the changes to the working conditions for administrators after *Bill-160*. Also, it would be worthwhile

examining the ways that PD is designed and delivered differently as a result of *Bill 160*.

Summary

In summary, this thesis examined and analyzed administrator's perceptions about any resulting changes in the relationship between administrators and teachers. My findings noted that:

- Administrators noticed a change in the working relationship with teachers, but also spoke of a relationship that seemed to be evolving. This new relationship seemed to be more formalized, as there was a different type of collegiality that emerged as a result of the legislative changes. There is now more clarity in the roles between teacher and administrator.
- *Bill 160* did not turn out to be the end of public education as some had claimed it would be. Although there were some difficulties at first, principals relied on their leadership skills to overcome the challenges that they experience in the era of educational reform of the late 1990's. Principals who used poetic, political and distributed leadership styles seemed to have more success in this new era even though they might not have identified the leadership styles by the aforementioned names.
- Teachers and administrators are finding new ways to work together and education is becoming less adversarial and more collegial. In this new environment, there is greater mutual respect between teacher and administrator, and the relationship that they have is more professional.

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Appendix A

Background

1. a) Can you briefly sketch your teaching career? For instance, subject matter, areas of added responsibility?
- b) How many years did you serve as a teacher before you became an administrator?
- c) What made you decide to become an administrator?
- d) In how many schools did you serve as an administrator?
- e) How long were you an administrator?
- f) When did you retire?
- g) What were the reasons behind your decision to retire? (Did the changes caused by *Bill 160* have anything to do with your decision?)

The Effect of Bill 160

1. Changes in Relationships with Teachers
 - a) How would you characterise your relationship with your teachers prior to *Bill 160*?
 - b) Can you give me an example of your relationship with your teaching colleagues prior to *Bill 160*? For instance chatting in the hallways, going into classrooms, meeting with staff after work or other social occasions.
 - c) How would you characterise your relationship with your teachers after *Bill 160*?
 - d) Can you give me an example of your relationship with those same colleagues post *Bill 160*?
 - e) Would you say that teachers valued you more or less as an educational leader after *Bill 160*? Can you give me an example?
2. Changes in the Role
 - a) How has your role in the school changed after *Bill 160*? For instance, prior to *Bill 160*, how were you viewed (e.g., a curriculum leader, manager, facilitator)?
 - b) Were there any changes in how you were viewed post *Bill 160*? If yes, what were they? (e.g., more of a manager)?
 - c) Please identify and explain how your role changed.
 - d) What changes brought about by *Bill 160* most affected
 - e) How you were able to operate as a principal?
3. Changes in Relationships with OSSTF

- a) Have you ever been an administrator at a “strong union” school? If so, was there a difference in how you were viewed or treated by the teachers compared to another school with less of a “strong union” presence after leaving the OSSTF?
- b) If there was a problem with the performance appraisal of a teacher prior to *Bill 160*, how would that same problem be handled post *Bill 160*?
- c) How has the issue of school supervision changed now since *Bill 160*? for instance, are teachers more or less likely to supervise parts of the school at your request?

4. Changes in Practice

- a) Did being “out of the union” make your job easier or harder? In what ways?
- b) Did being removed from the union affect your leadership style? If yes, can you describe that change? If no, can suggest why it didn't change?
- c) What was the greatest change that you experienced at your workplace after having left the union?

5. Changes in Professional Involvement

- a) What was your involvement in the OSSTF prior to 1998?
- b) How did you feel when the government removed you from the OSSTF?
- c) What are some of the positive outcomes of leaving the union?
- d) What are some of the negative outcomes of leaving the union?
- e) What was your involvement in the OPC after 1998?
- f) Can you compare the type of professional development that was offered by OSSTF for administrators with the type of professional development that is now offered by the OPC?
- g) Does the OPC fill a void that was created when administrators were removed from the OSSTF?
- h) Has your relationship with your administrative colleagues changed since 1998? In what ways?
- i) If you were given the chance to do it again, would you choose to leave the Federation to become an administrator?

6. Final summary

- a) Is there anything else you would like to add or to elaborate on further?

Appendix B

Examining the Relationship Between Administrator and Teacher post *Bill 160*.

LETTER OF INFORMATION

My name is Andrew Smith and I am graduate student at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into the impact that Bill 160 had on the relationship between teachers and administrators and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The aims of this study are to investigate how Bill 160 impacted the working conditions of educators, in particular that of administrators. I would like to speak with retired administrators who worked prior to, and post Bill 160.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to participate in a qualitative research interview. I will conduct an interview with you for around 45-60 minutes that will be audio recorded in a mutually agreed upon location. I will ask you a series of questions inquiring about how Bill 160 affected your work as an administrator. The interview will be transcribed into a written format.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All audio recorded information will be encrypted and stored securely for the duration of the study, after which time, it will be permanently deleted.

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, office of Research Ethics, the University of Western Ontario at 519-661-3036 or ethics@uwo.ca. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Andrew Smith at XXX-XXX-XXXX or my faculty advisor, Bob Macmillan at.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Andrew Smith

Appendix C

Examining the relationship between Administrator and Teacher post *Bill 160*

Andrew Smith, M-Ed Candidate

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D



THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO FACULTY OF EDUCATION

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 0804-3
Applicant: Andrew Smith
Supervisor: Bob Macmillan
Title: *Examining the relationship between teacher and administrator post Bill 160*
Expiry Date: July 31, 2008
Type: MEd Thesis
Ethics Approval Date: April 23, 2008
Revision #:
Documents Reviewed &
Approved: UWO Protocol, Letter of Information & Consent

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

No deviations from, or changes to, the research project as described in this protocol may be initiated without prior written approval, except for minor administrative aspects. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information and consent documentation, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Jason Brown (Chair)

2007-2008 Faculty of Education Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Dr. Jason Brown Faculty (Chair 2008)
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki Faculty
Dr. Jacqueline Specht Faculty
Dr. Wayne Martino Faculty
Dr. J. Marshall Mangan Faculty
Dr. Immaculate Namukasa Faculty
Dr. Robert Macmillan Assoc Dean, Graduate Programs & Research (*ex officio*)
Dr. Jerry Paquette UWO Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (*ex officio*)

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