

**Reimagining Targeted Classroom Management Supports for Teachers to Increase  
Teacher Retention Perceptions in the Reading School District**

A Doctoral Capstone Project

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

Department of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

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July 2024

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July 2024

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### **Dedication**

This project is dedicated to the current, former, and future staff of Central Middle School in the Reading School District. Without their tireless and painstaking work to do what is right for kids despite every barrier placed in their way, this project nor my life's work would not be possible.

### **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank my husband, Jeremy, and my children, Allison and Mark, who suffered through three years of additional chaos in our lives for me to complete the requirements of this program. Without exception, I would also like to thank my Assistant Principals and teacher leaders who were able to bear with me through my additional time requirements and probable lack of focus due to my over analysis of my new learnings. Additionally, I wish to thank the doctoral faculty of Pennsylvania Western University, especially Dr. Mary Wolf, for their quality feedback and supports; my cohort counterparts for their insights and collaboration throughout this journey; my external committee member, Dr. April Halligan-Rostek, for her time and encouragement over the past several months; my Superintendent, Dr. Jennifer Murray, for her support of this research; and Dr. Brittany Purr-Brehony, for her editing expertise.

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### **Abstract**

With teacher attrition and retention issues causing a nation-wide crisis of instructional vacancies in our public schools, research was conducted in a large, urban, high-need middle school in Pennsylvania to determine if a peer-led classroom management support system was effective for teachers already considering resignation. A mixed-methods, embedded design model that included a quantitative survey and a qualitative structured interview was used to determine how targeted booster professional development, peer observations, and observational feedback of professional practice impacted teachers' retention perceptions. The intervention system focused on the evidence-based practices of Restorative Practices and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, and it was purposefully designed to meet the professional development requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused. The designated master teachers who led the intervention system protocols were required to meet rigorous selection criteria. Results indicated that the intervention system had positive impacts due to its peer-led nature and perceived increase in skillset, support, and connectedness. The results also indicated that the classroom management support system was effective in changing most of the study participants' retention perceptions, particularly for those who identified as female and within their first three years of teaching.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

As an advanced society, we have developed education systems that are designed to impart our children with multidisciplinary learning on a vast array of topics that we deem essential. To accomplish this monumental venture, we employ teachers who design lessons to ensure learning occurs. While some recent advancements in computer applications have developed streamlined learning that eliminates the need for a multitude of individual teachers, our education systems cannot continue to exist without the service of professional teachers.

Despite this essential societal need, teacher vacancies abound in the Reading School District, a large, urban, and low socioeconomic public school district in southeastern Pennsylvania. Without a viable plan to retain new and experienced teachers, the future success of the students at the Reading School District will be in jeopardy.

### **Background**

Over the past decade, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of people who continue to work as teachers in our nation's school system. By the summer of 2022-2023, the percentage of vacant teacher positions in the Reading School District secondary schools was over ten percent. Furthermore, state-assessed content areas such as English, Mathematics, Science, English Language Learning, and Special Education accounted for many of the identified vacancies. For a school system where every secondary school has been identified by the state for comprehensive or targeted support due to extremely low academic proficiency, the lack of teachers is the most significant concern facing the secondary schools of the Reading School District.

Indeed, many factors have impacted teacher attrition and retention. Student misconduct has been cited by multiple teachers upon their resignation as the top reason for leaving their position. This research seeks to understand how a multi-faceted and peer-led mentoring support system for classroom management practices can begin to support struggling teachers and increase teacher retention outcomes.

### **Identification of the Capstone Focus**

In the Reading School District, Central Middle School is a historically hard-to-staff, urban middle school. High rates of teacher vacancy, teacher turnover, Special Education, ELL, student misconduct, and student violence, coupled with low academic achievement, limited parental engagement, and problematic facilities infrastructure, have continued to plague the potential success of the school, despite state-guided comprehensive support. Improvement efforts have focused on building capacity for professional learning communities to support academic teams, as well as the implementation of evidence-based, behavioral support programs, such as those based on Restorative Practices and schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports.

However, vacancies continue to rise annually, adding increased pressure and stress to the remaining professional staff. Additionally, the continuous cycle of teacher turnover has limited the forward progression of the improvement efforts, thwarting significant advancement in student achievement. The lead researcher, who also serves as the current Principal of Central Middle School, has planned to conduct action research to discover the impact of experimental teacher support system protocols to increase teacher retention efforts.



### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the research to determine which areas of a classroom management support plan have the greatest potential to positively impact teacher retention. The research questions include:

1. How does a modeled professional development series on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?
2. How do structured peer observations of designated master teachers on classroom management techniques affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?
3. How does feedback of professional practice on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?

### **Expected Outcomes**

Through mixed-methods action research, both quantitative and qualitative data will be used to identify which elements of the experimental classroom management support system have the most significant impact on teachers' perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. While the primary goal of this research is to support teachers towards retention, if elements of the developed system demonstrate positive effects towards the research goal, those factors will be further developed into a model classroom management support system that can be replicated in various schools and school systems.

**Fiscal Implications**

As Central Middle School and the entirety of the Reading School District are designated as Title 1 schools, federal funding sources can be used for future implications of this research. Once the initial research is conducted, the annual plan to supplement traditional professional development support for instructional staff using the proposed classroom management support system will incur several specific costs. While much of the cost will be encumbered in salaries and benefits for overtime work in a proposed three-hour per month peer mentorship program focused on effective elements of the classroom management support system, additional funds will be needed for nominal professional development supplies.

As the lead researcher for this action research, the time spent in research to develop the professional development sessions, peer observation guides, and peer reflection rubrics are solely indirect costs that do not have monetary values to consider when the positive aspects of the study are formulated into an official classroom management support system and encumbered annually to budgetary line-item expenses. Other indirect costs include the use of the school facility after hours, including basic utilities services that will be consumed to support the personnel staying overtime to complete the work.

**Summary**

Given the reality of the situation at Central Middle School, and in the Reading School District as a whole, teacher retention is a barrier to student success. Relentlessly hiring and training new teachers has become a never-ending cycle of frustration for all staff, and student behaviors continue to worsen year after year when teachers are

stretched to the point of exhaustion and defeat attempting to compensate for the overwhelming lack of staff. By developing and focusing a support system that will allow struggling teachers to gain support from successful peers around classroom management, there is potential for teacher retention to increase, driving students towards successful learning outcomes. Although the projected cost for an annual classroom management support system may seem high due to paying professional staff members overtime wages, the cost of failing to solve the teacher revolving door is infinitely higher. And, unfortunately, that is a cost that will ultimately be paid by students who leave Central Middle School less prepared for high school and beyond.

A thorough review of the existing literature on teacher attrition and retention, classroom management systems, and professional development strategies will follow in the next chapter. Specific methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations will also be detailed in subsequent chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

The following research will explore the current reality of teacher attrition and retention to determine a viable path towards peer collaborative practices that will bolster classroom management strategies in support of struggling teachers. Additionally, it will explore the perceptions and causes of the national teacher shortage, as well as the effects this crisis has on student learning and schools, particularly middle and high-need learning centers. Moreover, this research will explore widely used middle-level classroom management programs and strategies that seek to reduce negative student misconduct, specifically Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports and Restorative Practices. Finally, there will be a review of effective strategies to support new and struggling teachers from the lens of a proficiently designed peer-led professional development and support program.

#### Teacher Shortage Crisis

Currently in the United States, recent statistics show that interest in becoming a teacher has dropped by half from the 1990s, with job satisfaction measures being reported at the lowest levels in half a century (Ingram, 2023). While this is not the only time in the nation's education system history when the shortage of teachers caused a national dilemma, it is certainly the most significant in eighty years. For context, in the 1950s, after the end of World War II, the United States faced significant teacher shortages as the baby boomer generation entered elementary school with a 100% increase in enrollment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). To combat this crisis, Darling-Hammond et al. (2023) reported that several United States presidents, including Eisenhower, Kennedy, and

Johnson, championed teacher loan repayments and forgiveness under the National Defense and Education Act to entice more individuals into the teaching profession. There are similar efforts being proposed currently, both at the national and state level, in addition to the official and established Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program. However, even if those efforts to grant additional teacher loan forgiveness would be approved, the personal financial aspect of the teacher shortage does not appear to be the only barrier to solving the crisis.

Today, there are different reasons for the crisis, but the data is even more bleak when you look at specific measures, many of which have been significantly impacted by a multitude of societal and economic forces since the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics (2022a) reported that 18% of public schools had at least one teaching vacancy and 27% of public schools had multiple teaching vacancies. Overall, it was also reported that “4% of all public-school teaching positions across the country were vacant” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022a, p. 1). While teacher shortages were a general concern for some public-school districts prior to the pandemic, the Learning Policy Institute reported that the number of vacant teaching positions is about 300,000, which is three times the number from just five years ago (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). Given the context of this research, it is also important to note that 57% of those teaching positions were reported in high-poverty public schools, versus only 41% reported in low-poverty schools, showing an increased inequity for students who attend the poorest public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022a). Specific to middle school teachers, as we move forward, the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023) reported that while the job outlook shows

little to no change overall, there are 42,200 middle school teaching jobs per year through the year 2032 that will need to be filled due to teacher attrition trends. To give support to the need for this research to be conducted, Fuller (2022) reported that high-need middle schools are the most impacted by teacher shortages in Pennsylvania. Notably, for Pennsylvania middle schools that serve high percentages of students of color, almost 25% of teachers have less than three years of teaching experience and the same percentage of teaching staff leaves the schools each year (Fuller, 2022).

During the past four school years since the pandemic, Pennsylvania has reported increased staffing challenges because some districts created more teaching positions to fill in learning gaps caused by the pandemic school closures, further adding to the teacher shortage crisis (Fuller, 2022). Additionally, looking at teacher migration trends in the national data, teachers move from schools with high-need student populations at higher rates, leaving urban schools serving students of color and high-poverty with additional staffing vacancies (Allensworth et al., 2009).

When we investigate where we will find individuals to fill these vacancies, there is no easy answer. For context, in Pennsylvania alone, the total number of teaching certifications drastically decreased from 15,000 in-state certifications in the 2010-2011 school year to only 4,200 in-state certifications in the 2021-2022 school year (Hill, 2023). Perhaps the most telling numbers of the teacher shortage come from the percentage of college graduates who are receiving degrees in education. The Pew Research Center reported that the total percentage of education degrees fell from 19% in the 2000-2001 graduation year to just 4% in the 2019-2020 graduation year (Schaeffer, 2022). Moreover, in Pennsylvania, high school students who took SAT assessments in

preparation for college entrance reported a significant decline in intention to major in education from 11.2% in 2009, down to 4.5% in 2019 (Fuller, 2022).

### ***Teacher Attrition***

To fully understand the ramifications of the teacher shortage crisis, it is essential to look at teacher attrition and its impact. Cooper and Alvarado (2006) defined teacher attrition as “leaving teaching altogether, either to take another job outside of teaching, for personal reasons as child rearing, health problems, family moves, and retirement” (p. 1). The factors cited within the definition are not unique to the United States’ public education system and share similarities with other related occupations. What makes the current teacher attrition situation perilous is the drastic disinterest of teachers to continue in their current roles and occupations. Specifically, Sutchter et al. (2016) stated that even prior to the pandemic “the most important driving factor of teacher shortages is high teacher attrition” (p. 38). In the United States, teacher attrition rates of 8% are double the rates of other high-achieving nations such as Canada, Finland, and Singapore (Sutchter et al., 2016). Though Pennsylvania fares better than the national average, it still reports teacher attrition rates at 6.2% (Fuller, 2022). While other professions see retirement as the greatest source of attrition, two-thirds of teachers who are vacating their positions are leaving teaching for other reasons (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

In Pennsylvania, Fuller (2022) reported that data suggests that 11.3% of first-year teachers leave the profession outright. Prior to reaching tenure at the end of the third year, the percentage leaving increases to 16% (Fuller, 2022). In a survey conducted during the past year, teacher perceptions collected in the annual Merrimack College Teacher Survey recorded that 35% of current teachers reported that they are likely to quit

the teaching profession entirely within the next two years (Will, 2023). Although there is a growing body of research regarding why this is happening, there are certainly compounding factors that need to be analyzed in a holistic systems approach.

In an analysis of the deeper trends of teacher attrition, Ramos and Hughes (2020) report that the first and second reasons for teacher willingness to leave their current positions are student behavior and classroom climate, respectively. Garcia et al. (2022) furthered this claim by noting additional factors that are reported to contribute to the current dilemma, such as a lack of teacher voice, unsupported work environments, a multitude of school problems, lack of teacher morale, base salary figures, and increased work hours.

The prevalence of negative attitudes in the United States towards teachers is also a trend that has impacted the profession. Since the Gallop Poll first started to assess the American public perception of confidence in public schools in 1973, the confidence rates have dropped from 58% favorability to 26% in 2023 (Jones, 2023). In fact, negative perceptions are rampant with secondary school students who have immediate access to social media and who have made personal attacks on teachers and the teaching profession, including using websites specifically created to rate teachers and school officials, which have been reverberated through negative perceptions and social media critiques by parents and politicians (Fuller, 2022).

Salary concerns impact the decisions of individuals prior to becoming teachers, as well as those already in the profession. In Pennsylvania, Fuller (2022) reports that teachers' salaries have remained relatively stagnant for the past two decades, but the buying power of each dollar has decreased by half. Inflation and salary stagnation has



further exacerbated the difference between the profession of teaching versus others that require baccalaureate degrees (Fuller, 2022).

A Learning Policy Institute report has provided possible remediations and recommendations for this catastrophic education problem. In the report, Darling-Hammond et al. (2023) gave several suggestions for increasing teacher retention and limiting teacher attrition, which included increasing teachers' net compensation, creating debt-free teacher preparation programs, supporting clinical preparation programs, providing high quality mentoring programs, increasing investments in peer collaboration to share expertise, designing schools to prioritize teaching and learning, and addressing changes to school accountability. However, a meta-analysis of substantial studies concluded that teacher attrition from teacher burnout has a higher predictability than job satisfaction has to teacher retention (Madigan & Kim, 2021).

### *Causes of Current Teacher Shortage*

**Classroom Management.** According to the Merrimack College Teacher Survey, 62% of teachers reported this past year that better support is needed for students' discipline-related issues in their classrooms (Will, 2023). Concerns related to poor classroom management begin with teacher preparation programs. McGuire et al. (in press) found no evidence that pre-service teachers received any training related to specific behavior management. Further, the review also found that the teachers only received training once they were in-service and when they expressed a desire for more training in both classroom management and behavior management strategies (McGuire et al., in press).

Moreover, in a study conducted in a high-poverty, urban school district in

Arizona, Ramos and Hughes (2020) discussed the top five strategies that teachers believed would increase their likelihood of retention in their classroom. All of the factors were rated by level of perceived impact and related to classroom management concerns, including (1) more resources to manage student discipline, (2) full implementation and sustainability of the school discipline program, (3) improved working environment, (4) mentoring programs for classroom management and student discipline, and (5) professional learning community trainings focused on managing student discipline issues (Ramos & Hughes, 2020).

**Lack of Support.** Another factor that was discussed in the study by Ramos and Hughes (2020) was the perceived lack of support from school principals. The researchers described that principals believed that they were solely responsible for building up teachers to be prepared to engage in productive classroom management activities. According to the perceptions of the teachers, not only was the opposite true, but the teachers reported feeling that they gained more experience out of managing classrooms on their own. Additionally, the teachers in this study felt a disconnect with the principals who they perceived to not have a concrete understanding of the behavioral problems in their classrooms, a dissonance and lack of trust with reporting frustrations and struggles, and a discord between themselves and their principals in the ability to implement directed classroom management programs with fidelity (Ramos & Hughes, 2020).

Using the Teaching and Learning International Survey, Renberger and Davis (2019) explored the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and several other factors to determine possible ways to reduce teacher attrition. They reported that strong support from mentors was found to have a positive relationship, particularly when viewed in the

context of self-efficacy. Conversely, they found a negative relationship between job satisfaction and barriers to professional development, furthering the argument that a lack of support for professional growth is detrimental to solving the concerns around teacher attrition (Renberger & Davis, 2019).

**Lack of Professional Development.** When analyzing the data regarding the impact of professional development on teacher attrition and retention, it is important to note that the teaching profession has never had as many non-traditional teachers. Nationally, 27% of those enrolled in teacher candidacy preparation programs are currently teaching on some type of emergency certification (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). In Pennsylvania, Fuller (2022) reported that for the first time in history, there are more emergency teaching permits issued than full certifications by the Pennsylvania Department of Education annually.

The impact of this reality is felt nationwide, as there is ample evidence that teachers are not provided with enough professional development prior to entering the classroom. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) specifically reported on this issue as it relates to teaching in schools with culturally diverse student populations when they reported that “teachers who enter the profession through alternative certification pathways are much more likely to leave their schools and the profession, especially when they teach in schools with high proportions of students of color” (p. 17). This leaves administrators and school districts with a heavy lift in terms of developing teachers who lack skills that have traditionally been part of collegiate coursework and practicum.

In a relative study by Pivovarova and Powers (2022) that looked at teacher attrition prior to the pandemic in Arizona, the rate of teacher attrition between public

school teachers and charter school teachers was reviewed over six years. It is important to note that prior to the pandemic, charter school teachers had a higher percentage of alternative certification, which is now plaguing more areas of the country. The study showed that teacher attrition in charter schools was 54% higher than in their public school counterparts. The report noted that school districts need to consider direct interventions and more mentoring support for teachers who are new to the profession (Pivovarova & Powers, 2022). Fuller (2022) said that Pennsylvania has also seen this same impact on its charter schools. While lower, attrition rates for charter school teachers prior to the pandemic in Pennsylvania were at 20.1% by 2018 (Fuller, 2022).

Digging deeper into the professional development concerns, Koerber et al. (2023) recognized the teacher attrition crisis and analyzed its link with teachers' need for achievement, affiliation, and power. The study reported:

[T]eachers are more often retained when their needs for achievement are met through supportive and nurturing work environments, sustained by administrators focused on staff development. Teacher needs for affiliation are met through strong induction and mentoring programs coupled with a focus on cultivating a supportive staff through ongoing professional development and learning communities. (p. 1)

Further, it was found that meeting the teachers' need for power could be provided in classroom autonomy and influence (Koerber et al., 2023).

### ***Effects of Teacher Shortage***

**Effect on Students.** A lack of teachers has a direct and profound impact on students and their learning. Even when teachers are present in the classroom, their

personal level of stress and burnout can have an impact on students. Zhang and Sapp (2008) reported that teacher burnout has a direct impact on learning, with lower levels of affective learning happening in classrooms with teachers noting greater teacher burnout. Moreso, they described how teacher burnout levels directly impact student motivation in an opposite direction (Zhang & Sapp, 2008).

Referring to the Merrimack College Teacher Survey, 53% of teachers believed that their classroom management negatively impacts student learning (Will, 2023). When teachers need to stop the classroom activities to address student misconduct, the learning for all students in the room is paused. While this may or may not cause significant learning loss in any teacher's classroom, teachers who have chronic student misconduct would see this happening on a routine basis. Subsequently, there is a logical direct impact to student learning when eventual teacher attrition causes multiple vacancies and a complete void of instruction.

Specific subject areas are affected by teacher attrition and retention at higher rates. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) noted that math, science, and special education teachers are more likely to leave than teachers with certifications in other subject areas. They further noted that this is a nationwide trend. However, they also explained that data has been reported to show that teacher attrition is "increased in schools with more students of color and more low-income students" (p. 16). In their research, they described how teachers in schools with high populations of students of color "move schools or leave teaching at a rate 46% higher than teachers in schools with fewer students of color" (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019, p. 10). Thus, schools that have marginalized populations that traditionally need additional support to

succeed have the highest likelihood of having teacher attrition rates that will negatively impact students' learning and achievement.

**Effect on Staff.** Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, research was conducted regarding specific stressors for teachers. Lener et al. (2017) noted such factors to include large class sizes, student behavioral challenges, workload, and lack of autonomy. However, they also noted emotional stressors, such as compassion fatigue. This was particularly high within populations of teachers who served students who came to school with numerous adverse childhood traumatic experiences (Dorado et al., 2016), which include schools in high-poverty and urban areas and those who have substantial numbers of students of color (Lener et al., 2017).

When teacher vacancies rise and candidate pools are low, principals have few options. Hiring new staff is more about finding candidates who are willing to take on the challenges of classroom duties and less about finding teachers who are the best match for students. In a recent publication, Zuo et al. (2023) shared that principals tend to hire candidates who at least identify with a similar vision for student success, regardless of their qualifications or the diverse needs of the school. In addition to covering unsupervised classes for vacant positions, teacher stress and burnout are also responsible for increased teacher absenteeism and the use of sick time off from work (Lener et al., 2017). This further adds to principals who have no choice but to cover the unsupervised classes in other ways.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2022b) reported that even prior to the pandemic, 61% of schools struggled to find substitutes to fill teacher absences; however, by the end of the pandemic, the same data point rose to 77%. As evidence, they

noted that the rate of increase of teacher absences in the 2020-2021 school year was 49%, but the same rate rose to 77% in the 2021-2022 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022b). Consequently, principals had to find other ways to provide supervision for the students sitting in classrooms without a teacher. In the School Pulse Panel, a monthly survey used by the United States Department of Education to collect a wide variety of public school data for federal policymakers and educational researchers, principals reported that these coverages were filled by administrative staff 74% of the time, support staff 71% of the time, other teachers on their preparation periods 68% of the time, and by combining classrooms 51% of the time (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022b). Given this data, teacher absences have had a significant impact on other school staff members.

**Effect on the Profession.** Throughout history, the teaching profession has long been held in high regard. In many countries, this is still the case. However, teachers in the United States do not always feel that their profession is well-respected. Will (2023) reported that teachers only feel respected as professionals by 55% of the general public.

As a profession, teachers have argued for increased autonomy over their school roles. Doherty (2020) stated that “teachers report lower levels of autonomy over what tasks they do, the order in which they carry out tasks, the pace at which they work and their working hours, compared to similar professionals” (p. 80). While some school districts have teacher-led curriculum committees and teacher-initiated professional development action teams, the administration in most school districts plays a heavy hand in the day-to-day schedule and duties of each teacher. Unlike other professions, teachers have limited control over the duties of their job. Changes around teacher autonomy could

help teachers to feel professionally valued and are likely to abate job dissatisfaction (Doherty, 2020). Recently, a large quantitative study conducted by Worth and Van den Brande (2020) found that teacher autonomy has a strong correlation with job satisfaction. They also noted that there was a strong statistical correlation with workload management and teacher perception to stay in the profession (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020).

### ***Implications for High-Need Schools***

As noted earlier in this review of the literature, school systems that are characterized as high-need, as well as those that serve students of color, are disproportionately affected by teacher attrition for multiple reasons. While the rates are steadily increasing, these concerns have been ongoing since prior to the pandemic. In fact, Miller and Chait (2008) described this phenomenon as cyclical due to the more difficult working conditions present in higher-need schools. Specifically, they noted that the constant turnover of staff prevents high-need schools from developing and sustaining viable instructional programming and limits their ability to fully develop staff to deal with daily challenges. When we consider the examples provided regarding the 25% turnover of staff in high-need middle schools, these are significant concerns (Fuller, 2022). Miller and Chait (2008) contended that the subpar status and conditions of high-need schools also contribute to a generational lack of graduates from the same high-need schools who would even consider teaching as a profession.

### **Classroom Management Strategies and Practices**

Effective classroom management systems have become the centerpiece of ample educational research over the past decades. Given the propensity of teachers to feel that students' behavior is a catalyst for their attrition from the profession, it is imperative to



take a closer look at the literature around effective classroom management strategies and specific practices that support middle school teachers, as well as those teaching in high-need urban schools.

### ***Student Misconduct***

Even prior to the pandemic, the United States Department of Education data for the 2019-2020 school year has shown that exclusionary consequences for serious disciplinary incidents, described as violent or illegal acts including fighting, assaults, possession of weapons, and possession of drugs, had risen nationally in both middle and high schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022c). However, there are limited data sets available that provide quantitative information on classroom level misconduct incidents, such as those that are non-violent and non-criminal, which distract from the classroom learning environment. This is most likely because there is no universal reporting system for such data beyond those created at the local school level.

Despite the lack of general classroom misconduct data, there is perceptual data from teachers in relation to the interference of general student misconduct with teaching and learning. In terms of student behavior in middle schools, Zoronski et al. (2021) wrote that 89% of middle school teachers report having at least one student with chronic disruptive misconduct in their classroom. Moreover, during the 2020-2021 school year, 32% of teachers believed that student misconduct impacted classroom instruction, with the highest percentage of that national average being middle school teachers at 37% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). From the same survey, the report referenced the perceptions of teachers on rule enforcement of chronic classroom misconduct. Teachers surveyed believed 67% of teachers enforce student rules, while

83% believed that the principal enforces the rules (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Since most student behaviors do not warrant an exclusionary action by an administrator and are best handled by the classroom teacher who has the strongest relationship with the student, this is an area of concern. It also does not align with comparative research that only 1.8% of teachers reported regularly sending students to the principal for rule enforcement (Zoronski et al., 2021). This data suggests that there is a disconnect between teacher perceptions of student behaviors and responsibility for effectively eliminating such behaviors.

### *Classroom Management Strategies*

Brophy (2006) defined classroom management as “actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction” (p. 17). Beyond the traditional ideas of classroom management where teachers focused on establishing physical seating configurations and large group communication skills, he expanded on this definition by explaining that classroom management cannot be interpreted conceptually without also articulating that student socialization and disciplinary interventions are key elements to modern classroom management (Brophy, 2006). While maintaining order is a foundation to a successful classroom, until more recently, teachers and administrators have most often responded to student misconduct by assigning punitive measures to change the students’ behavior and limit the impact to the learning loss (Oxley & Holden, 2021). Indeed, early student behavioral theorists, like Skinner and Pavlov, discussed student behaviors in relation to how positive behaviors are reinforced so that students can remain productive members of the classroom environment, therefore seeking to limit exclusionary practices and keep students in their learning environment

(Brophy, 2006).

Certainly, logic implies that disruptions to the learning environment and lesson pacing are problematic. Zoronski et al. (2021) reported that disruptive behavior causes multiple types of negative outcomes, including lower student achievement and increased teacher burnout. To abate this problem, experienced teachers and theorists in the early 1900s began to write about aspects of management theory and how teachers could productively use them to maintain routines and respond to students or events that caused interruptions in learning (Brophy, 2006). Management theories continued to be developed through the twentieth century, with more emphasis on research methods and empirical data as the century progressed. As corporal punishment began to be dismissed as a legally available option for teachers and administrators, specific structures and frameworks to eliminate negative behaviors developed into more modern classroom strategies and programs.

**History of Classroom Management Programs.** In the 1980s, coinciding with education programs aimed at the prevention of drug use and teen pregnancy, educational researchers started to evaluate the need to increase student outcomes using prevention systems for negative behaviors (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Concurrently, classroom management theories went from prescriptive and organizational actions teachers needed to communicate, to classroom-based systems that focused on individual student needs (Brophy, 2006). By the 1990s, the focus and attention nationally was on providing technical assistance for schools to develop and implement behavioral support systems based on leading behaviorist theories (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012), but not everyone agreed with this trajectory. Besides theorists who conversely trialed counterproductive systems,

education leaders like Ronald Butchart pointed out that the classroom management systems needed to be more conducive to establishing classroom order and imparting life-long social skills that would ensure the continuation of a democratic social order (Butchart, 1995). This amplified the argument that classroom management programs need to incorporate a goal of appropriate student socialization while still building systems of support focused on the students' current social skills needs.

By the early 2000s, inclusive practices became increasingly used in American schools. With behaviorally diverse students included in all classrooms, teachers were presented with behaviors that needed structured responses (Flower et al., 2016). As discussed by Lanterman et al. (2021), much of the educational research on classroom management theory involved creating frameworks for teachers to use to support their ability to manage their classrooms while reacting to the individual needs of students, particularly those with defined disabilities.

As classroom management theories continued to develop, a keen focus on efforts that the teacher makes to organize and communicate student behavioral reinforcement became evident in both teacher preparation programs and professional development for in-service teachers (Sugai et al., 2000). Because research revealed that the actions of teachers in their classrooms have twice as much impact as external forces, it is essential that teacher actions regarding behavioral expectations in their classroom management system are explicit (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Today, two of the classroom management theories that are used widely in American classrooms, specifically Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and Restorative Practices, are based on the described classroom management theories developed over the past half-century.

**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).** Funded by grants from the United States Department of Education, intensive research on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) within schools and classrooms began after the implementation of IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Sugai and Horner (2002) described that the historical nature of PBIS was developed from the need to effectively respond to student negative behaviors to ensure student achievement.

According to the Center on PBIS (2023):

PBIS is an evidence-based, tiered framework for supporting *students'* behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. When implemented with fidelity, PBIS improves social emotional competence, academic success, and school climate. It also improves teacher health and wellbeing. It is a way to create positive, predictable, equitable and safe learning environments where everyone thrives. (p. 1)

Moreover, one of the main goals of the PBIS system is to create a sense of social equity in the classroom, as staff and students come together to prioritize expectations and expected outcomes. In this, PBIS uses classroom practices and systems that allow the teacher to review established data points collected to track positive and negative student behaviors to understand additional interventions that may need to be created (Center on PBIS, 2023).

Sugai and Simonsen (2012) discussed the four main elements of an effective PBIS program. They reported that teachers must first define the specific outcomes that students need to achieve. Next, these outcomes, usually written in positive behavioral language, are translated into student-friendly behavioral matrices that are designed to

outline the explicit behaviors that teachers expect in the classroom. To ensure that students are aware of each behavioral expectation, the Center on PBIS (2023) affirmed that there should be no more than five expectations and that these must be explicitly taught to students by the teacher, as well as continuously communicated to students. Then, classroom routines must be developed and consistently used to provide a continuum of support in daily activities. Finally, to interpret the data based on the actual behaviors that occur, teachers must use feedback regarding the specific behavioral expectations, which can include both positive and negative results (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

PBIS programs are built on the framework that there are multiple tiers needed to manage various levels of student behavior, from basic classroom disruptions to repetitive or violent acts. While the tiered system is more closely associated with school-wide PBIS, teachers can build tiered levels of support within their assigned classroom when a school-wide PBIS program does not exist (Center on PBIS, 2023).

By 2018, there were roughly 30,000 schools using PBIS (Center on PBIS, 2023) and there is ample research, particularly at the elementary school level, that it can be an effective system to improve student outcomes, reduce exclusionary discipline practices, and improve teacher outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2008). At the middle school level, Nocera et al. (2014) described research conducted on a high-need middle school that not only yielded reductions in school discipline and suspensions, but also demonstrated statistically significant increases in student achievement in both math and reading. Further, Lloyd et al. (2023) studied middle school student perspectives on the use of PBIS in their classrooms. Generally, the students' attitudes were positive, but their

perspective was recorded to view the system as being all about getting rewards. The students also shared that they believed that it improved both their school climate and student behavior, most specifically prosocial behaviors that were included in the expected behavioral matrices of the PBIS program. Ultimately, student perceptions suggested that PBIS in middle school classrooms encouraged transparent teacher to student conversations and opportunities for students to take an active role in their own school experience (Lloyd et al., 2023).

**Restorative Practices (RP).** In the later part of the last century, classroom management strategies were beginning to develop that were backed by cognitive behavioral theory. Daunic et al. (2006) wrote that using this theory, there is a focus on the student's metacognitive state, seeking to encourage students to look at their behaviors critically, focusing on their actions and the reasons behind those actions. What started out in the criminal justice reform era, Restorative Practices (RP) became a prominent classroom management strategy in the early 2000s (International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2023). The ability of RP to assist teachers in building both positive teacher-student relationships and classroom communities has been well-documented within the existing literature.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (2023) defined RP as “a field within the social sciences that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities” (p. 1). From this definition, RP is not merely set to be used within the classroom setting. In fact, Oxley and Holden (2021) stated that the model is focused on relationships, specifically repairing harm done, either to self, other individuals, or institutions.

According to Costello et al. (2019), teachers can begin to use RP in their classrooms by using affective statements, which are statements that include the “affect” that actions have on the individual. For example, instead of a teacher saying, “Don’t run across the classroom,” an affective statement would be rephrased to say, “When you run across the classroom, I get worried that you will trip and hurt yourself.”

The next level of RP includes affective questioning when a student engages in negative behaviors. In this instance, Costello et al. (2019) explained that teachers engage students in metacognitive thought on the following essential questions:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right? (p. 14)

Moving to whole class strategies, “circles” are used to blend the sense of community into the classroom. Costello et al. (2019) described how different classroom circles can be used for different classroom events. For routine classroom community development, classroom circles can be used in a proactive manner to establish bonds and communication norms. As such, when negative classroom events occur, responsive circles can be used to provide all students with an opportunity to share how the negative event impacted their work, feelings, or life (Costello et al., 2019).

Over the past two decades, RP has gained support from teachers, administrators, educational researchers, and state legislators. In fact, there is currently a proposal in the



Pennsylvania House of Representatives that would amend the Public School Code of 1949 to require public school districts to use RP to limit school exclusionary practices and keep a statewide database of school discipline data (H.B. 845, 2023). In practice, Acosta et al. (2019) validated that RP has been shown to produce a promise towards the reduction of disciplinary suspensions and exclusions, particularly for students of color. In fact, Darling-Hammond (2023) reported findings that academic achievement, by means of increased grade point average, were evident in schools with classrooms that used RP. However, evidence to support the statistical significance of RP is limited by the fact that disciplinary decisions are subjective in nature, which leads to ample limitations in empirical studies (Acosta et al., 2019).

### *Effective Use in Middle Schools*

To combat chronic student misconduct for adolescence, numerous plans, programs, and strategies are available on the topic of classroom management (Zoder-Martell et al., 2023). That said, when focusing on middle school environments, the existing literature is limited because most evidence-based classroom management programs conducted empirical trials in elementary settings (Herman et al., 2022). Gunersel et al. (2023) described the importance of classroom management being essential for middle school teachers, but they also stated that “relatively little is known about the middle school teachers’ perception of effective classroom management practices ... or the school level structures that support them” (p. 1). In their qualitative study of middle school teachers, they found that teachers’ active use of a specific strategy was important. Positive impacts were described when the following elements were included in the classroom strategies: (1) positive and negative reinforcement, (2) teachers’ consistent

follow-through, (3) positive and immediate feedback to students, (4) student buy-in to a reward system, and (5) positive teacher-student relationships (Gunersel et al., 2023).

For middle school classrooms, Beaty-O’Ferrall et al. (2010) discussed the specific need for middle school teachers to develop the knowledge and skills to create and use systems that are effective for their individual classrooms due to the differences in middle school aged student engagement and behaviors. They provided guidance that for teachers to develop effective practices, the teachers must first understand their students by building relationships. Specifically for effective middle school classroom management, they explained that developing empathy, embracing inherent life skills, and dropping teacher ego at the door are among the critical areas of focus. Moreover, they contended that focusing on structures and activities that allow multicultural connections within the classroom to develop are essential in modern classrooms (Beaty-O’Ferrall et al., 2010).

For middle school teachers struggling with student behaviors, there are few places to turn to gain evidence-based practice programs. Indeed, in a search on What Works Clearinghouse, a prominent online search engine for evidence-based educational programming options produced by the United States Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences, only three classroom management strategies meet the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Tier I category of evidence. Of those, two programs are individual reports regarding strategies used in specific subject areas. The Good Behavior Game strategy was the only evidence-based program to qualify for overall implementation in all middle school classrooms. The What Works Clearinghouse says:

Good Behavior Game is a classroom management strategy that aims to improve social skills, minimize disruptive behaviors, and create a positive learning

environment. Teachers place students into teams and reward them for demonstrating appropriate behaviors and following classroom rules. (Institute of Education Sciences, 2023, p. 1)

In further analysis, the Institute of Education Sciences (2023) reported on the What Works Clearinghouse that the Good Behavior Game only yields positive results around individual student behavior and teacher practice. Unfortunately, of the sixteen eligible studies reviewed that met the standard of evidence in this meta-analysis, there was no apparent effect on overall school climate, intrapersonal competencies, literacy achievement, or math achievement. Furthermore, when reviewing the demographic configurations of the research studies, there was no evidence available that the Good Behavior Game works with urban middle schools or those with significant populations of Hispanic students (Institute of Education Sciences, 2023).

### *Effective Use in Urban Schools*

For middle school teachers who teach in high-need urban settings, predominately to students of color, there is even less available literature. While Bottiani et al. (2019) found that urban teachers who are provided with classroom resources to address student misconduct can reduce teacher stress and burnout, particularly when collegial leadership was used to support teachers, there was no empirical evidence to determine specific strategies or programs that were most effective. In a separate study, Hunter and Haydon (2019) focused on an urban middle school in their research of the utilization of a specific classroom management protocol to extinguish negative behaviors. They found that classroom disruptions were reduced up to 50% in their case study of teachers who proficiently used a defined classroom management system (Hunter & Haydon, 2019).

### **Structured Supports for Teachers**

To support teachers around student behaviors and classroom management strategies, several modes of assistance are widely used across schools with varying degrees of success, as evidenced in a review of the literature. Much attention has been paid to what elements need to be included in quality professional development for educators, but less attention has been developed to determining exactly how to create such professional learning opportunities (Patfield et al., 2023). As this area of professional development is crucially important to encourage teacher retention, as well as to decrease student misconduct and increase overall student success, it is important to consider all available methods when designing school or district systems to positively support teachers and classroom practices, including well-designed professional development, peer coaching and modeling, and administrative support.

### ***Professional Development***

For an education system that provides academic learning to millions of students each day, there has long been a propensity for schools and districts across the United States to engage in a wide variety of professional development and learning practices for their educators. Professional development for teachers has transformed over the recent decades from stand-and-deliver lectures to embedded learning experiences throughout the school day and school year (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Notably, the first mention of professional development for educators within the context of legally prescribed practices came in 1965 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965). There was limited substance to any formulaic plans for educator professional development and it was not until the much more recent

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the current federal legislation on public education, where a comprehensive and designated professional development system for educators is now required (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

In truth, there are still educators working today who can remember a time when professional development days required individuals to seek out and attend professional development of their choice, which led to an amalgamation of one-day learning opportunities that were disjointed from daily instructional expectations and effective classroom practices. While recent research on educator professional development shows that teachers are exposed to evidence-based practices, without purposeful design, it is unlikely that they will apply their new skills and knowledge into the classroom more than 10% of the time (Germuth, 2018). Specifically, Germuth (2018) discussed that professional development opportunities rarely provided teachers with an opportunity to observe or collaborate on best practices with peers designated as master teachers on a specific topic, which limits teachers' ability to develop and transfer new skills into their professional practice.

Ultimately, to increase student achievement, professional practice must be improved (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This means that there must be substantial changes to the way that professional development is provided to educators (Yoon et al., 2007). Today, not only does professional development need to effect positive classroom changes, but it also needs to adhere to the legal requirements of ESSA. To emphasize the necessary conditions under the ESSA parameters, it is important to note that the What Works Clearinghouse, used in a review written by Yoon et al. (2007), stated that out of 1,300 research works studying educator professional learning, only nine individual

studies met the criteria for engaging in the standard of rigor necessary to provide evidence of effectiveness. The study summarized that “teachers who receive substantial professional development – an average of 49 hours in the nine studies - can boost their students’ achievement by about 21 percentile points” (Yoon et al., 2007, p. iii).

In the ESSA legislation, schools and school districts are required to implement professional learning that meets specific criteria. The areas that professional development must meet include criteria that the learning plan be sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). In a study conducted by the Frontline Research and Learning Institute, an entity that has access to professional development activities of hundreds of school districts across the country, it was found that most school districts lack rigor in the six component areas, specifically reporting:

- Only 13% of school districts had professional development that qualified as “sustained.”
- Only 4.5 hours of professional development annually qualified as “intensive.”
- Only 63% of professional development activities qualified as “job-embedded.”
- Only 9% of professional development activities qualified as “collaborative.”
- Only 8% of professional development activities qualified as “data-driven.”
- 85% of professional development activities qualified as “classroom-

focused.” (Combs & Silverman, 2016, p. 18)

Combined with the knowledge that adult learning models suggest that the ESSA legislative requirements are in alignment with evidence-based adult learning practices, it is essential to build educator learning systems around the professional development standards to ensure that effective professional development positively impacts student learning and achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). However, understanding how to develop effective professional learning for teachers needs to incorporate specific understandings of the required elements (Patfield et al., 2023).

**Sustained.** Unfortunately, the development of school district academic calendars does not always take into consideration the need for school leaders to plan and enact multi-day professional learning for educators. Often, professional development days are planned sporadically, during times when schools and districts have a desire to provide students with extended weekends surrounding holidays. Looking at effective professional development, research has shown that the learning opportunities need to be at least fourteen hours long to provide evidence that it will be impactful (Yoon et al., 2007). That said, the idea that professional learning all needs to happen in a continuous workshop, conference, or training is not necessary. Moreso, Combs and Silverman (2016) noted that it is essential that professional learning happens regularly over time. This can happen in short, progressive workshops several times a semester, in instructional coaching with school administrators or instructional coaches that includes consultative sessions before and after several observation cycles, or between peers while meeting regularly in professional learning community meetings focused on professional practice (Combs & Silverman, 2016). As evidence, Medina et al. (2021) discussed how positive

evidence of practice was seen in reading program implementation for teachers receiving more than six, short professional development sessions within the same school year.

However, the rates of success were even higher for teachers in the program who continued with the sustained professional development sessions for two consecutive years (Medina et al., 2021).

**Intensive.** To meet the ESSA requirement of intensive, professional development must have ample, devoted allocations of time. As in any field, there are a tremendous number of competing factors for teacher learning time. Schools and districts are notorious for attempting to engage in multiple new initiatives and programs each year, all without taking into consideration the additional time necessary for teachers to competently and proficiently know how to use the new learning and skills. For this reason, Combs and Silverman (2016) described that intensive professional development is focused on a particular “concept, practice, or program” (p. 17). Indeed, a competence goal must be established that provides school leaders with a metric to determine how much learning will be necessary for the desired outcome (Combs & Silverman, 2016). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) described several ways in which intensive professional development can be accomplished, highlighting formats from summer institutes to ongoing online learning modules, to purposefully timed coaching cycles to encourage reflections and growth. It is also important to discuss the concept of differentiated professional development in this area, as once each teacher has met the intended intensity goal and reached proficient practice, school leaders should provide differentiated pathways for educators to either become experts or peer leaders in the competency or be provided with the opportunity to gain new knowledge in a different area. This concept



was affirmed in a recent study by Gilson et al. (2022), where after teachers participated in an intensive professional development cycle on gifted education practices, they reported a strong desire to continue to receive differentiated learning personally connected to their daily practice.

**Collaborative.** For professional development to qualify as collaborative, teachers must do more together than simply be in the same room or talk about the same topic. Combs and Silverman (2016) reported that for professional development to be collaborative, it must demonstrate that the educators are working “together to achieve a shared understanding of a concept or to develop the same skillset” (p. 9). As an example, teachers engaged in an expert-peer educator relationship that rotates opportunities for teaching and learning reciprocally on a piece of relevant content would provide the depth of professional learning that is called upon under the collaborative parameter. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) provide guidance on the various forms of collaborative professional development. They state that activities do not have to have multiple peers to be effective. Opportunities can range from one-to-one mentoring sessions to small group data analysis sessions, to professional learning community practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In a recent study at the middle school level, teachers’ collaboration for professional learning on specific instructional practices was shown to provide support to individual teachers, teacher teams, and cross-building collaborative teams (Volante et al., 2023).

Indeed, perhaps the most impactful evidence on teacher collaboration supports for professional learning may come from the recent COVID-19 pandemic. When teachers had to immediately shift their instructional practices to online platforms, the steep

learning curve was mitigated in many instances by peer support. Despite the use of synchronous and asynchronous professional development platforms prior to the pandemic, there is currently growing evidence in the literature that collaboration within these professional learning activities is significantly essential. In a study of secondary teachers engaged in computational thinking integration last year, teachers were more successful when professional development opportunities were “designed to support teachers through scaffolded digital learning engagements [where] virtual environments can afford opportunities to build and sustain communities of practice” (Jocius et al., 2022).

**Job-Embedded.** Professional development that simply happens during a teacher’s workday is not job-embedded according to the definition provided by Combs and Silverman (2016). Specifically, they detailed that to meet this criterion, the professional learning must be part of the “on-going, regular work of instruction and related to teaching and learning taking place in real time in the teaching and learning environment” (Combs & Silverman, 2016, p. 17). An example of an activity that meets this criterion would be lesson study. Doig and Groves (2011) explained that lesson study is a practice that originated in Japan where teachers plan lessons together, conduct instructional rounds to observe each other’s presentation of the lesson, debrief regarding the perceived effectiveness and critiques of the lesson, and create a plan to adjust the lesson for future use. Assuming the lesson study activities happened on an on-going basis, they would count as a job-embedded professional development activity, as it is directly tied to specific instruction in the learning environment. Conversely, a workshop on classroom management would only be considered as job-embedded if it was

specifically applicable to strategies concurrently used or expected to be used within the current teaching or coaching cycle (Combs & Silverman, 2016).

**Data-Driven.** Contrary to its parameter name, the approach to create professional development that is data-driven does not mean that teachers simply need to be involved in learning about student data. While there are many professional learning opportunities where teachers could be analyzing student data metrics, to engage teachers in learning that will improve their practice means to make decisions about professional development based on evidence of professional practice (Yoon et al., 2007). Whether that evidence comes from administrative evaluations or student achievement data, Ventista and Brown (2023) reported that there are few research studies available that causally link any direct data impact with teacher professional learning. To remedy this, there needs to first be a system of data collection that can be used to inform school leaders and instructional support coaches on the status and use of specific practices prior to designing specific professional development opportunities in the hopes of linking instructional practices to academic success. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) discussed both school level and system level approaches to determining the selection of professional development topics. They highlighted a report by Tooley and Connally (2016) that articulates the importance of effectively determining teacher needs to ensure that professional learning is valued by the teachers who are receiving it. By targeting teacher focus areas and looking widely across proficiency components, areas that show little to no evidence of proficiency can be targeted for professional growth. With this approach, a data-driven professional development system can assist in providing much needed differentiated learning opportunities to specific teachers who need to increase their level of proficiency in

subdomain areas of professional practice, particularly when the teachers themselves perceive that as an area for personal growth (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

**Classroom-Focused.** In their study of 203 school districts and their prescribed professional learning plans, Combs and Silverman (2016) found that classroom-focused professional learning was a strength in most school districts across the United States. Notably, they found that the implementation plans of school districts often narrowed the topics presented to teachers to areas that would specifically be part of daily lessons and programs. Likewise, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) discovered that “professional learning that has shown an impact on students’ achievement is focused on the content that teachers teach” (p. 5). Indeed, most teachers in public schools may be presented with multiple opportunities throughout the school year to engage in content-specific professional development, but due to the structural differences of teacher preparation programs between elementary and secondary teachers, a simulation trend has started to be used in some schools to allow teachers to participate in practical applications of content-specific development outside of their classroom for practice purposes. Dove et al. (2023) described how teachers can engage in low-risk practice via simulation systems. Their research aligns with modern professional learning design in the medical field and provides in-service teachers with a less stressful way to practice their new content-based learnings before integrating them into the classroom. Additionally, content-based, online learning micro-credentialing tools, such as Google Classroom certification, have gained prominence in both school districts and higher education for students and teachers alike. Hughey (2020) discussed the implications for personalized learning, highlighting the potential use of micro-credentialing for content-specific and differentiated learning

opportunities for teachers. Although the primary goal is to ensure content-specific knowledge and skills are developed, it is possible for this method to also increase teacher motivation to use the newly learned skills (Hughey, 2020).

### ***Peer Mentoring and Coaching***

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2023), mentoring and coaching can be effective tools to increase the use of specific instructional strategies throughout a school, while simultaneously ensuring that support is provided for teachers for retention in their positions. For many years, researchers conducted dueling studies about the effectiveness of peer mentoring programs. However, more recently, studies are beginning to coalesce around evidence that there are strong correlations between extensive peer mentorship programs and inexperienced teacher progress. In a meta-analysis, Keese et al. (2023) concluded that not only did peer mentoring programs have a statistically significant impact on teacher retention, but they also had a statistically significant impact on teacher efficacy and student achievement.

The purpose of peer mentoring programs is generally limited to supporting novice teachers. However, as discussed in earlier segments, novice teachers are not the only ones who are prone to considering careers outside the classroom. Educators across the profession are reconsidering their current employment decisions, particularly those who are struggling with student behaviors and classroom management. For school and district leaders, initiating or bolstering peer mentoring into peer coaching programs may be a tool that will stop the growing teacher vacancies.

In Pennsylvania, peer coaches are expected to be master teachers who can model instructional strategies for peers, plan professional development opportunities, and build

trusting relationships with classroom teachers. Regarding qualifications for instructional coaches, it is essential that teachers being recommended for instructional coaching roles demonstrate the ability to connect with peers, recognize quality instructional practices, and provide honest feedback, as those are the most basic elements of their role. On a technical note, Pennsylvania school districts are encouraged to also select qualified coaches based on the following criteria:

- Pennsylvania Level II teaching certification
- track record or evidence of improving student achievement
- demonstrated knowledge and use of a rich array of instructional approaches, resources, and technologies
- demonstrated skills in analyzing and using data for instructional decision-making
- interpersonal, problem solving, and organizational skills required to effectively facilitate coaching and staff development
- ability to design and/or broker - individually or in collaboration with others - high quality professional development for teachers/school staff
- knowledge of equity issues in current education reform
- knowledge and skills to implement a standards-based education system utilizing the Pennsylvania Core Standards. (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2023)

Much of the literature around peer coaching is specific to instructional coaching. However, coaches can model classroom management practices to new or struggling teachers, complete classroom demonstrations of essential practices, and give feedback to

peers through a designated coaching cycle. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fallon et al. (2019) demonstrated this in a study in a high-need school that focused on peer coaching for classroom management strategies. In the study, three teachers received professional development on a classroom management plan to use in their assigned classrooms. After two weeks, when the teachers did not produce data that supported effective use of the practices, booster training was provided by a peer coach. In addition, the coach verbally modeled strategies that were part of the classroom management plan. While there was a slight decrease noted in the student behaviors, the study found that there was increased student engagement (Fallon et al., 2019). In another recent study, utilizing peer coaching to provide structured feedback to new teachers was shown to have been successful. Specifically, Wiens et al. (2019) discussed the positive teacher retention rates, including positive teacher transiency rates, in a large, urban school district where the Peer Assistance and Review Program, a program where designated mentor teachers conduct classroom observations of new teachers to provide more regular feedback, was used to supplement less frequent administrative observation and feedback cycles.

Specific to urban middle school teachers, Behm Cross and Thomas (2017) researched a university collaboration model that expands peer teacher mentoring and coaching across a three-year span to provide novice teachers with more structured support. In year one, pre-service teachers built collaborative partnerships with mentors and participated in specific collaborative training. In year two, the novice teachers received a co-teacher, a mentor teacher, and paid summer internship time to focus on specific job-required practices, along with additional collaborative training. Finally, in year three, the novice teachers were provided with continued support from a mentor

teacher and collaborative training, but they were no longer in a co-teaching environment (Behm Cross & Thomas, 2017).

### *Administrative Support*

Central to any focus on improving teacher attrition and retention is administrative vision, consistency, and support. New ideas and new approaches to solving problems in education need to be supported by building and district level administration. Indeed, Campoli and Darling-Hammond (2022) discussed positive effects on teachers' retention when principals embraced their own professional learning and growth.

Germuth (2018) suggested that failures to create and implement appropriate teacher support are often due to a "lack of encouragement and guidance when implementing new approaches in the classroom" (p. 77). Further, Germuth (2018) added that administrative support is essential to communicate expectations, leadership, and support. Often support takes on different avenues. Verbal support can take the form of praise or feedback during classroom observations or active participation in collaborative discussions. Written support can also be given in response to feedback of professional practice from administrators, as is most often seen in required evaluation systems. Financial and resource support are also necessary to ensure that teachers feel supported in having the materials that they need to implement new professional learning (Germuth, 2018).

In a recent education study, Campbell (2023) focused on the administrative support needs of veteran teachers. Although the study was small and limited, Campbell (2023) found that veterans wanted administrators to leave them alone. Conversely, veteran teachers also wanted administrators to inherently protect them and value their



work and opinions as professionals (Campbell, 2023). This research appears to be the opposite of other studies conducted within the past year that focus on younger teachers. Burt and Jones (2023) related this concept to the new Generation Z educators. In their research, they found that new teachers need administrative support in the form of continuous professional feedback. Furthermore, they found that Generation Z teachers desire feedback on their use of instructional strategies and classroom management practices and value close relationships with their administrators. To accomplish this, Burt and Jones (2023) recommended that administrators visit classrooms frequently and include new teachers in decision making committees, as they believe that their own roles are essential in the ongoing efforts to improve educational practices (Burt & Jones, 2023).

When evaluating the time that administrators have to support new teachers, many schools and districts recognize a gap in teacher supervision need and availability of administrative instructional leadership support. Because of this, instructional mentoring and coaching often fills this gap. In fact, Ridge and Lavigne (2020) reported that administrative support for the peer coaching model can align with the ESSA requirements to support effective teacher evaluation practices. This support can become a lifeline to struggling teachers when administrators are too overwhelmed themselves to get into classrooms to provide feedback of professional practice on a routine basis (Ridge & Lavigne, 2020).

### **Summary**

In summary, teacher attrition and retention are significant problems in America's public schools. Research has shown that current and potential teachers perceive student

misconduct, lack of professional development, and lack of support to be primary reasons for considering other professions, particularly in middle, urban, and high-need schools. To counteract this reality, schools and districts need to focus time, efforts, and supports on developing effective classroom management strategies for their student populations that build and strengthen relationships between teachers and students and that explicitly teach positive behavioral expectations. A well-designed professional learning plan that meets the legal requirements of ESSA needs to be developed to ensure teachers can utilize the behavioral strategies with fidelity. Peer coaching supports that include modeled classroom practices and collaborative feedback cycles will be essential to ensuring the professional learning plan is successful in reducing teachers' desires to leave the profession.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

Given the urgent need to minimize teacher attrition and increase teacher retention, it is necessary to develop an intervention plan to combat this educational crisis. Based on themes and evidence in the preceding review of the literature, the following methodology has been created to support the retention-related action research being conducted at Central Middle School in the Reading School District. To intensify support for teachers around professional development for classroom management strategies and practices, it is necessary to determine the effectiveness of a peer-led classroom management support system. Specifically, this chapter outlines the purpose of this action research, along with detailed information on the setting and participants. The design of the intervention support system implemented, as well as the timeline, data-collection methods, and validity used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data sources, is also fully described.

### **Setting**

The Reading School District is the fourth largest public school district in Pennsylvania with over 17,000 students enrolled. In terms of geographic location, it is in Reading, Pennsylvania, an urban area in the center of Berks County, halfway between Philadelphia and Harrisburg.

Central Middle School is the largest of five middle schools in the Reading School District, hosting almost 2,000 students annually in the fifth through eighth grades. Demographically, 94.1% of Central Middle School students qualify as economically disadvantaged, while 3.5% of the students are homeless. Academically, 27.5% of the

students are English language learners and 28.7% receive special education services. Ethnically, 87.1% of Central Middle School's students are Hispanic, with 6.4% identifying as Black and another 5.0% identifying as White.

For achievement context, Central Middle School was designated in 2018 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement school for historically and cyclically low performance. As determined by the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment data in the spring of 2023, reading proficiency was 20.8%, math proficiency was 4.8%, science proficiency was 26.5%, and English language learner proficiency was 3.2%. Additionally, 40.1% of students were labeled chronically absent (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2024).

Perceptually, Central Middle School has a long history of student behavioral concerns. In fact, the school has been labelled in the community as the "fight school" and the "riot school" due to the number of incidents that have historically occurred in and around the physical school. The school was originally opened as a ninth and tenth grade high school in 2012, called Reading Intermediate High School, to alleviate overcrowding at the district's sole high school building, Reading Senior High School. After the Great Recession's financial distress in the middle of the last decade, the Reading School District made the decision to close four sixth grade magnet school buildings to cut operational costs, which ultimately caused the grade levels of Reading Intermediate High School to shift to housing all eighth and ninth graders across the district. After numerous riots, large scale fights, and staff assaults caused ample negative publicity for the school, as well as overcrowding at the elementary school buildings, the Reading School District made the decision to shift the grade levels again throughout the district such that middle

schools would contain grades five through eight. With this move, Reading Intermediate High School became Central Middle School. Despite the change in name and grade levels, public and staff perception about the physical school building has been slow to change, notwithstanding an overall reduction in student misconduct incidents, such as fighting.

Table 1 reports the student enrollment and state reportable conduct incidents totals, with specificity to student fighting, over the five-year period from the 2018-2019 school year to the 2022-2023 school year.

**Table 1**

*State Reportable Behavioral Incidents at Central Middle School*

Year	Enrollment	Number of State Reportable Incidents	Fighting
2018-2019	1474	1507	78
2019-2020	2001	1409	136
2020-2021 <sup>a</sup>	1994	0	0
2021-2022 <sup>b</sup>	1973	768	64
2022-2023	1875	1096	46

*Note.* This table was compiled by the researcher based on state reportable student conduct incidents from 2018-2019 through 2022-2023.

<sup>a</sup> Students remained virtual for the majority of the 2020-2021 school year, with a low-attended, optional hybrid schedule opened only in April of 2021.

<sup>b</sup> Pandemic protocols that limited student physical contact were still in place for much of the 2021-2022 school year.

As part of the state-mandated school improvement plan for Central Middle School, various programs and initiatives have been implemented over the past several school years to assist the school culture, which includes student misconduct prevention strategies as well as academic supports. A streamlined and schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system was developed and implemented in the 2022-2023 school year. It is led by a school action team that includes instructional staff, students services team members, and administrators. Staff are provided with a thirty-minute professional development presentation on the schoolwide behavioral matrices and the incentive point system each August, but there is no additional professional development offered to staff throughout the school year, nor as new staff members start after the beginning of the school year, that demonstrates the program in the classroom setting.

In the 2019-2020 school year, Restorative Practices (RP) was implemented at Central Middle School as an additional evidence-based practice to support the mandated school improvement plan. The entire school staff received two days of training from the International Institute of Restorative Practices. While staff members who started working at Central Middle School after the 2019-2020 school year have still received the two-day training in their first year, it has been via internal facilitators who are not classroom practitioners.

### **Purpose**

While chronically understaffed, Central Middle School reached a crisis staffing level in the 2022-2023 school year when there were 16.7% of the professional teaching positions vacant. By August of 2023, and throughout the 2023-2024 school year, this

percentage increased to 25.5%.

In both a recent staff survey and focus group cycle during the 2022-2023 school year, Central Middle School teachers were asked about the reasons why they considered leaving the school, as well as the reasons why they were considering staying into the next school year. Interestingly, while the surveyed teachers were among the lowest paid in the local area, discontent with teacher salaries and benefits was not the primary reason given for potential resignation. Overall working conditions, including lack of teacher preparation time due to forced coverages for vacancies and stress related to chronic student misconduct were the primary factors reported by teachers for their consideration to leave Central Middle School.

As noted in the review of the literature, the theme of stress due to student misconduct is not unique to Central Middle School (Ramos & Hughes, 2020). Given the national and local teacher shortage crisis, coupled with the student behavioral and mental health crisis post-pandemic, immediate changes in these areas to increase teacher retention are not likely (Fuller, 2022). Other methods to increase the current teachers' desire to remain at Central Middle School need to be explored, including internal ways to build a classroom management support system for teachers who struggle with stress from chronic student misconduct.

To support the action research in developing a potential intervention support system, an in-depth analysis of existing literature was conducted to explore potential methods to include in the study. For instance, Ramos and Hughes (2020) reported that teachers described the need for fully implemented behavioral support programs, mentoring programs for classroom management, and professional learning community

trainings focused on classroom management issues. Additionally, Renberger and Davis (2019) found a positive relationship between peer mentorship support and reduced teacher attrition, as well as a negative relationship between overall job satisfaction and barriers to professional development supports. Further, additional research on positive teacher retention rates in urban schools was described by Wiens et al. (2019) where mentor teachers conducted classroom observations of each other to provide reflection and feedback.

In terms of specific classroom management strategies to incorporate into the action research, the review of the literature yielded that no one-size-fits-all program or system demonstrated statistically significant success for high-need, urban middle schools. However, both RP and PBIS showed some evidence of effectiveness (Acosta et al., 2019; Nocera et al., 2023).

In essence, this action research attempted to determine the effectiveness of a planned intervention support system to combat the teacher attrition and retention concerns at Central Middle School in the Reading School District by utilizing evidence-based practices noted in the review of the literature. To guide the implementation, analysis, and potential recommendations, as well as to determine the overall effectiveness of the intervention system on teachers' perception of their own willingness to remain in their current teaching positions, this action research was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How does a modeled professional development series on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?



2. How do structured peer observations of designated master teachers on classroom management techniques affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?
3. How does feedback of professional practice on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?

It was the goal of this research to assist the administration of Central Middle School in determining the most effective methods to support the retention of teachers by building a classroom management support plan for teachers at various career levels who are considering leaving the district or the profession due to stress from chronic student misconduct. A one-year permission for this action research was granted by the PennWest University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) and direct permission from the Reading School District Superintendent, Dr. Jennifer Murray, was granted for Central Middle School staff members to participate in this study (see Appendix B).

### **Research Intervention Plan**

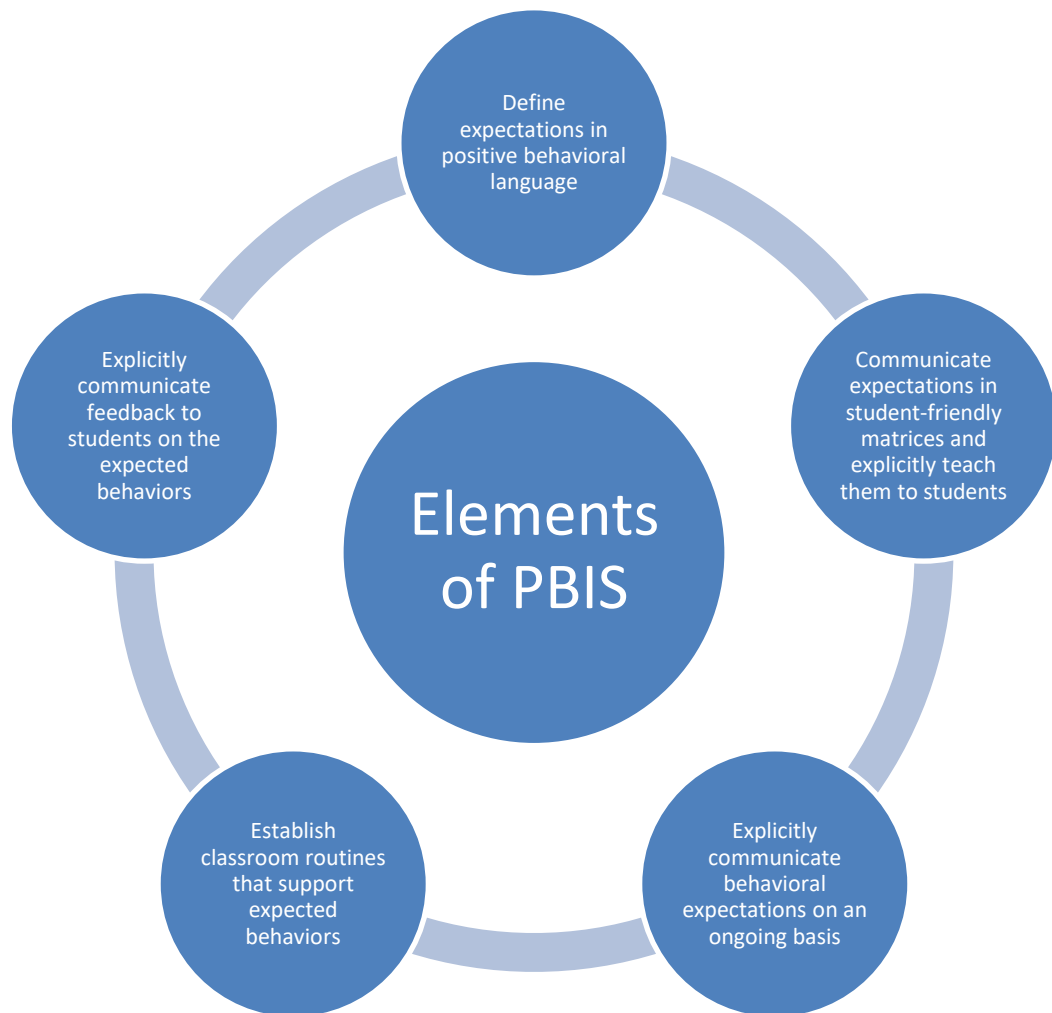
To create a classroom management support system for teachers at Central Middle School who are considering resigning from their current positions, it was necessary to model a research intervention focused on themes found within the review of the literature. Because Bottiani et al. (2019) found that urban teachers had greater success reducing stress and burnout when classroom resources were supported by collegial leadership, both evidence-based classroom management strategies and professional peer support elements were deemed to be essential in the intervention design. Moreover, because Hunter and Haydon (2019) discussed the success in the reduction of classroom

disruptions for urban middle school teachers when they were able to proficiently use classroom management techniques, it was determined that the research intervention plan must also include intensive support for specific classroom management techniques such that teachers could gain clarity of practice towards proficiency in utilizing the strategies. Due to the alignment of PBIS and RP with evidence-based success in the review of the literature and their existing use at Central Middle School by some classroom practitioners, the technical process and main philosophical practices of each system were used as the basis for the development of the intervention system from a contextual lens.

Relative to PBIS, it was important to focus the classroom management strategies for the research intervention plan on Sugai and Simonsen's (2012) description of the main elements of an effective PBIS program. Those elements are detailed in Figure 1.

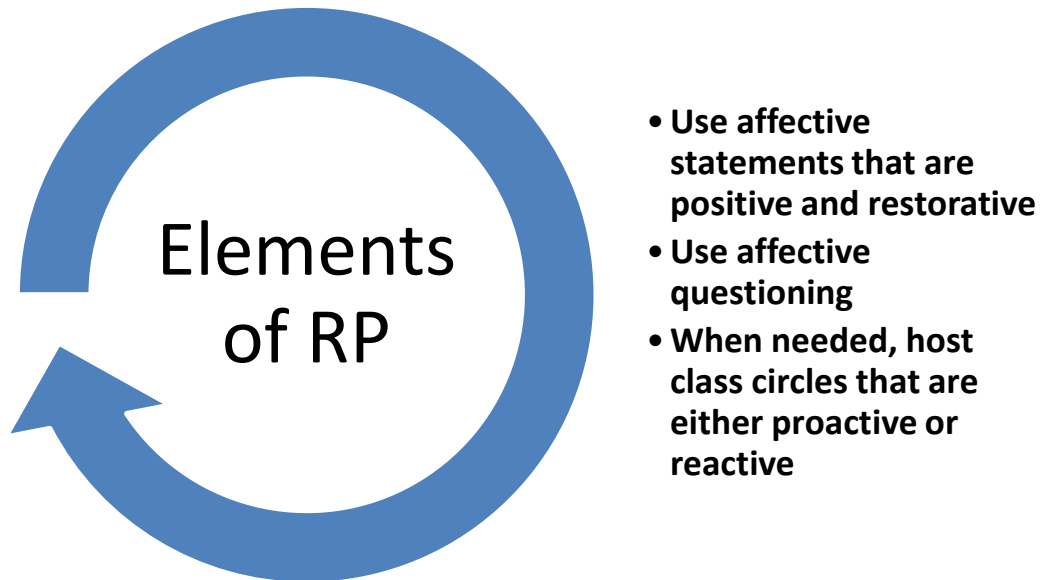
**Figure 1**

*Elements of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support for the Classroom*



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher to visually detail the elements of PBIS, as described by Sugai and Simonsen (2012).

In addition, it was important to focus the classroom management strategies selected for the research intervention plan on the work of Costello et al. (2019), who described the specific ways to use RP in classrooms. Those elements are detailed in Figure 2.

**Figure 2***Elements of Restorative Practices for the Classroom*

*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher to visually detail the elements of RP, as described by Costello et al. (2019).

To determine the design of the peer support for the research intervention plan, the review of the literature detailed how peer mentoring and coaching have been effective tools to increase the use of specific instructional strategies and the retention of teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). Indeed, Fallon et al. (2019) noted that successful outcomes could be achieved in a high-need school where peer mentors provided professional development sessions to struggling teachers via booster training on previously learned strategies. In the same study, the peer coach also modeled the strategies that were part of the classroom management plan. Furthermore, Wiens et al. (2019) described positive teacher retention rates in a large, urban school district where a

program using designated mentor teachers to conduct classroom observations and feedback was used. Figure 3 demonstrates the developed intervention plan based on the successful elements of the previously noted evidence-based research.

### Figure 3

#### *Peer-Led Classroom Management Support Intervention Plan*

##### STEP 1: Professional Development Series

- Booster training on PBIS classroom management strategies provided by designated master teachers
- Booster training on RP classroom management strategies provided by designated master teachers

##### STEP 2: Reflection and Practice

- Time for study participants to reflect on booster trainings
- Time for study participants to practice PBIS and RP strategies in their classrooms

##### STEP 3: Modeled Classroom Observation

- Observation by study participants of modeled classroom management strategies by a designated master teacher

##### STEP 4: Reflection and Practice

- Time for study participants to reflect on modeled classroom observation
- Time for study participants to practice PBIS and RP strategies in their classrooms

##### STEP 5: Feedback of Professional Practice

- Observation by a designated master teacher of study participants
- Feedback of professional practice to study participants by a designated master teacher

##### STEP 6: Reflection and Practice

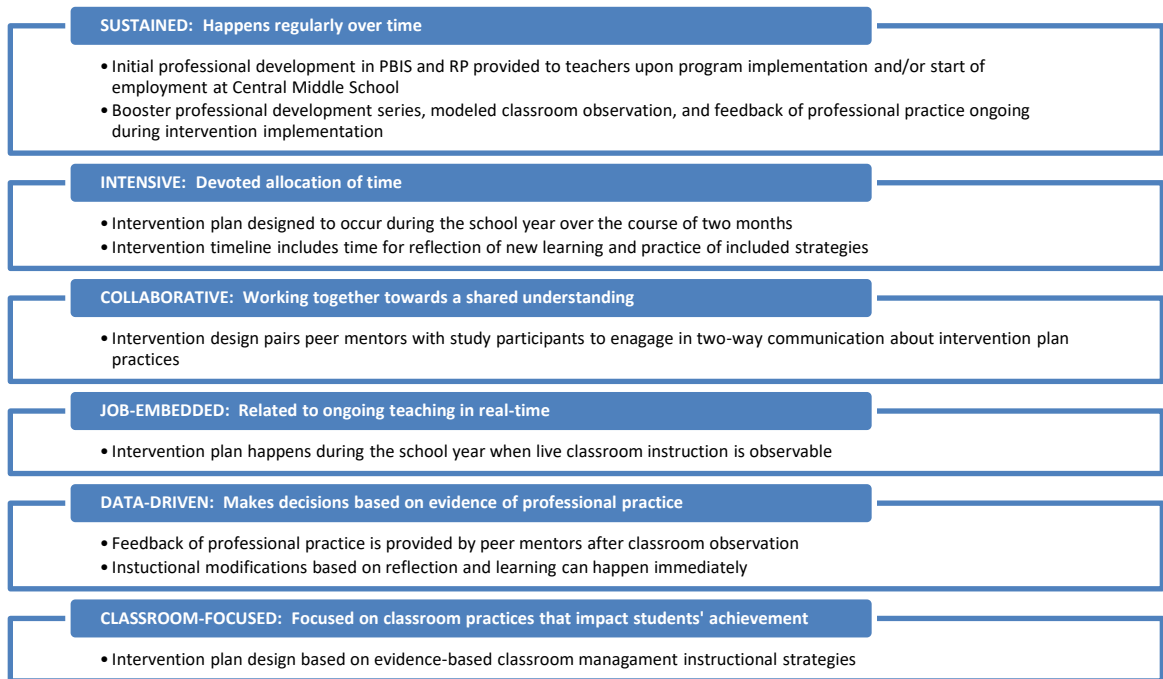
- Time for study participants to reflect on feedback of professional practice
- Time for study participants to practice PBIS and RP strategies in their classrooms

*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher to visually detail the intervention plan design based on elements of previous studies conducted by Fallon et al. (2019) and Wiens et al. (2019).

To ensure consideration of the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), this study’s intervention research design was also planned to be sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Most notably, it was essential to ensure study participants had time within the intervention plan to reflect upon and practice the classroom management strategies. Figure 4 demonstrates how the developed intervention plan ensures compliance with ESSA.

**Figure 4**

*Classroom Management Support Intervention Plan Professional Learning Compliance to ESSA*



*Note.* This visual representation was created by the researcher to detail the research intervention plan’s professional learning compliance to ESSA. It includes concepts described by both Combs and Silverman (2016) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2017).

Once identified, the designated master teachers initially met with the researcher to develop the booster professional development sessions. The two designated master teachers who were part of the PBIS Action Team were assigned to the PBIS professional development booster training and the designated master teachers who were initially trained by the International Institute of Restorative Practices were assigned to the RP booster training. After the initial meeting with the researcher, the designated master teacher pairings spent an additional hour collaborating and preparing practitioner examples for training sessions. In terms of the presentation of the booster professional development, each one-hour session was completed at a faculty meeting with all study participants present.

Specific to the classroom observations, the length of a class period at Central Middle School for the 2023-2024 school year was forty-seven minutes. The study participants were provided with a schedule of the designated master teacher classes to use to conduct their required classroom observation. While the study participants were only required to complete a single classroom observation, providing them with the instructional schedules of all designated master teachers gave them the opportunity to conduct multiple classroom observations if they determined that they needed additional examples. Conversely, the designated master teachers were directly assigned to study participants by the researcher to ensure (1) scheduling alignment with the designated master teachers' non-instructional time to complete the study participant's classroom observation, (2) that each of the study participants was guaranteed to have a classroom observation by a designated master teacher, and (3) that a clear communication channel existed for the designated master teachers to communicate and to schedule the feedback

session.

Each feedback session between the designated master teacher and the study participant was held either during mutually non-instructional times or before and after regular school hours. There was no direct compensation to either the designated master teachers or the study participants if any selected to conduct the feedback sessions beyond the length of the contractual school day.

To assist with each participants' collection and organization of strategies noted during the classroom observations, Appendix F was provided to both the designated master teachers and the study participants. However, by design, the evidence collection tool was not provided to the researcher or used in any data collection protocol.

In the aggregate, the research intervention plan directly supported the purpose of the action research by providing multifaceted, professional peer support to teachers in the area that they reported having the greatest concerns in consideration towards resigning from their teaching position: stress from chronic student misconduct. Regarding the research questions generated, the intervention plan's specific inclusion of professional development, peer observation, and observational feedback protocols supported overall data analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.

Financially, the research intervention plan did not incur a cost to Central Middle School or the Reading School District. As the lead researcher for this action research, the time spent in research to develop the intervention plan was solely an indirect cost. There was no direct compensation to the designated master teachers for time spent during non-instructional hours to prepare the booster professional development sessions and there was no direct compensation to either the designated master teachers or the study



participants if any selected to conduct the feedback sessions beyond the length of the contractual school day.

Separate indirect costs included the use of the school facility after hours, including basic utilities services, which were consumed during the implementation of the intervention plan. If found to be successful, the classroom management support system could be further developed to be used at Central Middle School and other Reading School District institutions in future school years to support ongoing teacher retention efforts. The estimated cost of the plan in direct costs would be \$52,000 annually for salaries and benefits, with an additional \$1,000 proposed for nominal professional development supplies. As Central Middle School and the entirety of the Reading School District are designated as Title 1 schools, federal funding sources could be utilized.

### **Participants**

Given the size of the student population, there are a multitude of positions assigned to Central Middle School. Table 2 enumerates the professional positions, along with the number of vacancies in each area as of February of 2024.

**Table 2***Professional Staffing at Central Middle School as of February 2024*

Group	Number of Positions	Current Vacancies
<b>Administrative</b>		
Principal	1	0
Assistant Principal	4	0
Instructional Supervisor	2	1
Dean of Students	1	1
<b>Student Services</b>		
School Nurse	3	0
School Counselor	4	0
Restorative Counselor	1	0
School Social Worker	4	0
In-School Suspension	1	1
<b>Instructional</b>		
Academic Interventionist	2	2
Reading Specialist	2	1
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math and Science	10	2
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA and Social Studies	10	2
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math and Science	10	2
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA and Social Studies	10	2
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA	5	1
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies	5	1
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	5	1
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science	5	1
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELA	5	1
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies	5	0
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	5	2
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science	5	1
English Language Support	9	3
Special Education	28	10
Gifted Education	1	0
Instrumental Music	2.2	0
General Music	4	0
Art	4	0
Physical Education	8	0
STEAM	2	1
Library	2	1

*Note.* This table was compiled by the researcher based on staffing at Central Middle School as of February 28, 2024.

In terms of the tenure of the professional staff at Central Middle School, 35.2% of the instructional and student services staff have been at Central Middle School for less than three years. Moreover, 30.3% of the instructional and student services staff have been in the field of education for less than three years. Further demographic indicators, such as gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, teaching experience, and current teaching assignment were collected for Central Middle School staff members who consented to study participation. That data is reported in the subsequent chapter.

For this research, there were two types of participants required. Instructional staff who provided the peer-led classroom management support were selected as the designated master teachers, per the intervention support system plan. The second type of instructional staff were selected as study participants who received the intervention. Because participation in the action research was voluntary and subject to participants' continued willingness to participate, the number of designated master teachers was set at four and the number of study participants was set at eight. This step was critical to ensure the study would yield various results for data triangulation in the case of a loss in participants due to withdrawal from the study, as well as potential resignation or termination of employment at Central Middle School over the course of the action research.

To qualify as a designated master teacher, Central Middle School instructional staff members had to meet several selection criteria. In alignment with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2023) guidance for peer coaches, much of the developed criteria required the designated master teacher candidates to have evidence of proven track records and demonstrated knowledge of specific instructional strategies, specifically

PBIS and RP. First, they had to willingly consent to participate in the initial quantitative survey. In a five-point Likert scale rating from “Absolutely Not Interested” to “Accept Without Hesitation,” the potential designated master teachers had to select either a “4” or a “5” when asked to rank their willingness to participate in an experimental classroom management support system which would require them to present classroom management professional development, host peer observations within your classroom, and provide peer feedback of professional practice. Next, on an additional five-point Likert scale rating from “Failing” to “Distinguished,” the potential designated master teachers had to select either a “4” or a “5” when asked to rank their perception of their own classroom management. From the potential candidates, the researcher used additional criterion to ensure credibility for the selected designated master teachers, which included:

- five years of classroom instructional experience
- a proficient or distinguished rating on the 2022-2023 evaluation in all four domains
- no more than three Level 1 student misconduct office referrals per month, on average, in the 2022-2023 school year
- current classroom practitioner

Furthermore, to ensure that the designated master teachers had sufficient experience in the prescribed classroom management strategies selected from the review of the literature, two were required to be active members of the Central Middle School PBIS action team and two were required to have been trained in RP directly from the International Institute of Restorative Practices. Redundancy of criteria in the parameters for PBIS and RP involvement was included to control potential participant attrition.

Moreover, the designated master teachers collaborated with the researcher to plan the booster professional development sessions so that there was both research and authentic practice included in the design of each session.

To qualify as a study participant, Central Middle School instructional staff members also had to meet selection criteria. First, they had to willingly consent to participate in the initial quantitative survey. Additionally, they had to be current classroom practitioners. Next, on the initial quantitative survey, the potential study participant candidates had to select “Yes” when asked “Within this school year, have you considered resigning from your current position?” Then, when asked “Which category or categories best describe your main rationale for considering resigning from your current position?” the study participant candidates needed to select either “Chronic student misconduct” or “Inadequate professional development.” Because concerns for both teacher attrition and teacher retention were grounds for this action research, the number of years of instructional experience was not a limiting factor for study participant selection.

Participation in the action research was open to all Central Middle School instructional staff members. Administrators and student services staff were not eligible to participate in the study because they were not classroom practitioners. A specific informed consent was provided to all potential participants as a condition to completing the initial quantitative survey. This informed consent was approved by the PennWest University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and can be reviewed in Appendix C.

Within the informed consent, the participants were given the option to discontinue their participation at any time with no negative impact or penalty. In addition, the

participants were informed of the potential risks from participating in the action research study, which included:

- loss of time due to participation in the professional development series
- loss of time due to peer classroom observations
- loss of time due to peer feedback of professional practice reflection sessions
- loss of time due to study participant interview sessions
- possible diminished collaborative relationships with peers

To control for the potential risks to the participants, the researcher provided the following accommodations:

- time during a mandatory professional staff meeting to review the informed consent
- time during a mandatory professional staff meeting to participate in the initial quantitative survey
- time during a mandatory professional staff meeting to participate in the classroom management professional development series
- organization of schedule and explicit directions provided by the researcher to minimize potential diminished relationships with peers due to communication and collaboration concerns

Additionally, because the researcher served as the direct supervisor of the potential participants, an assistant principal was used as an honest broker to introduce the opportunity for study participation to the Central Middle School professional staff and to minimize any potential obligatory participation responses or biases.

Participants in this action research were also given information regarding the potential benefits from their participation. While there was no direct monetary incentive to participate, the informed consent detailed that those selected as study participants who completed the research project would receive a ticket for a chance drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card. Additional benefits included:

- opportunity to provide peer collaboration, professional development, and mentoring support for the designated master teachers
- knowledge of additional classroom management techniques for the study participants
- peer observation and peer feedback of professional practice for the study participants
- potential enhancement of collaborative relationships with peers

### **Research Design, Methods, and Data Collection**

A mixed-methods, embedded design, action research project was used to explore how the use of various classroom management supports affects teacher retention perceptions. Because the purpose of the research was to increase teacher retention and decrease teacher attrition, the intervention plan functioned as an experimental protocol for a subset of the population of teachers at Central Middle School. Mertler (2022) explained that this type of action research enhances the design of the study by generating an alternative type of data for analysis. By following this method, the researcher was able to extract specific responses from an initial quantitative survey, perform an experimental intervention plan on the identified study participants, and subsequently collect qualitative data from the study participants on the effects of the experimental

intervention plan.

In greater detail, the mixed-methods, embedded design allowed the researcher to first determine which teachers were considering resigning from their current position from a quantitative survey. From those results, the researcher was further able to determine which teachers considering retention were doing so due to a perceived increase in stress due to chronic student misconduct and/or from a perceived lack of professional development and support. Next, the researcher was able to select study participants from those specific teachers to conduct the experimental research intervention plan focused on providing those considering resigning due to perceived stress from chronic student misconduct and/or lack of professional development and support with a research-based and peer-led classroom management support system. After the intervention plan was completed, the researcher was able to perform a qualitative structured interview with the study participants to gather perceptual data on the impact of the classroom management support system intervention on their own perception of their willingness to remain in their current position. To make conclusions and recommendations, the researcher was able to triangulate the data from both the quantitative survey and the qualitative structured interview to determine the overall effectiveness of the experimental intervention plan and answer the research questions.

Prior to the start of the action research study, the researcher successfully completed multiple courses on ethical guidelines for research conducted with human subjects. Additionally, all study procedures and data collection tools and methods were approved by the PennWest University IRB. Proof of these permissions is indicated in Appendix A.



Hendricks (2017) wrote about the importance of collecting baseline data to make comparisons before and after a research intervention, as well as to detail the results of the intervention plan in answering the overall research questions. For the initial quantitative survey, a Google Form was created to gather nominal, demographic data and ordinal, perceptual data. Specifically, demographics about teacher gender, age, race, education level, instructional content area, and instructional role were collected for aggregate reference and later data triangulation. Perceptual data points included Likert-scale ratings of items such as teachers' willingness to participate in the study, reflections on possible resignation, and self-evaluations of their classroom management abilities.

As noted by Hendricks (2017), caution was taken to ensure that the survey questions were aligned with the research questions, written in brief and clear segments, and strictly related to the research study. Additionally, quantitative survey design considerations described by Mertler (2022) were addressed, including providing written directions and ensuring that the questions were focused and grammatically correct, while simultaneously ensuring that they were not leading or double-barreled. Indeed, the quantitative survey was also piloted by the researcher and reviewed by the PennWest IRB; Faculty Committee Chair, Dr. Mary Wolf; and external committee chair, Dr. April Halligan-Rostek. The survey was offered to all teachers at Central Middle School to capture the maximum available data. A copy of the survey is available for review in Appendix C.

While the initial survey was used to determine potential participation interest in the research study, the basic demographic and perceptual data was collected and analyzed from all who consented to participate. For those not selected as designated master

teachers or research study participants, individual responses to demographic and perceptual data were only used and presented in the aggregate with no personally identifiable information disclosed. Individuals selected as designated master teachers or study participants did not have names or personally identifiable information included within the report of the research. Pseudonyms such as “Master Teacher 1” or “Participant 4” were used.

After the experimental protocols in the research intervention plan were completed, the qualitative data was collected. This was done via a structured interview protocol. Mertler (2022) described that structured interviews are conducted with the same set of predetermined questions for the sake of consistency. Because the experimental intervention plan included multiple types of peer-led support formats, such as professional development sessions, modeled observation of strategies, and feedback of professional practice, it was important to focus the qualitative interviews with a set of consistent questions to gain detailed perceptual information from the study participants on each of the intervention protocols to ease the analysis of each peer-led support. The specific questions used in the structured interview are based on the research questions and can be reviewed in Appendix D.

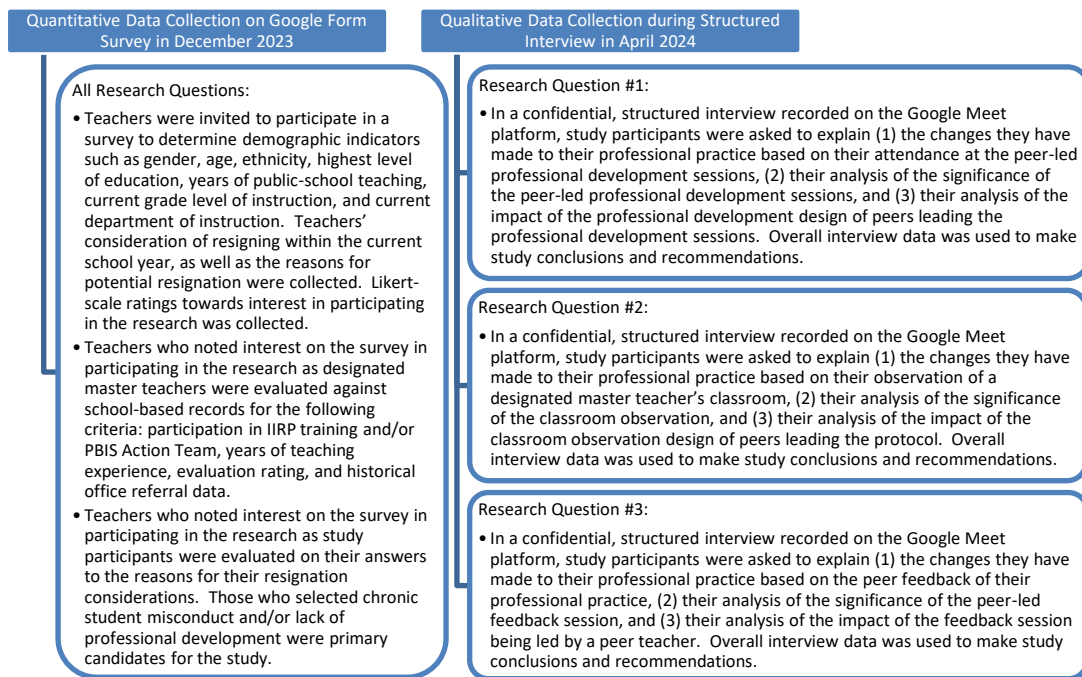
The qualitative structured interview sessions between the study participants and the researcher were recorded on the Google Meet platform. To provide privacy and confidentiality, the researcher and the study participants met in a confidential conference room at Central Middle School. Moreover, each study participant completed an individual interview to ensure confidentiality. During the data analysis process, the *Dedoose* system was used to code and analyze the data into relevant themes to draw

conclusions and make recommendations for potential systemic changes and further research. Additionally, the recordings were stored as a file on the researcher’s password protected computer drive. However, at the conclusion of the research study, the recordings were destroyed.

While there were three separate research questions to collect and analyze data, the general process and timeline was similar for all three research questions. The specific data collection methods and sources are detailed in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Data Collection Methods*

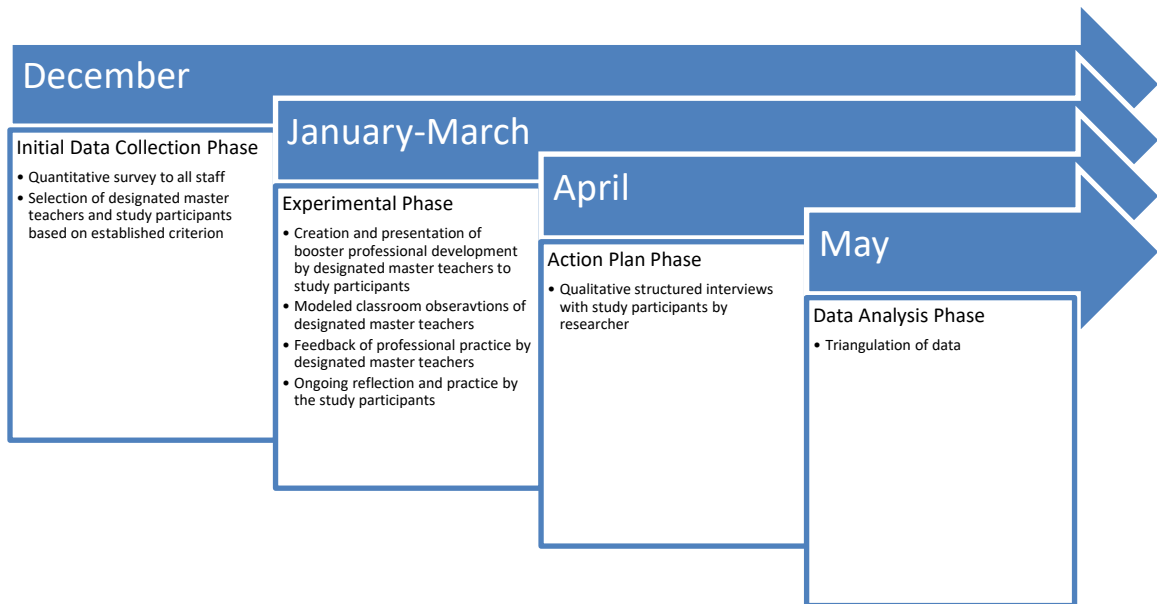


*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher to visually detail the data collection methods.

The overall study was completed during the 2023-2024 school year. The specific timeline for the action research is detailed in Figure 6.

**Figure 6**

*Action Research Timeline*



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher to visually detail the action research timeline.

While the purpose of this study was to increase teacher retention through the development of a targeted classroom management support system, the direct use of evidence-based classroom management techniques could have had a secondary effect on student behaviors within the classroom setting. During the study, no student routines were changed other than the exposure to their classroom teachers' use of PBIS and RP strategies. Moreover, no students were singled out in any way and no student data was

collected during this research. Furthermore, no individual teacher practice data from classroom observations was collected by the research. Any notes on the observation and evidence collection tool were solely used by the designated master teachers and the study participants, as they were never shared with the researcher.

Financially, there were limited direct costs associated with the research methodology outlined. While other quantitative survey platforms such as Survey Monkey were considered, the decision to utilize Google Forms was made because it did not add costs to the study and because Central Middle School teachers were already familiar with the platform, adding reliability to the overall study design. The cost of the \$100 Amazon gift card as the participant raffle ticket prize was the only tangible cost during the study. The *Dedoose* system used to organize and code the qualitative data does have a direct, associated cost. However, since the *Dedoose* system offers a free month trial, the researcher was able to conduct all analysis of the qualitative structured interview data prior to any cost being incurred. The only associated indirect costs continued to be the use of the school facility, including basic utilities services, which were consumed during the implementation of the intervention plan.

### **Validity**

Even though this action research was only conducted at Central Middle School in the Reading School District, it was important to provide high-quality and accurate data such that the study and any potential positive results can be validated for use across other schools and districts. Mertler (2022) contended that validity in the data of a research study is essential and must follow a logical sequence to measure what is being studied. He also noted that validity can differ contextually between quantitative and qualitative

data sources. Since this action research study took a mixed-methods approach, all relevant validity characteristics were considered for independent validity and data triangulation.

For the quantitative data collected in the Google Form survey, Mertler (2022) stated in action research, it is the ethical responsibility of the researcher to ensure the validity of evidence derived and inferences made from quantitative data sources. Allowing the individual teachers to record their own demographic and perceptual data within the Google Form survey added accuracy, and thereby validity to the data reported. Furthermore, gathering the quantitative survey data directly before the intervention plan began also added validity by ensuring timeliness for the interpretation of the data. In terms of reliability in the Google Form survey, this was not possible, as there was no relevant means to determine data reliability because the teachers participating were able to record their own individual demographic and perceptual answers with no way for the researcher to confirm consistency in the responses to any other available data source.

For the qualitative structured interview, credibility and dependability had to be established according to Mertler (2022). Credibility in this research study was enhanced due to the increased number of participants and the increased amount of time and means that the study participants had to engage in the intervention plan. Specifically, instead of using a single, designated master teacher and a single study participant, four designated master teachers and eight study participants were identified. Likewise, instead of simply selecting one element to create the peer-led intervention plan, multiple strategies on the same concept were designed into the plan, which added depth to the PBIS and RP content and credibility to the qualitative structured interview such that the study participants

could focus on the responses to the peer-led methods of support for analysis and not be confused about the intervention context. All the proceeding factors allowed for additional data triangulation.

Furthermore, credibility and confirmability were increased for the qualitative structured interviews because they were recorded on the Google Meet platform, which kept an auditory and written transcript of the entire response sets from each study participant and allowed the researcher to have accurate data recordings. In addition, credibility and confirmability were enhanced by using an honest broker to give the Central Middle School staff the initial invitation to participate in the research.

To demonstrate dependability and to further the data triangulation of this study, perceptual response questioning was used on both the quantitative survey and qualitative structured interview. Also, the extensive audit trails from the Google Form survey data responses and the Google Meet interview recording transcripts added dependability in the results and conclusions of this study because the researcher and the readers can both review the accuracy of the findings against the data sets.

In addition, transferability was provided within the extensive descriptions of the setting and participants, such that schools or districts with similar teacher retention concerns could reasonably generalize the findings and recommendations to their settings and participant groups. Hendricks (2017) also noted that differentiation amongst participants adds transferability, further supporting the rationale to use multiple participants in both the designated master teacher role and the study participant role.

### **Summary**

Within this chapter, the overall purpose of the action research was established to

determine the effectiveness of a planned intervention support system to combat the significant teacher attrition and retention concerns at Central Middle School. After synthesizing information and evidence-based practices from the review of the literature, an experimental intervention plan was designed to be used in a mixed-methods, embedded design, action research study focused on supporting teacher practitioners in classroom management strategies via specific, peer-led protocols. The setting and the participants were described and the methodology, intervention plan, participant selection criterion, timelines, and data collection tools were defined. Financial considerations to the direct and indirect costs of the study were also noted. Several methods and sources of validity were discussed and demonstrated, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to the study. The subsequent chapter reports the data analysis process and the results of the quantitative survey and qualitative structured interview.



## CHAPTER IV

### Data Analysis and Results

To determine the effectiveness of this action research, multiple sources of data were collected before and after the specific classroom management intervention support system was conducted. Specifically, this chapter details both the data analysis process and data results of the research study, utilizing a pre-intervention quantitative survey and a post-intervention qualitative structured interview. While the data and results are fully described in written narratives, many pieces of data and information are highlighted in visual tables and figures to provide informational clarity and ease of readability. Further, general discussion on the data analysis process is provided.

#### Data Analysis

In this mixed-methods, embedded design research study, both quantitative and qualitative data sources were utilized to triangulate the results of the classroom management support system on the teachers' perception of their willingness to remain in their current position. Due to the specific nature of the research design, elements of the initial quantitative data were analyzed prior to the implementation of the research intervention to determine which specific teachers from the overall population of teachers at Central Middle School qualified for the study as either designated master teachers or study participants. In addition, employee data accessible to the researcher, such as teacher evaluation ratings, number of discipline referrals submitted by teachers, practitioner status, prior professional development completed, and participation in school-based action teams was used in the criterion-based selection process.

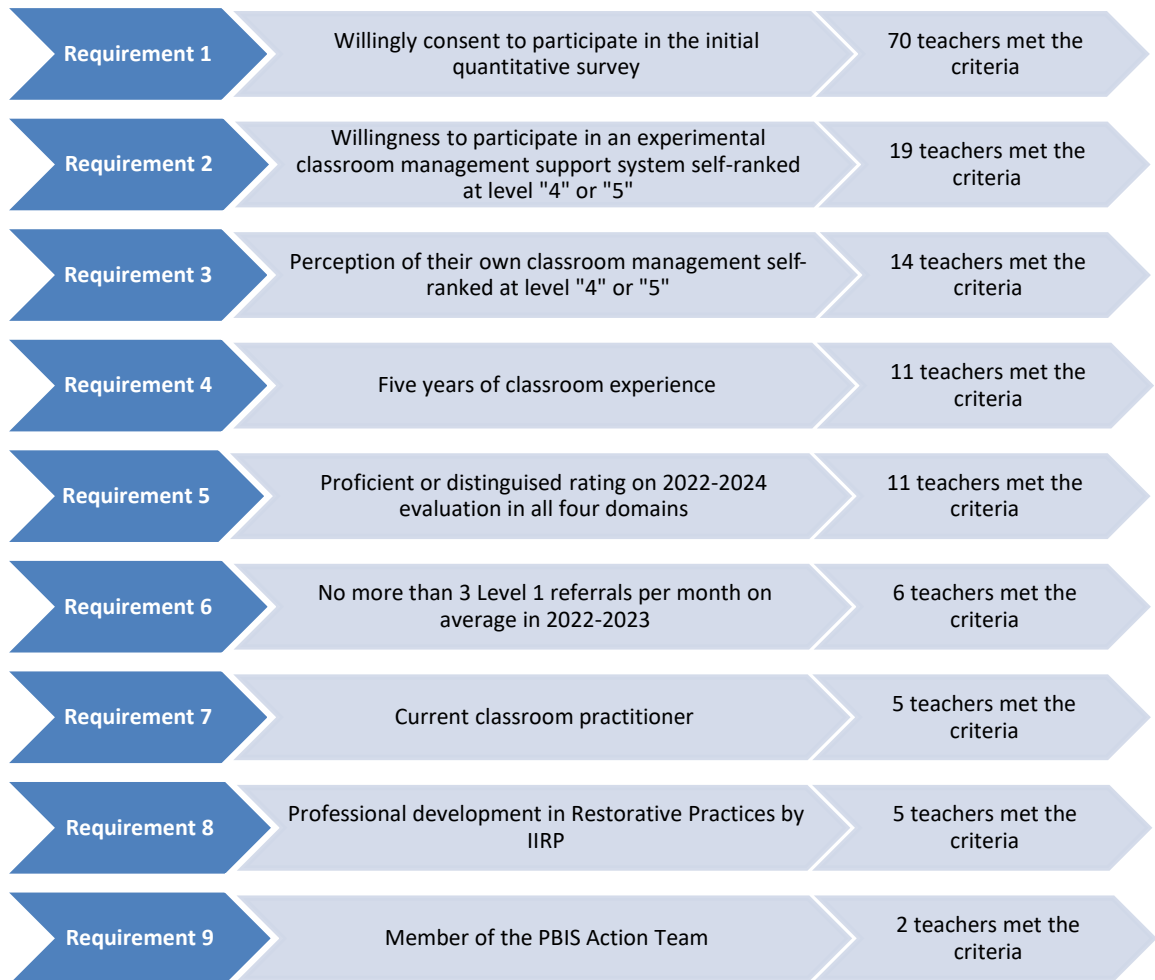
#### *Designated Master Teacher Selection*

First, the quantitative Google Form survey administered in December of 2023,

was used to determine potential designated master teachers. As defined in the research methodology, several questions on the survey were used as criterion to delimit qualification. Additional historical employee data accessible to the researcher was reviewed and utilized in this selection process highlighted in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Designated Master Teacher Selection*

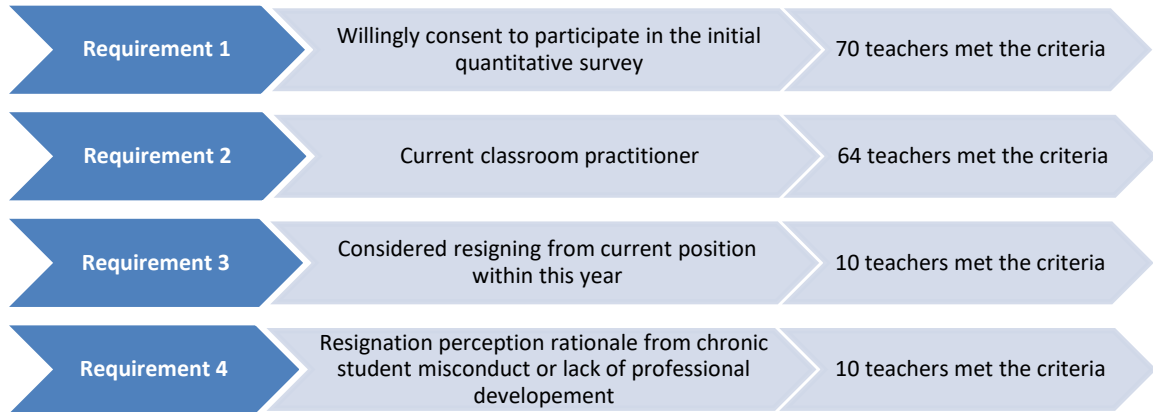


*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher to visually detail the delimited criteria results for the selection of the designated master teachers.

Also defined within the research methodology was the number of designated master teachers needed to ensure validity. Given that four designated master teachers were required in the methodology and five were delimited within the criterion-based selection process, four of the five were selected for participation as designated master teachers. Specifically, the two teachers who met the criterion based on membership in the PBIS Action Team were automatically selected as designated master teachers, as two were required in the research methodology. The remaining three teachers were numbered and selected via simple random sampling to select the final two designated master teachers. To note, all four designated master teachers completed the research protocols and continued to be employed at Central Middle School as of the date of publication of this research.

### ***Study Participant Selection***

Next, the quantitative Google Form survey administered in December of 2023, was used to determine potential study participants. Following the research methodology, several questions on the survey were used as criterion to delimit qualification as study participants from the overall faculty population of Central Middle School. Figure 8 details the data reviewed and utilized in the study participant selection process.

**Figure 8***Study Participant Selection*

*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher to visually detail the delimited criteria results for the selection of study participants.

After the initial data analysis of the criteria defined within the research methodology, the researcher numbered and selected, via random sampling, eight study participants from the ten qualified teachers in the participant pool. Table 3 describes the demographic data for the eight qualified study participants. However, prior to the completion of the research study, two of the selected study participants resigned from their positions as teachers at Central Middle School and were unable to complete the qualitative structured interviews and research requirements.

**Table 3***Study Participant Demographics*

Descriptor	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	2	25%
Female	5	62.5%
Other	1	12.5%
Age		
21-25	4	50%
31-35	1	12.5%
41-45	3	37.5%
Ethnicity		
White	7	87.5%
Other	1	12.5%
Level of Education		
Bachelor's	6	75%
Master's	2	25%
Public School Teaching Experience		
1-3	8	100%
Current Grade Level Assignment		
Grade 7	2	25%
Grade 8	2	25%
Mixed Grades	4	50%
Current Content Area Assignment		
English	2	25%
Science	1	12.5%
Social Studies	1	12.5%
Art	1	12.5%
Library	1	12.5%
Music	1	12.5%
Special Education	1	12.5%

*Note.* This table was compiled by the researcher based on study participant demographics.

*Quantitative Survey*

Because the quantitative survey was completed in the Google Form application, available for review in Appendix D, the researcher was able to extract all responses to a spreadsheet for data analysis. Moreover, the Google Form also generated several aggregate data graphs and charts that are reported as results in subsequent portions of this

chapter. Additionally, the generated spreadsheet from the Google Form was edited to add a column to identify the respondents as (1) study participants, by number; (2) designated master teachers, by number; (3) participant pool teachers; and (4) non-participant pool teachers. The spreadsheet column that contained the automatically collected email addresses from the Google Form was deleted to protect the confidentiality of the responses. Then, the adapted spreadsheet was entered into the *Dedoose* system to connect responses to the subsequent coded qualitative responses of the study participants for data triangulation.

### ***Qualitative Structured Interview***

As described in the research methodology, the qualitative structured interviews, available for reference in Appendix E, were conducted using the Google Meet platform. This recording platform has the capability to automatically generate a transcript of the interview, and that setting was enabled for each session. To protect the confidentiality of the designated master teachers, the transcripts were edited to remove any names referenced to the designated master teachers by substituting those references with generic pronouns. The responses to each structured interview question from each study participant were then entered into the *Dedoose* system so that responses could be coded by the researcher for data analysis and data triangulation purposes.

### ***Data Security***

To protect the integrity of the research study, research data was stored on the password protected computer of the researcher. Additionally, no personally identifiable information was reported in this study and information from this study was confidential within local, state, and federal laws. The PennWest University Institutional Review

Board (IRB) had authorization to review the research records upon request. As a protocol, the study results may be shared in aggregate form at a meeting or within a journal, but there will be no identifiable information revealed. The records from this study were not maintained after the study was completed; however, information collected in this research, such as demographic and perceptual responses, may be used or distributed for future research solely from the published manuscript.

## **Results**

There are numerous results for this mixed-methods, embedded design action research study. Though each relevant data point will be articulated in detail, the mixed-methods approach to triangulate the quantitative data and the qualitative data was used to make conclusions about the data for the following research questions:

1. How does a modeled professional development series on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?
2. How do structured peer observations of designated master teachers on classroom management techniques affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?
3. How does feedback of professional practice on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position?

### ***Quantitative Survey***

The quantitative Google Form survey, displayed in Appendix D, was used to collect several data points, from basic demographic information to willingness to serve as

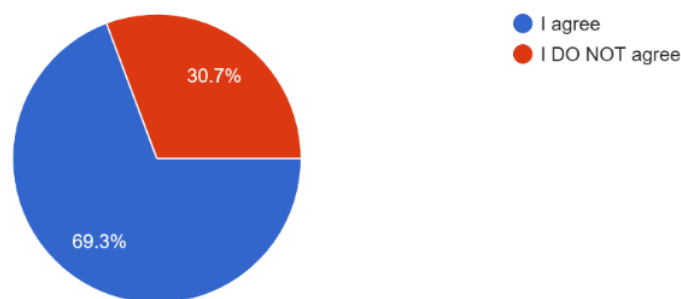
potential participants. While some of the questions were used as criterion markers for selection as either designated master teachers or study participants, as referenced in the data analysis descriptions in the preceding segments, other demographic results are described in narrative and visual form in the following segments.

**Consent to Participate.** Of the 124 teaching positions filled in December of 2023, 101 Central Middle School faculty members completed the initial reading of the research study's informed consent. This data demonstrates that 81.5% of the Central Middle School faculty read and reviewed the informed consent portion of the survey. Subsequently, 70 Central Middle School faculty members, which equates to 69.3%, consented to participate in the research study and completed the quantitative survey, as referenced in Figure 9.

### Figure 9

#### *Consent to Participate in Research Study*

By clicking on the "I agree" box and continuing with the survey, you have acknowledged that you have read the informed consent and are at least 18 ...ou may quit the study at any time without penalty.  
101 responses



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.



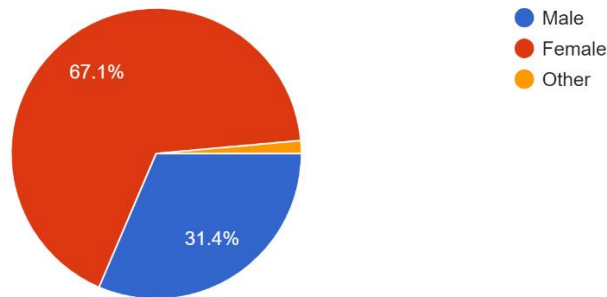
**Gender Identification.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, 67.1% identified their gender as female, while 31.4% identified their gender as male. One Central Middle School faculty member identified their gender as other. The data in Figure 10 demonstrates that most Central Middle School faculty members who completed the survey are female. This is consistent with the overall Central Middle School faculty gender identification data, where 69.3% of the faculty members identify as female. This data also correlates to the study participant gender demographics, where 62.5% of the study participants identified as female, suggesting research generalizability to the Central Middle School faculty population.

### Figure 10

#### *Central Middle School Faculty Gender Identification*

Which category best represents your gender?

70 responses



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

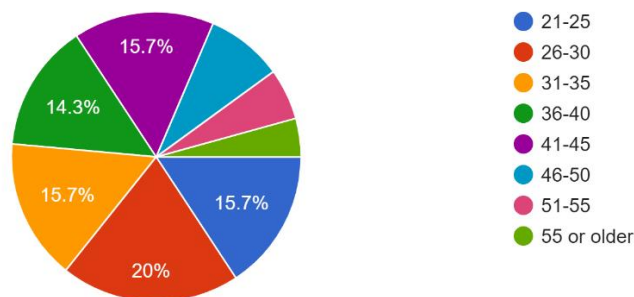
**Age Identification.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, there was a wide variation in the self-identification of age. As shown in Figure 11, the largest group of the population, 20%, identified as 26- to 30-year-olds, while the smallest group of the population, 4.3%, identified as 55-year-olds or older. In terms of potential teaching experience, it is important to note that 35.7% of the surveyed population identify as 30-year-olds or younger. In fact, 51.4% of the surveyed population identify as 35-year-olds or younger. In the study participant population, 62.5% of the teachers identified as being 35-year-olds or younger, which indicates that the study participant population was younger than the overall Central Middle School faculty population. While the difference is only 11.1%, this limits the generalizability of the age-based outcomes to the overall faculty population.

**Figure 11**

*Central Middle School Faculty Age Identification*

Which category best represents your current age?

70 responses



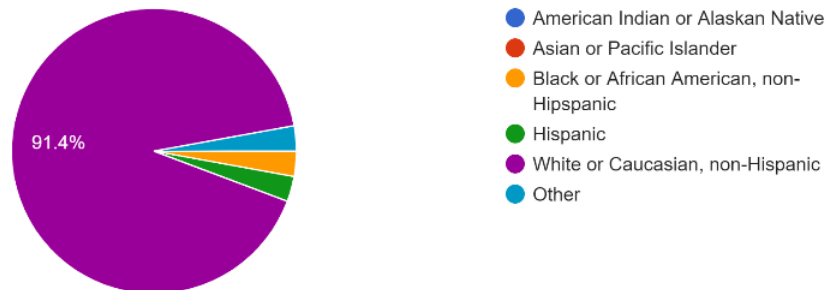
*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

**Ethnic Identification.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, there was limited variation in the self-identification of ethnicity. The surveyed population identified as 91.4% White, with only 2.9% identifying as Hispanic, 2.9% identifying as Black or African American, and 2.9% identifying as another ethnicity. Indeed, the study participant population, which indicates 87.5% identified as White, was generalizable to the overall Central Middle School faculty population ethnic identification. While Figure 12 represents the ethnic self-identification of the Central Middle School faculty, it is important to note that this data is not comparable to the Central Middle School student ethnic identification of 87.1% Hispanic, 6.4% Black, and 5.0% White.

**Figure 12**

*Central Middle School Faculty Ethnic Identification*

Which category best represents your ethnicity?  
70 responses



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

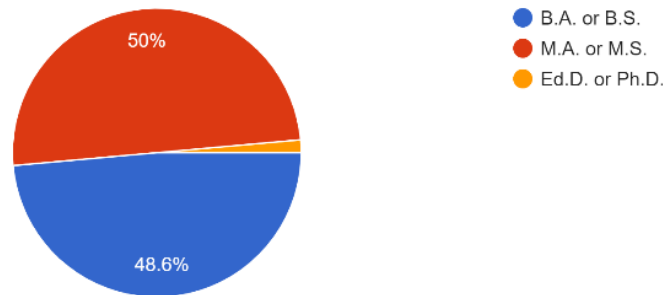
**Level of Education.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, the results in Figure 13 indicate that half of the surveyed population have a master's degree, while one individual has a doctoral degree. The remaining population, 48.6%, reported having only a bachelor's degree. Among the study participants, only 25% have a master's degree, so there was limited generalizability in the level of education from this research study.

**Figure 13**

*Central Middle School Faculty Level of Education*

Which of the following best represents your highest level of education?

70 responses



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

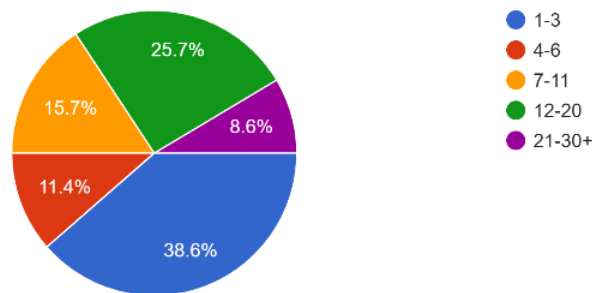
**Teaching Experience.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, the largest group of teachers, 38.6%, reported having only taught in public schools for one to three years. In fact, Figure 14 shows that when combined with those having only taught in public schools for four to six years, the percentage increases to exactly 50%. For comparison with the study participant population, 100% of the study participants are in their first three years of teaching in public schools. While this data point limits generalizability to the general population of Central Middle School faculty members, given the nature of this research, level of teaching experience may indicate other conclusions for the research study.

#### Figure 14

##### *Central Middle School Faculty Teaching Experience*

Including the current school year, which category best represents the number of years of teaching experience you have in public schools?

70 responses



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

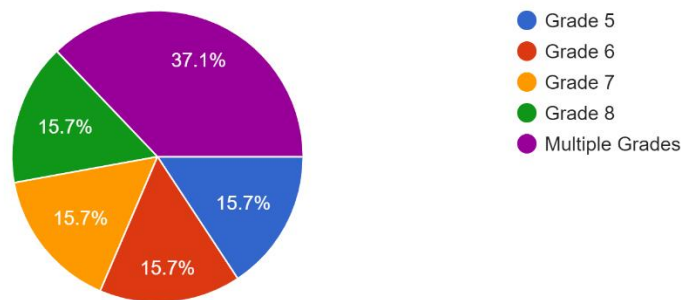
**Grade Level Teaching Assignment.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, data was collected regarding their current teaching assignment relative to assigned grade level. The information in Figure 15 demonstrates the grade levels of the current teaching assignments. Based on the data, an even distribution in specific grade level teaching assignments was noted, with 11 consenting faculty members from each specific grade level participating in the survey. The remaining 37.1% of those participating in the survey taught students in multiple grades at Central Middle School. Within the research study participant population, there were no teachers who taught Grade 5 or Grade 6. Furthermore, 50% of the study participants taught multiple grade levels. While limited in generalizability, this data may indicate other conclusions for the research study.

**Figure 15**

*Central Middle School Faculty Grade Level Teaching Assignments*

Which category best represents which grade level you currently teach?

70 responses



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

**Content Area Teaching Assignment.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, data was collected regarding their current teaching assignment relative to curriculum content area. The information in Table 4 demonstrates the curriculum content areas of the current teaching assignments. Based on the data, there is variance among the consenting Central Middle School faculty around curriculum content. For the study participant population, only Science, Social Studies, English, Special Education, Art, Music, and Library were represented. This may limit the generalizability of the research findings to the larger population of Central Middle School faculty.

**Table 4**

*Central Middle School Faculty Content Area Teaching Assignments*

Content Area	Percentage
Math	8.6%
Science	5.7%
Math and Science	11.4%
English	10%
Social Studies	7.1%
English and Social Studies	8.6%
Physical Education	8.6%
Music	5.7%
Art	4.3%
STEAM	1.4%
Library	1.4%
Special Education	12.9%
ESL	5.7%
Student Services	7.1%
Gifted Education	1.4%

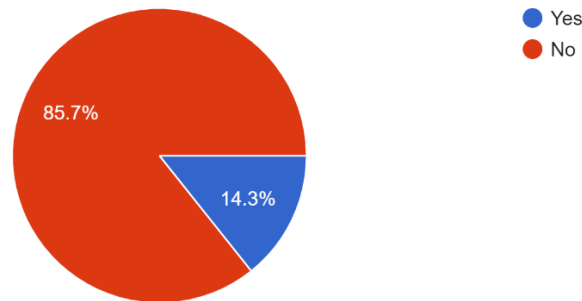
*Note.* This table was created by the researcher to visually represent the content area teaching assignments from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

**Resignation Perception.** Of the 70 consenting Central Middle School faculty who completed the quantitative survey, 14.3% of the surveyed population reported considering resignation from their current position within the 2023-2024 school year. However, 85.7% of the surveyed population of Central Middle School faculty denied any consideration for resignation from their current position during the 2023-2024 school year. Indeed, Figure 16 demonstrates that the majority of Central Middle School faculty surveyed are not considering resignation. In relation to the study participant population, 100% reported having considered resigning from their current position within this school year.

### Figure 16

#### *Central Middle School Faculty Resignation Perception*

Within this school year, have you considered resigning from your current position?  
70 responses



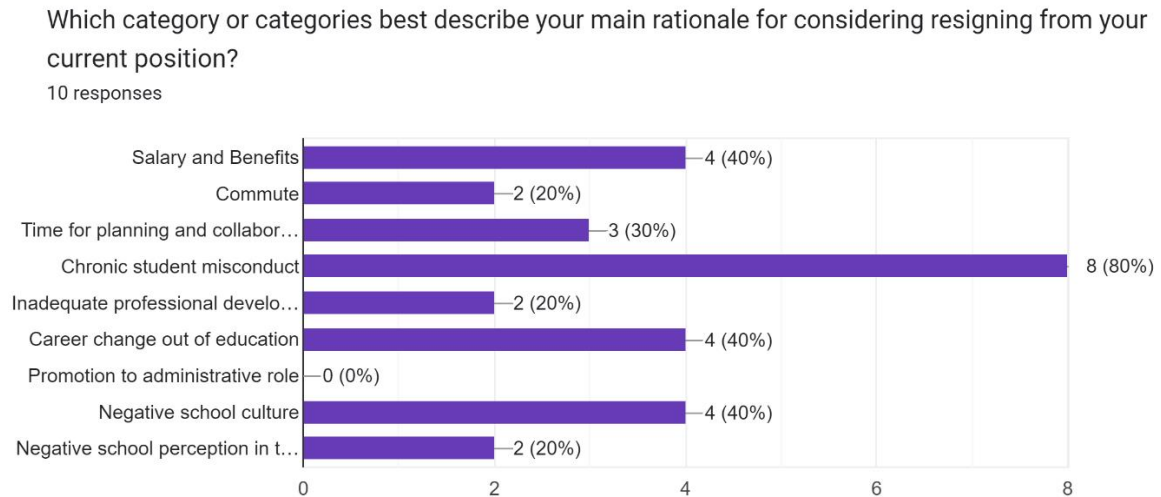
*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.



**Resignation Rationale.** Of the 10 consenting Central Middle School faculty who identified as considering resignation from their current teaching position at Central Middle School in the 2023-2024 school year, 80% of them reported chronic student misconduct as at least one of the reasons for their resignation rationale. In terms of inadequate professional development concerns, which was utilized as the second criterion factor for study participant selection, 20% of the study participant population reported this concern as a rationale for considering resignation. Figure 17 shows the graphical representation of this data set.

**Figure 17**

*Central Middle School Faculty Resignation Rationale*



*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the Google Form application from the data collected in the quantitative survey given to the Central Middle School faculty in December of 2023.

### *Qualitative Structured Interview*

The qualitative structured interview was created by the researcher to answer the research questions and draw conclusions about the overall study. It is available for review in Appendix E. According to the research methodology, only the identified study participants were included in the structured interview sessions. Only six research study participants met with the researcher to complete this portion of the action research study, as two of the study participants resigned from their positions prior to the end of the classroom management support system intervention.

Upon analysis of the study participant responses, a coding system was developed by the researcher to identify data themes and patterns based on study participant initial concerns, specific actions in the research intervention system, and impacts due to the participation in the research intervention system. Then, the responses provided by the study participants were coded in the *Dedoose* system according to the defined thematic coding system in Figure 18.

**Figure 18***Qualitative Data Coding System*

<b>Initial Concerns</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Classroom Management Ability:</b> Notes that the initial concerns of the study participant were in alignment with classroom management abilities</li> <li>• <b>Student Behavior:</b> Notes that the initial concerns of the study participants were in alignment with student behaviors</li> </ul>	
<b>Professional Development</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PD + :</b> Notes that the study participant reported a positive perception of the professional development offered in the classroom management support system</li> <li>• <b>PD - :</b> Notes that the study participant reported a negative perception of the professional development offered in the classroom management support system</li> </ul>	
<b>Peer Observation</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PO + :</b> Notes that the study participant reported a positive perception of the peer observation offered in the classroom management support system</li> <li>• <b>PO - :</b> Notes that the study participant reported a negative perception of the peer observation offered in the classroom management support system</li> </ul>	
<b>Observation Feedback</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OF + :</b> Notes that the study participant reported a positive perception of the observation feedback offered in the classroom management support system</li> <li>• <b>OF - :</b> Notes that the study participant reported a negative perception of the observation feedback offered in the classroom management support system</li> </ul>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Peer-Led:</b> Demonstrates that perceived impact was made on the study participant because the classroom management support system was led by peers</li> <li>• <b>Increased Skillset:</b> Demonstrates that perceived impact was made on the study participant because the classroom management support system increased their teaching skillset</li> <li>• <b>Increased Support:</b> Demonstrates that perceived impact was made on the study participant because the classroom management support system increased their feelings of professional support</li> <li>• <b>Increased Connectedness:</b> Demonstrates that perceived impact was made on the study participant because the classroom management support system increased their feelings of professional connectedness</li> <li>• <b>Resignation Indifference:</b> Demonstrates that the perceived impact of the classroom management support system on the study participant did not change the resignation perceptions</li> <li>• <b>Resignation Reduction:</b> Demonstrates that the perceived impact of the classroom management support system on the study participant did reduce the intention to resign</li> </ul>	

*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the research to define the qualitative coding system used to complete the data analysis for this action research.

**Code Frequency.** Upon initial data analysis, the coding of each study participant was reviewed to identify potential patterns within the data. Figure 19 shows the frequency of the defined code counts by study participant.

**Figure 19**

*Qualitative Code Count by Study Participant*

Media	Codes														Totals					
	Impact	Increased Connectedness	Increased Skillset	Increased Support	Peer-Led	Resignation Indifference	Resignation Reduction	Initial Concerns	Classroom Management Ability	Student Behavior	Observation Feedback	OF +	OF -	Peer Observation		PO +	PO -	Professional Development	PD +	PD -
Study Participant #6 - Capstone.txt			4	3	3		2		3			1		2				2		20
Study Participant #5 - Capstone.txt	1	4	2	4	1			1			3			1				2		19
Study Participant #4 - Capstone.txt	2	3	1	2		1		1	1		1			1				2		15
Study Participant #3 - Capstone.txt	2	4	2	4	1			2	1		7			2	1			2		28
Study Participant #2 - Capstone.txt	3	9		3		1		2	1		2			5				9		35
Study Participant #1 - Capstone.txt	2	3	1	4		1		1						3				3		18
Totals	10	27	9	20	2	5		7	6		13	1		14	1			20		

*Note.* This graphical representation was created on the *Dedoose* software application to visually represent the frequency of codes by study participant.

In reviewing the study participant response frequency regarding their initial concerns that led to considering resignation, student behavior concerns occurred six times in the excerpts, while classroom management abilities occurred seven times in the excerpts. This correlated to the pre-intervention quantitative survey data, where all the study participants had noted resignation concerns that included chronic student

misconduct and/or lack of adequate professional development.

Specific to the classroom management support system, the data results indicate that the professional development portion of the research intervention plan was described more frequently within the study participant interviews, with 20 occurrences in the data, compared to the peer observation and observation feedback portions, with 15 and 14 occurrences in the data, respectively. Moreover, the professional development data occurrences did not have any negative perceptual occurrences in the structured interview responses, whereas both the peer observation and observation feedback portions both had one negative occurrence each.

Additionally, the code frequency results that related to the perceived impacts of the classroom management support system were analyzed. Based on the study participant results, the most frequent response from the intervention system described was a perceived impact of increased classroom management skillset, with 27 responses attributed to this code. Another 20 responses were attributed to a perceived impact because the classroom management support system was peer-led by other classroom practitioners. The perception impact of increased connectedness was demonstrated in 10 occurrences, while increased support was noted in 9 occurrences.

**Code Occurrence by Demographic Markers.** To further describe and analyze the triangulated data reports from the *Dedoose* software system, the utilized coded response theme categories by study participant report was reviewed. In this process, additional analysis about the initial concerns, intervention system facets, and perceived impacts were able to be inspected by demographic markers. For the purposes of this action research study, the areas of gender and age were further analyzed due to their

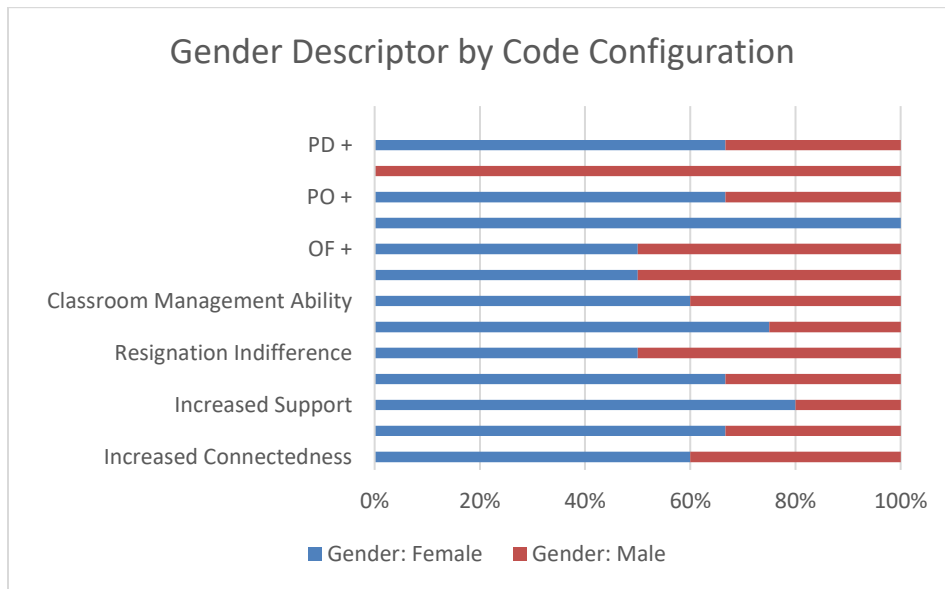
potential generalizability to the overall population. The demographic marker related to years of service in public schools was not analyzed, as all study participants reported a value of one to three years on the quantitative survey. Moreover, ethnicity was not analyzed due to the limited variance within the self-reported identification in both the study participant pool and overall Central Middle School faculty population. Further, the level of education, grade level taught, and content area taught were not analyzed by coded responses because the study participant population was not generalizable by percentage.

**Gender.** In terms of gender, the baseline demographics noted that 62.5% of the study participants identified as female, while 25% identified as male and 12.5% identified as other. However, with the attrition of two study participants, one who identified as female and one who identified as other, the final demographic markers for the study participant population showed that 66.7% identified as female and 33.3% identified as male. Notably, the attrition of the two study participants who resigned prior to the completion of the intervention system caused the gender statistics to align to the overall Central Middle School faculty population more closely. Given those values, the following areas were noteworthy in the analysis of the coded responses specific to gender:

- Initial concerns regarding student behavior and classroom management were reported less by females.
- Negative peer observation perceptions were reported only by males.
- Negative observation feedback perceptions were reported only by females.
- Positive observation feedback perceptions were reported less by females.

- Perceived impact of the intervention via increased support was reported more by females.
- Perceived impact of the intervention via increased connectedness was reported more by males.
- Overall resignation reduction from the intervention was reported more by females.
- Overall resignation indifference from the intervention was reported more by males.

Indeed, Figure 20 further reveals the percentage of the study participant population who responded to specific coding themes by gender.

**Figure 20***Gender Descriptor by Code Configuration*

*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher in the *Excel* software application based on an extracted spreadsheet generated in the *Dedoose* software application comparing coded responses of study participants to gender identifications.

**Age.** To analyze the age demographics, the baseline data showed that 50% of the study participants identified as aged 21 to 25, with 12.5% identifying as aged 31 to 35 and 37.5% identifying as aged 41 to 45. Removing the resigned study participants from the percentages, those who finished the research intervention system included 33.3% in the 21- to 25-year-old range, 16.7% in the 31- to 35-year-old range, and 50% in the 41- to 45-year-old range. Specifically, this reduces the generalizability of the 21-to 25-year-old subgroup and the 41- to 45-year-old subgroup, while simultaneously increasing the generalizability of the 31- to 35-year-old subgroup. The analysis of the responses of the study participants specific to age group showed the following indications:

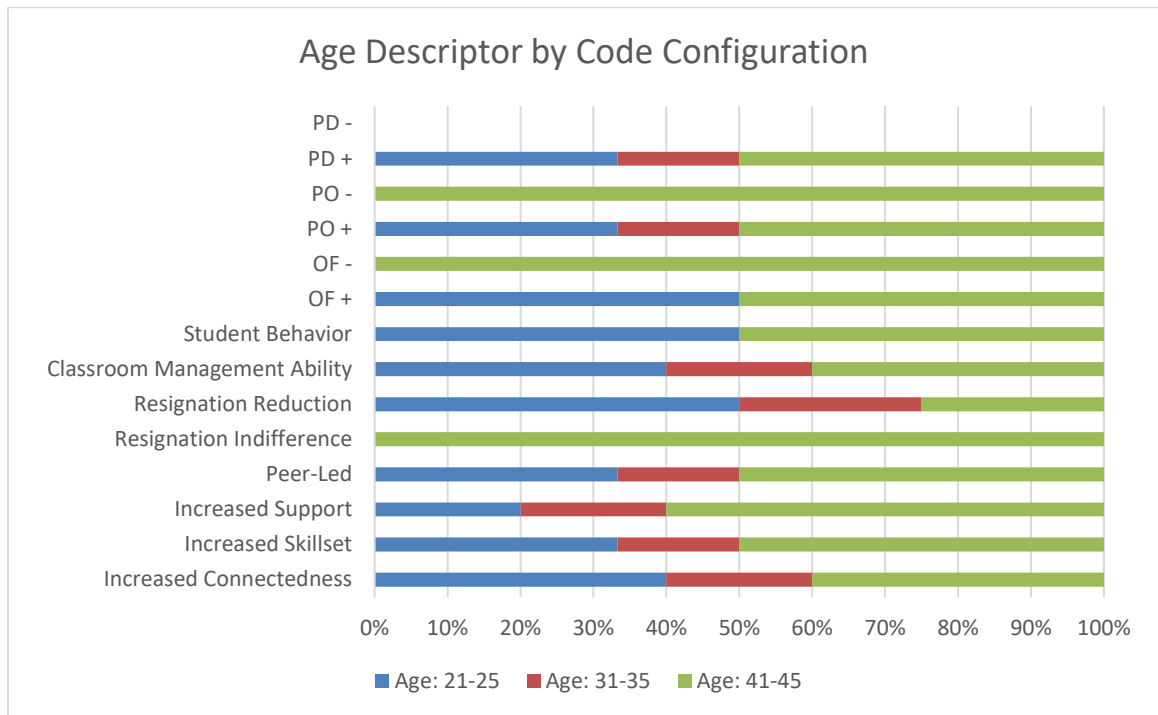


- Initial concerns regarding student behavior and classroom management were reported more by the 21 to 25 age group.
- Negative peer observation perceptions were reported only by members of the 41 to 45 age group.
- Negative observation feedback perceptions were reported only by members of the 41 to 45 age group.
- Positive observation feedback perceptions were reported more by the 21 to 25 age group.
- Perceived impact of the intervention via increased support was reported less by the 21 to 25 age group and more by the 41 to 45 age group.
- Perceived impact of the intervention via increased connectedness was reported more by the 21 to 25 age group and less by the 41 to 45 age group.
- Overall resignation reduction from the intervention was reported more by the 21 to 25 and 31 to 35 age groups.
- Overall resignation indifference from the intervention was only reported by the 41 to 45 age group.

Figure 21 details the percentage of the study participant population who responded to specific coding themes by age group.

**Figure 21**

*Age Descriptor by Code Configuration*



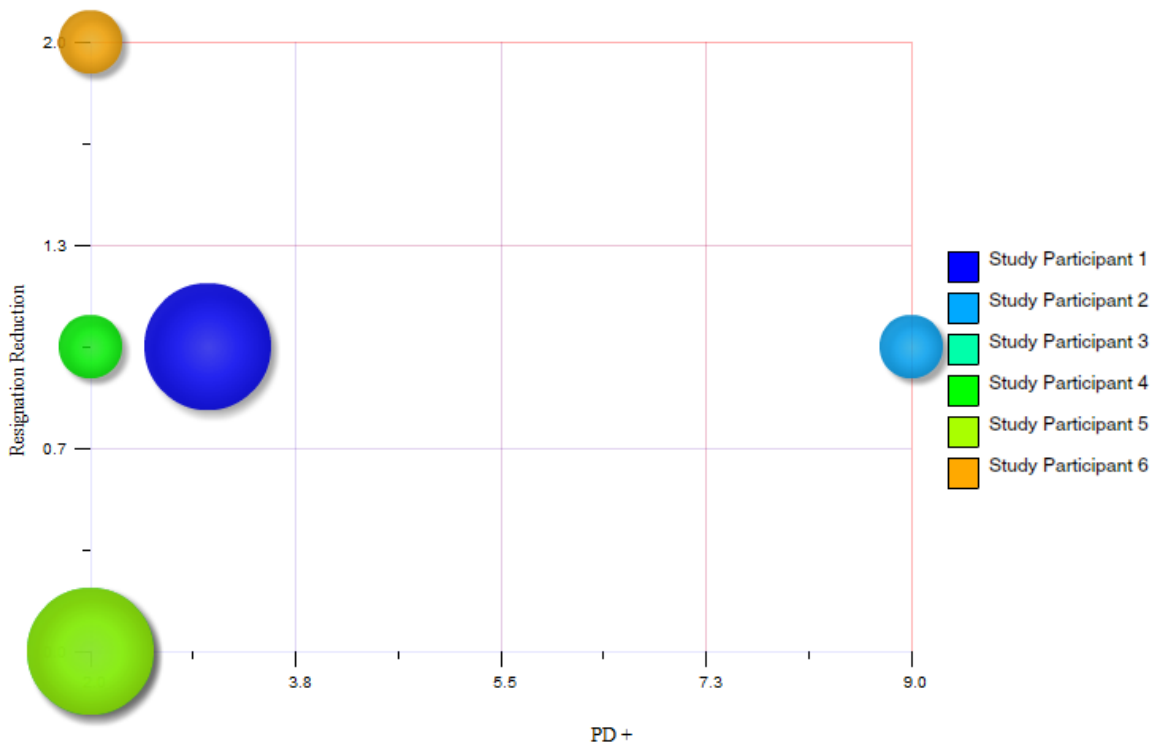
*Note.* This graphical representation was created by the researcher in the *Excel* software application based on an extracted spreadsheet generated in the *Dedoose* software application comparing coded responses of study participants to age identifications.

**Professional Development Impact.** The first research question asked how a modeled professional development series on classroom management techniques provided by designated master teachers affects teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. To best determine the effect, the *Dedoose* system was used to create a code frequency descriptor bubble plot to analyze the impact of the professional development on any possible resignation reduction by the study participants. In the bubble plot displayed in Figure 22, the bubble size was set to show the impact of

the peer-led nature of the professional development sessions.

**Figure 22**

*Peer-Led Professional Development Resignation Reduction Bubble Plot*



*Note.* This graphical representation was created in the *Dedoose* software application.

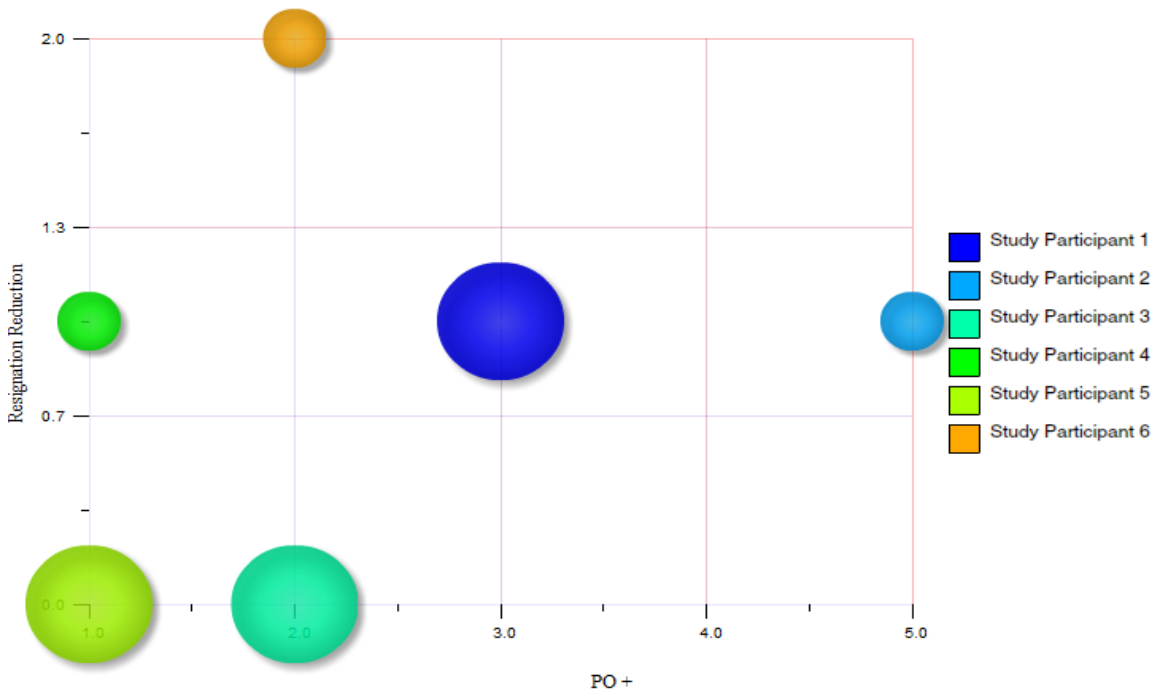
The bubble plot above indicates that the peer-led nature of the professional development sessions was positive for five of the six study participants, or 83.3%, who completed the intervention. It also indicates that four of the six study participants, or 66.7%, expressed a reduction in their intention to resign due to the professional development portion of the classroom management support system. However, it also displays that while there was a positive impact by the peer-led nature of the classroom management support system specifically for the professional development element, two

of the six study participants, or 33.3%, did not note any reduction in their intention to resign from their current positions at Central Middle School because of the peer-led professional development series.

**Peer Observation Impact.** The second research question asked how a structured peer observation of designated master teachers on classroom management techniques affects teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. The *Dedoose* system was again used to create a code frequency descriptor bubble plot to analyze the impact of the peer observation on any possible resignation reduction by the study participants. Figure 23 also shows how the bubble size was set to show the impact of the peer-led nature of the peer observations.

**Figure 23**

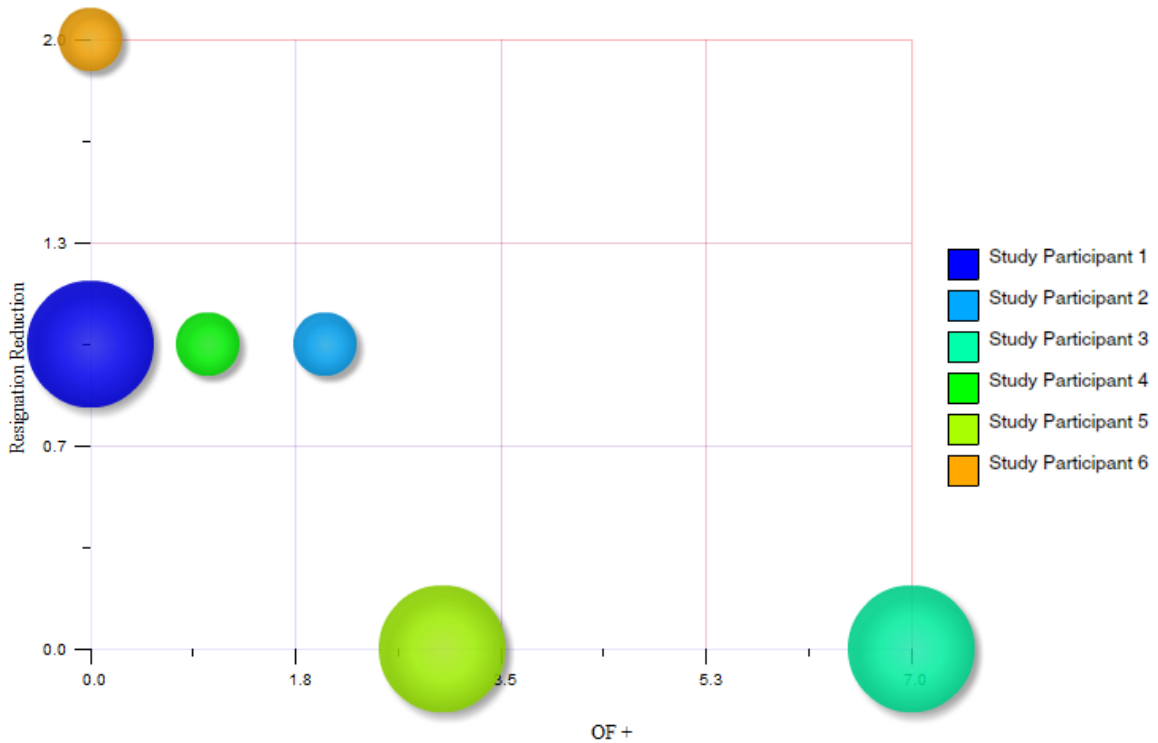
*Peer-Led Peer Observation Resignation Reduction Bubble Plot*



*Note.* This graphical representation was created in the *Dedoose* software application.

The bubble plot above indicates that the peer-led nature of the peer observation was positive for all six study participants, or 100%, who completed the intervention. Moreover, it indicates that four of the six study participants, or 66.7%, expressed a reduction in their intention to resign due to the peer observation portion of the classroom management support system. Despite the positive impact from the peer-led nature and the peer observation protocol, two of the six study participants, or 33.3%, did not note any reduction in their intention to resign from their current positions at Central Middle School specifically due to the peer-led peer observation.

**Observation Feedback Impact.** The third research question asked how feedback of professional practice on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affects teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. To generate an answer to this question, the *Dedoose* system was used to create a code frequency descriptor bubble plot to analyze the impact of the observation feedback on any possible resignation reduction by the study participants. In the bubble plot displayed in Figure 24, the bubble size was set to show the impact of the peer-led nature of the observation feedback session.

**Figure 24***Peer-Led Observation Feedback Resignation Reduction Bubble Plot*

*Note.* This graphical representation was created in the *Dedoose* software application.

The bubble plot above shows that the peer-led nature of the observation feedback session was positive for 100% of the study participants who completed the intervention. Additionally, it indicates that four of the six study participants, or 66.7%, expressed a reduction in their intention to resign due to the observational feedback portion of the classroom management support system. Indeed, it also shows that four of the six study participants, or 66.7%, expressed positive experiences with the observation feedback session, even though the two study participants who reported the strongest positive effect from the observation feedback did not report any reduction in their intention to resign. Specifically, the peer-led observation feedback protocol in the classroom management

support system intervention also yielded a 66.7% reduction in the intention to resign from current teaching positions at Central Middle School.

### **Discussion**

To complete this mixed-methods, embedded design action research, several data collection and data analysis systems had to be developed. First, in consideration of the existing literature, the criteria for determining which teachers could qualify as designated master teachers and study participants had to be determined. Moreover, which types of relevant demographic factors would be pertinent to the generalizability and transferability of the research had to be determined. Additionally, a mechanism for collecting the quantitative data, the Google Form survey viewable in Appendix D, needed to be established. On the survey, the demographic fields collected markers for gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, years teaching in public schools, grade level of current assignment, and content area of current assignment. The perceptual fields on the survey, which used Likert scale ratings fully described in the research methodology in the previous chapter, captured data that included recent resignation consideration, including the reasons for any such perception; a self-reflection of classroom management abilities; and a willingness indication to participate in the research study as a designated master teacher.

Once the intervention plan concluded, a separate mechanism, which became the structured interview available in Appendix E, needed to be developed to capture the perceptual responses of the study participants. To ensure that all responses were complete and accurate, the Google Meet platform with transcription functionality enabled was selected to record the structured interviews. Once the qualitative data was captured,

an analysis of the responses had to be completed and the *Dedoose* software system was selected due to its ability to synthesize and analyze both the quantitative and qualitative data sources. Because the qualitative data revealed themes that needed to be coded for further analysis in the *Dedoose* system, a coding system was created by the researcher to note patterns and trace outcomes of the responses to the existing demographic markers, as well as to note frequency and trends within the converged data sets.

Along the way, data security protocols were established and utilized to protect the data and the confidentiality of the designated master teachers and the study participants. To provide potential answers to the established research questions, narrative and graphical representations of the data sets were fully analyzed for frequency, convergence, and further interpretation for each of the research questions.

### **Summary**

Numerous types of data and results were provided in this chapter to answer the research questions, which included data sets, descriptions, and visual displays of both the quantitative and qualitative responses of the study participants. Data analysis protocols approved by the PennWest University IRB Committee were followed and data was always secure. Analysis of the results was completed solely by the researcher with assistance from the Google Form, Google Meet, *Excel*, and *Dedoose* software applications. Despite the use of software products, there was no financial cost to collect or analyze the data and results, as the Google products are produced at no cost, the *Excel* license was already owned by the researcher prior to this action research study, and the *Dedoose* application was completed within a free trial period. Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed in the subsequent chapter.



## CHAPTER V

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The business of any school system is to produce successful students to carry on the functionality, growth, and continuation of a successful society. To do so, professional educators are the crucial vehicle to power the mechanisms that have been established to ensure the viability of the public schools in the United States of America. As described in the extensive review of the literature, less individuals have a desire to become professional educators and, of those who make teaching their career path, a significant number of them are leaving the classroom within the first few years of teaching due to student chronic misconduct and a lack of professional development to support their classroom management practices. For this reason, this mixed-method, action research project was conducted to discover how a multifaceted, research-based, and peer-led classroom management support system affected the perceptions of teachers who were already considering resigning from their current position. After a robust intervention system was applied, the data and results from the action research have informed the researcher of several conclusions regarding the research questions identified, the internal and external limitations noted, the recommendations for utilizing the results of this study, and the future needs to continue research in support of increasing teacher retention.

### Conclusions

Numerous conclusions have been drawn from this research. While the researcher was specifically interested in the defined research questions, results from both the quantitative survey and the qualitative structured interview also provided evidence to support the functionality of the action research, as well as potential application and

further development. Furthermore, the implications and fiscal considerations due to this research study were examined.

### *Quantitative Survey*

The analysis of the quantitative survey produced many results that must be considered regarding the conclusions of this research. First, the generalizability of the study participant pool to the overall instructional population of Central Middle School was consistent for gender identification and ethnic identification. In contrast, it was not generalizable for age identification, level of education, teaching experience, grade level of teaching experience, and content area of current position. Specifically, the study participants, those consenting teachers who identified their consideration to resign within the same school year due to chronic student misconduct and/or lack of professional development, were statistically younger than the overall population of teachers, suggesting that age impacts resignation consideration at Central Middle School. Furthermore, the level of education of the study participant population was statistically lower than that of the overall teaching population, which suggests that an increased level of education has a positive impact against resignation considerations. Moreover, teaching experience was statistically lower in the study participant population, as all the study participants were within their first three years of public-school teaching experience. Given this data, a correlation between level of teaching experience and a consideration to resign from their current teaching position is highly likely. When coupled with the age group and level of education conclusions, this conclusion informed the researcher that targeted applications of the intervention protocols for the following school year need to be made for young, less educated, and less experienced teachers.

In terms of content area of current teaching position, the study participants had a variety of curriculum areas noted in the quantitative survey. Due to the size of the participant pool versus the number of content areas provided at Central Middle School, the data analysis regarding content area does not provide any conclusions, as the study population size called for in the methodology did not provide for the possibility of all content areas being represented.

Most interesting in the analysis of the results of the quantitative survey were the results regarding the grade level of the current teaching assignments. No study participants identified as teachers of grades five or six. This is notable because the structure of the fifth and sixth grades at Central Middle School utilizes a two-man team concept, with one teacher hosting a section of students for half of the school day to teach English Language Arts and Social Studies, and a second teacher hosting a section of students for half of the school day to teach Mathematics and Science. This is different than the seventh and eighth grade instructional model, which utilizes a traditional four-person team approach, with each teacher responsible for a specific curriculum content area. In the fifth and sixth grade model, each teacher only has a maximum of 60 students, whereas the seventh and eighth grade model prescribes up to 120 students per teacher. Furthermore, the number of study participants who were responsible for multiple grade levels, largely related arts teachers who are responsible for up to 600 students each five-day cycle, was also higher in the study participant population. Numerous reasons external to this research could cause such an effect; however, a hypothesis for future research based on this factor would be that the number of students assigned to a teacher impacts their consideration for resignation due to chronic student misconduct and/or lack

of professional development.

### *Qualitative Structured Interview*

After the analysis of the data collected in the qualitative structured interviews, the code frequency was used to determine specific conclusions about the classroom management support system and its effect on the study participant's resignation considerations. As noted in the results section of the previous chapter, the professional development series, peer observations, and feedback of professional practice elements of the intervention system all provided multiple positive responses. Indeed, the professional development series had the highest number of positive responses, discussed 20 times throughout the interviews. While it is natural to conclude that the greatest frequency may have generated the greatest impact on the study participants, it is important to consider that the study participants' first interaction with the classroom management support system was through the professional development series and their subsequent peer observations and feedback sessions all related to the same concepts originally boosted in the professional development sessions around the topics of RP and PBIS. This is important to consider because there was a significant amount of conceptual continuity within the intervention protocols that may have directly impacted which intervention mode the study participants discussed the most.

A corresponding conclusion can be made regarding the most frequently discussed impact noted by the study participants. When analyzing the 27 times that the study participants discussed feeling an increased skillset due to the intervention system, no distinct disaggregation can be made regarding which of the three intervention protocols was most impactful because the RP and PBIS concepts were interwoven throughout the

classroom management support system. Conversely, the 20 times that the study participants discussed a positive impact due to the peer-led nature of the intervention system, a conclusion can be adequately made that the peer-led nature was positive because it was specifically interwoven throughout the methodology of the intervention plan.

Additional data analysis was conducted regarding the frequency of the code occurrence relevant to gender and age, as both were determined to be generalizable to the teaching population at Central Middle School in the data analysis of this research. For gender identification, statistical conclusions from the data suggest that females reported a perceived impact of increased support more than males, while males reported a perceived impact of increased connectedness more than females. Additionally, overall resignation reductions from the intervention protocols were statistically reported more by females, concluding that the overall intervention system was better at supporting female teachers than male teachers.

As age already indicated the conclusion that resignation considerations are more frequent in younger age groups based on the results of the quantitative survey, it can also be concluded from the combined data analysis that the overall resignation reduction from the intervention system was reported more by the younger age groups as well. Overall, the younger age groups also discussed more positive impacts from the peer-led observational feedback sessions, as well as more positive perceptual impacts from increased support and increased connectedness. On the other hand, resignation indifference, negative peer observation perceptions, and negative observational feedback perceptions were reported only by the members of the 41 to 45 age group, suggesting that

the professional development series may be the best path for older teachers who are considering resignation due to chronic student misconduct.

### ***Research Question 1***

The first research question asked how a modeled professional development series on classroom management techniques provided by designated master teachers affects teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. Based on the results of this study, 66.7% of the participants noted a reduction in their intent to resign from their current position due to the positive impacts of the professional development series. Moreover, 83.3% of the study participants indicated a positive impact due to the peer-led nature of the professional development sessions. This information concludes that the professional development sessions were overall impactful to most of the study participants in reducing their retention perceptions; however, the peer-led nature of the professional development series was still impactful, even for the study participant who did not change their resignation intention.

### ***Research Question 2***

The second research question asked how a structured peer observation of designated master teachers on classroom management techniques affects teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. Given the peer observation protocol, 66.7% of the participants noted a reduction in their intent to resign from their current position due to the positive impacts of the peer observation portion of the intervention system. Additionally, 100% of the study participants indicated a positive impact due to the peer-led nature of the peer observations. This information concludes that the peer observation protocol was impactful overall to most of the study participants

in reducing their retention perceptions; however, the peer-led nature of the professional development series was consistently positive.

### ***Research Question 3***

The third research question asked how feedback of professional practice on classroom management techniques that is provided by designated master teachers affects teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. Like the peer observation protocol, the feedback of professional practice was 66.7% effective in reducing retention intentions within the study population. Indeed, 100% of the study participants also noted that the peer-led nature of the feedback sessions had a positive impact on their perception of this portion of the intervention system. This information concludes that the feedback sessions of professional practice conducted by professional peers were consistently positive and made a reduction in resignation intentions for most of the study participants.

### ***Implications***

The implication of this research extends well beyond Central Middle School and the Reading School District. Teacher attrition and retention concerns are triaged at the top of schools' and districts' concerns across the nation. The fact that two of the identified study participants resigned from their positions during the study amplifies the need to create immediate support systems for teachers who have already indicated their intent to resign from their positions. Information provided to the researcher from exit interviews and resignation letters indicated that concerns over chronic student misconduct were the top reason for both teachers' resignation mid-year. While there are often several reasons for a teacher to consider resignation, this research study corroborated recent

research across the nation that the most consistent reason for resignation is due to chronic student misconduct. However, this research study also concluded that a peer-led support system that provides professional development, peer observation opportunities, and professional practice feedback sessions can also reduce the resignation intentions of teachers, particularly for females who are in younger age groups. For Central Middle School and the Reading School District to address its most critical need at the secondary level by increasing teacher retention, this intervention system will need to be used to support teachers to stay in their positions.

### ***Application***

In the Reading School District, new teachers are required to participate in a week-long teacher induction program prior to the start of the school year. They are also given a year-long tenured teacher mentor to review an orientation-style checklist regarding their new teacher role. Additionally, new teachers are required to spend six hours with school administrators in after-school training sessions regarding such topics as Special Education, evaluation, ESL, and parental interactions. This research indicates that there is a definitive need to provide more support regarding classroom management to new teachers, as the study participant pool yielded exclusively teachers within their first three years of teaching in public schools. To accomplish this, it is the recommendation of the researcher to enhance the intervention system developed in this action research study to provide more immediate support to new teachers, with the additional intention of making the enhanced system available to any teachers who feel that they could benefit from the support or who have concerns over chronic student misconduct. Specifically, the peer-led nature of the intervention system was noted to be positive and will need to remain a



central focus of the enhanced system. Since the positive aspects of the professional development opportunities were noted most frequently in the study participant responses, more frequent opportunities for new and struggling teachers to engage with designated master teachers for additional classroom management training are needed. For the 2024-2025 school year, Central Middle School has planned to open a three-day per week after-school teacher “urgent care center” where designated master teachers will provide immediate and on-demand professional development for any new or struggling teachers who report to the sessions.

To provide opportunities for new and struggling teachers to more frequently visit designated master teacher classrooms to conduct peer observations, Central Middle School will create a special class coverage request system where instructional coaches, called Academic Intervention Specialists in the Reading School District, can provide classroom coverage once per month for any new or struggling teachers who desire to visit designated master teacher classrooms. The same instructional coaches can also be utilized to provide coverage for the designated master teachers to conduct classroom observations to provide the new and struggling teachers with feedback sessions of professional practice. Moreover, the Academic Interventionist Specialists, who by nature are recent classroom practitioners who meet strict criterion for being selected to fill instructional coaching roles, can fulfill the role of peer observers to complete additional feedback sessions to the teachers.

### ***Fiscal Considerations***

Even though two study participants resigned prior to the completion of this research study and two of the six remaining study participants noted an indifference in

their resignation intentions, the results and conclusions of this research have found that the peer-led classroom management support system had a positive impact on retention reduction. As such, the interventions, including the recommendation to expand the interventions into more intensive and immediate supports for new and struggling teachers via an after-school support option, will have a significant cost to continue after the research period. As noted in previous chapters, the estimated cost of the intervention system alone would be \$52,000 annually for staff wages and an additional \$1,000 for supplies. With the modifications applied, the estimated cost would rise to \$57,000 for staff wages. Because Central Middle School is a Title I school, all these costs would be supported under federal program budgetary expenditures. Indirect costs would remain for the use of the facility to provide the intervention system. Moreover, the organization of the classroom management support system could be delegated to the school's Instructional Supervisor position, a position already tasked with oversight of the new teacher mentor program and whole-school professional development programs. This delegation would not incur any additional cost to the school or district.

### **Limitations**

Mertler (2022) described the presence of limitations within educational action research. During this research study, both internal factors, those directly limited by the prescribed methodology, and external factors, those outside the control of the researcher, were noted to potentially limit the generalizability and transferability of the results and conclusions to other schools and educational settings.

### ***Internal Factors***

The most significant internal factor that limited this action research study was the

size of the study participant population. When creating the methodology to conduct this research, careful attention was paid to the number of study participants necessary. In fact, the researcher used eight study participants to potentially counteract any study participant attrition. As the study progressed, two of the study participants were removed from the research due to their resignation from their position at Central Middle School. This action reduced the study participant population to a cohort of six. Data was analyzed, results were calculated, and conclusions were discussed all relative to a small study participant population, which must be interpreted carefully when considering the application of this research to similar school settings.

Another factor explained within the methodology of this action research was the selection criteria for the participants who would become the designated master teachers to lead the professional development series, peer observations, and feedback of professional practice sessions. Even though strict criteria were articulated to define the qualities needed in these peer leaders, nothing within the research methodology controlled for personality or experiential differences of the designated master teachers beyond the explicit criteria noted. In fact, because the methodology only required one peer observation and one observational feedback session, significant limitations could have factored into the qualitative responses of some study participants when compared to the responses of other study participants who may have had a significantly different collaborative experience with a different designated master teacher.

The generalizability of this research to other schools and educational settings was also noted to be a potential limitation. When reviewing the demographic nature of the research setting, Central Middle School in the Reading School District, there are very few

urban middle schools in the state of Pennsylvania with such a large student population and professional educator population. In this light, conclusions that were made based on the results of this action research at Central Middle School may not transfer into a school setting that is not the same size or configuration. Also, the conclusions may not be transferable to another school setting that has a teacher population that is either more collaboratively supportive of each other or less inclined to support struggling peers. Caution should be used by any individuals who choose to use the conclusions of this research in schools and educational settings that do not share similar school demographics, as the transferability may not yield similar results.

### ***External Factors***

Several external factors were also noted in the analysis of the results of this research. First, this research did not collect any data from the study participants to determine the extent of their previous training or use of Restorative Practices (RP) or Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS). Moreover, this research did not collect any previous perceptions of the RP or PBIS programs. Explained previously in the methodology of this research, all professional employees at Central Middle School received the initial RP training and were required to use the schoolwide PBIS program. That said, the booster training via the professional development sessions were developed to reinforce previously learned information. While the results clearly indicated that the largest impact noted from the study participants was their perceived increase in skillset, there may have been a wide variance in the level of existing knowledge and application of the strategies provided within the professional development sessions. This factor limits the potential usefulness of the conclusions of this action research, particularly

when considering using the intervention system and methodology in other schools, districts, or school years.

Moreover, this study did not capture study participant existing perceptions of professional respect for the designated master teachers. While there were no negative comments made about specific designated master teachers by the study participants in the qualitative structured interviews, there could have existed a wide range of pre-existing relationships or pre-existing concerns with the peer leaders that may have compounded the study participants' reflections on the suggestions provided within the intervention protocols. In the future, this limitation could be minimized by having each study participant interact with multiple designated master teachers, ensuring that any variance of professional respect for a specific designated master teacher could be avoided in the aggregate.

Further limitations to this study have been noted regarding the potential impact of supervisory influence on the study participants' qualitative responses. With the quantitative survey, an honest broker was used to present the consent to participate and the initial quantitative survey. However, once the study participants and designated master teachers were determined from the selection process, the researcher, who was also the principal of the school site, was the main contact, organizer, and interviewer to collect the qualitative responses. Indeed, it must be noted that the study participants' answers to the structured interview questions may have been influenced by the fact that their direct supervisor was conducting the research and the interview. As there was no follow-up reference to determine any such influence, no data exists to support or refute this potential limitation. In any future research using this intervention system, the

methodology may be less limited if an honest broker was also used to conduct the qualitative structured interviews.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This research study was conducted in the 2023-2024 school year at Central Middle School in the Reading School District. While the results and conclusions can inform the administration and teacher leadership teams of Central Middle School, the limitations within this study make the results less generalizable and less transferable to other schools within the Reading School District and beyond. Several recommendations to extend this research, including updates to the methodology of the classroom management support intervention plan, to future school years, schools, or school districts have been made.

The first recommendation for future research would include the addition of a qualitative structured interview for the designated master teachers. Within this study, attention was only paid to the perspectives of the study participants, the teachers who had noted a consideration for resignation. Indeed, the goal of this research was to identify how the various intervention support protocols affected the perceptions of the teachers' willingness to remain in their current positions. However, there was no mechanism within this research methodology to capture the perspectives of the designated master teachers and any insights or conclusions they may have had as peer leaders who directly supported the study participants. Future research could inform the researcher and additional educational leaders about the designated master teachers' perspectives to better inform any future additions or changes needed for the classroom management support system or the specific methodology protocols.

In addition, a recommendation for future research would include more training for the designated master teachers. It was discussed in the limitations that the responses in the qualitative structured interviews noted distinct variations in the actions taken by the designated master teachers, from professional development presentation differences to the quality of the feedback given to the study participants. To ensure consistency in the intervention protocols for both the classroom management support system and any future research, it will be necessary to provide more training to the designated master teachers, including routinized follow-up sessions with them, to ensure the quality of the mentoring protocols is consistent from one designated master teacher to another.

Another recommendation for future research would be to expand the scope of the classroom management support system intervention to more teachers and to additional schools. Within this research, participation in the study was limited to teachers who consented to participate. Given the positive results of many aspects of the intervention system, the administration of Central Middle School could mandate this classroom management support system to teachers who are struggling with classroom management, regardless of their intention to resign or their willingness to voluntarily participate. Furthermore, because this action research was solely conducted at Central Middle School, expanding the intervention protocols and classroom management support system to other secondary schools in the Reading School District could assist future analysis of the system by expanding the population and including a wider range of perspectives both from the future participants and the future designated master teachers.

Moving forward, another recommendation for future research regarding the classroom management support system would be to change the intervention protocols to

ensure that the participants are able to see more than one peer observation by requiring the participants to observe multiple classrooms conducted by multiple designated master teachers. The variety of instructional and classroom management strategies that the participants would be able to see could yield variances in perspectives and changes to professional practice that were not available via the methodology of this action research project. In addition, future research could determine if participants have differences in perspectives if they were observed and given feedback of professional practice from multiple designated master teachers, as this action research only provided one individual professional feedback session by one designated master teacher.

Moreover, future research could be conducted with the classroom management support system over the course of several school years to use the participant perspectives to analyze trends over time by conducting a longitudinal study of the protocols. In doing so, the researcher and other educational administrators would be able to determine if protocols that had positive effects in the 2023-2024 school year continue to have positive effects three to five to ten years into the future. This process can be invaluable because instructional and behavioral practices change rapidly in the field of education, especially with new technology and societal impacts that create new scenarios quickly in each classroom. Failing to assess the long-term use of the protocols in this study could potentially yield a negative experience for both participants and designated masters teachers, as well as having a profoundly negative effect on student success.

As noted in the review of the literature, Pennsylvania, as well as other states, have experienced a rapid increase in the number of emergency certified teachers versus those traditionally certificated via university-sponsored teacher certification programs. Given



this fact, an additional recommendation for future research from this study would be to include a bivariate analysis of the perceptual effects of the classroom management support system between teachers who received emergency certification and teachers who received traditional certification. Potential results could assist educational administrators in determining the best mentoring and induction options for teachers who receive emergency certification without the benefit of educational coursework and preparatory programs.

Furthermore, a future research study could also be designed to determine any similarities or differences in the perspectives of participants who volunteered to participate versus participants who involuntarily were placed in the intervention protocols due to professional improvement plans. In this potential future study, the guiding research questions regarding the willingness to accept feedback from peer leaders, the utilization of professional development practices, and the transfer of quality instructional practices from peer observations could be analyzed.

Ultimately, the goal of this research was to determine how a multifaceted classroom management support system led by peers potentially changed the intent of teachers who expressed a desire to resign from their positions. Realistically, the desired effect of increasing the teachers' willingness to stay in their current positions was to increase student success. To determine if this intervention system ultimately leads to student success, future research must be conducted to analyze both student behavioral outcomes and student academic achievement for the teachers who participated in this research study and any future variations of this research study that may be conducted. No intervention protocol in the educational system works with one-hundred percent fidelity

due to variances in human nature of each student, teacher, and classroom environment. Nevertheless, considering this classroom management support system requires a considerable effort on the part of the designated master teachers and educational administrators, it would be essential to conduct further research on a potential correlation between the effectiveness of the classroom management support system and student achievement data. This information would not only be necessary for educational administrators to determine the usefulness of this intervention protocol, but also to justify the financial funding of the intervention protocols moving forward.

### **Summary**

In summary, the conclusions detailed in this chapter show that there were positive outcomes from the use of the classroom management support system for several of the study participants in reducing their intention to resign from their current teaching positions. In particular, the benefits of the professional development sessions and the perceived increases in skillset were noted by the study participants most frequently. Indeed, the peer-led nature of the intervention also was noted by study participants as a positive value in their perception of the classroom management support system.

The urgency problem for which this action research was conducted remains the top priority at Central Middle School and beyond. As of June of 2024, professional teaching vacancies are still abundant and ample certificated teachers interested in working in a high-need school like Central Middle School have yet to materialize. That said, five of the six remaining study participants continued to be employed as teachers at Central Middle School at the time of publication of this research. The results of this study will be used by the researcher to modify and expand the classroom management

support system to yield a potentially more potent impact on new and struggling teachers for the 2024-2025 school year.

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**APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board  
250 University Avenue  
California, PA 15419  
[instreviewboard@calu.edu](mailto:instreviewboard@calu.edu)  
Melissa Sovak, Ph.D.

Dear Geina Beaver,

Please consider this email as official notification that your proposal titled "Reimagining Targeted Classroom Management Supports for Teachers to Increase Teacher Retention Perceptions in the Reading School District: a Doctoral Capstone Project" (Proposal #PW23-010) has been approved by the Pennsylvania Western University Institutional Review Board as submitted.

The effective date of approval is 10/05/2023 and the expiration date is 10/04/2024. These dates must appear on the consent form.

Please note that Federal Policy requires that you notify the IRB promptly regarding any of the following:

- (1) Any additions or changes in procedures you might wish for your study (additions or changes must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented)
- (2) Any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects
- (3) Any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in (2).
- (4) To continue your research beyond the approval expiration date of 10/04/2024, you must file additional information to be considered for continuing review. Please contact [instreviewboard@calu.edu](mailto:instreviewboard@calu.edu)

Please notify the Board when data collection is complete.

Regards,

Melissa Sovak, PhD.  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

## Appendix B

### Reading School District Letter of Approval



June 29, 2023

Mrs. Geina Beaver  
118 Whispering Pines Lane  
Birdsboro, PA 19508

Dear Mrs. Geina Beaver:

I am pleased to write a letter in support of your doctoral capstone project entitled, "Reimagining Targeted Classroom Management Supports for Teachers to Increase Teacher Retention Perceptions in the Reading School District: a Doctoral Capstone Project." Furthermore, I approve for the Reading School District's name and Central Middle School's name to be used in the research study, reports, and/or potential future publications. The proposed research has significant value for the Reading School District as it seeks to find solutions to the critical teacher retention problem of our secondary schools. Moreover, the research may help to inform our district practices on teacher support systems around classroom management.

I have reviewed the project proposal and understand the following related to participation:

- Teacher participation involves completion of pre-intervention surveys.
- Teacher participation involves completion of a classroom management support system intervention.
- Teacher participation involves completion of post-intervention interviews.
- Participation will be voluntary, and teachers may withdraw from the study at any time.
- Data collected will be kept confidential and secure via electronic files.
- Potential risks are minimal and include loss of time due to the completion of the research survey, intervention, and/or interview.

Please accept this letter as my formal consent and support of the district's participation in the proposed research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Murray".

Dr. Jennifer Murray, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Reading School District

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent

#### PennWest University

##### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

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**Title of Study: Reimagining Targeted Classroom Management Supports for Teachers to Increase Teacher Retention Perceptions in the Reading School District: a Doctoral Capstone Project**

##### KEY INFORMATION

You are being asked by Mrs. Geina Beaver, under the faculty advisement of Dr. Mary Wolf of Pennsylvania Western University: California, to participate in a research study. Participation in the study is voluntary, and you may stop at any time.

The purpose of the study is to investigate how different facets of a classroom management support system provided to teachers who have self-identified as considering leaving their current positions affects their perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position. Three strands of support will be used, which include a professional development series, peer classroom observations, and peer feedback of professional practice. The professional development sessions and peer feedback of professional practice will be conducted by designated, master teachers. The peer classroom observations will be conducted by the study participants inside the classrooms of the designated master teachers. The recommendations of this study will be used to create a model classroom management support plan to be used with future teachers who have similar retention-related concerns.

In this study, you will be asked to complete an initial survey of approximately 5 minutes in length. As a result of your survey responses, you may be asked to further participate in the study as described below:

- a) If you are selected as a designated master teacher and complete the study requirements, you will be provided with training on the specific elements necessary to complete all aspects of the research methodology. You will be provided with a ticket for a chance drawing for a \$100 Amazon Gift Card for time spent in planning meetings, conducting professional development, conducting peer classroom observations, providing peer feedback of professional practice, and communicating with the researcher.
- b) If you are selected as a research participant and complete the study requirements, you will be provided with a ticket for a chance drawing for a \$100 Amazon Gift Card for time spent in professional development sessions, conducting peer classroom observations, meeting with designated, master teachers to be provided with feedback of professional practice, and in an interview session with the researcher.

The timeline for this research study includes the following components:

- December 2023
  - Initial survey and informed consent to determine study participation
  - Criteria analysis to determine designated master teachers
  - Selected designated master teachers will receive training on each element of the research study
- January 2024
  - Designated master teachers will conduct classroom management professional development sessions with research study participants, to include two separate one-hour sessions after school
- February 2024
  - Research study participants will conduct a peer observation inside the classroom of a designated master teacher and record their reflections of effective practices noted
- March 2024

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

- Designated master teachers will conduct a peer observation of study participants and conduct a feedback session to communicate the effective practices noted
- April 2024
  - Researcher will conduct teacher interviews with study participants to gather qualitative feedback on any perceptual changes towards retention using structured interview questions
- July 2024
  - Study results via a research report will be made available to Central Middle School faculty and staff

The potential risks during the initial survey include a loss of approximately 5 minutes of time. If selected to participate in the study, potential risks include loss of time due to participation in the planning sessions, loss of time due to professional development series, loss of time due to peer classroom observations, loss of time due to peer feedback of professional practice reflection sessions, loss of time due to participant interview sessions, diminished collaborative relationship with peers, and disclosure of student information from peer observations in live classrooms. Remember, you may stop taking the survey or participating in the study at any time.

There are no direct benefits to the initial survey participants. If selected as a designated, master teacher or a study participant and all elements of the study have been completed, the monetary benefit is a chance to win a \$100 Amazon Gift Card. Additional benefits may include the knowledge of additional classroom management techniques, peer feedback of professional practice, and enhanced collaborative relationships with peers. The results of this study will help researchers better understand how various elements of classroom management support systems affect teacher perception of their own willingness to remain in their current position.

#### SECURITY OF DATA

The initial survey will be used to determine potential participation interest in the research study. Basic demographic and perception data will be collected. For those not selected as designated, master teachers or research study participants, individual responses to demographic and perception data collected will only be presented in the aggregate with no personally identifiable information disclosed. Individuals selected as designated, master teachers or research participants will not have names or personally identifiable information included within the research. Pseudonyms such as "Master Teacher 1" or "Participant 4" will be used within the research.

Remember, taking part in this study is voluntary. If, while taking the survey or participating in the study, you feel uncomfortable or no longer want to participate, you may stop at any time. To stop taking the survey, you may close your browser completely. If selected as a designated, master teacher or a study participant you feel uncomfortable or no longer want to participate, you may contact the researcher immediately at [BEA0078@pennwest.edu](mailto:BEA0078@pennwest.edu) to remove yourself from the study.

There are no consequences if you decide to stop participating in this study at any time.

No personally identifiable information will be reported in this study and information from this study will be confidential within local, state, and federal laws. The PennWest University Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the research records. The study results may be shared in aggregate form at a meeting or journal, but there is no identifiable information to be revealed. The records from this study will not be maintained after the study has been completed.

Your information collected in this research, such as demographic and perceptual responses, may be used or distributed for future research, however, all personally identifiable data will be removed.

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY**

If you have questions about the research or a research-related concern, you can contact Dr. Mary Wolf at [wolf@pennwest.edu](mailto:wolf@pennwest.edu). If you have a question about your rights as a research participant that you need to discuss with someone, you can contact the PennWest University Institutional Review Board at [InstReviewBoard@pennwest.edu](mailto:InstReviewBoard@pennwest.edu).

If you would like a copy of this informed consent, please print this screen, or contact Mrs. Geina Beaver at [BEA0078@pennwest.edu](mailto:BEA0078@pennwest.edu).

By clicking on the "I agree" box and continuing with the survey, you have acknowledged that you have read the informed consent and are at least 18 years old. Also, you acknowledge that you agree to participate in the study and have the right not to answer any or all the questions in the survey. Moreover, you agree that you will not collect, communicate, or disseminate any student information through any action before, during, or after this study. Finally, you understand your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may quit the study at any time without penalty.

## Appendix D

### Quantitative Survey

#### Central Middle School Teacher Participation Survey for Research

This survey will close at 3 PM on December 15, 2023.

\* Indicates required question

1. Email \*

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PennWest University

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Informed Consent - Page 2

- o Designated master teachers will conduct a peer observation of study participants and conduct a feedback session to communicate the effective practices noted
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  - o Researcher will conduct teacher interviews with study participants to gather qualitative feedback on any perceptual changes towards retention using structured interview questions
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  - o Study results via a research report will be made available to Central Middle School faculty and staff

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If you have questions about the research or a research-related concern, you can contact Dr. Mary Wolf at [mwolf@penntwest.edu](mailto:mwolf@penntwest.edu). If you have a question about your rights as a research participant that you need to discuss with someone, you can contact the PennWest University Institutional Review Board at [IntrReviewBoard@penntwest.edu](mailto:IntrReviewBoard@penntwest.edu).

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2. By clicking on the "I agree" box and continuing with the survey, you have acknowledged that you have read the informed consent and are at least 18 years old. Also, you acknowledge that you agree to participate in the study and have the right not to answer any or all the questions in the survey. Finally, you understand your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may quit the study at any time without penalty. \*

Mark only one oval.

- I agree    Skip to question 3  
 I DO NOT agree

Demographic Information

3. Which category best represents your gender? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Male  
 Female  
 Other



4. Which category best represents your current age? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- 21-25  
 26-30  
 31-35  
 36-40  
 41-45  
 46-50  
 51-55  
 55 or older

5. Which category best represents your ethnicity? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Asian or Pacific Islander  
 Black or African American, non-Hispanic  
 Hispanic  
 White or Caucasian, non-Hispanic  
 Other

6. Which of the following best represents your highest level of education? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- B.A. or B.S.  
 M.A. or M.S.  
 Ed.D. or Ph.D.

7. Including the current school year, which category best represents the number of years of teaching experience you have in public schools? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1-3  
 4-6  
 7-11  
 12-20  
 21-30+

8. Which category best represents which grade level you currently teach? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Grade 5  
 Grade 6  
 Grade 7  
 Grade 8  
 Multiple Grades

9. Which category best represents which content area your currently teach? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Math
- Science
- Math and Science
- ELA
- Social Studies
- ELA and Social Studies
- Physical Education
- Music
- Art
- STEAM
- Library
- Special Education
- English as a Second Language
- Student Service Supports
- Gifted Education

**Teacher Retention Information**

10. Within this school year, have you considered resigning from your current position? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes *Skip to question 11*
- No *Skip to question 12*

**Retention Rationale**

11. Which category or categories best describe your main rationale for considering resigning from your current position? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Salary and Benefits
- Commute
- Time for planning and collaboration
- Chronic student misconduct
- Inadequate professional development
- Career change out of education
- Promotion to administrative role
- Negative school culture
- Negative school perception in the community

**Designated Teacher Interest**

12. Please rank your perception of your own classroom management? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

---

Fail      Distinguished

13. Please rank your willingness to participate in an experimental classroom management support system which would require you to present classroom management professional development, host peer observations within your classroom, and provide peer feedback of professional practice. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5

---

Abs      Accept Without Hesitation

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**Appendix E**

## Qualitative Structured Interview Questions

## Classroom Management Support System Participant Interview Questions

1. What were your initial concerns related to your classroom management before participating in these experimental protocols?
2. What changes have you made to your professional practices based on:
  - a. The professional development sessions attended?
  - b. The peer observations you attended?
  - c. The feedback you were given on your professional practice?
3. Which, if any, of the above do you believe most impacted chronic student misconduct in your classroom? Why?
4. In what ways, if any, did peers leading this support system affect your engagement in the process? Why?
5. Has this support system reduced your intention to resign from your current position at Central Middle School? Why or why not?
6. What specifically could be improved in this classroom management support system to better support teachers with chronic student misconduct in the future?

**Appendix F**

Observation of Professional Practice Evidence Collection Form

*Observation of Professional Practice Evidence Collection Form*

<b>PBIS</b>	<b>RP</b>
<p><b>Look for 1:</b> Expectations defined in positive behavioral language?</p>	<p><b>Look for 1:</b> Affective statements used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive?</li> <li>• Restorative?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Look for 2:</b> Expectations communicated in student-friendly matrices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than five behavioral expectations?</li> <li>• Explicitly taught to students?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Look for 2:</b> Affective questioning used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened?</li> <li>• What were you thinking at the time?</li> <li>• What have you thought about since?</li> <li>• Who has been affected by what you have done?</li> <li>• In what way have they been affected?</li> <li>• What do you think you need to do to make things right?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Look for 3:</b> Explicit and ongoing communication of expected behaviors?</p>	
<p><b>Look for 4:</b> Classroom routines support expected behaviors?</p>	<p><b>Look for 3 (based on needs of the class):</b> Class circles used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive?</li> <li>• Reactive?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Look for 5:</b> Feedback of student behaviors communicated?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive?</li> <li>• Corrective?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Overall Reflection/Feedback:</b></p>