Investigating Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Administrative Support on

Educator Job Satisfaction and Retention

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Dedication

This doctoral project is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Mariah, and sons Ben and Will. Their belief in me as a person and professional inspired me to pause my career and return to graduate school to achieve this lifelong goal. Without their support, this doctoral program and project would not have been possible. It is my sincere hope that one day this effort will serve as an example to my sons that they can accomplish anything they are willing to work hard to achieve, and that it is never too late to finish what you start. I love you.

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

School districts are struggling to attract and retain teachers. The current shortage of teachers and difficulty in maintaining high quality school faculties to support student achievement are the result of several economic, societal, educational, and workplace related factors. While many of the factors driving teacher shortage and attrition from the career are outside of the influence or control of school administrators, the primary purpose of this research study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers on administrative support and how it impacts job satisfaction and retention. Using a mixed methods study with qualities of a convergent parallel design, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data from an online survey and interviews around research questions focused on the importance and impact of administrative support on educator job satisfaction and retention. Eighty-one educators participated by ranking research-based leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components for their impact on job satisfaction and retention, with 17 of the participants volunteering for an optional interview with more in-depth questions about administrative support. Data analysis of the results showed that teachers placed the highest value on administrative support that emphasizes strong communication, relationships, empowering and collaborative work environments, school discipline and safety, and manageable work-life balance.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Public schools today are facing unprecedented challenges in teacher hiring and retention. A myriad of current societal circumstances and factors are converging to create an environment where the demand for highly qualified staff is exceeding supply. School systems that in the past had dozens of quality applicants for open positions are now struggling at times to attract and retain minimally qualified candidates, and districts more traditionally impacted by ongoing teacher turnover and shortage are unable to fill classrooms through traditional means. While teacher shortage and turnover were concerns in some areas across the country prior to COVID-19, the conditions during the pandemic and period since have been the catalyst for a whole new magnitude and scope of teacher shortage concerns.

The literature on teacher shortage, explored in more detail in the next chapter, identifies several key factors contributing to the workforce issues facing schools today. Primarily, challenging work environments and declining school conditions for teachers are of great concern. These prohibitive factors include concerns such as stress, physical safety, mental health, the amount of work outside of the school day, burnout, and lower pay as compared to other career fields (Baker & Koedel, 2024; Burkhauser, 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The declining perception and treatment of educators driven by political rhetoric and the impact of modern societal issues on schools has also negatively affected how teachers feel education is valued, esteemed, and supported by their communities. The sum of these concerns has started to fuel a newer problem facing education in the staggering decline of new teacher certification candidates available to replace those

leaving the career or retiring. With existing numbers of teachers on the decline and a drastic decrease in the number of new teachers coming from university programs to replace them, the problem of attracting and retaining high quality teachers in schools does not seem to have an end in sight.

Background

Over the last twenty years as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal, the researcher witnessed and experienced many of the circumstances that have led schools to the current challenges with teacher recruitment and retention. Firsthand, the researcher lived through COVID-19's impact on schools and students, from closures, virtual and hybrid learning, and students learning to return to school in mass through reopening. Collaborating with teachers, students, and families through modern school discipline issues, the researcher felt the frustration and growing sense of defeat in colleagues with challenging student behaviors, a lack of parental support, declining mental health, and the impact of social media and smartphones in the classroom. By 2023, the researcher's middle school had approximately 50% of teachers either change positions, leave the district, or leave education completely from when the researcher started there in 2019. In a four-year span, half of the faces in the school had changed places, which was an unprecedented amount of turnover and fluidity for the suburban, rural middle school.

While the researcher's school was experiencing teacher turnover at a new, higher level than in previous years, applicant pools for replacement teachers were small and at times non-existent as other districts were encountering similar difficulties as well. Some staffing needs were fueled by the turnover in neighboring school districts that offered higher salaries or were closer to the homes of commuting teachers. Hiring processes

intended to identify the best of quality applicants were reposted as they failed to produce quality or at times any qualified candidates. Meanwhile, school culture and working conditions were on the decline as turnover and inexperience created more responsibility for teachers that remained due to inconsistencies with the implementation of expectations, procedures, and curriculum. It was this experience with teacher turnover, shortage, and their consequences that inspired the researcher to learn more about the conditions that promote teacher attrition and the types of administrative support that could help reverse the trend.

Capstone Focus

As today's teachers navigate modern working conditions and challenges, the level of support they receive from school leaders and administrative teams has become paramount. While many issues and challenges are outside of the control of school administrators, the types and levels of support provided to teachers can greatly impact not only the job performance and satisfaction of teachers, but their tenure and willingness to stay. In short, teachers that feel supported tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and career decisions. School administrators and teams that are informed on the types of leadership characteristics and practices that best support teachers may have an advantage when it comes to building a culture that attracts and retains teachers.

In addition to the types of administrative characteristics and support that contribute to more consistent levels of staffing, how we evaluate school administrators is something that calls for further examination. Over the years, evaluation systems for administrators have shifted to include more results-based measures and a focus on instructional leadership and student achievement. School principals today are expected to

lead learning as much if not more than effectively managing the multi-faceted needs of their buildings. However, building management, organization, and leadership are still important aspects to teacher support and job satisfaction. The perception of the impact and importance of how we evaluate school leaders, and which components of that evaluation carry the most weight with teacher job satisfaction and career decisions could provide critical insight. In addition, the career stages and job assignments of teachers could also have a role in that perception with regards to the unique needs of their grade level, area, or years of experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be used as part of this study to ascertain the perceptions of teachers with regards to school administrative leadership characteristics, administrative evaluations, teacher career stages, and teacher assignments as they apply to job satisfaction and willingness to remain in their roles in schools:

1. What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?

2. What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?

3. What is the relationship between teacher career stage and teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?

Expected Outcomes

Using a mixed method approach to data collection, this study will use both quantitative survey data and qualitative survey and interview data to measure the impact of leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components on educator job satisfaction and retention. In addition, response data from various career stages and teaching assignments will be disaggregated for comparison of possible trends. The intent of the study, data analysis, and triangulation of data will be to identify leadership characteristics, evaluation components, and areas of potential administrative support that can best support teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Fiscal Implications

The financial cost of the study is associated with licenses or services for the analysis of survey and interview data. The online survey tool, Google Forms, was free to use and Microsoft Teams under the license of the university was the online application used to conduct live teacher interviews. No compensation was offered to respondents for participation in the study. The fiscal impact of any plans or initiative to improve teacher job satisfaction or retention would be determined by the individual school or district and their needs.

Summary

The overall goal of this study is to better understand the impact of administrative support on teachers through an exploration of their ratings and insights on leadership, school administrator evaluation components, and personal feelings on how they are best supported by school leaders. Through a stronger understanding of how leadership and

administrative support impacts educator job satisfaction and retention, we can begin to reverse current, downward trends in teacher recruitment and retention. In the next chapter, the stage will be set through a review of literature on the topic of teacher shortage. After defining teacher shortage and examining the recent history of the issue, the causes and consequences of teacher shortage are discussed. In addition, research on leadership, the concept of administrative support in schools, and school administrative standards and evaluations are explored.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Simply put, public schools are struggling to find and retain quality teachers. The teacher shortage issue facing the country began prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but since has grown into a shared crisis being faced on some level by most school districts in the United States. Schools and districts that in the past had a surplus of quality applicants and candidates for most positions now find themselves struggling to maintain their faculties from year to year. Without highly qualified and consistent teaching forces, schools are finding it increasingly difficult to meet the growing and multi-faceted needs of their students and communities. This literature review will examine the past and present of teacher shortage concerns, the consequences of ongoing teacher turnover, as well as the perfect storm of societal, economic, and administrative factors that are making the recruitment and retention of teachers difficult. This review will also take a closer look at leadership and the concept of administrative support for teachers, which has been identified as a major contributing factor to the job satisfaction and longevity of educators in the career. Finally, current school principal standards, development, and evaluation will be examined to highlight how we measure school leaders.

Teacher Shortage - History and Overview

Before exploring the background or current state of teacher shortage, it is vital to provide definition to the concept. Sutcher et al. (2019) defined teacher shortage as a phenomenon driven by multiple factors including diminished development of new teachers, turnover, fluid teacher to student ratios, and the ability of specific areas to

attract teachers. Nguyen et al. (2024) used more established terms to define teacher shortage, supporting the U.S Department of Education's approach to measuring any shortage through data on unfilled positions and positions that may be held by teachers with emergency or provisional certifications. There is also debate in the literature about how shortages are modeled and reported nationally versus in varying regions or locations. Schmitt and deCourcy (2022) discussed how the current shortage is not necessarily the result of a national shortfall of teachers but instead is more the product of areas with certain working conditions and wages having difficulty filling positions. The literature around teacher shortage agrees that like scarcity in any category, it boils down to supply and demand. "Teacher shortages emerge in different fields and locations when there is an imbalance between the number of teachers demanded and the number of qualified teachers willing to offer their services" (Sutcher et al., 2019, p. 2).

While most of the recent reporting and concern about teacher shortage stems from a post-COVID perspective, the reality is that concern about teacher shortage in the United States is not new. Teacher shortage has been a developing concern for decades only to be amplified by the impact of the pandemic. The National Commission for Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 1996) sounded the alarm about growing student populations nationally and the need for more teachers. The report estimated that by 1998, schools in the United States would have enrollments approaching fifty-two million students, which would be more students enrolled in schools than ever before in history including the baby boom. Because of this, the NCTAF's central strategy to improving schools in their recommendations was a focus on the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers. A more recent, but still pre-COVID report on the concern over teacher supply and

shortage from the Learning Policy Institute (Sutcher et al., 2016) outlined compelling evidence of a national teacher shortage due to a combination of factors, including staffing and budget cuts from the Great Recession of 2008 and higher levels of teacher attrition both because of growing numbers of teachers reaching retirement age and changing careers before retirement. The 2016 report also asserted that the shortages "are not felt uniformly across all communities and classrooms" because of different depths to the shortages either at the state level, by subject area, or in high-poverty and high-minority settings (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 5). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) discussed that the field of education suffers from high turnover, both attrition and migration within the profession, when compared to other occupations due to the size of the workforce coupled with a wide range of working conditions. Darling-Hammond et al. (2018) identified three major key findings as they relate to teacher shortage. First, that teacher shortage while widespread is more severe in certain demographics and subject areas such as math, science, and special education. In addition, in response to the supply of qualified teachers being inadequate to meet demand, schools increased the hiring of teachers with sub-standard or alternate credentials. Finally, the shortage of qualified teachers is largely the result of substantial declines in the production of new teachers. This third and final key point is supported by Berry and Shields (2017) who note that between 2009 and 2014, enrollments in teacher preparation programs dropped 35% nationally.

The most recent concerns and literature about teacher shortage and attrition are dominated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on staffing levels. Koch (2024) concluded that the years after the pandemic had a significant impact on education and the availability of teachers, highlighting aspects of the American Rescue Plan's Elementary

and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) as an attempt to assist schools after COVID-19 to help find, train, and retain educators. In 2023, the U.S. Department of Education through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2023) reported several concerning statistics with regards to teacher shortage following the pandemic. It was reported by the NCES that 86% of U.S. public K-12 schools reported challenges with hiring teachers and that 45% of schools reported considering themselves understaffed. In addition, 70% of schools reported too few candidates for open positions, with 66% of schools reporting a lack of qualified applicants.

While there is substantial depth to the literature on the growing demand and dwindling supply for qualified teachers nationally, there are counter-perspectives to consider. While acknowledging teacher demand, Ngyuen et al. (2024) also proposes that some modeling and characterization of the sum of local or state data to the national level is flawed, and instead what some may call a national shortage of teachers could be more of an imbalance of qualified teachers in easier to staff areas leaving difficult to staff areas affected most. Meanwhile, Behrstock-Sherratt (2016) notes that how the issue of teacher shortage is framed may depend on which side policymaking you reside, writing that while from one point of view the problem may be considered severe or crisis-level, another perspective may consider the concern overblown, also discussing a lack of consistent policy, approaches, data, and reporting on a national level.

Pennsylvania has not been immune to the growing rates of teacher shortage and attrition impacting the country. According to Fuller (2023), Pennsylvania experienced its highest teacher attrition rate on record in 2023 in the form of over 9,500 certificated teachers leaving the profession as compared to approximately 5,100 new teacher

certifications issued statewide. The Pennsylvania Department of Education in statistics on teacher certifications has shown sharp decreases in new credentials overall, but specifically in areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2024b). Shortage and attrition are particularly impacting schools in urban communities and are strongly represented in a lack of teachers of color. Norris et al. (2024) points to a significant lag not just in teachers, but in teachers from minority groups, with 53% of Pennsylvania schools employing no teachers of color, meaning 43% of students are being educated in schools without minority faculty representation. The situation with finding educators in Pennsylvania has reached the point where the state government has begun budgeting and funding for significant stipends for student teachers entering the workforce and teaching a minimum number of years in a specific location (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2024a).

Teacher Shortage - Causes

With definitions, background, and the current state of teacher shortage both nationally and locally established, unpacking the causes of the lack of educators being encountered by schools is a logical next step. Garcia and Weiss (2019) emphasized that working conditions and challenging work environments, particularly in the area of school climate, are having a significant impact on the teacher shortage problem. These work environment challenges and conditions include unprepared students, lack of parent support and involvement, stress, disappointment with the profession, and of most concern threats to teacher emotional and physical safety. When surveyed, one in five teachers reported being threatened while one in eight reported some level of physical attack from students (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Other working conditions of concern for teachers

include class sizes, teacher salary, school resources, use of teacher time, and student

behavior (Burkhauser, 2017). Billingsley (2004) discussed teacher working conditions

from the perspective of special educators, indicating that factors such as reasonable role

expectations, workload, collaboration time, and support from colleagues and

administrators all play a key role in effective teaching. According to Darling-Hammond

(2003), perceptions of administrative support and teacher input into decisions are strongly

associated with attrition and reasons for leaving the profession. Specifically, as it relates

to teaching since the COVID-19 pandemic, Wilson et al. (2024) highlighted increases in

anxiety and stress for teachers as a change to the school-work environment post-

pandemic. Baker and Koedel (2024) identified that increases in classroom disruptions,

lower levels of student responsibility, and quality of student interactions are contributing

to a decline in teacher working conditions. "Worsening contemporary teacher working

conditions may exacerbate problems in the profession going forward" (Baker & Koedel,

2024, p. 15).

Contributing to the problems with working conditions, public perception, and

trust in public schooling by society is on the decline. Kraft and Lyon (2022) expressed

serious concern about education, proposing that the well-being of education is

approaching if not already at historic lows, citing a combination of societal polarization,

partisan political narratives, and persistent reform efforts. Baker and Koedel (2024)

suggested that professional prestige among teachers nationally has been declining for

over a decade. This recent trend of polarizing, political narratives contributing to the

decline of the public perception of schools was supported by Coupet and Scott (2024)

who wrote about how controversial issues such as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and

Critical Race Theory in schools were becoming divisive to the home and school relationship through the debate over parents' rights. Knight-Abowitz and Stitzlein (2022) also shined a light on rhetoric and the use of public schools as a political issue during elections, highlighting the use of educational rhetoric during a Wisconsin gubernatorial race in 2018. With as heated and emotional as political races both locally and nationally have become, using schools as a political tool in campaigns puts educators at risk for being political targets. COVID-19 and the conditions around education with school closures, masking, and reopening did not help with these trends. "Faced with the challenge of homeschooling their children, the initial weeks of the pandemic saw an outpouring of appreciation from parents about the challenging work teachers do. This newfound respect quickly waned as teachers were cast as the culprits of prolonged school closures" (Kraft & Lynn, 2022, p. 3). According to Fuller (2023), 77% of teachers surveyed in 2011 reported feeling respected by community members, with that falling to just 46% by 2022. "Declining respect and prestige create unfavorable working conditions that increase the odds that a teacher will quit the profession" (Fuller, 2023, p. 4).

The decrease in the prestige and public esteem for educators is unfortunate, as often it was the appreciation and societal value of teachers that helped offset the lack of compensation and pay as compared to other careers. Darling-Hammond et al. (2018) identified several financial factors in education contributing to teacher shortage and turnover, including lower salaries, college debt, housing costs. Weiss and Garcia (2020) identify the comparatively low pay of teachers as a reason why teachers are leaving or choosing not to enter the profession, noting that in 2018 that teachers' wages were 21.4% lower than their non-teaching peers accounting for factors such as educational levels and

experience. In addition, their report noted that of the 2015-2016 school year, 59% of teachers reported taking on additional paid work or another job. Nguyen et al. (2023) discuss that despite teacher salaries and benefits representing the largest expenditure for school districts, low salaries in comparison to other careers are often a key factor in turnover decisions, especially as it applies to differences in salary levels between neighboring school districts that encourage teacher mobility. Taie and Lewis (2023) reported that a key reason for teachers either changing jobs within education or leaving the field to pursue another career was a need for a higher salary as compared to their current position. In a study of salary, ranking, and teacher turnover in Texas, Garcia et al. (2009) linked competitive compensation and benefits to turnover, identifying decreased turnover rates in school districts where the average teacher salary was higher. Podolski and Kini (2016) summarized the financial challenges for teachers, noting that the salary gap between educators and other careers grows from 20% as beginning teachers to 30% by mid-career as compared to other fields with college degrees.

Many of the above working conditions and factors impacting teachers today in schools are leading to increased rates of teacher burnout. Archer (2024) applied clinical definitions of burnout to educators, connecting concepts such as exhaustion, stress, and anxiety to the experiences of teachers, especially those during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Also included was the characterization of teacher burnout as emotional fatigue as the result of high demand without enough resources, which describes working in schools throughout the pandemic, online, and hybrid learning well. Kraft and Lyon (2022) also pointed to growing dissatisfaction and burnout among teachers because of the pandemic but also suggested shifts in the position of education in the public eye and

issues such as racism and sexuality in schools as contributing factors to the stress and anxiety leading to burnout. Schmitt and deCourcy (2022) reported that the teaching profession tops survey results of professionals in reporting stress throughout the workday, as well as experiencing higher rates of burnout among working adults. The National Education Association (NEA, 2022) reported in a survey of its membership that 67% of members cited teacher burnout as a serious issue. One additional stressor and burnout concern also suggested by the NEA involved the increased workload for remaining teachers when job openings go unfilled. One of the largest contributing factors leading to teacher burnout is dealing with student behavior. This is especially true for teachers that specialize in or work with students in special education, or with students with emotional or behavior disorders. Wilson et al. (2024) suggested that teachers experience psychological distress when classroom conditions impair connections with students and the ability to deliver quality instruction, with classroom management being one of the most significant competing factors. Brunsting et al. (2024) focused on the burnout of teachers working with students with special needs and behavior disorders, and connected emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a lack of personal accomplishment with the intent to leave the profession.

The substantial list of prohibitive factors being experienced by the field of education as it relates to the workforce are contributing to one of two major problems: the ability to retain current teachers by preventing attrition and a troubling decline in the number of new teachers entering the career. Researchers have defined and categorized teacher workforce attrition in multiple ways. Billingsley (2004) provided a multi-category concept to describe the several types of teacher movement which included

retention, transfers, and exits. These categories included factors such as movement

between schools, districts, roles, or from the career to a new job. Because education and

teaching make up such a sizable percentage of the workforce in society, describing all

worker-movement as turnover lacks specificity. Like Billingsley's concept, Ingersoll and

Smith (2003) split teacher turnover into categories. First, migration or movement

between roles or schools, but of more concern, attrition or those leaving education

altogether. A more in-depth model around teacher retention and attrition would be Vaidya

and Hanna's (2023) application of the Four-Capital Theory which involved defining the

factors influencing career decisions into the four capitals of human, social, structural, and

positive psychological. However, attrition and teachers leaving education like teacher

shortage overall, is not a new problem. Darling-Hammond (2003) reviewed data as far

back as the early 1990's showing that the annual number of teachers leaving teaching has

exceeded those entering the profession by an increasing amount, while also noting that

attrition among teachers from the career is its steepest in the first few years, with about

one-third of new teachers leaving the profession in the first five years. "A growing body

of evidence indicates that teachers who lack adequate initial preparation are more likely

to leave the profession" (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 7). It would also be incorrect to

assume that most educators leaving the field are just retiring. Among the teachers

surveyed that left teaching voluntarily in 2021-2022, 16% indicated that they left

teaching for retirement (Taie & Lewis, 2023). Sutcher et al. (2019) summarized similar

findings, in that while 13% of surveyed teachers that left the profession indicated

retirement was the most important factor, 55% reported issues such as teaching

conditions, pressures related to test preparation, class size, salary, lack of administrative

support, or policy issues as most important reasons for leaving.

Just as critical of a factor to the growing teacher shortage issue is a reduction in

new teacher candidates and enrollments in teacher preparatory programs in universities.

In examining teacher supply and demand in the United States and sounding the alarm on

the coming crisis in teacher supply before the pandemic, Sutcher et al. (2016) identified a

major decline in teacher preparation enrollments as a key factor. In an examination of

California teacher preparation enrollments from 2002-2016, Darling-Hammond et al.

(2018) noted that the state experienced an almost 75% drop over the 14 year period,

though noting that some of these reductions were not just driven by lack of interest but in

some cases the increase of requirements and restrictions on admittance, which may have

also occurred in other states. Schmitt and deCourcy (2022) highlighted both falling

interest in education as a field of study and a reduction of conferred education degrees as

major factors contributing to teacher shortage, noting that students in education have

dropped by half since the 1970's, but that the majority of the decline has occurred since

the early 2000's. The reasons for such a steep decline in educational degree and

certification programs have a lot in common with the working conditions and concerns of

existing teachers. Factors contributing to dissuading college students from entering the

profession include low pay, safety, challenging school environments, and lack of respect

for teachers (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The national trend is also reflected in the

certification data reporting in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Education

(2024b) reported a decline in total new certifications from just over 21,000 in 2011 to

6,150 in 2022.

Teacher Shortage - Consequences

Teacher shortage, educator attrition, the decline in new teacher candidates, and more stressful working conditions in the educational environment are not without consequences, especially for students. Duncan (2022) outlined several potential consequences of teacher shortages, beginning with a lack of consistent academic, social, and mental health support for students in schools. Also highlighted by Duncan (2022) were reduced access to rigorous instruction, tutoring and re-teaching, and a decline in positive adult to student relationships. Blizard (2021) concluded that high teacher turnover hurts student achievement, leading to reduced long-term learning outcomes and upward mobility for students. Sorensen and Ladd (2020) affirmed this conclusion, providing attention to the hidden costs of teacher turnover, more specifically the impact on the quality of instruction in the classroom received by students based on rates of teacher turnover and qualifications. Similarly, it was concluded that the periods of teacher turnover had an adverse effect on achievement outcomes.

Just as there is strong agreement in the literature that higher rates of teacher turnover led to diminished learning outcomes and student achievement, there is similar agreement that teacher turnover has a disproportionate impact on certain demographics and student populations. Nguyen et al. (2023) described the disproportionate impact of teacher turnover on schools that serve economically disadvantaged students and minority populations as deleterious. Blizard (2021) also wrote about the impact of turnover being greater on schools and students that serve lower income students, especially from the perspective of limiting the future options and mobility of disadvantaged students. Lower income, higher poverty, and minority schools experience higher turnover for a variety of

reasons. Comparatively lower salaries, fewer resources, higher student need, reduced parental support, stress, and more difficult working conditions lead to more teachers looking to leave positions in schools in these areas (Darling-Hammond, 2003). "Relative to their peers in low-poverty schools, larger shares of teachers in high-poverty schools report barriers to teaching, threats to physical safety and attacks, a lack of supportive relationships, and little autonomy in the classroom" (Garcia & Weiss, 2020, p. 4).

While the impact to the well-being and learning of students is usually at the forefront of the teacher turnover conversation, there are also financial consequences for higher rates of attrition. Darling-Hammond (2003) described an example of the heavy financial cost of high rates of teacher turnover in the state of Texas, noting that an overall annual turnover rate of 15% and 40% turnover rate in the first three years of teaching cost the state a conservative estimate of $329 million annually. In addition to the costs for states and school districts to recruit, onboard, and train new teachers from year to year, there has been a significant increase in investment regarding financial incentives to motivate educator retention and to attract new teachers into the career field. To combat high rates of attrition and a reduction of new teacher candidates, many states have invested in incentives such as loan forgiveness, service scholarships, and stipends for student teachers (Feng & Sass 2015; Podolsky & Kini 2016; Steele et al., 2010). With an understanding of the propensity of new teachers to have a higher rate of attrition and turnover, schools have also begun to invest more in the professional development and support of new teachers with hopes of retaining them in higher percentages. Barnes (2024) explored the use of increased mentoring to promote the retention of early career teachers in urban Maryland, which involved more emphasis on support, feedback,

supervision, and leadership. Supporting and mentoring new educators has become

especially important in circumstances where shortage and attrition have created the need

to provide alternative pathways to teacher certification to adequately staff schools.

Teacher candidates coming from other career fields or backgrounds have limited

classroom experience and training in pedagogy, leading to unique needs for training and

more intensive support (Lazenby-Rankin & Brinkman, 2024). The additional investment

in alternative certification and additional support can be worth the cost in hard to staff

areas and schools. Laski (2024) examined a performance-based licensure program in

Mississippi which allowed experienced school staff and paraprofessionals holding

bachelor's degrees to assume full-time teaching roles on a provisional basis, finding that

provisional teachers were generally as effective as their traditionally certificated peers.

Leadership and Administrative Support for Teachers

The examination of teacher shortage, educator attrition, and the decline in school

working conditions described above indicate a strong need for leadership. Teacher

advocates and organizations identified a lack of administrative support and administrative

leadership styles as potential reasons as to why teachers are choosing to leave the

profession (NEA, 2022). There will always be structural components and factors outside

the control of school leaders, such as teacher salary, demographics, and contractual

obligations that impact an administrator's ability to support teachers (Martinez &

McAbee, 2020). However, if the elements and behaviors of leadership within the

influence and control of school administrators can be tailored to better support the

retention of teachers, then it is worth exploring and should be heavily considered in

leadership decisions. Northouse (2022) defines leadership as a process in which an

individual influences a group to achieve a common goal. His book also explored the differences between leadership and management, which are often terms used interchangeably, but are quite different concepts. Northouse aligns management with organizing, planning, establishing rules, and creating procedures while associating leadership more with the concepts of vision, change, inspiration, and empowerment. Also summarized by Northouse are the evolution of the research on leadership and conclusions around how leadership has been defined over time. Examples of this include the theories, strengths, and criticisms of the most supported and popular theories around leadership, including theories based on leader traits, skills, and behaviors. The early leadership theory research findings highlighted traits such as intelligence, responsibility, initiative, and persistence as being positively associated with leadership (Northouse, 2022). This book also summarized the early skills approach to leadership framework, which uses the three categories of technical, human, and conceptual to organize skills positively associated with leadership. A more recent and well-received leadership philosophy recognized by Northouse (2022) is that of authentic leadership, which organizes leadership in the five dimensions of purpose, values, relationships, self-discipline, and heart.

While overarching research on leadership provides valuable context and is applicable to all types of groups, organizations and professions, more specific work connecting leadership theory to worker support and the field of education exists to better define the concept of administrative support. House (1981) brought more definition to the concept of leadership and support for workers, categorizing the four areas of support behaviors for workers as emotional, appraisal, instrumental, and informational. Littrell et

al. (1994) expanded upon House's social support categories in education by providing

more definition to the four areas with specific school contexts for administrators.

Emotional support of educators included providing esteem, showing appreciation,

extending trust, and valuing input. Appraisal support encompassed providing ongoing and

constructive feedback and clear guidelines for work standards. Supporting professional

growth and development through instructional leadership fall into the category of

informational support, with instrumental support comprised of leadership that provides

necessary resources for teachers to be effective such as materials, space, and time. Flores

and Shuls (2024) described five key factors present in school systems with high levels of

teacher retention. These five factors were identified as a positive school culture,

supportive administration, strong professional development, mentorship programs, and

classroom autonomy.

Characterizations of leadership in the school setting are important. The literature

supports that leadership and administrative support have a positive impact on teacher

perceptions of working conditions and decisions to remain in their job, even though early

conceptualizations of the role of the principal and school administrators leaned to more

managerial tasks and less with more current conceptions of leadership (Burkhauser,

2017). Tickle et al. (2011) summarized several key findings with regards to

administrative support on public school teachers. These key findings included that

administrative support was a significant predictor of teachers' intent to stay in teaching,

and the principal is a mediating factor for negative teaching experiences such as student

behaviors and other stressful working conditions. Burkhauser (2017) also suggested that

the perceptions of educators on their own working conditions has a strong influence on

their retention decisions and that the principal may be in the best position to have a positive influence on conditions within the school, recommending that principals receive development in communication and leadership skills through training. This was supported by Sutcher et al. (2018) who discussed that teachers with unsupportive administrators are more than twice as likely to leave their position as teachers that feel supported. Tran et al. (2023) surveyed teachers on thirteen distinct types of administrative support which included respect, discipline enforcement, open-door policy, communication, resources, collegial relationships, professional appreciation, trust, agency over change, coaching, peer mentoring, personal relationships, and community leadership. Of the administrative support behaviors posed to teachers in the study, respect was identified as the most important by teachers by a wide margin regardless of the retention status of the respondent. Through a systematic review, Shell et al. (2023) was also able to generate a list of characteristics associated with principal support of teachers that shared similar support behaviors as the Tran study, but also included items such as fair performance evaluation, resource allocation, principal growth, decision making, and self-efficacy, with the characteristics of support, encouragement, and communication being seen as the strongest predictor of retention. Garica and Weiss (2019) succinctly generalized the relationship between teacher retention and administrative support by noting the relationship climate of a school shapes the work environment. "This climate affects how well the school provides a learning community in which administrative supports and leadership are strong, there is time for peer collaboration, and employees share a strong sense of purpose" (Garcia & Weiss, 2019, p. 8).

The concept of job satisfaction appears in much of the literature on the topic of teacher shortage and attrition, specifically as it applies to the impact on a decision to stay or leave the teaching profession. Tickle et al. (2011) identified teacher job satisfaction as the most significant predictor of a teacher's retention or attrition. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) specifically examined the concept of teacher autonomy as it applies to job satisfaction, finding a strong relationship between teacher empowerment and perceived professionalism, which led to higher job satisfaction through the perception of teaching as a true profession. In addition to promoting increased teacher job satisfaction, higher levels of support for teachers also lead to stronger levels of school commitment from teachers (Littrell, 1994). When interviewed about the joys and challenges of their work, teachers' responses have led to the emergence of themes such as making a difference and teaching students as a calling (McGee et al., 2023). Novice teachers have also reported a sense of increased job satisfaction when provided the opportunity to work as a team with veteran teachers and administrators who recognize their contributions (Cells et al., 2023). With the high attrition rates of teachers in their first several years, all avenues to increase support and job satisfaction for new teachers should be considered.

From the opposite perspective, there are working conditions that promote teacher job dissatisfaction. Cawte (2020) reported that job dissatisfaction was associated with workload, lack of understanding regarding increases in workload, and a lack of administrative support. Garcia and Weiss (2019) focused on school climates stating that dissatisfaction and low motivation from teachers was the result of barriers to teaching such as threats to safety and a lack of influence over decisions that apply to school policy and what they teach in the classroom. Darling-Hammond et al. (2018) reported survey

results in California that identified general job satisfaction among teachers but found lower levels of satisfaction reported by teachers working in more challenging environments who were concerned with working conditions such as administrative support and collegial work environments.

The leadership, support, and management of teachers in a broad range of career stages and teaching assignments is also an important aspect of administrative support in education. The rate that new and novice teachers leave teaching is of great concern and one of the driving factors behind teacher shortage. Newer teachers can benefit from additional planning time, time for collaboration and mentoring, and more targeted support with student behaviors and instructional strategies (Cells et al., 2023). Flores and Shuls (2024) also identified well-developed mentoring programs, with support from colleagues and administration, as an impactful factor for teacher retention for those new to the classroom. "Life for beginning teachers has traditionally been described as a sink-or-swim proposition" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 33). While early career teachers receive most of the attention from the literature on teacher attrition, the needs and well-being of educators in all career stages are important and warrant consideration. Cawte (2020) profiled mid-career teachers and identified how their needs and job satisfaction may differ from others. Among the conclusions from this examination of mid-career teachers included that they have experienced more critical events during their career that could influence perspectives, increased pay and security concerns, the need for increased acknowledgement and recognition for work, and that they are more likely to have changed roles or schools in their career. Most importantly, mid-career teachers have a heightened need for involvement or career progression. This concept for later career stage

teachers was supported by Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990), who identified that middle and late career teachers required less support for student behavior and task management, but task autonomy and discretion had a much higher impact on job satisfaction. You and Conley (2015) examined several workplace factors regarding teacher career stage and intention to leave the career. Their conclusions noted that the further along a teacher was in their career stage, the more their job satisfaction influenced their decision on remaining in teaching. Another conclusion was that veteran teachers tend to become more preoccupied with students later in their career. The presence of administrative support is also a critical factor for later career teachers. "Mid-career teachers who do not receive strong, positive principal supervision may question the importance of working hard in their job, may rethink their choice to enter the teaching profession, and become uncertain about whether or not to remain" (You & Conley, 2015, p. 577).

Teaching assignments can also have a considerable influence on teacher job satisfaction and a sense of workplace support. This issue is connected to the well-established premise that hard to staff schools in lower socio-economic demographics or with high percentages of minority students provide a more challenging work environment. Donaldson and Johnson (2010) found overall that teachers with more challenging teaching assignments were at greater risk for attrition and leaving their schools. They also reported that teachers assigned to teach multiple grades or that had multiple assignments within their position factored it into their decisions about attrition, especially newer teachers. Archer (2024) examined teacher burnout as the result of COVID-19 with results that indicated teaching assignment had an impact on stress and burnout levels. Middle level teachers indicated the highest levels of burnout while

elementary school teachers indicated the lowest. Billingsley (2004) noted that while special education teachers begin their careers with a great deal of optimism and the desire to make a difference, many do not survive the journey to becoming an experienced special educator due to role overload, work conditions, and a lack of support.

Another topic strongly associated with teacher job satisfaction is the concept of work-life balance. The ability of teachers to balance their workload, responsibilities, stress, and home lives have been noted to have an impact on job satisfaction and decisions made regarding their own career retention. Taie and Lewis (2023) reported that most teachers who left teaching indicated their ability to balance work and life commitments were improved in their new positions or careers. McBrayer et al. (2022) studied work-life balance and teacher perceptions of professional learning needs during the period following the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that under normal circumstances, teaching is already a strenuous career experiencing increased attrition. Work-life balance was a challenge for teachers in the study due to a lack of training and resources, shifting between the demands of in-person and virtual learning, and increased levels of burnout.

To create a stronger sense of community and a positive school climate, some schools have implemented positive, school-wide programs. Tench et al. (2021) examined the impact of The Leader In Me program from Franklin Covey on the work-life and relationships between teachers and administrators. One of the core habits of the program underscores wellness and self-care, as well as developing oneself emotionally, physically, and mentally. The study reported stronger connections between faculty, students, and administration because of the emphasis on school family. This work-life balance for new educators is of particular concern to teachers with alternative routes to certification.

Lazenby-Rankin and Brinkman (2024) reported that teachers new to the career from alternate certification pathways often reported feeling overwhelmed and that a lack of balance was common in their responses. This is notable considering the increasing trend of teachers with alternative pathways to teacher licensure being hired to combat teacher turnover in traditionally hard to staff schools and areas.

School Principal Roles, Standards, and Evaluation

Building level school administrators and the leadership they provide play a key role in the job satisfaction and career decisions of teachers. Superville (2021) provided a succinct review of the history and background of school principals, outlining their origins from one room schoolhouses in the 1800's through the modern expectations of dynamic, instructional leaders impacted by recent policies such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. Highlighted within the development of the role of the modern school principal was the tension of time management, the ever-difficult task of juggling the more operational and managerial parts of the role with the increasing demands of the best practices of instructional leadership. In a social history of the principalship, Rousmaniere (2007) characterized the role of the principal within schools in several insightful ways over the years, from foremen in factories and mid-level managers in offices, to the hinge between the operations of the school and the district with the influence over policy decisions. One insight noted that principals often use dual personalities, providing loyalty and action to district leadership while also collaborating with their local teachers on day-to-day tasks. Also noted was that the principal role is not typically remembered by most with the same esteem as teachers, as many usually recall inspiring former teachers over

time, but not as often as a principal who may be involved in more organizational or

disciplinary circumstances than in students' experiences.

Over the last thirty years, standards that are increasingly focused on leadership

over management have been developed for school principals and their developmental

programs. Organizations such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium in

1996 and the Educational Leadership Constituencies Council in 2002 developed early

sets of such standards on which subsequent and current standards and administrator

evaluations are based on. In a watershed and often cited report on the importance of the

shift of school leadership to learning, Leithwood et al. (2004) along with researchers

from the Universities of Minnesota and Toronto concluded that school leadership ranked

only behind classroom instruction among factors in schools that impact on learning. The

importance of school leaders setting a direction, developing people, creating systems, and

supporting conditions for learning were among the many concepts from the report that

have trickled down to more recent principal and leadership standards. The National

Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2008) approved the Interstate

School Leaders Licensure Consortium's (ISLLC) Educational Leadership Policy

Standards for school leadership in Figure 1, which served as a basis and starting point for

most national and state level principal professional development efforts and evaluations.

Tickle et al. (2011) noted that the ISLLC Standards were used in his and other studies

around school leadership and administrative support.

Figure 1

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008

Improving Leadership Standards
1. Setting a widely shared vision for learning.
2. Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3. Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. Collaborating with the faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts.

These standards for school leadership were updated again in 2015 but no longer under the title of ISLLC. The NPBEA rebranded the standards into the Professional Standards for School Leaders in Figure 2 noting that the rapidly changing global economy, more current research, and increased public school accountability measures required more focused and specific standards (NPBEA, 2015).

Figure 2

Professional Standards for School Leaders: NPBEA 2015

Leadership Standard Domains
1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values
2. Ethics and Professional Norms
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
5. Community of Care and Support for Students
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
9. Operations and Management
10. School Improvement

The transition over the years in education of principals both in standards and practice from managers to instructional leaders has not been without some concerns and challenges. Kafka (2009) suggested that the principalship has changed significantly over time, and its current form is a new phenomenon when considered with the history of the position. While growing responsibility and supervisory authority helped increase the prestige associated with the principalship, these changes have also increased accountability for learning and to the community. In addition, more recent emphasis on test scores and results have left principals to make hard choices between improvement and relations with students, teachers, and the community. Goodwin et al. (2005) surveyed secondary school principals and concluded that as a result of an ongoing increase of tasks, the role of the principal has become a significant accumulation of expectations creating conflicts to manage in the four areas of roles, autonomy, accountability, and responsibility. This concern over the growing demands on the time of school principals was supported by Neumerski et al. (2018) who described time management and visibility as consistent areas of challenge for school leaders. Implementing additional responsibilities related to instructional leadership as opposed to traditional roles and duties were reported to have consequences the interpersonal relationships with teachers and students of principals. In addition, the demands of new instructional leadership placed on the time of principals led to expressions of concern regarding stress, frustration, and burnout.

Pennsylvania has been an active participant in the efforts to redefine the standards, development, and evaluation of school principals. As part of the requirements of Act 45 of 2007, Pennsylvania created the PA Inspired Leadership program to enhance

the development of school principals in the state (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,

2024c). This includes components of the required principal induction program for new

school administrators. The PA Inspired Leadership program in Figure 3 is strongly rooted

in the leadership standards from The National Institute of School Leadership and

designed to develop leaders for high-performing schools that improve instruction, utilize

data, improve on culture, and support equity (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2024d).

Figure 3

PA Inspired Leadership Course and Unit Sequence

Course One: World-Class Schooling: Vision and Goals • Unit 1: The Educational Challenge • Unit 2: The Principal as Strategic Thinker • Unit 3: Rigorous and Adaptive Learning Systems
Course Two: The Research on Learning and the Implications for Teaching, Leadership, and School Organization • Unit 4: How People Learn: Implications for Teaching, Leadership, and School Organization, Part 1 • Unit 5: How People Learn: Implications for Teaching, Leadership, and School Organization, Part 2 • Unit 6: How People Learn: Implications for Teaching, Leadership, and School Organization, Part 3 • Unit 7: Promoting the Learning Organization • Unit 8: Leadership for Effective Teaching
Course Three: Sustaining Transformation through Capacity and Commitment • Unit 9: Teams for Instructional Leadership • Unit 10: Culturally-Responsive Leadership for Equity • Unit 11: Driving and Sustaining Transformation • Unit 12: The NISL Program: Inquiry, Reflection, and Closure

School administrator and principal evaluation in Pennsylvania has also evolved over the years to reflect this newer, research and action-based focus on learning and student achievement. Act 13 of 2020 revised school professional evaluations established as part of Educator Effectiveness in Act 82 (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2024e). Educator Effectiveness is the process used to evaluate teachers and administrators in grades PK-12 in Pennsylvania. The administrative evaluation form in Pennsylvania is the Framework for Leadership which is grounded in evidence and research on improving professional practice for educational leaders. The goal of the Pennsylvania Department of Education with the Framework for Leadership in Figure 4 is to define what school leaders should know and be able to demonstrate in their leadership of schools. The framework consists of twenty educational leadership components across four domains.

Figure 4

Educator Effectiveness Framework for Principal Evaluation

The Four Domains of Professional Practice for Principals
Domain 1: Strategic/Cultural Leadership 1A: Creates an Organizational Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals 1B: Uses Data for Informed Decision Making 1C: Builds a Collaborative and Empowering Work Environment 1D: Leads Change Efforts for Continuous Improvement 1E: Celebrates Accomplishments and Acknowledges Failures
Domain 2: Systems Leadership 2A: Leverages Human and Financial Resources 2B: Ensures a High Quality, High Performing Staff 2C: Complies with Federal, State, and Local/LEA Mandates 2D: Establishes and Implements Expectations for Students and Staff 2E: Communicates Effectively and Strategically 2F: Manages Conflict Constructively 2G: Ensures School Safety
Domain 3: Leadership for Learning 3A: Leads School Improvement Initiatives 3B: Aligns Curricula, Instruction, and Assessments 3C: Implements High Quality Instruction 3D: Sets High Expectations for All Students 3E: Maximizes Instructional Time
Domain 4: Professional and Community Leadership 4A: Maximizes Professional Responsibilities through Family/Caregiver Involvement, Community Engagement 4B: Shows Professionalism 4C: Supports Professional Growth

The evolution and progression of school leadership philosophy, standards, and evaluation practices of administrators have clearly been molded by the prevailing

research on what works best for learning. Although there is a strong emphasis on learning and instructional leadership, these standards and evaluation domains also clearly illustrate the wide range of demands, areas of expertise, and skills required to operate effectively as an administrator in schools today. The depth of these expectations, combined with the accumulation of similar levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout help explain why similarly to teachers, quality school principals are getting more difficult to attract and retain. Gilman and Lanman-Givens (2001) identified the struggle with time management between the roles of disciplinarian, safety officer, supervisor, manager, and public relations and wearing too many hats without proportionate support or compensation as factors demotivating teachers from aspiring to administrative roles. According to Mendels (2016), not only are qualified principals shorter in supply, but district level leaders are dissatisfied with preparatory training at the university level and feel programs do not always reflect the real job of being a school principal. If high quality leadership is important to teacher recruitment, retention, and effectiveness, then any conditions making it harder to find and maintain effective administrators or administrative teams would have a negative trickle-down effect on teachers.

Summary

The struggles of school systems today in recruiting and retaining teachers are measurable and supported by data. The literature on teacher shortage is clear that while the pool of available teachers and the attrition rates of existing teachers are on the decline, these shortage conditions disproportionately have an impact on traditionally harder to staff schools in urban centers, areas with lower socioeconomic status, and high minority populations. Lower overall pay and compensation as compared to other career

fields is a crucial factor to the teacher shortage. Studies also show that declining working conditions and prestige for education are driving teachers away from the classroom and deterring college students from aspiring to lead classrooms. The working conditions of most concern to teachers are school safety, student behavior, workload, stress, and lack of support from parents and school administration. These working conditions and the teacher shortage issue have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout in schools during and after the crisis. As a result, many federal and state financial efforts have been made to try and attract new teachers to the field of education including a number of strategies that allow for alternative certifications and pathways to teaching credentials. Just as there is evidence of teacher shortage and attrition, there has been research on the consequences of high rates of teacher turnover on schools. Teacher turnover has negative impacts on student learning outcomes, school culture, access to support and resources, and workloads. Much like teacher attrition overall, these consequences are felt disproportionately higher in harder to staff schools and areas.

The leadership and administrative support that teachers receive and perceive are key factors to their job satisfaction and career decisions. The roles and responsibilities of school principals have changed and grown significantly over time. Once viewed as school managers, school principals today are more expected to function as instructional leaders and change agents while still balancing all the other numerous managerial and supervisory responsibilities that come with the position. Current practices in Pennsylvania and nationally reflect a steady evolution and implementation of the research on leadership. The Pennsylvania Department of Education's Framework for Leadership in schools encompasses and promotes school leadership that is strategic, systems-based,

learning-focused, and rooted in professional growth and community involvement. How

we develop and evaluate school administrators is not only important to students and

learning outcomes, but it is a critical component to the support and job satisfaction of

teachers. Teacher job satisfaction and the presence of administrative support are

paramount in the career decisions of teachers to remain in education. How we develop

and evaluate administrators on the components of leadership that impact teachers deserve

more consideration. The perceptions of teachers on how they are led and supported by

administrators with regards to their job satisfaction and retention in education would be

valuable information for leaders to consider when deciding what strategies to implement

to support their faculties. This study, described in the next chapter, aims to survey current

teachers using multiple methods to better understand their perceptions on administrative

support with the purpose of informing school leaders on how to more effectively promote

job satisfaction and longer careers in the classroom for educators.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the rationale and research methodology for this Doctoral Capstone Project. The literature on teacher shortage and attrition indicates public schools today are struggling to attract and retain educators (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fuller, 2023; Tickle et al., 2011). The researcher experienced this phenomenon with increasing turnover in education first-hand and used it as the inspiration for this study. Over the last several school years since the COVID-19 pandemic, schools have experienced not only the difficulty and frustration of increased levels of teacher shortage and attrition but witnessed some of the consequences of ongoing turnover on students, school climate, and overall building culture.

Purpose

The main goal of this study is to better inform school administrators and leaders of teacher perceptions of the administrative support they receive on the job, and how those perceptions impact teacher job satisfaction and willingness to remain in their positions. Administrative support and teacher job satisfaction were highlighted in the literature as being among the strongest determinants of whether educators remained in the classroom (Littrell, 1994; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Tickle et al., 2011). Understanding teacher job satisfaction and the role that leadership and administrative support play in educator retention is critical. The administrative support provided to teachers is among the factors within the control of school leaders that influence job satisfaction. Many school working conditions and prohibitive factors that influence teacher job satisfaction

are outside of the control of school administrators. Wage compensation as compared to other careers, declining parental and public support, and the influx of controversial societal issues into the classroom are largely out of the hands of school leaders. School leaders that are informed on the types of administrative support and leadership characteristics that teachers identify as having higher levels of impact on their job satisfaction may prioritize that support and improve their likelihood of having success attracting and maintaining teachers in their schools. This study is relevant to the field of educational leadership because teacher shortage and attrition are no longer isolated to urban or lower socioeconomic demographics that are more traditionally and disproportionately impacted by a lack of highly qualified teachers. Teacher turnover has become an issue both state and nationwide and has left school leaders with an ongoing challenge to maintain staffing and consistency in classrooms to support student achievement and positive school cultures.

With the goal of better informing school leaders on the perceptions of teachers on administrative support and job satisfaction, and consideration from the research from the literature review in the previous chapter, the following research questions were developed to explore the topic:

1. What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?

2. What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?

3. What is the relationship between teacher career stage and teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?

Research question one was developed to directly probe teachers on which research-based leadership characteristics have the strongest impact on their job satisfaction. While the research and models of various leadership styles are plentiful and well-established (Northouse, 2022), there is a lack of specific context to the educational setting. The researcher felt strongly that seeking teacher feedback as part of this study would provide valuable data to school leaders on the types of leadership characteristics that best support teacher job satisfaction.

Research question two focuses on teacher perceptions of how school administrators and building principals are evaluated. University principal preparation programs and professional development initiatives may promote leadership models and styles that support educator job satisfaction and teacher retention, but how do those concepts apply to how principals are evaluated? Are there elements of leadership characteristics or administrative support that teachers identify with having a high impact on their job satisfaction within the principal evaluation framework, and if so, which components emphasize leadership that supports job satisfaction the strongest? It is the experience of the researcher that teachers have little to no exposure or background with the tools used to evaluate school administrators. Surveying teachers on the impact of principal evaluation components towards their job satisfaction would provide both principals and their supervisors with meaningful data.

Research question three acknowledges that while teacher perception survey or interview data in the aggregate may provide valuable data and insight into the types of leadership and administrative support that best influence teacher job satisfaction and retention, disaggregating survey and interview responses into subgroups such as teacher experience or assignment may provide the opportunity for even more targeted administrative support efforts. Most of the literature in the previous chapter provided general research on teacher shortage, attrition, and working conditions impacting on teacher job satisfaction that could apply to most if not all educators. A few studies narrowed the focus to teachers of varying experience levels or schools of specific grades bands or demographics. This research question will look at the response data from teachers of various experience levels and teaching assignment areas to explore if any patterns or trends emerge. Potential trends could identify the need to differentiate or tailor the types of administrative support teachers in these different subgroups may need to improve their job satisfaction and ultimately, retention in their job.

A mixed-method approach was chosen for this study with research questions that would require the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to answer. Mertler (2022) characterized quantitative research as an attempt to describe, explain, and predict a phenomenon of interest through variables that could be quantified. For this study, the quantifiable data will be represented by the Likert-scale ratings provided by teachers on the impact and importance of research-based leadership characteristics and principal evaluation components on their job satisfaction and retention. Leadership characteristics and evaluation components can be analyzed and compared for their impact and importance through quantifiable terms. Conversely, most

of the experiences, insights, and emotions of teachers with regards to administrative support and its impact on their job satisfaction cannot be quantified. Therefore, a qualitative approach to data collection was also selected to be included in the study. Qualitative research is comprised of the collection, analysis, and interpretation of narrative data as it applies to a phenomenon of interest (Mertler, 2022). In this study, qualitative data was collected from teachers in the form of open-ended survey questions and optional, follow-up interviews. This mixed methods study most resembles a convergent parallel design, with quantitative and qualitative data collected during the same time period and analyzed together.

Setting

The setting for this research study was determined by accessible school districts local to the researcher, characteristics that Mertler (2022) would categorize as a form of convenience sampling. Two school districts located in the same suburban-rural county in southcentral Pennsylvania gave permission to the researcher to survey and potentially interview teachers in their schools. A total of three school districts in the county were contacted for permission, but one school district opted not to give permission to the researcher to survey teachers, citing concerns over current teacher workloads and the time needed to complete the survey. Due to the nature of the survey and interviews involving teacher job satisfaction and perceptions of administrative support, remaining anonymous was a condition of approval for participating districts.

School District A is the largest school district in the county and largely serves the suburban and surrounding areas of the county seat but not the city itself. According to Future Ready PA Index (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2025), District A covers a

geographic area of sixty-six square miles while serving approximately 4,900 students in grades K-12. District A is comprised of one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools. Percent enrollment by student group and ethnicity for District A is shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Figure 5

Percent Enrollment by Student Groups for District A
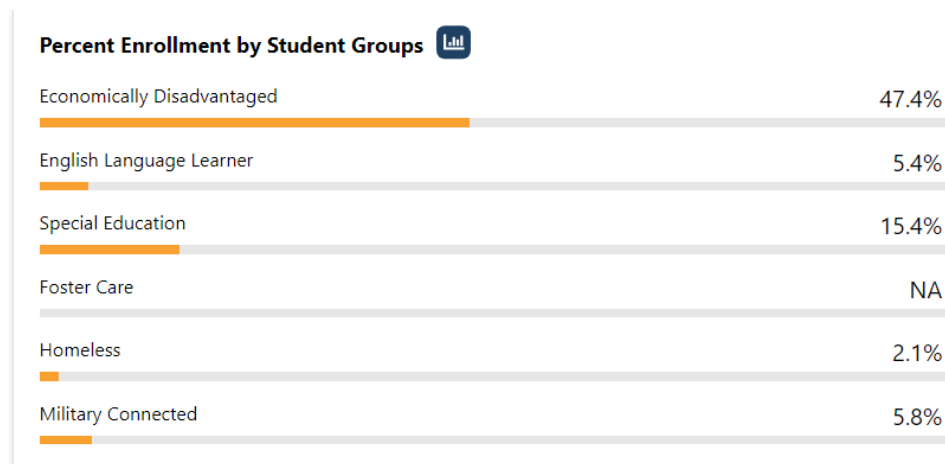
Percent Enrollment by Student Groups

Student Group	Percent
Economically Disadvantaged	47.4%
English Language Learner	5.4%
Special Education	15.4%
Foster Care	NA
Homeless	2.1%
Military Connected	5.8%

Note. This graph shows the demographic enrollment of School District A taken from https://futurereadypa.org/District/FastFacts.

Figure 6

Percent Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity for District A
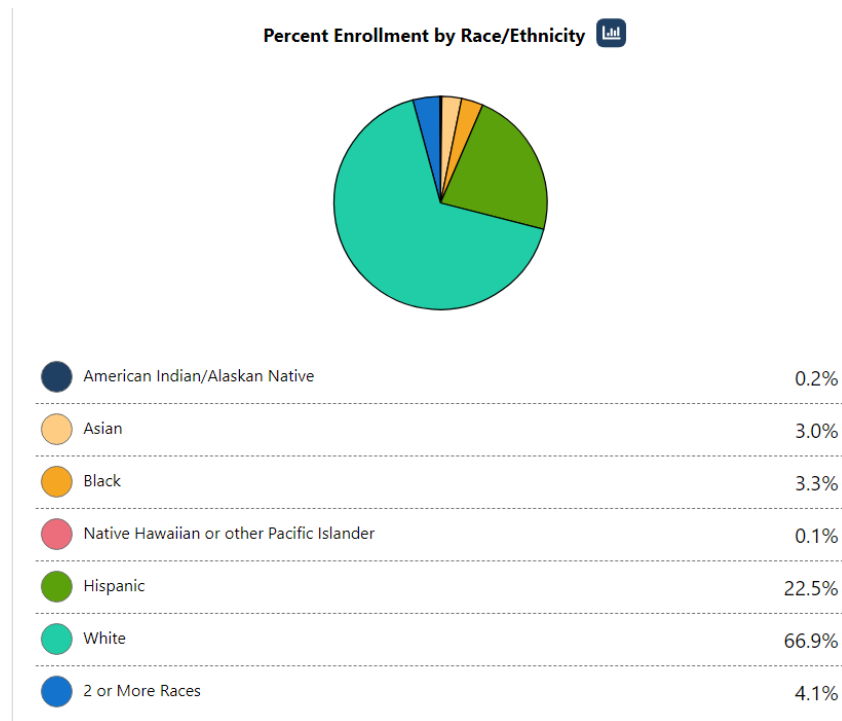
Percent Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2%
Asian	3.0%
Black	3.3%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.1%
Hispanic	22.5%
White	66.9%
2 or More Races	4.1%

Note. This graph shows the enrollment percentages by race and ethnicity of School District A taken from https://futurereadypa.org/District/FastFacts.

School District B is a medium-sized, suburban-rural district in the same county also comprised of one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools on a smaller scale population-wise in comparison to District A. According to Future Ready PA Index (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2025), District B covers a geographic area of thirty-seven square miles while serving approximately 3,500 students in grades K-12. Percent enrollment by student group and ethnicity for District B is shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

Figure 7

Percent Enrollment by Student Groups for District B

Percent Enrollment by Student Groups

Economically Disadvantaged	31.2%
English Language Learner	2.7%
Special Education	18.9%
Foster Care	NA
Homeless	2.3%
Military Connected	0.0%
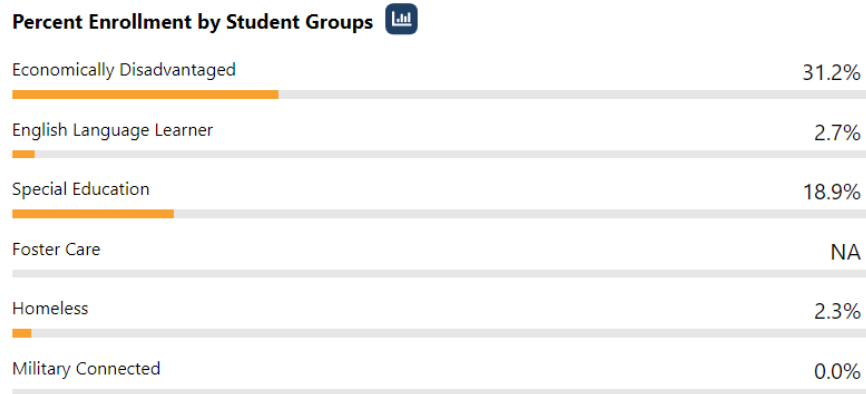
Note. This graph shows the demographic enrollment of School District B taken from https://futurereadypa.org/District/FastFacts.

Figure 8

Percent Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity for District B
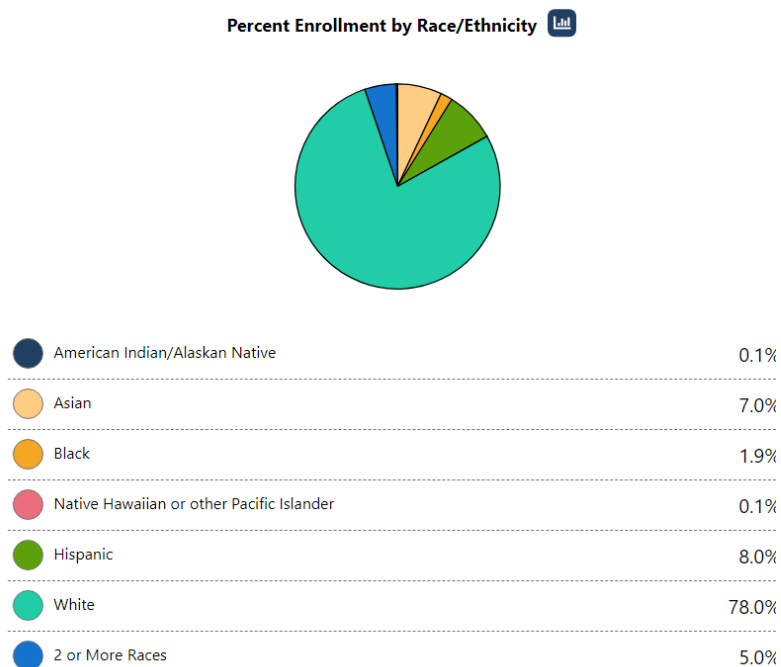
Percent Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.1%
Asian	7.0%
Black	1.9%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.1%
Hispanic	8.0%
White	78.0%
2 or More Races	5.0%

Note. This graph shows the enrollment percentages by race and ethnicity of School District A taken from https://futurereadypa.org/District/FastFacts.

From a demographic perspective, District A and B have a lot in common in terms of student population and subgroups. Both school districts are at least two-thirds White-Caucasian and serve communities that are less than 50% free/reduced lunch program qualified. District A is more diverse demographically and shows higher socioeconomic need overall as it serves areas bordering a more urban, lower socioeconomic status school district.

Participants

This Doctoral Capstone Project study focused on public school teachers. Purposeful sampling involves the intentional selection of a site or group of people to study a topic or phenomenon (Mertler, 2022). Because this study involved surveying educators on their perceptions of the impact of administrative support on their job satisfaction, the targeted population for the study was that of classroom teachers and other full-time educators in schools. Due to the nature of the study topic and survey/interview format, teachers within the districts in which the researcher receive approval were informed of the study and provided the opportunity to volunteer through email link to the survey. Participation in the study survey was anonymous and email addresses were not collected as part of the survey submission. Eighty-one total teachers completed the online survey, with 17 teachers agreeing to and completing the optional, follow-up structured interview. Participants were asked to indicate their years of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment at the beginning of the survey. The

percentage breakdown for years of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment are included in Figures 9, 10, and 11.

Figure 9

Survey Participant Breakdown by Years of Experience
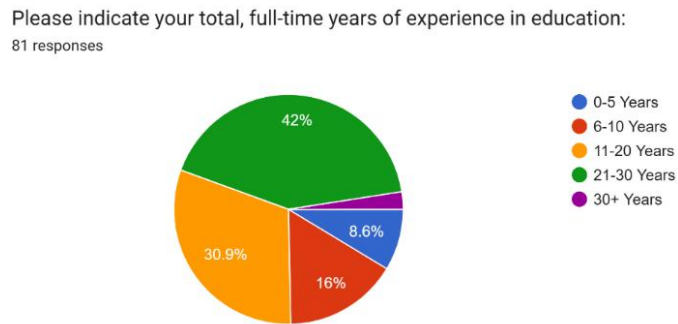
Note. Chart taken from survey question #2 asking respondents to identify their years of experience in full-time teaching. According to this chart, almost 75% of respondents had between 11-30 years of teaching experience, with less than 10% of respondents being new teachers with less than five years of teaching.

Figure 10

Survey Participant Breakdown by Teaching Level
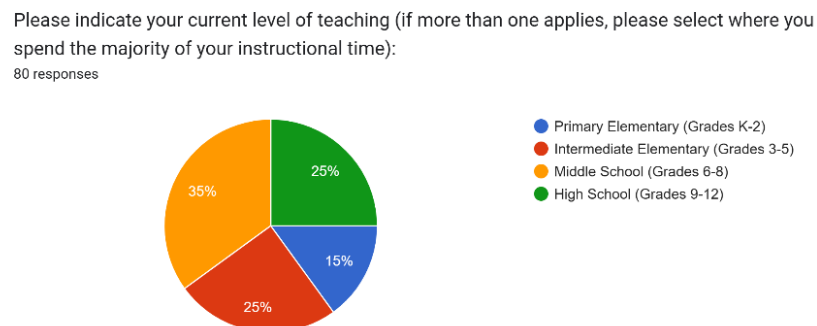
Note. Chart taken from survey for question #3 asking respondents to identify their current level of teaching. Although the middle school group represented the largest group of respondents at 35%, there was a response of at least 15% from all grade spans. If combined, the elementary (K-5) to secondary (6-12) teacher breakdown would be 40% to 60% respectively.

Figure 11

Survey Participant Breakdown by Teaching Assignment

Please choose which category best describes your current teaching assignment:
81 responses

- Regular Education
- Special Area/Related Arts/Electives
- Special Education/ELL/Intervention
- Student Services (Counselor/Psychologist/Nurse)

21%
17.3%
7.4%
54.3%
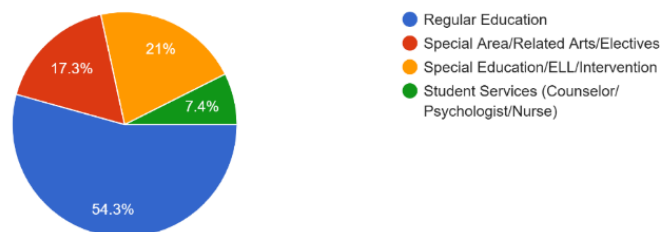
Note. Chart taken from survey question #4 asking respondents to identify their current teaching assignment. Over half of the respondents to the survey identified themselves as regular education teachers, with the next largest group being that of special education or intervention teachers. The smallest group was represented by student service providers such as counselors and school nurses.

Research and Data Collection Plan

The researcher completed all required training and certifications on ethics and conflicts of interest through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative prior to beginning the study. The researcher applied to the Institutional Review Board at

Pennsylvania Western University receiving approval to begin the study project on August 7, 2024 (Appendix A). Letters of consent from the Superintendents from both participating school districts were also obtained (Appendixes B & C). The focus of the study's research questions and outcomes were based on the researcher's personal experience with teacher shortage and attrition, as well as the literature identifying the negative impact of declining working conditions on job satisfaction and the career decisions of educators. A mixed methods approach was used to investigate teacher perceptions of administrative support on job satisfaction to use both quantitative and qualitative data to identify trends and themes for each research question. According to Mertler (2022), rigorous collection and analysis of multiple data allow for emerging trends to build upon each other.

The researcher used Google Forms as the primary data collection tool for the survey that collected the perceptions of educators on administrative support on their job satisfaction and job retention (Appendix D). For the collection of quantitative data, Likert scale rating response questions were used to gather ordinal data on the importance of research-based leadership characteristics and the impact of administrator evaluation components on teacher job satisfaction and attrition. The Likert scale for rating leadership characteristics or evaluation components asked respondents to rate each survey item from one to four with a progression from lowest impact or importance to highest. The three research questions, data collection plans, and rating items and scales are identified and represented in Figures 12 through 16.

Research Question #1 - What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?

Figure 12

Research Question One Data Collection Plan

Data Sources	Timeline
Quantitative, ordinal data in the form of Likert scale ratings will be collected using a Google Form survey. Respondents will rate research-based leadership characteristics on their importance in the support of job satisfaction and retention in the career. Qualitative data in the form of short-answer Google Form survey questions and follow-up interview question data will be collected. Respondents will be asked to provide their perspectives and opinions on the role and impact of administrative support on job satisfaction and retention.	The Google Form survey for teachers in participating districts was administered in the Fall of 2024 from late September through November. Interviews via Microsoft Teams are being conducted and transcribed in January/February 2025.

Note. Data sources and timeline taken from researcher's Doctoral Capstone Project Data Collection Plan and Timeline Document approved on January 28, 2025.

Figure 13

School Administrator Leadership Characteristics and Likert Scale

Leadership Characteristics	Rating Scale
Intelligence	1 = Never Important
Initiative	2 = Sometimes Important
Responsibility	3 = Often Important
Confidence	4 = Always Important
Integrity	
Sociability	
Determination	
Organization	
Efficiency	
Collaboration	
Communication	
Empathy	
Flexibility	
Self-discipline	

Note. Complete survey items, instructions and rating scale description included in Appendix D. Research-based leadership characteristics selected from various leadership theories and models as described by Northouse (2022).

Research Question #2 - What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?

Figure 14

Research Question Two Data Collection Plan

Data Sources	Timeline
Quantitative, ordinal data in the form of Likert scale ratings will be collected using a Google Form survey. Respondents will rate the components of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership school administrator evaluation tool for their impact on job satisfaction and retention in the career. Qualitative data in the form of short-answer Google Form survey questions and follow-up interview question data will be collected. Respondents will be asked to provide their perspectives and opinions on the role and impact of administrative support on job satisfaction and retention.	The Google Form survey for teachers in participating districts was administered in the Fall of 2024 from late September through November. Interviews via Microsoft Teams are being conducted and transcribed in January/February 2025.

Note. Data sources and timeline taken from researcher's Doctoral Capstone Project Data

Collection Plan and Timeline Document approved on January 28, 2025.

Figure 15

School Administrator Evaluation Components and Likert Scale

Evaluation Components	Rating Scale
1A: Creates an Organizational Vision	1 = No Impact
1B: Uses Data for Informed Decision Making	
1C: Builds a Collaborative and Empowering Work Environment	2 = Low Impact
1D: Leads Change Efforts for Continuous Improvement	3 = Some Impact
1E: Celebrates Accomplishments and Acknowledges Failures	4 = High Impact
2A: Leverages Human and Financial Resources	
2B: Ensures a High Quality, High Performing Staff	
2C: Complies with Federal, State, and District Mandates	
2D: Establishes and Implements Expectations for Students and Staff	
2E: Communicates Effectively and Strategically	
2F: Manages Conflict Constructively	
2G: Ensures School Safety	
3A: Leads School Improvement Initiatives	
3B: Aligns Curricula, Instruction, and Assessments	
3C: Implements High Quality Instruction	
3D: Sets High Expectations for All Students	
3E: Maximizes Instructional Time	
4A: Maximizes Professional Responsibilities through Parent Involvement	
4B: Shows Professionalism	
4C: Supports Professional Growth	

Note. Complete survey items, instructions and rating scale description included in

Appendix D. Evaluation components taken from Pennsylvania Department of Education

Framework for Leadership (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2024d).

***Research Question #3 - What is the relationship between teacher career stage and
teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and
components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?***

Figure 16

Research Question Three Data Collection Plan

Data Sources	Timeline
Quantitative, nominal data will be collected from teachers on career stage and teaching assignment for the purpose of disaggregating and analyzing trends in survey and interview data that may be unique to subgroups of teachers regarding the types of administrative support that best supports their needs.	The Google Form survey for teachers in participating districts was administered in the Fall of 2024 from late September through November. Interviews via Microsoft Teams are being conducted and transcribed in January/February 2025.

Note. Data sources and timeline taken from researcher's Doctoral Capstone Project Data
Collection Plan and Timeline Document approved on January 28, 2025.

For the collection of qualitative data, short-answer questions on the topic of
administrative support were included in the Google Form survey. In addition, respondents
were provided with the opportunity to participate in a follow-up, virtual interview with
the questions provided in advance for transparency before indicating a willingness to
participate through providing a contact email for scheduling purposes. The following
were the short-answer survey questions included in the Google Form survey:

1. What role does administrative support play in the job satisfaction and retention of
   teachers?

2. What are the most important ways school administrators can support teacher job
   satisfaction and retention?

3. With what current issues or challenges in schools do you feel teachers need more administrative support in order to promote better overall job satisfaction and retention?

Optional follow-up interviews were conducted with 17 volunteer respondents using Microsoft Teams. Interviews were recorded and transcribed as part of the data collection. Interviewees were informed that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed and were notified at the beginning of end of the recording during the interview process. All interviewees were asked the same three questions which were provided in advance of the interview. The 17 interview respondents included five from the elementary level, eight from the middle school level, and three from the high school level. Recorded and transcribed portions of the interviews ranged from four to eight minutes. The interview questions asked were:

1. When or under what circumstances have you felt most supported by school administrators? What made you feel supported?

2. When or under what circumstances have you felt least supported by school administrators? What made you feel unsupported?

3. Have you ever considered leaving your current position or education? If so, what role did administrative support play in your consideration?

The full Google Form online survey which includes the questions used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data as part of this mixed methods research project is included in Appendix D.

Validity

"To have any effect on either the practice or theory of a field, research studies must be rigorously conducted; they need to present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, practitioners and other researchers" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 238). While the outcome goals for this research study project are intended to serve the practitioners of school administration with insight perspectives from teachers on the kinds of leadership support that most impacts job satisfaction, it is still important that the research plan and data collection represent scientifically accepted standards for validity and reliability. Lincoln and Gube (1985) provided a four-pronged structure to study validity through their quality criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Hendricks (2017) describes these criteria for trustworthiness as follows:

- Credibility – The plausibility of the research findings and interpretation.

- Transferability – The extent to which the results are applicable to other individuals or contexts.

- Dependability – The degree to which the results could be replicated.

- Confirmability – The results of research represent what occurred rather than bias or motivation.

The researcher worked to establish validity for this research project by first selecting appropriate settings with applicable participants in the form of teachers who receive administrative support from supervisors. The researcher collaborated with Superintendents of the participating districts to share the optional survey link and information with full-time educators. The leadership characteristics and administrator

evaluation components selected to be rated as part of the survey were chosen from

research-based sources and the actual evaluation document used by school districts in

Pennsylvania. Short-answer and interview questions were consistent with the research

questions and no follow-up or random questions based on responses were used. Each

respondent was presented and asked the same questions with no exceptions.

Transferability and dependability were supported using a confidential, private online

survey developed in a private and password secure Google account. Interviews were

conducted, recorded, and transcribed using private Microsoft Teams meetings between

the researcher and individual respondents. The anonymity and confidence in privacy

allowed respondents a safe forum to provide honest responses, which was important due

to the nature of the survey and questions focusing on support from supervisors.

Confirmability of the study is supported by the objectivity of the survey and consistency

with interview procedure.

The triangulation of multiple data sources was also used to contribute to the

validity and confirmability of the research study. The comparison of multiple sources of

data can enhance the credibility of a study (Hendricks, 2017). The multiple sources of

data collected and analyzed as part of this mixed methods research project included both

qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data collected as part of the study

included nominal demographic data from respondents, as well as ordinal Likert scale

rankings of research-based leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation

components for their impact on educator job satisfaction and retention. The qualitative

data collected included short-answer survey questions and follow-up interview questions

on the topic of administrative support or teachers and instances where respondents felt most and least supported by school administrators.

Financial Implications

There were no outside costs, fees, or additional paid licenses associated with this research study. The primary data collection tool in the form of a Google Forms survey was created and implemented using the researcher's free Google account. Optional, follow-up interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed using online meetings in Microsoft Teams. Some features such as recording and transcribing could be associated with a licensed Microsoft account. The researcher utilized his own university issued Microsoft Teams account to conduct the interviews. The researcher used data analysis software, such as SPSS, using a license provided by the university library. It is possible that to replicate the study and use similar online tools, another researcher may need to pay for temporary or annual license fees or use other available software that also analyzes quantitative and qualitative data. Participation in the research study was on a volunteer basis only. No compensation was offered or paid to any respondents for their participation.

Summary

This chapter established the purpose, research plan, and data collection methods for the research study. The setting and participants were described using data from available state reporting sources and respondent data on years of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment. The concept of study validity and its components were

defined and discussed. In the next chapter, data from the mixed methods data collection

and results will be explored and analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present the process for data analysis and results of the study on teacher perceptions of administrative support with regards to overall job satisfaction and retention in the career. Through a mixed methods approach with characteristics of a convergent parallel design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from respondents for the following research questions to help provide a deeper and more robust picture of teacher perceptions of administrative support on job satisfaction and retention:

1. What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?

2. What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?

3. What is the relationship between teacher career stage and teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?

A total of 81 teachers from two school districts participated in the study's online survey, with 17 teachers volunteering for the optional, follow-up interview. The goal of this study is to provide school administrators with actionable trends in teacher

perceptions on the types of administrative support in leading schools that can improve teacher job satisfaction and prevent educator shortage and turnover.

Data Analysis

This mixed methods study included the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from respondents. Quantitative data was collected using an online survey asking respondents to rate research-based leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components on their impact on job satisfaction and retention in education. Qualitative data was collected both in the form of three short-answer questions on the online survey, as well as with three pre-determined follow-up survey questions asked of participants that indicated a willingness to be interviewed.

The distinct types of data collected as parts of the study required different methods for data analysis. The quantitative data collected on teacher ratings of the impact and importance of leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components was analyzed by the researcher using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. This software was used to determine the overall mean, or average score for each leadership characteristic and school administrator evaluation component to show which characteristics and components were rated by teachers to have the highest level of impact on job satisfaction and teacher retention. Using data from nominal demographic questions, SPSS was utilized to disaggregate the response data by subgroup for the analysis of any trends individual groups may have that differ from the overall study group suggesting a need for more targeted administrative support. These disaggregated subgroups included years of teaching experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment.

For the qualitative data collected in the study, inductive coding was utilized to derive high-frequency topics and themes from the data. Initially, the researcher planned to use the online software, NVIVO, to assist with the analysis of the qualitative data collected through open-ended survey questions and responses to the follow-up interviews. However, after applying NVIVO to the data and determining that the software mostly produced lists of high-frequency words and phrases without context, the researcher decided to code open-ended survey and interview question responses by hand to apply greater context to descriptive codes and themes that software may not be able to apply without background knowledge and the experience of working in schools.

Results – Quantitative Data

Each of the three research questions was addressed with specific quantitative survey data, while the qualitative survey data in the form of short-answer and interview response coding can be applied to all three research questions. The quantitative data is presented below by research question.

Quantitative Data for Research Question One

Research question one asked, "What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?" The primary source of data for the first research question was teacher survey responses in the form of Likert scale ratings of research-based leadership characteristics (Figure 9) on a scale of one to four, with the importance of each leadership characteristic to job satisfaction and retention ranging from "never" to "always" important. The complete survey is included

in Appendix D. Figure 17 shows the mean response scores from the overall participant group. The leadership characteristics of communication, integrity, and responsibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention.

Figure 17

Overall Ranking of Leadership Characteristics
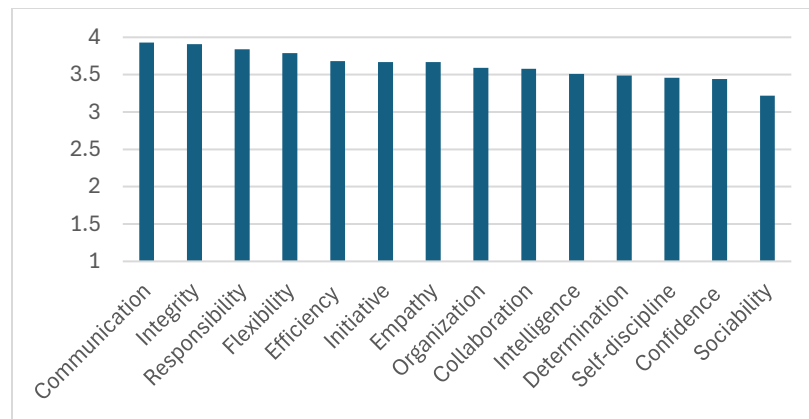
Note. The overall response group included 81 teachers from all subgroups, including years of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment.

Based on the average mean response ratings of the 81 participants, the leadership characteristics of communication (3.93), integrity (3.91), and responsibility (3.84) were rated highest. These top-rated characteristics were closely followed by those of flexibility, efficiency, initiative, and empathy. The lowest rated leadership characteristics with regards to supporting job satisfaction and retention were sociability (3.22) and confidence (3.44). It is also noteworthy that all 14 of the leadership characteristics were rated to be at least "often important" with a mean response score over three. The mean response scores on the leadership characteristics indicated that in general, most research-based leadership characteristics are of some importance to teacher job satisfaction and retention, with

some characteristics identified as more important than others. In the case of the job

satisfaction and retention of teachers, the survey data identifies the most important

characteristics involving leadership that promotes high levels of communication,

dependability, and trust through characteristics such as integrity and responsibility.

Although sociability and confidence were rated lowest by the overall respondent group

for importance on job satisfaction and attrition, these are often traits that leaders,

especially young and inexperienced leaders, associate with success.

Quantitative Data for Research Question Two

Research question two asked, "What is the impact of the Pennsylvania

Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school

administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?" Teacher survey responses

were the main source of data for the second research question. Teacher responses were

collected in the form of Likert scale ratings of school administrator evaluation

components from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership

(Figure 15) on a scale of one to four, with the importance of each leadership

characteristic to job satisfaction and retention ranging from "never" to "always"

important. The complete survey is included in Appendix D. Figure 18 shows the mean

response scores from the overall participant group. Evaluation component names are

abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15.

The school administrator evaluation components of communication, ensuring school

safety, and building a collaborating and empowering work environment were rated

highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention.

Figure 18

Overall Ranking of School Administrator Evaluation Components
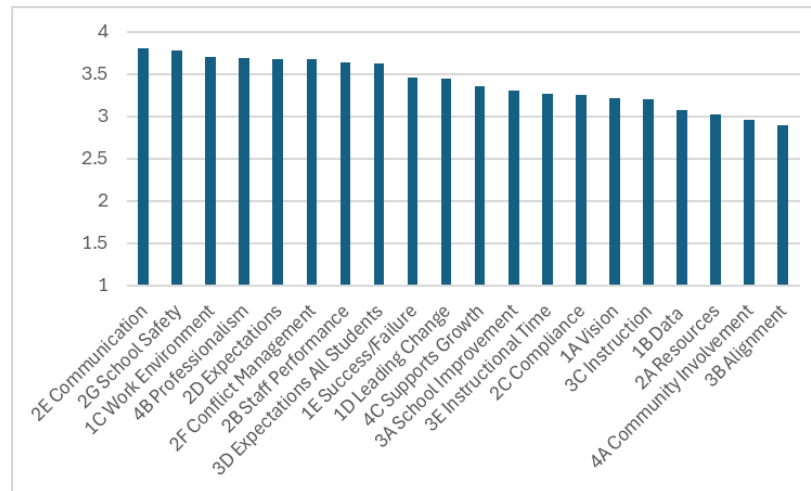

Note. The overall response group included 81 teachers from all subgroups, including years of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment.

Based on the average mean response ratings of the 81 participants, the school administrator evaluation components of communicating effectively and strategically (3.80), building a collaborative and empowering work environment (3.78), and ensuring school safety (3.70) were rated highest. Also rated highly were the evaluation components of showing professionalism, setting high expectations for all students, and managing conflict constructively. The lowest rated evaluation components with regards to supporting job satisfaction and retention were using data for informed decision making (3.07), leveraging human and financial resources (3.02), and aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment (2.89). While some school administrator evaluation components were ranked higher than others, it should be noted that all 20 of the components were ranked between "some" and "high" importance with regards to

educator job satisfaction and retention. These results lead to the conclusion that the

teachers surveyed felt all the components of the school administrator evaluation had some

degree of impact. It can also be concluded that the teachers surveyed did not feel that

evaluation components grounded more in instructional leadership, such as using data for

decision making or areas such as curriculum alignment and assessment, were as

impactful on their job satisfaction as components focused more on the work environment,

communication, and school safety. This conclusion reflects a similar trend in the data in

support of research question one. Much of the focus over the last couple of decades in

schools has been on the trend of school improvement for student achievement. The

increased emphasis on achievement and instructional leadership areas in how we evaluate

school leaders may have indirectly de-emphasized the evaluation components of

leadership that most support the job satisfaction and retention of teachers.

Quantitative Data for Research Question Three

Research question three asked, "What is the relationship between teacher career

stage and teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and

components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?" The same

quantitative data used for the first two research questions was also used as the primary

source of data for the third research question with the extra step of disaggregating the

data by subgroup. Due to the number of subgroups included in the demographic questions

of the survey, this research question has several figures that disaggregate the overall

survey data into years of teaching experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment for

both the teacher ratings of research-based leadership characteristics and school

administrator evaluation components. The mean rankings of the 14 research-based

leadership characteristics for each subgroup are included in Figures 19 through 31.

Figure 19 shows the mean response scores from teachers in the zero to five years

of experience subgroup. The leadership characteristics of communication, collaboration,

and flexibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention for

teachers in the zero to five years of experience subgroup.

Figure 19

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers with Zero to Five Years of Experience
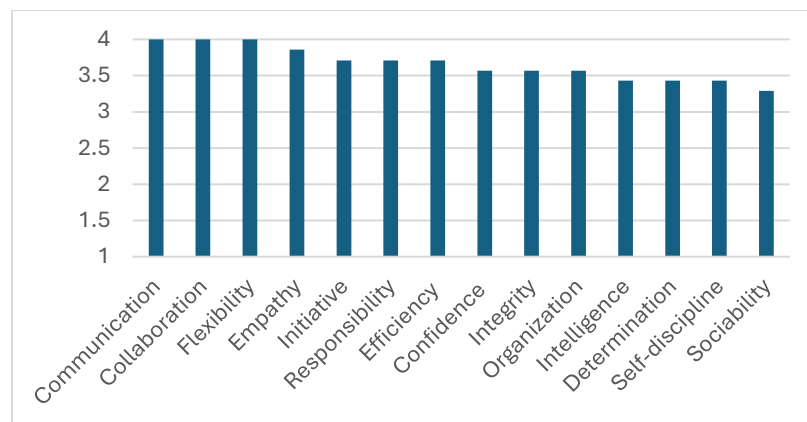
Note. The subgroup of teachers with zero to five years of teaching experience included

seven teachers.

Figure 20 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of responsibility, integrity, and flexibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention for teachers in the 6 to 10 years of experience subgroup.

Figure 20

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers with 6 to 10 Years of Experience
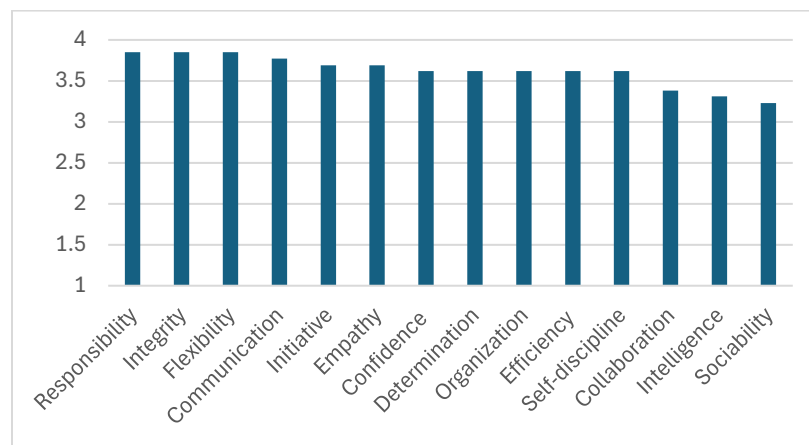
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 6 to 10 years of teaching experience included 13 teachers.

Figure 21 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 11 to 20 years of experience who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of communication, integrity, and flexibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention for teachers in the 11 to 20 years of experience subgroup.

Figure 21

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers with 11 to 20 Years of Experience
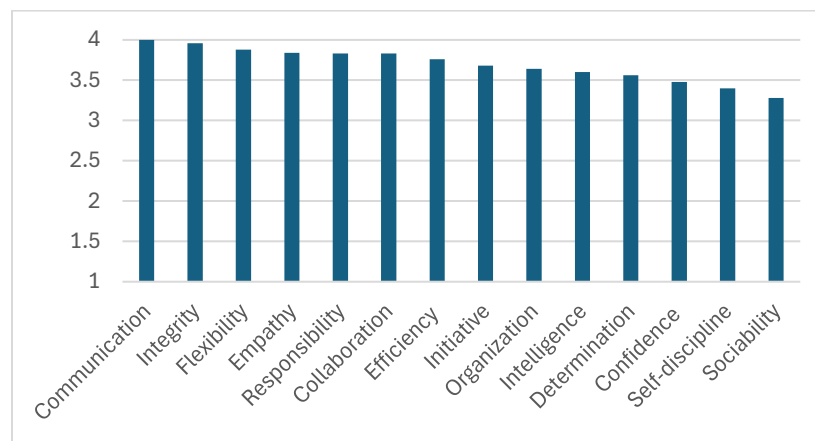
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience included 25 teachers.

Figure 22 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 21 to 30 years of experience who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of integrity, communication, and responsibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention for teachers in the 21 to 30 years of experience subgroup.

Figure 22

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers with 21 to 30 Years of Experience
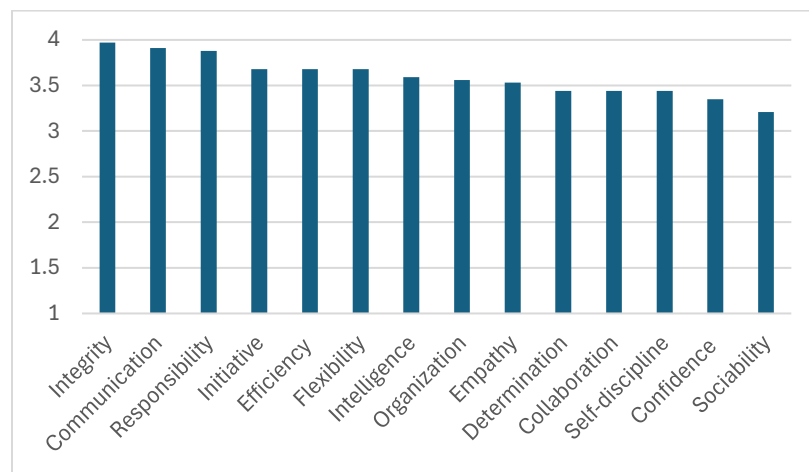
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience included 34 teachers.

Figure 23 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 31+ years of experience who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of integrity, communication, and responsibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention for teachers in the 31+ years of experience subgroup.

Figure 23

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers with 31+ Years of Experience
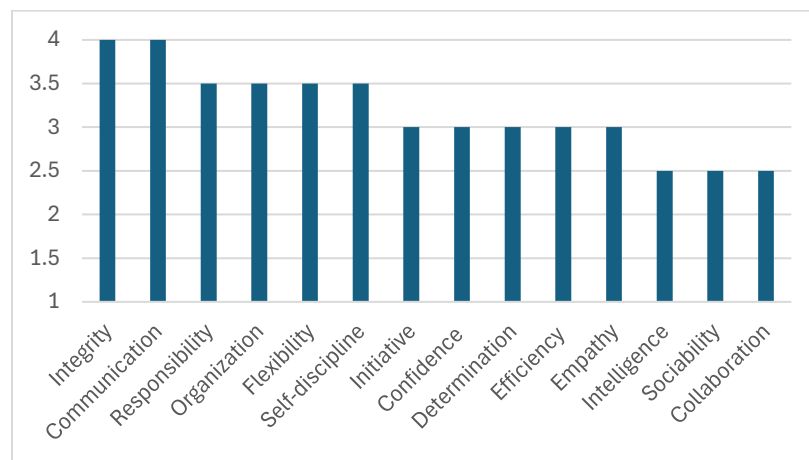
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 31+ years of teaching experience included two teachers.

Figure 24 shows the mean response scores from the primary level teachers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of initiative, responsibility, integrity, communication, and collaboration were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers at the primary level.

Figure 24

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers at the Primary Level
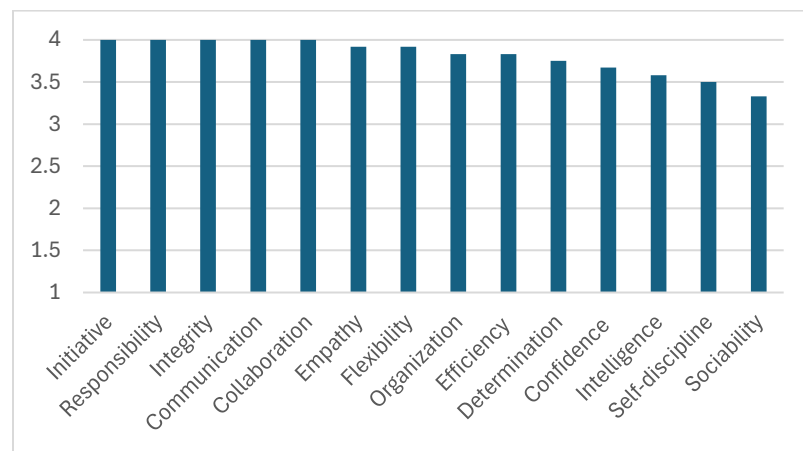
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the primary level from Grades Kindergarten to Two included 12 teachers.

Figure 25 shows the mean response scores from the intermediate level teachers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of communication, integrity, and responsibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers at the intermediate level.

Figure 25

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics Importance by Teachers at the Intermediate Level
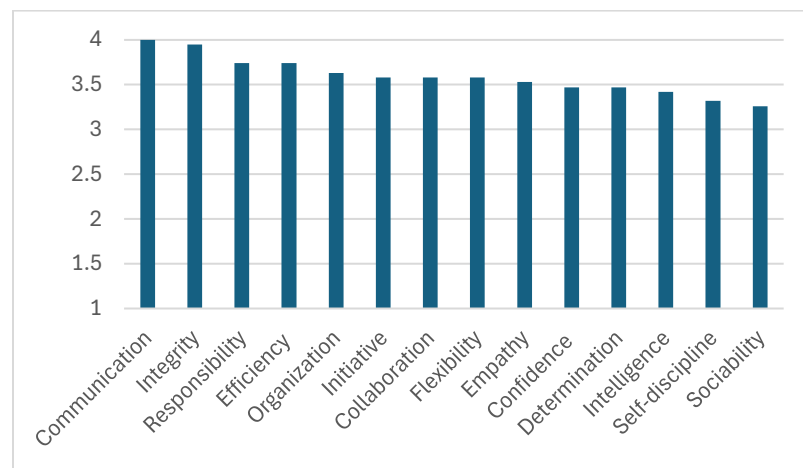
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the intermediate level from Grades Three to Five included 19 teachers.

Figure 26 shows the mean response scores from the middle school teachers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of communication, flexibility, and integrity were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers at the middle school level.

Figure 26

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers at the Middle School Level
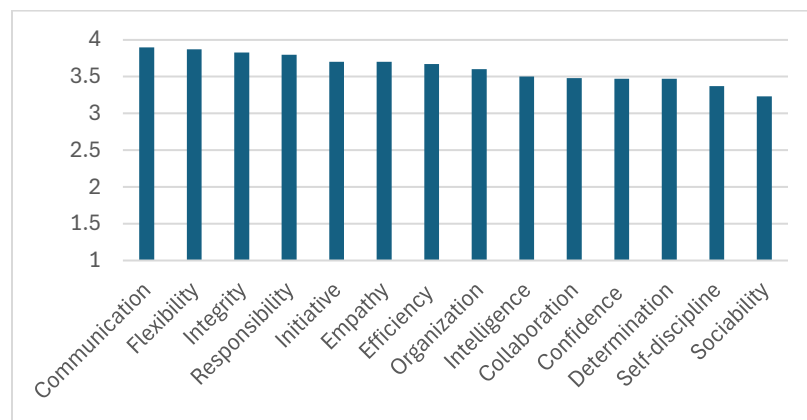
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the middle school level from Grades Six to Eight included 30 teachers.

Figure 27 shows the mean response scores from the high school teachers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of integrity, responsibility, and communication were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers at the high school level.

Figure 27

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Teachers at the High School Level
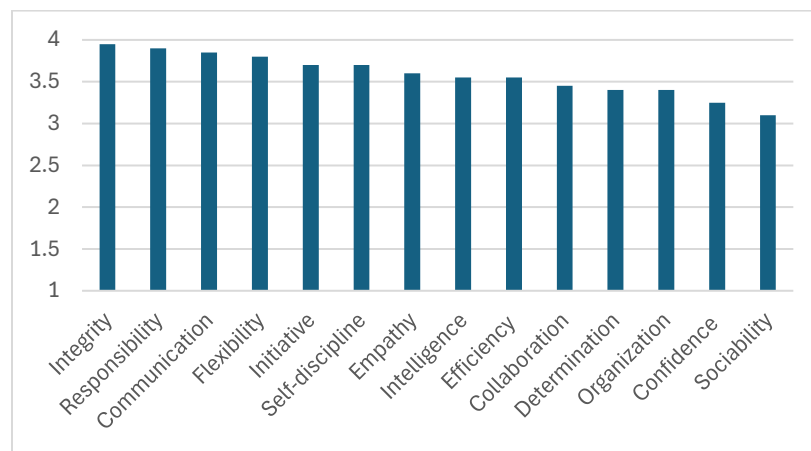
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the high school level from Grades 9 to 12 included 20 teachers.

Figure 28 shows the mean response scores from the regular education teachers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of integrity, communication, and responsibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by regular education teachers in grades K-12.

Figure 28

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Regular Education Teachers
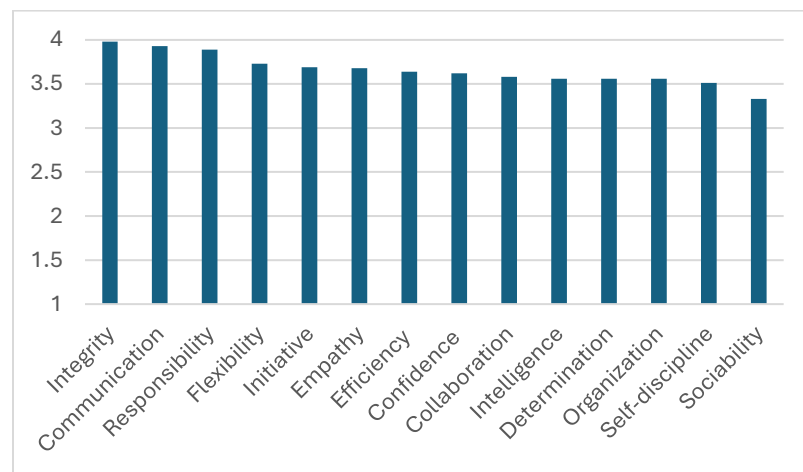
Note: The subgroup of regular education teachers included 45 teachers.

Figure 29 shows the mean response scores from the special education and intervention teachers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of communication, responsibility, integrity, and flexibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by special education and intervention teachers in grades K-12.

Figure 29

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by Special Education and Intervention Teachers
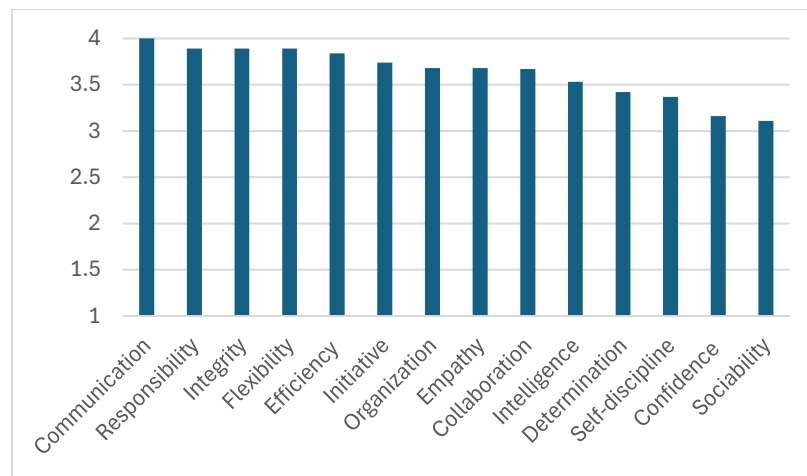
Note. The subgroup of special education and intervention teachers included 19 teachers.

Figure 30 shows the mean response scores from the special area and related arts teachers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of integrity, flexibility, responsibility, and communication were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by special area and related arts teachers in grades K-12.

Figure 30

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics Importance by Special Area Teachers
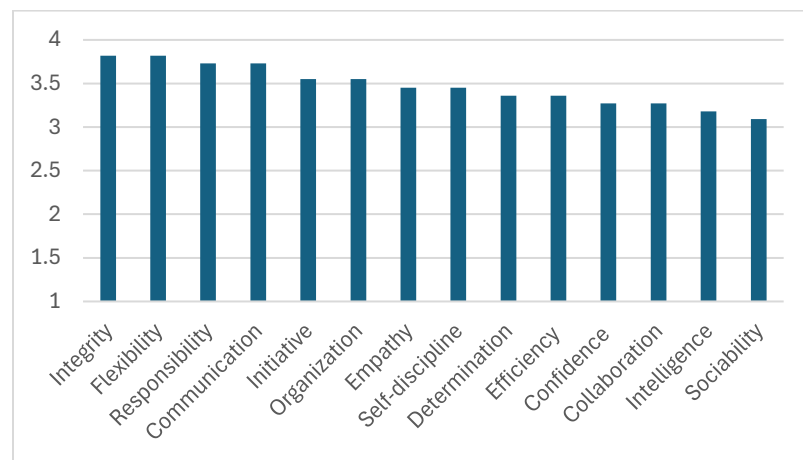
Note. The subgroup of special area and related arts teachers included 11 teachers.

Figure 31 shows the mean response scores from the school service providers who were surveyed. The leadership characteristics of efficiency, communication, collaboration, and flexibility were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by school service providers in grades K-12.

Figure 31

Ranking of Leadership Characteristics by School Service Providers
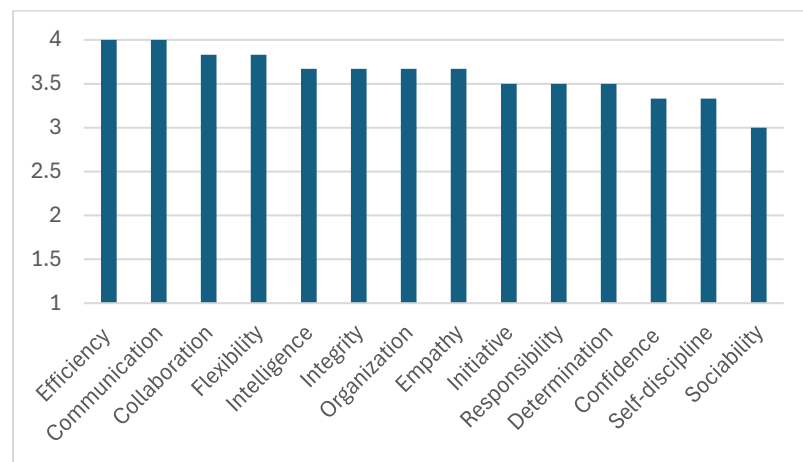
Note. The subgroup of school service providers such as school counselors, nurses, and psychologists included six educators.

In addition to ranking the leadership characteristics, survey respondents also ranked 20 school administrator evaluation components from the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Framework for Leadership for their impact on teacher job satisfaction and retention. The school administrator evaluation components ranked using mean score average by individual teacher subgroups are included in Figures 32 through 44.

Figure 32 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with zero to five years of experience who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of communication, leading change, and establishing expectations were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers with zero to five years of experience.

Figure 32

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers with Zero to Five Years of Experience
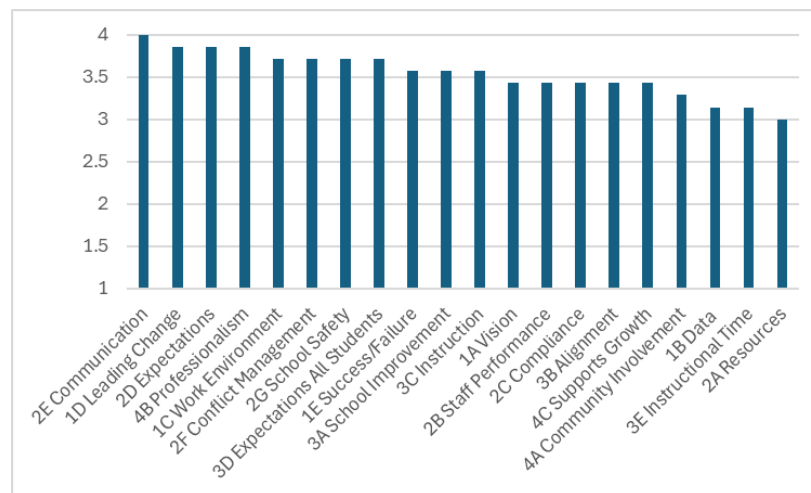
Note. The subgroup of teachers with zero to five years of teaching experience included seven teachers.

Figure 33 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of establishing expectations, ensuring school safety, and high expectations for all students were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience.

Figure 33

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers with 6 to 10 Years of Experience
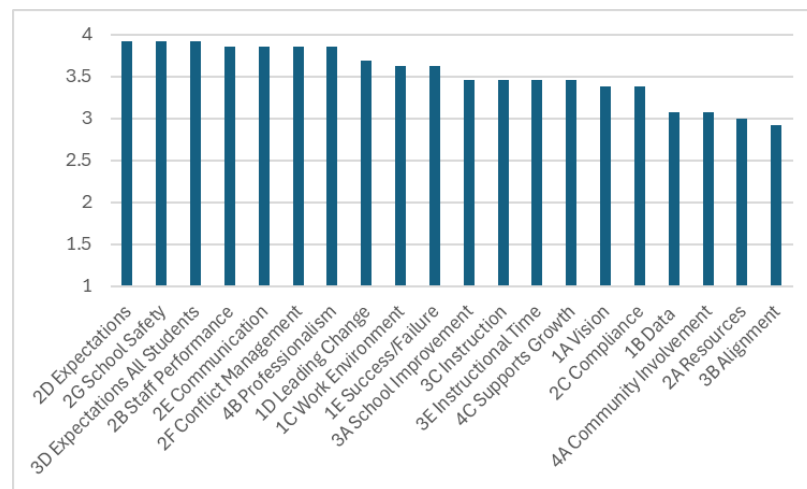
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 6 to 10 years of teaching experience included 13 teachers.

Figure 34 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 11 to 20 years of experience who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of a collaborative and empowering work environment, communication, and conflict management were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers with 11 to 20 years of experience.

Figure 34

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers with 11 to 20 Years of Experience
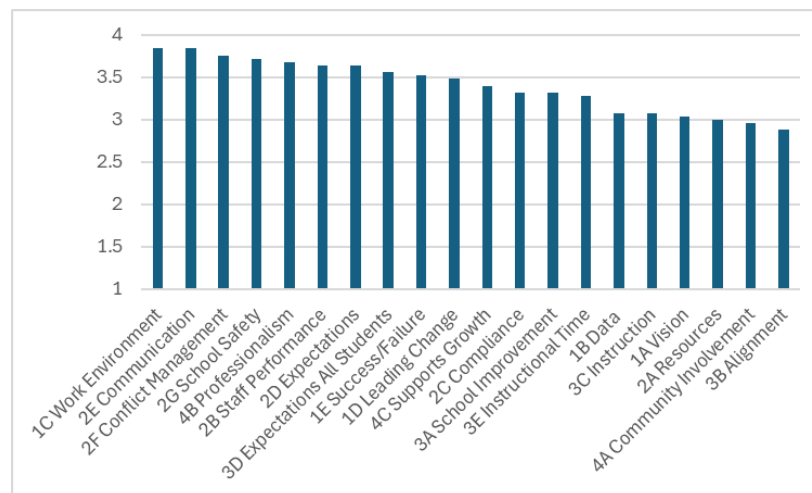
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience included 25 teachers.

Figure 35 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 21 to 30 years of experience who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of ensuring school safety, communication, and a collaborative and empowering work environment were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers with 21 to 30 years of experience.

Figure 35

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers with 21 to 30 Years of Experience
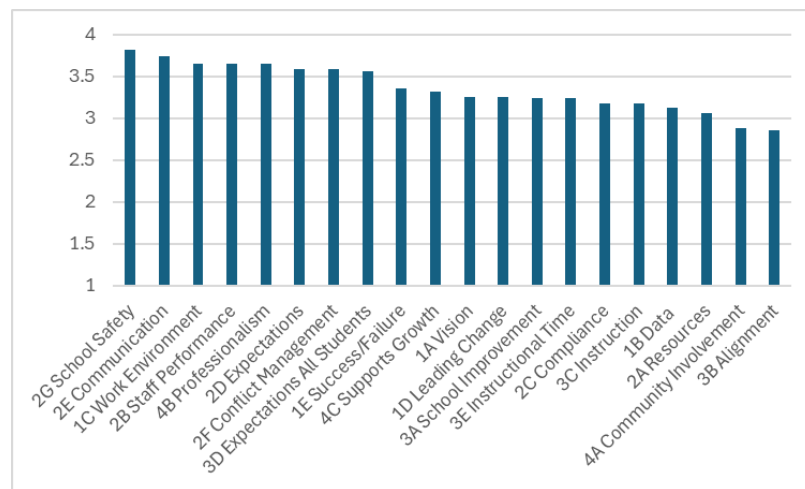
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience included 34 teachers.

Figure 36 shows the mean response scores from the teachers with 31+ years of experience who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of a collaborative and empowering work environment, establishing expectations, communication, and high expectations for all students were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers with 31+ years of experience.

Figure 36

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers with 31+ Years of Experience
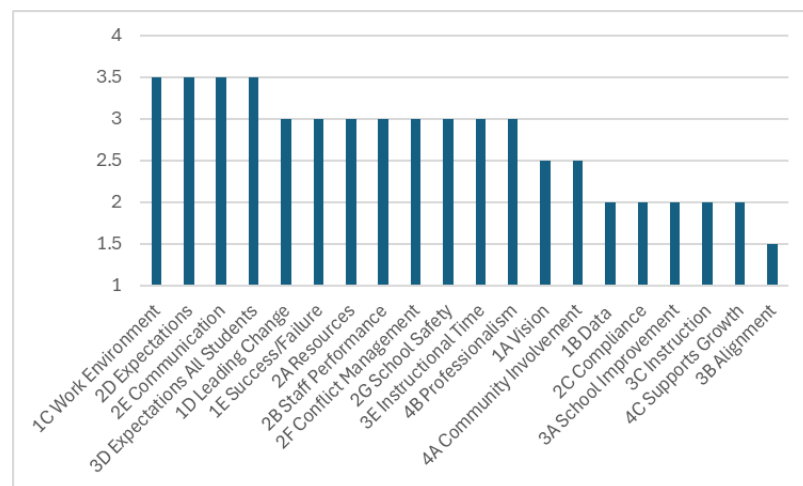
Note. The subgroup of teachers with 31+ years of teaching experience included two teachers.

Figure 37 shows the mean response scores from primary level teachers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of ensuring school safety, a collaborative and empowering work environment, staff performance, communication, and conflict management were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by primary level teachers.

Figure 37

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers at the Primary Level
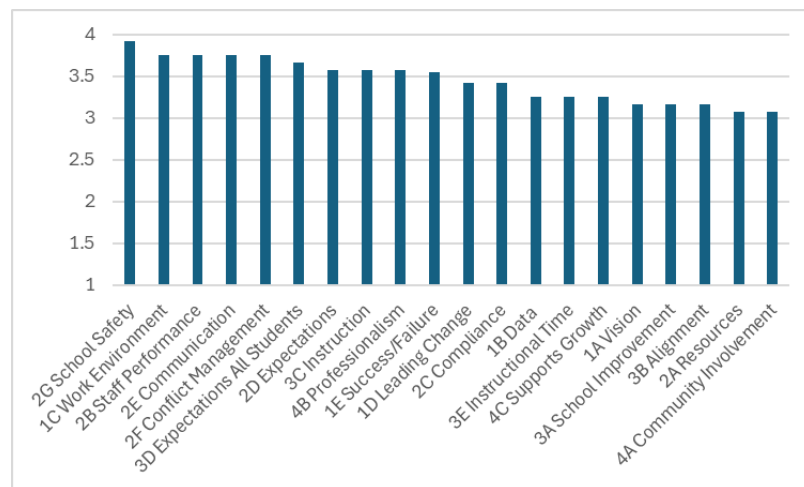
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the primary level from Grades Kindergarten to Two included 12 teachers.

Figure 38 shows the mean response scores from intermediate level teachers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of a collaborative and empowering work environment, communication, and professionalism were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers at the intermediate level.

Figure 38

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers at the Intermediate Level
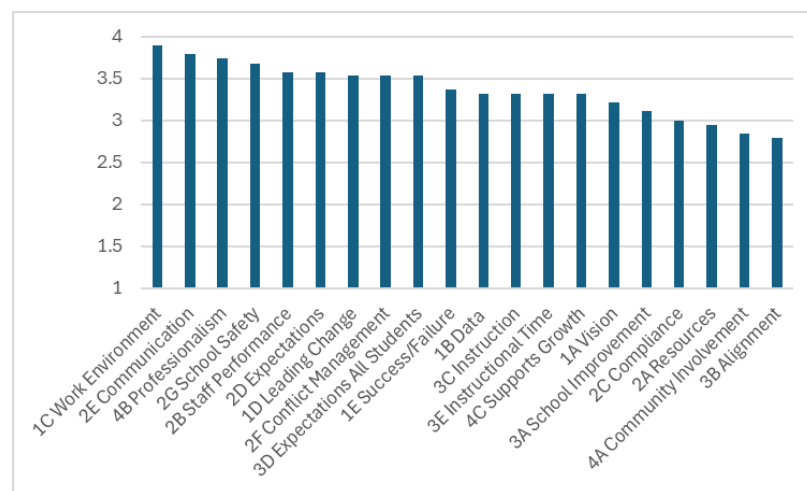
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the intermediate level from Grades Three to Five included 19 teachers.

Figure 39 shows the mean response scores from middle school teachers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of establishing expectations, communication, and ensuring school safety were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers at the middle school level.

Figure 39

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers at the Middle School Level
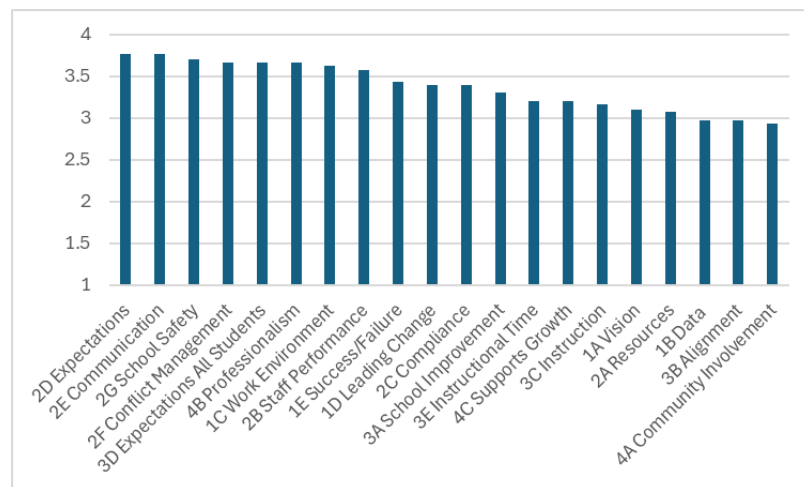
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the middle school level from Grades Six to Eight included 30 teachers.

Figure 40 shows the mean response scores from high school teachers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of communication, ensuring school safety, and conflict management were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by teachers at the high school level.

Figure 40

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Teachers at the High School Level
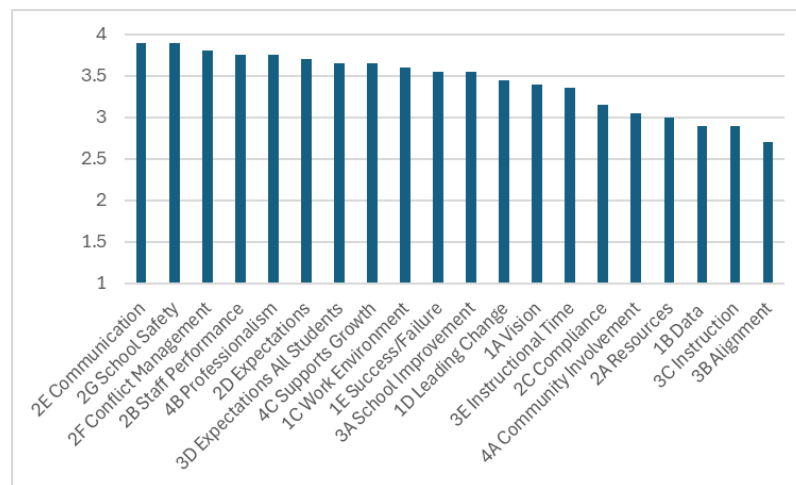
Note. The subgroup of teachers at the high school level from Grades 9 to 12 included 20 teachers.

Figure 41 shows the mean response scores from regular education teachers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of ensuring school safety, a collaborative and empowering work environment, and communication were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by regular education teachers in grades K-12

Figure 41

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Regular Education Teachers
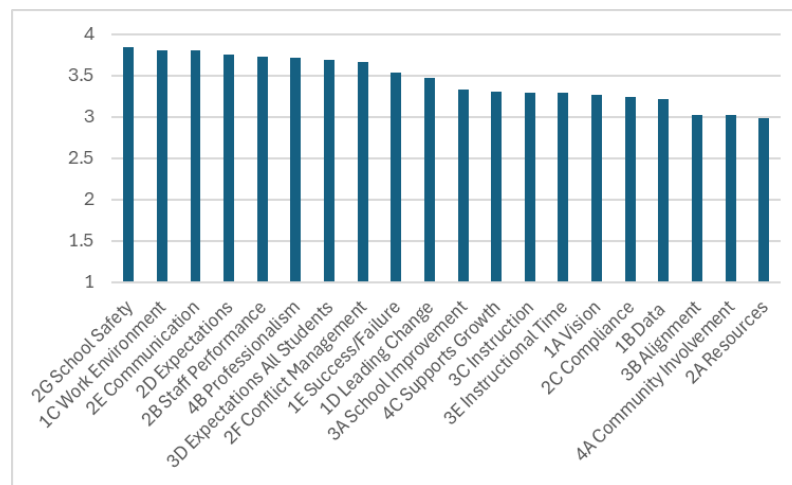
Note. The subgroup of regular education teachers included 45 teachers.

Figure 42 shows the mean response scores from special education and intervention teachers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of communication, ensuring school safety, and a collaborative and empowering work environment were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by special education teachers in grades K-12.

Figure 42

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Special Education and Intervention Teachers
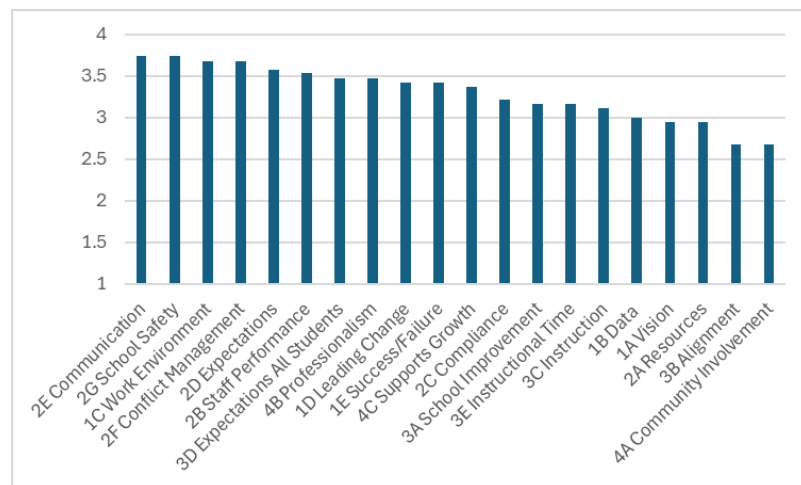
Note. The subgroup of special education and intervention teachers included 19 teachers.

Figure 43 shows the mean response scores from special area and related arts teachers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of communication, high expectations for all students, and professionalism were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by special area and related arts teachers in grades K-12.

Figure 43

Ranking of Evaluation Components by Special Area and Related Arts Teachers
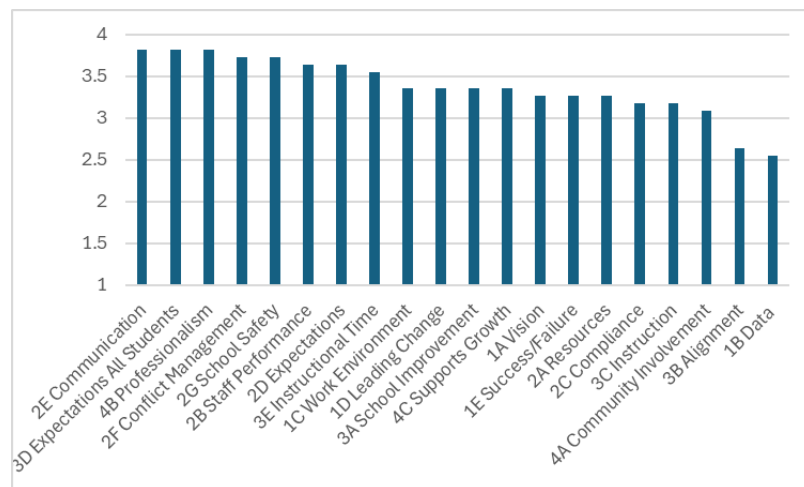
Note. The subgroup of special area and related arts teachers included 11 teachers.

Figure 44 shows the mean response scores from school service providers who were surveyed. Evaluation component names are abbreviated above and correspond with the full component titles identified in Figure 15. The school administrator evaluation components of communication, professionalism, a collaborative and empowering work environment, and conflict management were rated highest for impact on educator job satisfaction and retention by school service providers in grades K-12.

Figure 44

Ranking of Evaluation Components by School Service Providers
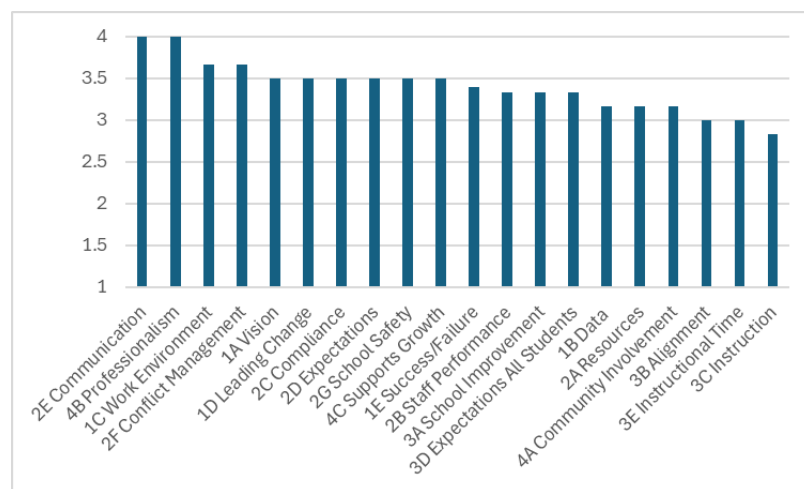
Note. The subgroup of school service providers including school counselors, nurses, and psychologists included six educators.

Analysis, trends, and comparisons of each subgroup to the overall response group quantitative data for mean score ratings of both research-based leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components are discussed by subgroup in the subsequent sections.

Zero to five Years of Experience Subgroup Analysis. This subgroup represented the newest teachers to the career. Seven participants identified themselves as having zero to five years of experience in teaching. This subgroup on average ranked collaboration as second highest out of the school administrator leadership characteristics, much higher than all other years of experience subgroups. This difference from the other groups could be explained by newer teachers' interest in being coached and mentored as they enter the profession. With regards to school administrator evaluation components, newer teachers ranked the leading of change as the highest out of all subgroups and second highest overall. This could be explained by newer teachers being less entrenched in classroom practices and programs than veteran counterparts, and more native to things such as technology and data analytics. These rating trends indicate school administrators should embrace the willingness of new teachers to collaborate and be part of planning and institutionalizing change initiatives with hope those qualities will carry on into the mid and later career stages.

6 to 10 Years of Experience Subgroup Analysis. The subgroup of teachers from 6 to 10 years of experience included 13 teachers. This career stage is a transition from novice teacher to the mid-career stage educator. This subgroup rated leadership characteristics such as responsibility and integrity higher than the new teacher subgroup. Teachers with more experience feel less dependent on mentorship and more in need of reliable and consistent leadership and structure. This subgroup also rated collaboration significantly lower, possibly signaling teachers exiting their early years appreciating more independence and autonomy as compared to other more impactful traits to their job satisfaction. This finding was consistent in differences with this subgroup's mean rating

of school administrator evaluation components, rating clear and consistent expectations and high expectations for all students higher than compared to the overall and zero to five year experience subgroup.

11 to 20 Years of Experience Subgroup Analysis. This more experienced subgroup has solidly entered the mid-career stage. Twenty-five participants identified as having 11 to 20 years of experience in teaching. This experience range is where educators have the youngest families and increased demands outside of the workday. Flexibility and empathy are higher than with the previous subgroup, as is efficiency which is a leadership characteristic that may be valued more by teachers with less time in their daily lives to accomplish more both in and out of the classroom. In terms of school administrator evaluation components, this subgroup rated building a collaborative and empowering work environment the highest, with conflict management also receiving its highest mean score rank of all the years of experience groups. Teachers in this experience subgroup have reached a point in their career where they appreciate more autonomy and ability to innovate beyond minimum work standards. This was reflected in several short-answer and interview responses as well. This empowerment could also lead to more appreciation for assistance with problem solving and conflict management with students, parents, and colleagues.

21 to 30 Years of Experience Subgroup Analysis. This subgroup is comprised of veteran teachers and those most established within the school culture. This category was the largest years of experience subgroup with 34 teachers. Integrity, communication, and responsibility were rated as the most important characteristics by veteran teachers indicating they value leadership that leads with honesty, trust, and follow-through.

Prioritizing integrity and communication highest signals a standard and expectation that this subgroup finds "walking the talk" important in leadership. This subgroup also rated the characteristic of efficiency as the highest of all subgroups indicating an appreciation for leadership that values the time of teachers, whether that be during the school day, planning time, meetings, or professional development. Ensuring school safety was the school administrator evaluation component rated highest by the 21 to 30 years of experience subgroup, which was a topic that was often mentioned in short-answer responses and interviews.

31+ Years of Experience Subgroup Analysis. This was the smallest subgroup represented in the study data with only two teachers identifying in this range of experience. Though not as statistically significant as the larger subgroups, the researcher felt it was important to represent their perspectives in the data. This subgroup is at or near retirement age and experience. It is notable that this subgroup rated collaboration the lowest of all leadership characteristics, completing a trend of collaboration falling in the mean score rankings as the subgroups increased in years of experience. Interview responses from more veteran teachers also supported this point of view but not necessarily just in a lack of interest in collaboration. Some veteran teachers noted in their interview responses that collaboration, or lack thereof, was a topic of concern. Examples of this trend included when teacher input was requested but unused, or despite when collaborating with teachers "in the trenches" administrators would make predetermined decisions.

Primary Level Teacher Subgroup Analysis. The primary teacher subgroup included 12 teachers that identified as teaching grades kindergarten through second

grade. This subgroup rated the leadership characteristic of initiative the highest while also valuing responsibility and integrity at the highest levels. Like the overall subgroup, both communication and collaboration were valued above most other leadership characteristics. This corresponds with the primary teacher subgroup's administrative evaluation component ranking of a collaborative and empowering work environment as second highest only behind ensuring school safety. Primary teachers placing a high impact on school safety is understandable given their responsibility for the safety of a school's youngest and most vulnerable learners.

Intermediate Level Teacher Subgroup Analysis. The intermediate level subgroup included 19 teachers that indicated they served in grades three to five. Like their primary level counterparts, this subgroup rated communication, integrity, and responsibility at a very high level, but the intermediate level teachers placed a higher level of importance on leadership characteristics such as organization and efficiency. This trend could be due to the increased involvement of the intermediate level with standardized testing data and planning in the form of benchmark, diagnostic, and state achievement testing. The intermediate level teachers also rated the administrator evaluation components of clear and high expectations for all students at higher levels, possibly indicating a stronger need for support with student behaviors and discipline as students transition to the upper elementary grades.

Middle School Teacher Subgroup Analysis. The middle school level subgroup included 30 teachers working in grades six through eight. The middle school level teachers placed the highest value of all other subgroups on the leadership characteristic of flexibility. Middle level teachers and learners have unique needs as they transition not

only from elementary to secondary education, but from childhood to adolescence. The developmental, social, and emotional needs of adolescents and the teachers that work with them require a high level of flexibility in leadership and approach. High and clear expectations, as well as school safety, were rated highly by the middle level subgroup as impactful administrative evaluation components. Middle level teachers work tirelessly to provide boundaries and structure to students and their school environment during a time of life that is full of change.

High School Teacher Subgroup Analysis. The high school level subgroup was represented by 20 teachers working in grades 9 to 12. The high school level subgroup prioritized the leadership characteristics in a similar fashion to the overall group but rated the administrator evaluation component of conflict management the highest out of the teaching level subgroups. The high school level by nature is a larger system that could be more prone to conflicts between students, staff, administration, and parents. Circumstances with regards to discipline issues and/or police involvement, class rank, eligibility, athletics, extracurriculars, and the presence of the more mature societal issues of young adulthood could have influenced this higher ranking for conflict management by high school teachers. This subgroup of teachers is also the most content specialized and possesses higher levels of academic understanding of individual content areas than most administrators who may lack backgrounds in a specific field. This difference in content knowledge and understanding could also explain an increase in the need for conflict management.

Regular Education Teacher Subgroup Analysis. The subgroup of regular education teachers included 45 teachers in grades K-12 and was the largest subgroup

surveyed. The size of the subgroup was more than half of the overall participant group resulting in the overall rankings of the mean scores for leadership characteristics and evaluation components being most like the overall respondent group. This subgroup reinforced the strong sentiment of the importance of integrity, communication, and responsibility as leadership characteristics. School safety, a collaborative and empowering work environment, and clear communication were the administrative evaluation components that ranked highest with regular education teachers. Variations from the overall response group are more strongly represented by other teaching assignment subgroups with different and more unique needs than the regular education teacher population.

Special Education and Intervention Teacher Subgroup Analysis. The special education and intervention teacher subgroup included 19 teachers in grades K-12. Some of the unique aspects and challenges of teachers that manage IEPs and individual student plans may have led to some variance in the ratings of leadership characteristics and evaluation components when compared to the overall response group or regular education subgroup. Special educators and interventionists ranked the importance of efficiency and organization at higher levels than other subgroups. This subgroup of educators is more responsible for the management of individualized plans, timelines, data collection, and progress monitoring. These circumstances are also reflected in this subgroup's higher ranking of the conflict management evaluation component for administrators. The case manager role of special educators and interventionists tend to place them in more frequent situations involving meetings with students and parents

which could explain the higher impact of administrative support that includes effective conflict resolution.

Special Area and Related Arts Teacher Subgroup Analysis. This subgroup was represented by 11 teachers in grades K-12 that include but are not limited to subjects such as the arts, physical education, foreign language, technology, and other related courses that compliment core classes in schools. The special area and related arts teachers valued the leadership characteristics of flexibility and communication at a higher level than other subgroups. This subgroup rated collaboration at the lowest level of subgroups. It is the researcher's experience that this subgroup of teachers often feels left out or underrepresented in decision-making due to the nature of their courses. These content areas are not always traditionally graded, not part of core instruction or graduation requirements, or unincluded in the content of state assessments. This low rating of collaboration as a leadership characteristic could be explained by the increasing trend of special area and related arts teachers being asked to do things outside of their normal schedules and certification areas as schools struggle with substitute coverage, extra duties during transitions and lunch, and creative intervention scheduling. This subgroup also reinforced the impact of having high expectations for all students. The priority placed on this evaluation component could be explained by special area and related art teachers serving multiple grade levels, both regular and special education students, and at times working in multiple school buildings in a day or week.

School Service Provider Subgroup Analysis. The school service provider subgroup was represented by six educators with professional support roles within schools such as school counselors, nurses, or psychologists in grades K-12. This subgroup ranked

efficiency the highest of the teaching placement subgroups while also placing a high importance on the characteristics of communication and collaboration. Counselors, nurses, and psychologists often balance the needs and requests of all parties within the school. Thus, time management and scheduling are a high priority. This trend was also reflected in a strong impact rating for communication and professionalism as administrative evaluation components. Most notably, the school service provider group ranked creating an organizational vision more highly than other subgroups possibly due to their roles within the school or district having a larger, more vertical view of grade levels, student groups, goals, and mission of the school.

Results – Qualitative Data

In addition to the quantitative data collected with the teacher survey and as part of this mixed methods study, qualitative data was also collected. Qualitative data was collected in the form of open-ended, short-answer survey questions and pre-determined, follow-up interview questions. According to Mertler (2022), inductive coding is the process of identifying patterns and themes from volumes of collected data and determining a framework for presenting the key findings to influence future action. The researcher read and coded short-answer and interview transcripts to calculate the reference topics with the highest frequency. The complete survey and interview questions are provided in Appendix D.

Short-answer Question One

The first short-answer survey question (Survey Question 40) asked, "What role does administrative support play in the job satisfaction and retention of teachers?" Table

1 shows the ranking of response topic frequency for the first short-answer survey question. Reference frequency totals are from the overall respondent group. Feeling supported, a positive school climate/culture, and being valued were the response topics on the role of administrative support with the highest frequency.

Table 1

Topic Ranking for Short-answer Question One

Response Topic	# of References
Feel Supported	18
Climate/Culture	9
Valued	8
Respected	6
Work-life Balance	6
Collaboration	5
Autonomy/Empowerment	4
Student Discipline	4
Trust	4
Visibility/Access	3
Relationships	3
Follow Through	2
Communication	2
Recognition	2
Encouragement	2
Clear Expectations	2
Vision	2
Morale	1
Empathy	1

Note. The overall response group included 81 teachers from all subgroups, including years of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment.

Short-answer Question Two

The second short-answer survey question (Survey Question 41) asked, "What are the most important ways school administrators can support teacher job satisfaction and

retention? Table 2 shows the ranking of response topic frequency for the second short-answer survey question. Reference frequency totals are from the overall respondent group. Communication, administrator visibility and access, and work-life balance were the response topics on the most important ways school administrators can support teachers with the highest frequency.

Table 2

Topic Ranking for Short-answer Question Two

Response Topic	*# of References*
Communication	21
Visibility/Access	15
Work-life Balance	14
Student Discipline	10
Empathy	9
Valued	8
Autonomy/Empowerment	7
Support with Parents	7
Flexibility	6
Recognition	6
Collaboration	5
Respected	5
Advocate	5
Professional Development	5
Feedback	4
Supported	4
Resources	4
Relationships	4
Climate/Culture	3
Transparency	3
Clear Expectations	3
Trust	2
Morale	1
Encouragement	1
Fairness	1

Note. The overall response group included 81 teachers from all subgroups including years of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment.

Short-answer Question Three

The third short-answer survey question (Survey Question 42) asked, "With what current issues or challenges in schools do you feel teachers need more administrative support in order to promote better overall job satisfaction and retention? Table 3 shows the ranking of response topic frequency for the third short-answer survey question. Reference frequency totals are from the overall respondent group. Student discipline, support with parents, and work-life balance were the issues or challenges facing teachers with the highest frequency.

Table 3

Topic Ranking for Short-answer Question Three

Response Topic	*# of References*
Student Discipline	30
Support with Parents	17
Work-life Balance	15
Communication	5
Collaboration	5
Professional Development	5
Student Mental Health	4
Special Education	4
Feedback	3
Climate/Culture	3
Visibility/Access	3
Empathy	3
Autonomy/Empowerment	2
Morale	2
Trust	2
Respect	2
Relationships	2
School Safety	1
Transparency	1
Feeling Supported	1
Advocate	1
Clear Expectations	1

Note. The overall response group included 81 teachers from all subgroups including years

of experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment.

Interview Question One

The first interview question asked, "When or under what circumstances have you

felt most supported by school administrators? What made you feel supported?" Table 4

shows the ranking of response topic frequency for interview question one. Reference

frequency totals are from the respondent group that volunteered to participate in the

follow-up interview to the online survey. Student discipline, communication, and teacher

innovation were the response topics with the highest frequency.

Table 4

Topic Ranking for Interview Question One

Response Topic	# of References
Student Discipline	6
Communication	6
Teacher Innovation	5
Flexibility	4
Empathy	3
Support with Parents	3
Access/Visibility	2
Relationships	2
Collaboration	1
Honesty	1
Checking In	1
Safety	1
Shared Vision	1
Consistency	1
Growth	1
Trust	1
Work-life Balance	1
Feedback	1

Note. Volunteer follow-up interview response group included 17 teachers.

Interview Question Two

The second interview question asked, "When or under what circumstances have

you felt least supported by school administrators? What made you feel unsupported?"

Table 5 shows the ranking of response topic frequency for interview question two.

Reference frequency totals are from the respondent group that volunteered to participate

in the follow-up interview to the online survey. Lack of communication, teacher

workload, and student discipline were the response topics with the highest frequency.

Table 5

Topic Ranking for Interview Question Two

Response Topics	# of References
Lack of Communication	10
Teacher Workload	3
Student Discipline	2
No Collaboration	2
Relationships	2
Lack of Consistency	2
Lack of Appreciation	2
Work Ethic	1
Unclear Expectations	1
Not Flexible	1
Curriculum Demands	1
Lack of Mentoring	1
Micromanagement	1

Note. Volunteer follow-up interview response group included 17 teachers.

Interview Question Three

The third interview question asked, "Have you ever considered leaving your

current position or education? If so, what if any role did administrative support play in

your consideration?" Table 6 shows the response totals and ranking of response topic

frequency for interview question three. Frequency totals are from the respondent group

that volunteered to participate in the follow-up interview to the online survey. Career

change, different certifications, and financial need were the response topics with the

highest frequency for those teachers that considered leaving.

Table 6

Topic Ranking for Interview Question Three

Response	Total
Yes	12
No	5

Response Topics (Yes)	# of References
Career Change	3
Admin Certification	2
Financial Need	2
District Change	2
Discipline	2
Position Change	2
Communication	2
Work-life Balance	2
School Change	1
Early Retirement	1
Relationships	1

Response Topics (No)	# of References
School Family	2
Love Teaching	1
Meant for Teaching	1
Relationships	1

Note. Volunteer follow-up interview response group included 17 teachers.

Qualitative Data Analysis for Research Question One

Research question one asked, "What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?" The qualitative data collected from both open-ended online survey questions and interview questions on the topic of administrative support are analyzed for response topic trend frequency and patterns below.

Survey Short-answer Response Analysis. To answer the first research question, the responses to three open-ended, short-answer questions on the topic of administrative support for teachers were analyzed. An inductive analysis of open-ended responses was conducted to code responses and identify trends in the data. When asked about the role of administrative support in the job satisfaction and retention of teachers, respondents most often referred to the importance of feeling supported, valued, and respected by school administration (Table 1). One participant responded, "An admin makes or breaks a school. Teachers who feel they are respected and supported will go above and beyond in their jobs and feel they want to do extra things." Another participant shared, "The more a teacher feels supported and cared about by their administration, the more likely they are to feel loyal to their district and wish to stay." In addition to feeling supported, valued, and respected, other frequent response topics included a positive school climate and culture, work-life balance, and collaboration.

When asked about ways that school administrators can directly support teacher job satisfaction and retention, much like with the highest rated leadership characteristic from the quantitative data, the response topic with the highest frequency was communication (Table 2). Common themes within the response topic of communication included concepts such as "keeping people in the loop," having an "open door," and making sure everyone is "on the same page." The topic of communication for school administrators often only considers communication from administration to teacher, whether that be through meetings, bulletins, emails, timely responses, or directives. However, teacher short-answer response data indicates an importance for that communication to go both ways, with an emphasis on listening. One participant

responded, "It is vital that administration are good listeners to hear what teachers are

communicating." Another response noted, "Truly listen to the teacher; not just to

respond, but to understand." A third respondent shared, "Listening and making informed

decisions based on what the building needs." Communication was closely followed by

the response topics of visibility and access, which directly supports communication.

Being visible, checking in regularly, and being more present in teachers' day-to-day work

environments were common themes in responses regarding the visibility and access of

administrators. One teacher responded, "Be present, listen, and support teachers in

difficult situations." Another teacher responded, "Support teachers daily by being present

and available." This was summed up by a third response that stated, "An administrator

needs to be available when needed to address concerns in a timely manner to support

staff."

When asked about current issues and challenges that teachers need increased

administrative support to improve job satisfaction and retention, most of the responses

revolved around topics of support with student discipline, parents, and work-life balance

(Table 3). "We cannot possibly deal with all the issues that students come to school

carrying," commented one teacher. Another teacher responded, "Disruptive students

cause issues that affect the entire classroom and teachers need the support of

administrators to prevent massive distractions to learning." Often coupled with responses

including student discipline were comments about support with parents. One participant

put both together in their response saying, "Discipline and follow through with students

and parents across the board. Administration needs to have their teachers' backs. Too

often the blame for a student's failure or misbehavior falls upon the teacher." Other

responses with regards to more support with student discipline and parents included

consistent expectations and enforcement, issues with cell phones, student mental health,

and social emotional needs. Work-life balance was also a frequently referenced for

increased administrative support, leading one teacher to comment, "Acknowledging that

we are people that have priorities, families, and our own well-being." This sentiment was

summed up by the response, "Expectations increase little by little, but nothing is taken off

plates." Other response topics related to work-life balance noted by participants included

teacher burnout, more time for professional development and collaboration, and more

time for work completion in the classroom.

      Follow-up Interview Response Analysis. The responses to optional, follow-up

research questions on instances when teachers felt most supported or unsupported were

analyzed. In addition, interviewees were asked if they had ever considered leaving their

current position or the career of education and what role, if any, administrative support

may have played. Interviewees were asked about a time when they felt most supported by

school administrators and what made them feel supported. The response topics of support

with student discipline, communication, support with teacher innovation, and flexibility

were given with the most frequency (Table 4). These topics triangulate with and support

both the quantitative survey data and short-answer question data on leadership

characteristics. One participant responded, "I felt supported in the past when

administrators gave me their time, their energy, and their ability to listen to different

situations that I needed help with." Another participant felt supported by communication

from administrators when they "were very upfront and honest" and that "the biggest thing

is the ability to listen and make that connection." In addition to communication as a

repeating theme in interview responses, student discipline was commonly mentioned. Topics referenced with student discipline with interview responses included timeliness, responsiveness, support with social and societal issues such as race, and collaboration on solutions. One response included, "The way I felt most supported is we sit, we talk, and we have some sort of plan in place going forward." This topic of being heard and supported was echoed by another participant that stated, "They heard me and they took action. I just really appreciated it in that moment."

The second interview question posed the opposite scenario, asking about times teachers felt unsupported and why. The response topic frequency data also supported the above quantitative data and short-answer response data with lack of communication overwhelmingly mentioned the most in interviews (Table 5). One interviewee responded, "It almost feels like what you have to say isn't important and isn't being heard." Another responded, "In meetings or committees there are times where they will ask your opinion and there will be group discussion, but then the principal will be like, 'well this is what I want to do.'" The lack of communication with regards to not feeling listened to or heard in decision making was also supported by the response, "I feel there is a difference between being listened to and being heard. Administrators are making decisions, and they haven't consulted with the people who are in the trenches." Lastly, one interviewee shared an experience as a department with the response, "It appeared to us as a department or individually that they really just didn't care and just wanted to get one more thing off their to do list." Based on responses and these quotes in particular, teachers feel supported when their input is sought out, heard, and acted upon.

The third interview question focused on whether the respondent had considered leaving their current position or education, and to what degree administrative support may have been involved in that consideration (Table 6). Twelve of the teachers that were interviewed reported having considered leaving their current position or the career. They that indicated they considered leaving due to a career change, new certification area, or financial reasons. In terms of leadership characteristics or forms of administrative support that may have played a role in their consideration to leave, teachers shared topics also present in the quantitative and other qualitative data such as student discipline, communication concerns, and work-life balance. One respondent expressed concerns about student discipline and classroom safety by sharing, "I felt that way last year because I had kids in my class who were clearly afraid. I had kids that were using racial slurs." Another interviewee noted a lack of confidence in asking for support with student discipline from administrators by replying, "I feel like at this point I'm not even sending them anywhere. I just keep them with me because if I send them to the office, nothing happens, so I would rather them stay and deal with it that way."

Interview participants who indicated they had not considered leaving their current position or education cited reasons such as being part of a school family, being meant for teaching, and positive relationships with administrators. One response included, "It's the little things. Making those personal connections." Another reply included, "When they walk through the building, I know that I can have a conversation with them." One respondent referenced a time that they were going through a family tragedy, and an administrator checked on them and prayed with them. It was clear in responses that relationships matter and are a key factor in support of job satisfaction.

Qualitative Data Analysis for Research Question Two

Research question two asked, "What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?" The qualitative data collected from both open-ended online survey questions and interview questions on the topic of administrative support are analyzed for response topic trend frequency and patterns below.

Survey Short-answer Response Analysis. The responses to three open-ended, short-answer questions on the topic of administrative support for teachers were analyzed. An inductive analysis of open-ended responses was conducted to code responses and identify trends in the data that triangulate with the quantitative responses of teachers to the online survey on the impact of school administrator evaluation components on job satisfaction and retention. When asked about the role of administrative support in the job satisfaction and retention of teachers, the highest frequency response topics were making teachers feel supported, valued, and respected. Teachers also responded with direct connections to types of administrative support that reinforced the quantitative mean score rankings of evaluation components (Table 1). This included several references in the short-answer response data about collaboration and the empowerment of teachers which is associated with the evaluation component of building a collaborative and empowering work environment. One teacher responded, "I value working in an environment where administrators are working with teachers towards a common goal." Another participant stated, "Teachers thrive when they feel empowered, trusted, and autonomous." Another theme present in responses was teacher appreciation for the ability to try new things and

take risks. This was summarized by one teacher that responded, "Having administrative support pushes me to be a better educator. Having this support allows me to try new things and have confidence."

When asked about ways school administrators can directly support teacher job satisfaction and attrition, the response topic of highest frequency again aligned with the qualitative ranking of school administrator evaluation components. Communicating effectively and strategically was the top mean score ranked evaluation component but also the most referred to form of administrative support in short-answer responses (Table 2). One response included, "In my experiences, frustration and dissatisfaction usually stem from lack of communication or poor communication. Teachers love information and knowing what is going on." Another teacher responded, "An administrator can create buy-in and make teachers feel heard and valued." Along with communication, building a collaborative work environment was also supported by short-answer response data. One response included, "Work with teachers hand-in-hand and in the trenches. Listen to staff, create, and implement a plan with input." Another teacher shared, "Be willing to work hand in hand through the good and the bad to create a more positive work environment." Finally, a reoccurring theme in responses included administrators keeping in mind what it was like being a teacher. This trend was summed up well by the response, "Too many administrators have been out of the classroom too long and have forgotten what it is like to be in the teacher's shoes all the time."

When asked about current issues and challenges that teachers need increased administrative support with to improve job satisfaction and retention, the response topics of student discipline and support with parents also corresponded to the highly ranked

school administrator evaluation components of ensuring school safety, setting high

expectations for all students, and managing conflict constructively (Table 3). One teacher

responded, "Teachers need the support of a principal with consistent discipline practices

and a social and emotional program where the entire community (principal, teachers,

staff, and parents) follow the same program." This was echoed by another teacher that

replied, "It feels like as the years go on there is an increasing number of students and

parents who do not value education." Challenging situations with parents were also

referenced by one respondent that stated, "When a parent calls, ask us what happened

before you jump on us for something that may or may not be true." Throughout their

responses, teachers discussed increasing challenges with student behaviors and

interactions with parents, and the importance of a supportive school administrator to

support all parties as part of a team.

Follow-up Interview Response Analysis. To answer the second research

question, the responses to optional, follow-up research questions on instances when

teachers felt most supported or unsupported were analyzed. In addition, interviewees

were asked if they had ever considered leaving their current position or the career of

education and what role, if any, administrative support may have played. Interviewees

were asked about a time when they felt most supported by school administrators and what

made them feel supported. The most frequent response topics that coincided with school

administrative evaluation components were student discipline, communication, and

teacher innovation (Table 4). These topics connected to the highly rated administrator

evaluation components of communicating effectively and strategically, ensuring school

safety, and setting high expectations for students. Teachers noted feeling most supported

when administrators are present, responsive, and consistent with student discipline, including one special education teacher that commented, "It can be emotional and there is never a hesitation about if you need a break, we'll get somebody to cover you." In addition to support with discipline, teachers also discussed feeling most supported when allowed to innovate or implement new ideas. "I have felt most supported when I'm given the OK to try something, even though maybe it hasn't been tried before," responded of one teacher. Another stated, "Just having that support to go create, get creative, let the kids run with what they are interested in. That has been really awesome."

The second interview question asked the opposite as the first about times teachers felt unsupported and why. The response topic frequency data also supported quantitative data rankings of communicating effectively and creating a collaborative and empowering work environment as key to the job satisfaction and retention of teachers (Table 5). The majority of experiences shared by teachers included a lack of communication on the part of administration. Trends in the interview responses included instances like administrators "not having the whole story" or seeking input only to not use it in decision making. One respondent described a lack of communication by saying, "Administrators are making decisions and they haven't consulted with people who are in the trenches. This looks good on paper type of thing. Let's do this and then it kind of goes by the wayside." This lack of communication also connects to other response topics such as frustration with teacher workload, ego, low collaboration, and lack of appreciation. One response highlighted, "I want to say underappreciated, but there's a lack of ability or lack of awareness from certain administrators to kind of read the room or social cues." Other

examples included instances where it was perceived that administrators were "out to get people" or "make examples of different people or things."

The third interview question focused on whether the respondent had considered leaving their current position or education, and to what degree administrative support may have been involved in that consideration. The majority of those interviewed indicated they have considered a change citing changing certifications, seeking new careers, or financial need as the most common reasons (Table 6). With regards to administrative support that aligns with school the school administrator evaluation components of research question two, communication, work-life balance, and school discipline were discussed. These high-frequency response topics agree with the quantitative data used to measure the mean score rankings of evaluation components. Five respondents indicated they had not considered leaving their position or the field of education, citing ideas such as being meant for teaching, being part of a school family, and positive relationships. These concepts align with the evaluation component of building a collaborative and empowering school culture. One teacher that reported not considering leaving said, "I love my job. I feel like I was meant to do this. I love every day because it is different." Another cited the empathy and support of administration during a time of family need as being part of a work family and a reason to stay.

Triangulation of Data

Triangulation is the comparison of sources of data and cross-checking results to improve the credibility and validity of a study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this mixed methods study, both quantitative and qualitative data sources were collected to cast a broader net into the types of administrative leadership characteristics and support

behaviors that best promote teacher job satisfaction and retention in the career. As a result of the study, the researcher was able to triangulate the Likert scale ratings of leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components with the open-ended and interview responses provided by participants. Through this comparison, it could be determined which response patterns and trends were the most credible as they would have multiple forms of response data indicating their importance with regards to teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Teachers ranked leadership characteristics and administrative evaluation components for importance towards their job satisfaction and willingness to stay in their job. To validate and add credibility to the Likert scale rating survey responses, qualitative data in the form of short-answers and interview responses on the same topic of administrative support were included in the study. By triangulating the quantitative survey results with the qualitative open response and interview questions, the most impactful types of leadership and administrative support for the respondent group with regards to teacher job satisfaction and retention could be determined. In addition to this comparison of multiple types of data for the overall respondent group, another level of triangulation for credibility was added through the examination of teacher subgroup data (career stage, teaching level, and teaching assignment) for the purpose of comparing subgroup data to the overall group to identify any potential trends in needed differentiation of administrative support for these various groups. Figure 45 provides a breakdown of the data sources and triangulation for each of the research questions included in the study.

Figure 45

Data Sources for Triangulation by Research Question

Research Question	Data Sources for Triangulation
1. What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?	- Likert scale survey ratings of research-based leadership characteristics - Open-ended short-answer response survey questions on administrative support - Follow-up interview question responses on administrative support
2. What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?	- Likert scale survey ratings of school administrative evaluation components - Open-ended short-answer response survey questions on administrative support - Follow-up interview question responses on administrative support
3. What is the relationship between teacher career stage and teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?	- Likert scale survey ratings of research-based leadership characteristics disaggregated by subgroup - Open-ended short-answer response survey questions on administrative support - Open-ended short-answer response survey questions on administrative support - Follow-up interview question responses on administrative support

Summary

The focus of this chapter was to present the methods of data analysis and results

for this study on teacher perceptions on administrative support on job satisfaction and

retention. Using a mixed methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative data from an online survey and follow-up interview were collected and presented by relationship to each research question. Quantitative data was presented in the form of mean score rankings of research-based leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components. Qualitative data was presented from the inductive coding and response totals of high-frequency topics from short-answer survey questions and interview responses. Disaggregated quantitative data also reflected differences in the perceptions of teachers in various subgroups when compared to the results from the overall participant group. Conclusions, limitations, recommendations, and potential areas for future research will be discussed in the closing chapter.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers on the importance of administrative support from school leaders on job satisfaction and retention using the following research questions:

1. What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?

2. What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?

3. What is the relationship between teacher career stage and teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?

The focus of the project was inspired by the ongoing teacher workforce challenges facing school districts and the researcher's own personal experience with the impact of increased faculty turnover and declining teacher morale. While some factors contributing to the teacher shortage and attrition facing public schools are outside of the control of school administrators, how school workforces are led, developed, and supported are key to the career decisions of educators. This chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations for school leaders derived from the online teacher survey and follow-up interview data shared in the previous chapter. The limitations of the

study and recommendations for future practice and research in the areas of administrative support and teacher job satisfaction are also shared in this chapter.

Conclusions

This mixed-methods study was conducted by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to measure the perceptions of teachers on the impact of school administrator leadership characteristics and evaluation components on job satisfaction and retention. The Likert-scale ratings on leadership characteristics and evaluation components, as well as open-ended survey questions and interview responses on the topic of administrative support, were used to answer each of the research questions below.

Research Question One

Research question one asked, "What school administrative leadership characteristics do teachers identify as having the most important role in the effective administrative support of educator job satisfaction and retention?" Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer the first research question. The quantitative data was collected by an online survey in the form of Likert-scale ratings of school administrative leadership characteristics, and the qualitative data was collected utilizing short-answer questions on administrative support on the online survey, as well as optional, follow-up interview questions. The entire survey including follow-up interview questions is included in Appendix D.

Results of the study showed that teachers surveyed consistently rated communication as the most important leadership characteristic with regards to teacher job satisfaction and retention. Communication was strongly supported in overall and

subgroup quantitative data, as well as throughout qualitative response data provided by teachers to short-answer and interview questions. In addition to communication, the leadership characteristics of integrity, responsibility, empathy, and efficiency were rated highest by the overall teacher response group. While some leadership characteristics were rated higher than others, it is of note that all 14 leadership characteristics rated by teachers had a mean response score indicating some importance towards job satisfaction and retention. While some characteristics may have been rated to support job satisfaction more than others, some variance in ratings by subgroups and all characteristics receiving at least a mean score of 3 or above indicate that well-rounded leadership can help promote the job satisfaction and retention of all the teacher groups.

Research Question Two

Research question two asked, "What is the impact of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework for Leadership evaluation tool for school administrators on educator job satisfaction and retention?" The first research question for this study focused on the leadership characteristics of school administrators. This question shifts the spotlight to how school administrators are evaluated in the state of Pennsylvania with the goal of determining which evaluation areas are most impactful to the job satisfaction and retention of teachers. Exploring how administrators are evaluated and which components of that evaluation are perceived by educators to have the greatest impact on job satisfaction and retention could better inform school districts on how their evaluations of school administrators support teacher job satisfaction and turnover. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer the second research question. The quantitative data was collected by an online survey in the form of Likert-scale ratings of

school administrator evaluation components, and the qualitative data was collected utilizing short-answer questions on administrative support on the online survey, as well as optional, follow-up interview questions. The entire survey including follow-up interview questions is included in Appendix D.

The school administrator evaluation component corresponding with strong communication was rated highest, supporting the responses to the first research question. High levels of communication were also consistently supported in qualitative responses to short-answer and interview questions as the evaluation component that made teachers feel most valued, supported, and respected. Teachers feeling listened to and heard in communication with administrators was a trend that emerged in responses. In addition to communication, the administrator evaluation components of safe schools and the establishment of collaborative and empowering work environments were rated most impactful in support of job satisfaction and retention. Short-answer survey questions and interview responses frequently referenced support with school discipline and teacher innovation as examples that supported these higher ratings. Conflict management was also highly rated, supported both by the overall group and several subgroups with reference to the growing need for support with students and parents when concerns arise.

Research Question Three

Research question three asked, "What is the relationship between teacher career stage and teaching assignment on teacher perceptions of leadership characteristics and components as they apply to educator job satisfaction and retention?" The goal of this research question was to use the data collected in the study to compare the responses of different subgroups. The purpose for this comparison was to determine any differentiation

in leadership areas of emphasis individual subgroups of teachers may perceive as having

a better impact on job satisfaction and retention. As part of the online survey, participants

were asked demographic questions regarding their years of experience, teaching level,

and teaching assignment. The quantitative, online survey data was disaggregated by

subgroups to determine the highest mean score rankings for both the school administrator

leadership characteristics and evaluation components.

There were several notable trends that emerged when examining the

disaggregated data from various groups by career stage, teaching level, and teaching

assignment. Newer teachers rated collaboration much higher than their veteran

colleagues. As teachers develop more experience, they place a higher value on integrity

and responsibility of school leadership. Primary level teachers rated collaboration higher

than their secondary counterparts, while secondary teachers rated flexibility and conflict

management as more impactful than other subgroups. Special educators valued efficiency

the highest while school service providers indicated the most appreciation for

collaboration and vision. Related arts teachers that serve all students within a school

provided the highest rating for administrative support that supports high expectations for

all students.

Recommendations

The collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from survey

ratings, short-answer responses, and interview questions relating to teacher perceptions of

the importance and impact of administrative support on job satisfaction and retention

resulted in several overarching themes. The following themes emerged from the data and

were used by the researcher to develop recommendations for future school leadership

practice and research:

- Communication is Key – Both quantitative mean score rankings of leadership

  characteristics and administrator evaluation components, as well as qualitative

  short-answer and interview response data, overwhelmingly indicated that teachers

  value high levels of communication from administration. Being informed,

  involved, and listened to were important aspects of communication from

  administration that were highlighted by participants as impactful. In addition,

  timely and transparent communication was also preferred.

- Work Environments Matter – Positive and well-connected work environments

  were highly-rated by teachers as having a strong impact on job satisfaction and

  retention. Teachers indicated that school climates and cultures that are positive,

  collaborative, safe, flexible, empathetic, and empowering promote better job

  satisfaction and retention. The building of relationships and connectivity among a

  school family supports commitment, buy-in, and trust. Collaboration is especially

  important to the newest and least experienced teachers. Teachers reported being at

  their best when they are trusted, provided autonomy, and given opportunities to

  innovate.

- Teachers Need Balance – A common, repeated theme in the data of this study was

  that work-life balance for educators supports better job satisfaction. Demands on

  educators inside and outside of the classroom continue to grow with little being

  removed from the plates of teachers while more programs, initiatives, and

mandates are added annually. Administrative support can help offset teacher burnout and stress.

- Presence is Appreciated – Access, visibility, and the context of current challenges facing teachers that comes with administrators being present throughout the school are critical to supporting teacher job satisfaction and retention. Teachers expressed an appreciation for frequent check-ins, informal conversations, and administrative support that is present and visible throughout the school day and around the entire school not just in the main office by appointment or after formal observations.

- Challenges are Growing – Participants reinforced the literature on teacher shortage that increasing challenges in the classroom are having negative impacts on teacher job satisfaction and attrition. Student behavior, controversial societal issues, mental health, confrontations with parents, and cell phones were all shared as issues that require increased administrative support in schools.

- Job Satisfaction is not Data-driven – School improvement initiatives, data-informed planning, and student achievement will always be paramount in measuring the effectiveness of schools, curriculum, instruction, and programming. However, with regards to teacher job satisfaction and retention, the importance of instructional leadership was regularly rated below other forms of administrative support. Teachers did not indicate that instructional leadership was unimportant, but other forms of administrative support such as communication, work environment, and school order and safety were preferred.

Recommendations for Practice

This study focused on the perceptions of teachers on the impact of administrative support on job satisfaction and retention in education. The goal of this research was to provide school leaders with actionable data in multiple forms from which to inform leadership practices to combat the current trends of teacher shortage and attrition. The data collection, analysis, and overarching themes presented above support the following recommendations for practices in administrative support that have potential to better support teacher job satisfaction and retention.

School Leadership Teams. Teachers that participated in the study indicated both in ratings of leadership characteristics and administrator evaluation components that they value communication, collaboration, empowerment, and the feeling of being valued and supported. School administrators that move beyond traditional faculty, department, and other standard informational meetings to more of a model that develops shared vision, mission, decision-making among their teachers and staff have a greater opportunity to support teacher job satisfaction, buy-in, and stronger school culture. Shared leadership teams that work together to identify areas of need and problem-solve with multiple perspectives are better informed and empowered. These types of teams also allow administration to identify and cultivate teacher leaders and future internal candidates for administrative positions. Teachers and faculties that feel heard and represented in the direction and decisions of a school are more likely to be satisfied in their work and stay in their jobs.

Feedback Systems. Assessment and feedback are daily, ongoing occurrences in classrooms between students and teachers, and even to some degree between teachers and

administrators with classroom walkthroughs and observations. However, there are little to no traditional vehicles or opportunities for school leaders to get this type of formative or formal feedback from those they serve outside of annual evaluations by supervisors. School administrators looking to better support teacher job satisfaction and retention can implement the findings of this research or similar studies by establishing ongoing and transparent systems of feedback from which to inform support for teachers and school decision making. Feedback systems in the form of needs assessments or surveys with the option of anonymity can give teachers an opportunity and voice to safely provide input on what is working and what is not from their perspective within a school. "360 Degree" evaluation and survey tools have been developed by companies to aid organizations, including schools, for the collection of this type of feedback. Focus groups and roundtable-style meetings around current issues can also be of value and support. The sharing of feedback data with teachers and leadership teams provides a level of transparency and accountability that can promote the type of collaborative and empowering work environment that response data from this study indicated supported teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Expand Teacher Induction and Mentoring for New Teachers. Teachers with zero to five years of experience in this study indicated that collaboration had among the highest impacts on their job satisfaction and attrition. That finding coupled with the literature on teacher shortage showing that most teachers leave the career do so within the first five years indicates a need for school administrators to consider enhancing and expanding support for newer teachers. State-mandated teacher induction programs in schools are two-year programs that may seem adequate on paper, but in the experience of

the researcher, tend not to be a priority for either the overwhelmed young teacher learning the ropes or the assigned mentor and administrator also struggling to manage day-to-day demands. Districts should consider expanding induction programs beyond two years, including increased investment in release time for professional development, mentoring opportunities, and training targeted specifically to the needs of new educators to help increase the chances that new teachers remain.

More Support for Administrators. A strong theme within the response data of this study involved the increasing number and intensity of challenges facing schools. These included but were not limited to student discipline, issues with parents, mental health, school safety, societal issues, and work-life balance. Not only do teachers need increased administrative support with these concerns but so do the administrators. School administrators who are overwhelmed, understaffed, and constantly trying to balance all the demands of students, teachers, parents, administration, the board, and the community simply need more help. The short and easy answer might be to hire more administrators to assist with the needs of schools, but that presents its own challenges, most notably the cost in additional salary and benefits to a district and how any additional administrators would be assigned to equitably manage the needs of multiple schools or settings. When adding administrative positions is not possible, schools can become more creative with local funding and grant money for leadership team positions without supervisory responsibilities to help support the day-to-day needs of students and teachers with school discipline and management. Priority should also be given to the ongoing professional development and training of school administrators in research-based best practices in leadership.

Administrative Evaluation Areas of Emphasis. The second research question for this study asked teachers to rate the 20 components of the Pennsylvania Framework for Leadership used to evaluate school administrators. These ratings along with qualitative responses to open-ended survey questions and interviews indicated that the components involving instructional leadership did not rate as having as high an impact on job satisfaction as more traditional leadership characteristics or aspects building management. Over the last few decades, the measurement of school administrators has grown to include increasing amounts of data and evidence of student achievement and instructional leadership. The data from this study indicates that those aspects of school leadership, though important, are not as impactful in terms of supporting teacher job satisfaction or retention. Without highly qualified and talented teachers, no school administrator or instructional leadership practice can drive student achievement. School district leaders should find balance between evaluating principals for instructional leadership, management of schools, and building of collaborative and empowering work environments. If schools are not evaluating and developing their principals to support teachers both as instructional leaders and building managers that support job satisfaction and attrition, prohibitive factors such as teacher morale, burnout, and turnover will negatively impact student achievement.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this research study provided data and insight into teacher perceptions of administrative support and its impact on job satisfaction and career decisions, how school systems can support educators at all levels is an area that needs more research and exploration. The challenges and prohibitive factors that exist to current and future

educators are only growing. Public education will continue struggling to attract, develop, and retain quality educators without a greater understanding of these challenges and stronger support for teachers in the modern classroom environment. The following are areas of suggested future research that could extend or expand upon the results of this study.

Subgroup Focused Studies. This research study included 81 teachers from two school districts, broken down into subgroups by teaching experience, teaching level, and teaching assignment. The data collected represented all subgroups, but some subgroups contained lesser numbers of teachers, and thus smaller sample sizes. Future studies on administrative support and its impact on job satisfaction and teacher retention could narrow the focus to a particular subgroup to provide more in-depth feedback on the needs of a particular career stage, level, or placement.

Leadership Trait or Evaluation Component Studies. This research study surveyed teachers on 14 leadership components and 20 school administrator evaluation components. In retrospect, while this provided a wide range of data points on each topic, a narrower focus could be appropriate for follow-up research or extension of this study. For example, communication was overwhelmingly identified by teachers at almost every opportunity in both the survey and interviews as having a high impact on job satisfaction and retention. A study focused on just communication as a form of administrative support could yield more nuanced and in-depth data with more specific recommendations for practitioners. A follow-up study on other leadership characteristics or components could also include more focused examinations of high impact areas such as collaborative and

empowering work environments, teacher support and appreciation, school safety, and student discipline.

Pre-Service and Post-Service Teacher Studies. While this research study focused on current teachers across various career stages, levels, and assignments, a study of teachers either before or after their career could also yield compelling data to be considered by school administrators when considering ways to combat teacher shortage and attrition. Surveying or interviewing teachers prior to full-time service could better inform school systems on the needs of new teachers and inductees, while a study focused on teachers who have left their career could provide a more experienced point of view on what best supports teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Administrative Perspectives Study. Studying teacher perspectives on administrative support for job satisfaction was a poignant and timely research topic. It is the belief of the researcher that a juxtaposed study on the perspectives of school administrators on this topic would also be impactful. A collaborative and empowering work environment includes not just administrative support for teachers, but also teacher support for administrators. This research could include school administrators rating and responding to similar leadership characteristic traits and evaluation components but also exploring the ways that administrators and their job satisfaction and retention feel most supported by teachers.

Limitations

There were several limiting factors that may have impacted this research study. This study was conducted only using volunteer respondents from two medium-sized

school districts. The volunteer nature of the study resulted in 81 participants, but lack of more specific sampling did not allow the researcher to control the focus of the study to any subgroup of teachers. Also, while the two participating school districts provided access to an adequate number of willing participants, the teachers worked in districts that shared similar demographics. A third, more urban school district was invited to participate but declined permission to the researcher to survey teachers. The perspective of urban teachers on the research topic would have been valuable and grounded in a different set of experiences and challenges regarding job satisfaction and retention.

Another possible limitation of the study was bias. The researcher has experience and background as a school administrator. While this study was designed and implemented with as much objectivity as possible, there was potential for implicit bias in the analysis of data with regards to the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and working environments. The individual experiences of respondents were varied with different levels of job satisfaction prior to the study that could have impacted objectivity. When asked to rate their current job satisfaction as a teacher (Survey Question 5), only seven out of 81 teachers reported dissatisfaction with their current position. Most teachers that participated in this study were responding from the perspective of being satisfied at some level with their job. A participant group with more balanced levels of satisfaction to dissatisfaction or made up of only dissatisfied teachers may have provided different responses. Anonymity in the survey and interviews was assured of participants but some responses may have been given with the understanding that the topic was directly related to how they are supervised.

Summary

School districts are struggling to attract and retain quality teachers. While many external, societal, and financial factors are contributing to today's teacher workforce concerns, this mixed-methods study was conducted to explore the perceptions of teachers on internal school leadership practices and administrative support for their impact on job satisfaction and retention in the career. This study collected quantitative and qualitative data to gain more insight into which leadership characteristics and school administrator evaluation components were rated to have the highest importance for teacher job satisfaction. If school leaders are implementing leadership practices that support teacher job satisfaction and retention, it improves the chances of retaining quality teachers and better supports student achievement. Highly rated leadership characteristics and practices that were scored as having the most impact job satisfaction included communication, integrity, collaborative and empowering work environments, school safety, and making teachers feel valued and supported through connectivity, relationships, accessibility, and respect.

School administrators should be concerned about teacher scarcity and workforce fluidity. If administrators are not taking care of their teachers in a way that supports job satisfaction and retention, another school or district looking for teachers will. In a short-answer response to a question about the role of administrative support, one teacher wrote, "They say people leave bosses and not jobs." While the literature on teacher shortage and attrition indicates there are many factors contributing to the workforce challenges of schools, this response signals a need for school administrators to examine their leadership practices and how districts evaluate and develop school principals to prevent negative

teacher job satisfaction as the result of inadequate leadership. School leaders may not have control over all aspects of the societal storm currently making it hard to find teachers, but they do have control over how they lead. The results of this study on teacher perceptions of administrative support show that teachers are more satisfied with their jobs when they feel supported, valued, involved, connected, listened to, and respected. Many school improvement initiatives are costly and difficult to budget, but leadership that values, supports, and appreciates teachers is free.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

Institutional Review Board
250 University Avenue
California, PA 15419
instreviewboard@calu.edu
Melissa Sovak, Ph.D.

Dear Nathan,

Please consider this email as official notification that your proposal titled "Investigating Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Administrative Support on Educator Job Satisfaction and Retention" (Proposal #PW24-027) has been approved by the Pennsylvania Western University Institutional Review Board as submitted.

The effective date of approval is 08/07/2024 and the expiration date is 08/06/2025. 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 08/06/2025, you must file additional information to be considered for continuing review. Please contact instreviewboard@calu.edu

Please notify the Board when data collection is complete.

Regards,

Melissa Sovak, PhD.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

District A Letter of Consent

July 29, 2024

Nathan Rackley
226 Waterford Way
Lebanon, PA 17042

Dear Mr. Rackley,

I am honored to write a letter in support of your doctoral Capstone project entitled, "Investigating Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Administrative Support on Educator Job Satisfaction and Retention." The potential impact of the proposed research on school districts could be significant, as education faces growing challenges with recruiting and retaining staff in schools. This study has the opportunity to offer valuable insights to school administrators regarding the leadership traits and methods that best contribute to teacher job satisfaction and retention in their current roles.

I have reviewed the project proposal and understand the following:
- Teacher participation involves the completion of an online survey instrument.
- All participation will be voluntary.
- Teachers can withdraw at any time.
- Collected responses will be kept confidential and secure via electronic files.
- Potential risks are minimal and include loss of confidentiality and undesired distress in responding to questions related to working in education.

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

Sincerely,

Appendix C

District B Letter of Consent

Superintendent		Director of Business Affairs
Assistant Superintendent	Director of Human Resources	Asst. to the Supt. for Student Services
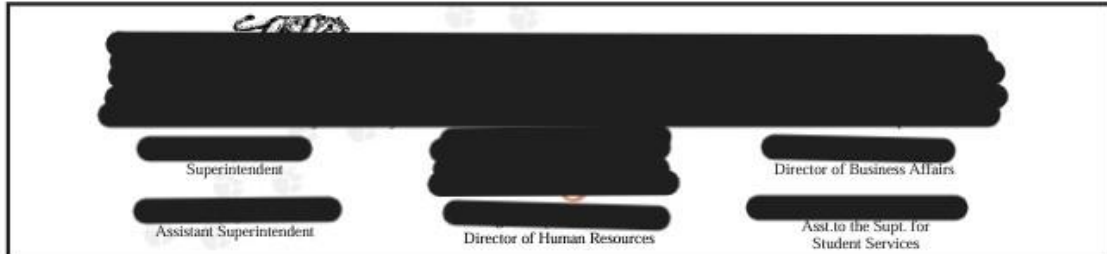
June 24, 2024

Nathan Rackley
226 Waterford Way
Lebanon, PA 17042

Dear Mr. Rackley,

I am pleased to write a letter in support of your doctoral capstone project entitled, "Investigating Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Administrative Support on Educator Job Satisfaction and Retention." The proposed research has a great deal of potential value to school districts as education faces growing challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff in schools. Your study could provide school administrators with insight as to what leadership characteristics and approaches best support teacher job satisfaction and retention in their current positions.

I have reviewed the project proposal and understand the following:
- Teacher participation involves the completion of an online survey instrument.
- All participation will be voluntary and teachers can withdraw at any time.
- Collected responses will be kept confidential and secure via electronic files.
- Potential risks are minimal and include loss of confidentiality and undesired distress in responding to questions related to working in education.

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

Sincerely,

Appendix D

Copy of Online Survey

Investigating Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Administrative Support on Educator Job Satisfaction and Retention

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

Title of Study: Investigating Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Administrative Support on Educator Job Satisfaction and Retention

Principal Investigator: Mr. Nathan Rackley

KEY INFORMATION

You are being asked by Mr. Nathan Rackley to participate in a research study, taking part in the study is voluntary, and you may stop at any time.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers on the impact of the support provided by school administrators on their job satisfaction and retention in education. A stronger understanding of teacher beliefs around leadership and types of support that have a positive effect on job satisfaction and retention could help school administrators better serve their staff and school populations.

In this study, you will be presented with/asked to rate school administrator leadership characteristics and components of the Pennsylvania Framework for Leadership used to evaluate school administrators as to their importance to job satisfaction and retention. In addition, participants will be asked to respond to several open-ended questions on the topic of administrative support and its role in educator job satisfaction. Finally, respondents can volunteer to participate in a brief follow-up, online interview to provide more specific detail on their opinions on administrative support and its impact on educator job satisfaction and retention. It will take you about 10-15 minutes to complete the study.

Respondents are not rating their school administrators and should not apply these questions to any individual. Instead, the leadership characteristics and components in the survey should be considered objectively as to how they each apply to your own personal job satisfaction and retention in your current position.

There is no compensation or direct benefit to participants from the research. The research will help researchers better understand how this research relates to their career field and working conditions. The potential risks during the study are minimal and include loss of confidentiality and undesired distress in responding to questions related to working in education.

This online study is completely anonymous. You will not be asked to provide your name or email address unless you volunteer for the follow-up interview. The survey is NOT linked to IP addresses. Individual responses will not be presented, just the aggregated data.

Remember, taking part in this study is voluntary. If, while taking the survey, 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 without pressing "submit."

All information from this study will be confidential within local, state, and federal laws. The Pennsylvania Western University Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the research records. The study's results may be shared in aggregate form at a meeting or journal, but your personal information will not be revealed. Records from this study will be kept by Mr. Nathan Rackley for at least three (3) years after the study is complete. Your information collected in this research will not be used or distributed for future research studies, even if all your identifiers are removed.

If you have questions about the research or a research-related issue, you can contact Mr. Nathan Rackley at rac61777@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 Pennsylvania Western University Institutional Review Board at InstReviewBoard@Pennwest.edu. If you would like a copy of this informed consent, please print this screen or contact Mr. Nathan Rackley at rac61777@pennwest.edu.

By clicking on the "Yes" and continuing with the survey, you have acknowledged that you have read the entire informed consent and are at least 18 years of age. 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 completely voluntary, and you may quit the study at any time without penalty.

* Indicates required question

1. Do you consent to participate in the research study? Please choose an option   *
   below and click "next."

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes, I wish to start the survey.   *Skip to question 2*

   ◯ No, I do not wish to particpate.

At this time, you have chosen not to participate in the study. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions prior to participating, please contact Mr. Nathan Rackley at rac61777@pennwest.edu. **You can close this browser to exit the survey at this time.**

Demographical Questions

To better understand trends or patterns in teacher perspectives on school administrator support and job satisfaction, please answer the following questions on your years of experience, teaching level, and current teaching assignment and job satisfaction.

2. Please indicate your total, full-time years of experience in education:

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 0-5 Years

   ◯ 6-10 Years

   ◯ 11-20 Years

   ◯ 21-30 Years

   ◯ 30+ Years

3. Please indicate your current level of teaching (if more than one applies, please select where you spend the majority of your instructional time):

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Primary Elementary (Grades K-2)

   ◯ Intermediate Elementary (Grades 3-5)

   ◯ Middle School (Grades 6-8)

   ◯ High School (Grades 9-12)

4. Please choose which category best describes your current teaching assignment:

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Regular Education

   ◯ Special Area/Related Arts/Electives

   ◯ Special Education/ELL/Intervention

   ◯ Student Services (Counselor/Psychologist/Nurse)

5. How would you rate your own current job satisfaction?

1 = Very Dissatisfied
2 = Somewhat Dissatisfied
3 = Somewhat Satisfied
4 = Very Satisfied

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Very	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very Satisfied

Skip to question 6

Importance of School Administrator Leadership Characteristics

Using the scale provided, please rate the following 14 research-based leadership characteristics of school administrators as to their importance to your job satisfaction and retention as an educator.

1 = Never Important
2 = Sometimes Important
3 = Often Important
4 = Always Important

6. **Intelligence**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

7. **Initiative**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

8. **Responsibility**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

9. **Confidence**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

10. **Integrity**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

11. **Sociability**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

12. **Determination**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

13. **Organization**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

14. **Efficiency**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

15. **Communication**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

16. **Collaboration**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

17. **Empathy**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

18. **Flexibility**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

19. **Self-Discipline**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
New	◯	◯	◯	◯	Always Important

Impact of components from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Framework Leadership used to evaluate school administrators on teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Below are the 20 components of the PA Department of Education Framework for Leadership used to evaluate the job performance school administrators in our state.

Using the scale provided, please rate the leadership components as to their impact on your job satisfaction and retention as an educator.

1 = No Impact
2 = Low Impact
3 = Some Impact
4 = High Impact

20. **Creates an organizational vision.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

21. **Uses data for informed decision making.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

22. **Builds a collaborative and empowering work environment.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	○	○	○	○	High Impact

23. **Leads change efforts for continuous improvement.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	○	○	○	○	High Impact

24. **Celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	○	○	○	○	High Impact

25. **Leverages human and financial resources.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	○	○	○	○	High Impact

26. **Ensures a high-quality, high-performing staff.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

27. **Complies with federal, state, and district mandates.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

28. **Establishes and implements expectations for students and staff.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

29. **Communicates effectively and strategically.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

30. **Manages conflict constructively.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

31. **Ensures school safety.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

32. **Leads school improvement initiatives.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

33. **Aligns curricula, instruction, and assessments.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

34. **Implements high-quality instruction.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

35. **Sets high expectations for all students.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

36. **Maximizes instructional time.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

37. **Maximizes professional responsibilities through parent involvement.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	◯	◯	◯	◯	High Impact

38. **Shows professionalism.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	○	○	○	○	High Impact

39. **Shows professional growth.**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
No I	○	○	○	○	High Impact

Open-ended Response Questions

Please read and respond to the following open-ended questions based on your experience with administrative support in schools as it relates to educator job satisfaction and retention.

40. **What role does administrative support play in the job satisfaction and retention of teachers?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

41. **What are the most important ways school administrators can support teacher job satisfaction and retention?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

42. **With what current issues or challenges in schools do you feel teachers need more administrative support in order to promote better overall job satisfaction and retention?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

Optional Follow-Up Interview

Would you be willing to participate in a brief, optional 5-10 minute follow up interview conducted online via Zoom and scheduled at a time convenient for you? The follow up interview is NOT required to complete the survey. It is only intended to provide additional response information on the research topic from those that choose to participate. Your participation in the follow-up interview and responses will be confidential.

If so, please select "Yes" followed by "Next" to be taken to a place to enter a preferred contact email address. If not, please select "No" followed by "Next" to be taken to the end of the survey to submit your responses.

43.   The optional, follow-up interview questions will be as follows:

- When or under what circumstances have you felt most supported by school administrators? What made you feel supported?

- When or under what circumstances have you felt least supported by school administrators? What made you feel unsupported?

- Have you ever considered leaving your current position or education? If so, what if any role did administrative support play in your consideration?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes, I would be willing to participate in the optional follow-up survey.

◯ No, I would not be willing to participate in the optional follow-up survey.
        Skip to section 9 (Survey Completed!)

Thank you for being willing to participate in the optional, follow-up survey. Your preferred email address, participation in the follow-up survey, and responses will be confidential.

44.   Please provide a preferred email address you would like to be used to contact you about scheduling a date/time convenient for you and to send a Zoom meeting link.

_____

Survey Completed!

THANK YOU! You have finished the research study survey! Your time and effort in responding is greatly appreciated.