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HOOD COLLEGE



Influence of a Leadership Coach Community:  
New School Leaders' Self Efficacy Perspectives

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
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Doctor of Organizational Leadership

by  
Karine J. Myers

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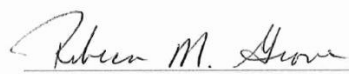
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## DEDICATION

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Influence of a Leadership Coach Community:  
New School Leaders' Self Efficacy Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The role of the school principal continues to increase in complexity and challenge. Administrators are expected to have a significant impact on student achievement and absenteeism in addition to teacher satisfaction and retention. Yet, half of principals have less than five or fewer years of leadership experience. High-quality, personalized professional learning, such as leadership coaching, is essential to support principals in their development to ensure effective schools and student success. This qualitative action research study aimed to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community of practice on new school administrators' perceptions of self-efficacy. It examined participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements and adjustments. Twelve leadership coaching participants from a K-12 mid-sized, mid-Atlantic school system completed two semi-structured interviews, one at mid-intervention and the other at the end of the intervention. Six participants completed and submitted pre and post self-efficacy scales, and four principal supervisors completed an end- of-intervention survey. Researcher logs and memos served as an additional data source. Coded data identified patterns and themes for coaches, coachees, and the leadership coaching program. The study found that coachees experienced increased self-efficacy, valued trusted relationships and collegial collaboration, and felt supported in their transition to their new principalship role. Participants felt the program was mutually beneficial for the coach and

coachee. Findings indicate that the program provided valuable support and should be continued. The participants recommended the program expand beyond the school-based administrator role to serve and support other leaders within the school system as they acclimate to new roles. Results provide insight for other school systems seeking to design or implement a similar leadership coaching program to influence leadership self-efficacy both for coaches and coachees.



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

School leaders positively impact students, staff, and communities in a multitude of ways (Leithwood et al., 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; The Wallace Foundation, 2006; Augustine-Shaw, 2015). Leithwood et al. (2004) first found that school leadership was second only to teacher influence regarding school-related factors that impact student achievement. Moreover, school leadership had more impact on those schools with significant needs (Leithwood et al., 2004). Leithwood et al. (2020) revisited their original claim.. Because researchers described the claim as one of the most widely endorsed and quoted; they felt a revision of the claim was warranted because of the initial study's limitations and the availability of higher-quality evidence more than ten years later. The researchers concluded, "school leadership has a significant effect on features of the school organization which positively influences the quality of teaching and learning. While *moderate*, their leadership effect is vital to the success of most school improvement efforts" (p. 6).

Grissom et al. (2021), in a longitudinal study over two decades, found that the impact of school leadership may not have been stated "strongly enough" in terms of magnitude and scope on a range of students and teacher outcomes (p. 91). The researchers concluded effective principals have large effect sizes; they claimed that replacing a sub-par principal with an effective principal would increase a typical student's learning by three months in both math and language arts annually. Grissom et al. (2021) also posited that the impact of the principal reaches beyond student achievement outcomes. They suggested effective principals affect student absenteeism and exclusionary discipline, and teacher satisfaction and retention. Therefore,

Grissom et al. (2021) indicated the need for more focused attention to preparing and supporting high-quality school leadership personnel.

The school leaders' landscape is ever changing, and few jobs have the array of roles and responsibilities of a school principal (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). The diversity of students and their families, financial constraints, volatile political conditions, and increasing accountability structures make the role of principal even more of a challenge in today's global economy (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) depict the relentless work principals do to increase student achievement, develop, and support their staff, and create a positive culture and climate (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The PSEL standards highlight the need for effectively allocating resources, developing efficient systems and policies, and striving for equity while promoting culturally responsive practices (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

The shift from the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC), which were established in 1996 and updated in 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008), to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders highlights the leader's role in the support and care of students and the academic rigor of school. The standards also recognize the critical importance of human relationships and equity-focused work on leadership, instruction, and learning (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Unlike the ISLLC standards, which served as the foundation of principal preparation programs, certification, professional development, and performance evaluation across the country, the PSEL standards provide the guideposts for school leaders to "make a difference every day in learning and

wellbeing of students by articulating the leadership students and schools need and deserve” (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

Not only is the role of the principal shifting, but the people in the role have also shifted according to the recent longitudinal research by Grissom et al. (2021). Researchers found that since 1988, elementary public and charter school principals have become more female, decreased in average number of years’ experience, and remained unchanged regarding diversity , while the student population is significantly more diverse. The average number of years of teaching experience before their school administration experience is also on the decline (Grissom et al., 2021). The decrease in experience emphasizes the need for a comprehensive system of professional learning and supports for school leaders especially those new to the role (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Providing high quality professional learning and supports ensures that administrators have the skills and capabilities to meet the demands and realities of their roles, thus leading to positive outcomes for staff and students (The Wallace Foundation, 2007; Grissom et al., 2021). Grissom et al. (2021) found that the magnitude and scope of the impact of the principal may have been understated in previous research on a range of outcomes including student performance, absenteeism, working conditions, teacher retention, and teacher job satisfaction. The researchers stated, “it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership” (p. xiv).

The education field at large relies on training or professional learning (PL) to ensure that school leaders have the skills and capacities needed to meet the standards and are well prepared for the realities and demands of their jobs (The Wallace Foundation, 2006). Educational leaders

embrace lifelong learning, reflective practice, and the importance of transference of knowledge to practice because of their professional backgrounds (Dyer & Renn, 2010). Authentic, engaged leaders embrace the opportunities to become lead learners of their organizations and readily model that approach to learning (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). Participation in PL correlates with increased school leader self-efficacy, which positively impacts work performance and effectiveness, thus benefiting the communities they serve (Finn et al., 2007; Hanna et al., 2008; Dwyer, 2019; Levin et al., 2020). For this study, *leadership development* is defined as all learning activities that aim to contribute to a leader's professional growth (Daniels et al., 2019).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) suggested that school leaders need a comprehensive approach to principal development. Critical components of high-quality leadership development include developing leadership “in practice,” offering a continuum of support and opportunities from pre-service through veteran principals, extinguishing the idea of leadership as a solitary activity, and shifting to a collaborative learning organization (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010, Darling Hammond et al., 2022). Through networking, principals explore individual and collective experiences to actively construct, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and apply learning to enhance and extend knowledge and practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Darling Hammond et al., 2022).

Coaching and mentoring are effective, evidence-based methods that some school systems have used to provide leadership learning and support (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012; DeWitt, 2019). Formal mentoring or coaching rated the highest among the most helpful in-service learning strategies for principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010, Levin et al, 2020, Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). Coaching features open-ended questions that lead to self-reflection and a search for

solutions, followed by determining an action plan with accountability measures between the partners (The Wallace Foundation, 2007). Coaching allows for a more personalized, tailored approach to leadership development (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014, Learning Forward, 2022). It focuses on topics and issues important to the coachee (C. van Nieuwerburgh, 2020). Research suggests that principals benefit from the coaching or mentoring relationship by establishing a trusting relationship which allows for probing, reflective questions, and honest feedback (Tingle et al., 2019). However, Darling-Hammond et al. (2022), in their synthesis of literature on principal professional learning, found that coaching is not widely used as a means of professional learning for school leaders.

Wise and Cavazos (2017) found that approximately 48.9% of all surveyed public-school principals responded positively when asked if they had received formal leadership coaching in the last five years. Further, early in their career, principals were 16% more likely to receive leadership coaching (p. 229-230). However, Levin et al. (2020) found that in the past two years, only 23% of elementary principals surveyed had a coach or mentor despite it being recognized as one of the most valuable professional learning experiences. Further, only 32% of those elementary school principals surveyed regularly (three or more times in the past two years) shared leadership practices with peers. Yet, principals stated that an on-the-job mentor or coach contributes to their success at a significantly high rate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). As a valuable source of PL, providing school leaders with a coach promotes school improvement and the adoption of new leadership practices which help build leader efficacy (Levin et al., 2020).

Dwyer (2019), reviewing 25 years of the literature on self-efficacy and leadership effectiveness, found that coaching can bolster leaders' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is one of the

most critical factors in determining performance and affects the choice of activity, effort, and persistence on tasks (Bandura, 1977). Understanding the impact of school leaders on critical school outcomes, new school administrators must have access to professional learning and the support needed to increase their leadership self-efficacy (Grissom. et al, 2021; Moen & Allgood, 2009; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). Collaboration through leadership coaching enhances knowledge sharing, improves educational practice, and facilitates change (Siciliano, 2016). When leaders take ownership of their learning through the coaching process, establishing goals, taking actions, receiving feedback and support, they experience increased self-confidence, agency, and competence (Aas, 2017; Robertson, 2009; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011).

### **Shifting Onboarding: Event to Experience**

The mid-Atlantic, local school system (LSS) context of this study consists of approximately 45,000 students and 170 school-based leaders (principals and assistant principals). Until 2020, the LSS' new administrator leadership development programming only comprised a few days of "sit and get" professional learning in the summer. Beyond the summer PL, new administrators received the same PL as that of a veteran school-based leader through the systemic monthly meeting structures. Occasionally a mentor had been appointed to a new hire but there was no consistency, structure to the program, or training provided to the mentor.

In the spring of 2019, the LSS strategically reorganized to focus on a district wide goal of hiring, supporting, and retaining high quality staff by providing ongoing opportunities and experiences for professional growth. Recognizing the lack of leadership development beyond what was part of the typical meeting structures, the LSS reorganized to create a specific

department to address the learning and development needs of the organization. The newly minted leadership development division opened the door to alternative possibilities of what the onboarding of new school administrators could become.

Recognizing the need for a more personalized PL approach to support novice school administrators, the LSS created a pilot leadership coaching program in the spring of 2020 with the goal of a full launch in 2021. A further detailed explanation of the research and development of the leadership coaching program follows in the next section. The current study provided insight into the influence of the leadership coaching program on the self-efficacy of the novice school leaders (coachees). The results of the study contributed multiple possible programmatic enhancements and adjustments to ensure participants experience optimal learning and mutually benefit from the leadership coaching program.

### **Development of a Leadership Coaching Program**

In May 2020, a collaborative team of myself, my leadership development team, and principal supervisors of a local school system (LSS) began planning the pilot Leadership Coaching Program (LCP) for first-year school administrators (see Appendix A). The goal of the leadership coaching community was to create a foundational professional learning experience to help onboard new school leaders while simultaneously reenergizing veteran administrators who have knowledge to share.

The program development process included determining a leadership coach's formal job description (see Appendix B), which widened the collaboration to include the administrative negotiating party's representative and human resources. Multiple researchers suggest that providing clarity of roles and responsibilities in a coaching relationship is critical to its success

(see Appendix C) (Daresh, 2016, Killion et al., 2020). The establishment of clear roles and responsibilities for both coaches and coachees started immediately through the welcome events. Coaching agreements were signed as a record of acknowledgment and understanding of the roles and responsibilities. The LSS superintendent, Board of Education, and administrative negotiating party established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which allowed for a stipend commensurate with the time and requirements of the tasks required of the coach.

Careful selection and training for the coaches were critical to the success of the experience (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012, The Wallace Foundation, 2007). Therefore, the LCP implemented a rigorous application process, although slightly adjusted for the COVID pandemic. It included an initial resume screening against the job description and a written interview blindly scored by multiple screeners (see Appendix D). The top-scoring applicants were selected as coaches. Coaches were matched through a process that included a collaborative team that considered the coach's and coachee's experiences and the coachee's current placement.

The leadership development team created five asynchronous professional learning modules on coaching competencies and the GROW (goal, reality, options, wrap-up) coaching model. Coaches completed required modules before beginning any coaching sessions (Panchal & Riddell, 2020; International Coaching Federation, 2019) (see Appendix E). Once coaching had commenced, additional professional learning continued using a community of practice model (Wenger, 2002), focused on *Coach It Further: Using the Art of Coaching to Improve School Leadership* by Peter DeWitt (2019). The coaches engaged in discussions with other coaches and the leadership development team on the book, as well as collaborating on problems of practice.



In December 2020, the LSS launched the pilot year of the LCP. We partnered all 13 new principals and 19 assistant principals with a veteran school leader coach. Participation was not optional. Each principal was assigned a leadership coach. The LSS assigned groups of 2-3 APs to the same coach. Throughout the year, the leadership development team garnered feedback on all aspects of the pilot. We used the invaluable insights of the pilot years' participants to adjust and revise for the first full year of implementation beginning in August of 2021.

In the Spring of 2021, the leadership development team adjusted and refined the new program. Some programmatic refinements included:

- Revisions to professional learning for coaches.
- A kick-off session for partners to clarify roles and responsibilities and start the relationship-building process.
- A request for coachees to complete pre- and post-self-efficacy surveys as part of the evaluation of the program.
- A monthly resource to align systemic priorities and personal leadership goals which provides both coach and coachee timely topics and resources created based on feedback from participants in the pilot (see Appendix F).
- A new revised coaching log for coaches to record visits and notes based on feedback and Title II-A requirements (see Appendix G).
- Collection of programmatic feedback through anonymous surveys from coaches and coachees.

The leadership coaching program officially launched in August of 2021, with the newly hired school administrators and their assigned coaches who started their new roles on July 1, 2021.

This cohort of coaches and coachees established the Leadership Coaching Community used in the study.

### **The Stormy Seas of School Year 21-22**

Grissom et al. (2021) describe the role of the principal as increasing in complexities and demand. School leaders during 21-22 navigated stormy seas. There were moments of extremely choppy seas and some calm points where they could catch their breath. It was all about adjusting sails and meeting the needs of the moment. The school year highlighted those complexities and demands, emphasizing the principal's evolving role, which included the ability to lead and manage through crisis and uncertain times as well as navigating social media and communications (Clifford, A. & Coggshall, J., 2021).

Clifford and Coggshall (2021) reported that although principals focused on the PSEL standards during the pandemic years, priorities shifted, and the complexities of the role became ever more apparent. The researchers found that although principals surveyed felt they did not increase the amount of time working, their focus areas had shifted in three significant ways:

1. Principals were more engaged in "frontline services" in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, such as contact tracing, masking mandates, social-emotional support for struggling students and staff, providing coverage when needed, and addressing learning loss caused by the pandemic.
2. There seemed to be less definitive boundaries as work from home became normalized. The tether to work became stronger and harder to cut when a typical day should end.
3. Principals reported that the role was a continuous cycle of responding to urgent needs and putting out fires.

For some school leaders, the stormy seas were too great, and 42% of principals pondered leaving the profession in 21-22 (Levin et al., 2020). The need for structures to retain and support school leaders has never been more critical.

### **Researcher Positionality**

As a dedicated educator of twenty-five years, I have served many roles throughout the local school system (LSS) from elementary teacher to assistant principal to principal, and then shifting to central office positions. My varied positions have provided me with an array of perspectives and lenses by which I can view and experience the current educational challenges. While there are positives to the sustained years in one school system, it can also serve as a detriment as it is a myopic view. Without diversified experiences beyond the LSS, I have a limited scope focused solely on education and further concentrated in one LSS.

I have witnessed the challenge of providing sustained support for leaders through my various roles in education. As a novice assistant principal and principal, I received some support provided by the system but no one-on-one dedicated support that helped me flourish. I had to seek that support for myself. In each of the stages of my journey, a mentor or coach has affected me. It began in childhood with my mother and continued throughout my life. As a leader, those who have coached me have helped shape, inspire, and support me throughout my life and career. When I struggled as an assistant principal to get promoted to principal, I sought the assistance of a leader I respected and trusted to serve in the role of leadership coach. They guided me through an incredible journey of self-reflection. They allowed me to find the answers within myself; I became a more confident leader and felt more grounded in who I was as a leader. I would not be immersed in the writing of this dissertation if it were not for another

influential coach. Coaches have had a significant impact on my life, both professionally and personally. Those special relationships left indelible marks on my leadership journey.

In the spring of 2020, I received training from the Academy of Creative Coaching to become a certified coach. I am continuing to work on my accreditation through the International Coaching Federation. Through this process, I have a coach to guide me as I start my leadership coaching experiences. I am partway through accruing the requisite one hundred hours of coaching for this certification. I have learned a great deal about leadership, coaching, and myself through each experience. I have experienced immense joy as a coach, watching and witnessing the success of those I serve as a coach.

As the Supervisor of Leadership Development, I help coordinate and collaborate with leaders throughout the LSS for professional development needs. In that role, I am directly involved with all the participants in the study for many reasons. We attend the same meetings; we serve on committees together, and I lead or develop many professional learning experiences. I am also an architect of the leadership coaching program; therefore, I have vested interest in the program and its success. I invest in the principal leaders of the LSS so that the students can achieve to their fullest capacity and staff can have positive, satisfying cultures.

Although my role is not of evaluator to any of the coaches or coachees, I supervise the program. I used measures to decrease the power of the position to obtain unbiased data or influence LCP members to participate. I provided participants informed consent (see Appendix P), which indicated that they may decline to participate in the study yet continue to be part of the LCP. I also emphasized the non-evaluative nature of the research and its focus on the program's

influence versus individual participants. I did not formally evaluate any of the participants in the study.

However, it was still imperative that any information collected uses pseudonyms and confidentiality be maintained to obtain unbiased data. Interview participants created their own pseudonyms. All survey data was collected anonymously, and directions asked that any identifiable information (i.e., participant names, schools, etc.) be removed, or redacted. I was mindful to separate the role of program supervisor and researcher. An insider with other insiders, action research allowed me to stay close to the problem and explore the program during its implementation (Herr & Anderson, 2015). As a researcher, I sought to understand and remained curious. However, as the supervisor, I fulfilled those roles and responsibilities that leading a project such as this entails. The program had much to gain from the honest insights and experiences of the participants. It necessitated vulnerability and openness to all input and comments.

Growth is one of my core values. I am firmly grounded in the belief that as an educator we are honor-bound to strive for excellence by committing to a journey of continual development and learning. Taking part in coaching allows for the personalized learning leaders seek, as I have experienced it myself. I believe in the power of coaching, which drives this research. However, I was mindful of my positive bias and allow the research data to speak for itself. It was imperative for me to stay inquisitive, seek real understanding without allowing my feelings for the coaching experience or the program to interfere. It was the only way to have the leadership coaching community (LCC) and overall program improve to become a force that inspires and facilitates transformation.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study was informed by the three components of Wenger et al.'s (2002) Communities of Practice (CoP) Social Learning Theory: domain, practice, and community. The Leadership Coaching Program (LCP) facilitated the creation of multiple CoP's within its structure. The coach/coachee partnered a learning loop that facilitated a principal's self-reflection to focus on their values, assumptions, and governing variables that lead to their actions and subsequent results (Argyris & Schön, 1978). The partners worked together to achieve goals set by the coachee. Within the CoP, coaches and coachees focused on their personal mastery experiences, sharing vicarious experiences, giving, and receiving feedback (social persuasion) to increase self-efficacy in the role of principal or coach (Bandura, 1977).

### **Communities of Practice**

Communities of practice (CoP) provided an avenue for the exchange of knowledge and the continued pursuit of professional development. CoP's develop when participants share a passion or concern about a topic, wish to deepen their knowledge or expertise or have a particular problem to solve (Wenger, 1998; Snyder et al., 2004; Wenger et al. 2002). The exchange of implicit and explicit knowledge, resources, support, and shared experiences led to learning and improvement for the community members. A CoP "increase[s] the collective knowledge, skills, and professional trust and reciprocity of practitioners" (Snyder et al., 2004). Wenger et al. (2002) describe three fundamental elements of communities of practice: community, practice, and domain.

## ***Community***

Wenger et al. (2002), theorized that the *community* creates the “social fabric of learning” (p. 28) by which the participants shared expertise, engage in joint activities, discussions, help each other and shared information. The leadership coaching program (LCP) created two simultaneously occurring CoP’s. The cohort of coaches formed one CoP as they developed their skills as coaches and collaboratively solved problems of practice. The coach/coachee partners created their small community as they shared experiences as school leaders and exchanged information and feedback, helping the novice school leader acclimate and grow in their new role.

## ***Practice***

The element of *practice*, in this case, educational leadership, established the structure, tools, resources, and language that all participants shared. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) and LSS systemic priorities, goals, and focus areas for their roles as assistant principals and principals provided a common framework for coaching conversations. Coach/coachee partners shared resources, experiences, tools, ideas, and strategies for addressing issues and concerns that arose.

## ***Domain***

The final fundamental element of communities of practice, *domain*, created a common purpose and sense of identity (Wenger et al., 2002; Snyder et al., 2004). The domain established a purpose and defines the issues the community addressed. For the current study, the coaching experience worked to help establish the domain of principalship for the coachee as they acclimated to their new role within the local school system. A further detailed explanation of Wenger et al.’s (2002) Community of Practice Theory will follow in Chapter 2.

## **Double Loop Learning Theory**

Argyris (2002) defined learning as the “detection and correction of assumptions/generalizations” (p. 206). Often organizations and employees within it engage in what Argyris (2002) referred to as single loop learning, error correction without addressing or changing the “underlying governing values” (p. 206). He used the metaphor of a thermostat which adjusts the heat or air-conditioner accordingly based on the temperature. Argyris (2002) posited that double-loop learning occurs when errors are corrected by changing the “governing values” and assumptions and then determining action steps. Argyris and Schon (1978) suggested an inquiry-based dialogue that facilitates a leader to question and challenge their underlying assumptions and governing values (Cartwright, 2002). Having a coach helped promote the questioning of beliefs and values through the self-reflective process when defensive reasoning rises to the fore. The double-loop learning process allowed for dynamic, challenging dialogue that stops perpetuating the status quo. It forced both coach and coachee to reflect on their assumptions as principal leaders. Further detailed explanation of Argyris and Schon’s (1978) Double Loop Learning Theory will follow in Chapter 2.

## **Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is one of the most critical factors that affect a person’s performance (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, self-efficacy is a foundational characteristic of an effective school leader (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Bandura (1977) theorized, “Efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and adverse experiences” (p. 194). Bandura (1977) researched four primary sources of



information that lead to personal efficacy: performance accomplishment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal.

The first source of information leading to self-efficacy is performance accomplishment which is “especially influential” since it is grounded in personal mastery (p. 195). Each success increases the mastery expectation, and each failure lowers them, especially if those failures occur earlier, which is essential to note for our novice principals. Through continued experienced success, there is a reduction in the impact of failures or challenges. Bandura (1977) suggested “improvements to behavioral functioning” occur not only in similar situations but are likely to transfer to other conditions. The transference was critical for principals, especially novice principals. If a coachee was experiencing success with a particular goal, the learning would likely transfer into other leadership areas. Second, expectations derived from the vicarious experiences of those around us impact self-efficacy. Leaders learned from observing and collaborating with those around them. Coaches and coachees both learned from the experiences they are engaging in as they connect and shared during their sessions.

Connected closely to vicarious experience is the third source of efficacy which is verbal persuasion. Coaches used positive feedback and the feedback loop as a means of verbal persuasion to inspire and motivate principals to focus on their goals (Bandura, 1977; DeWitt, 2019). The last source of efficacy is emotional arousal, or the physiological condition that contributes to self-efficacy by emphasizing social and emotional wellness to help coachees determine effective coping strategies for moments of high stress or anxiety (DeWitt, 2019). The physiological sensations of high emotional arousal, such as tension, anxiety, or fear, within a leader’s body debilitates performance and negatively influences their self-efficacy beliefs.

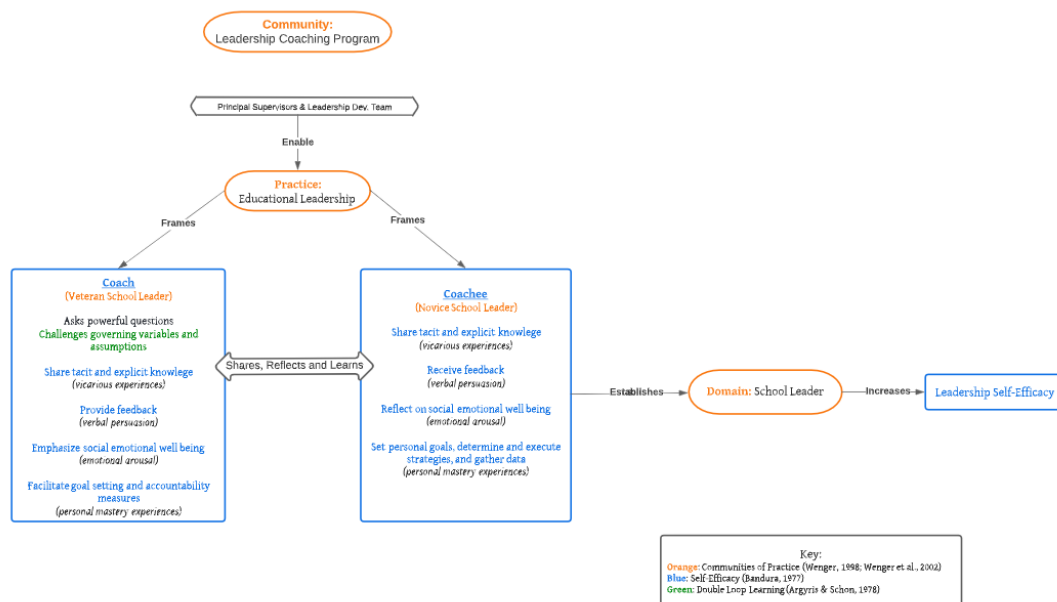
Bandura (1977) posited that decreasing emotional arousal can reduce avoidance behaviors. By continued performance experience successes, emotional arousal is reduced, thus increasing self-efficacy. A further detailed explanation of Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory to follow in Chapter 2.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frame for the study was grounded in three seminal works, Wenger et al.'s (2002) communities of practice social learning theory, Argyris and Schön (1978) theory of double loop learning theory, and Bandura's (1977) theory of personal self-efficacy (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

### *Conceptual Framework*



*Note.* (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002; Argyris & Schön, 1978; Bandura, 1977)

Each of these seminal works will be explored more fully in Chapter 2. The conceptual framework highlights a community of practice that emphasizes social learning through the joint

enterprise of the coaching experience focused on the practice of educational leadership (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). Principal supervisors and the leadership development team worked collaboratively to enable the coaching community by providing professional learning, structures, allocated time, and resources (Wenger et al. 2002). Coaches used powerful questioning and challenge governing variables and assumptions to push leadership thinking forward (Argyris & Schon, 1978). The coaching experience facilitated the social learning and works toward increasing self-efficacy through the sharing of knowledge (vicarious experiences), exchanging of feedback (verbal persuasion), establishing and monitoring of goals and strategies (performance mastery), and focusing on social, emotional wellness (emotional arousal) (Bandura, 1977). The reciprocal and continual social exchange led to sharing, reflecting, and learning, working to establish the school leader domain for the novice school administrator/coachee (Wenger et al., 2002). Consequently, new school leaders experienced increased self-efficacy.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this action research study was to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy (Wenger et al., 2002; Bandura, 1977). It further sought to examine participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or adjustments.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the influence of the leadership coaching **community** on the coachee/new school leaders' self-efficacy?
  - a. How is the educational leadership **practice** of the coachee influenced?
  - b. In what ways is the coachees' **domain** of school leader influenced?

2. In what ways could the leadership coaching programming be adjusted to better meet participants' needs?

### **Overview of Methodology**

Participatory action research establishes researchers and school practitioners as partners in a collaborative inquiry process focused on addressing a problematic issue to generate change for the betterment of an organization (Efron & Ravid, 2020). Action research orients to instituting "some action" (the creation of the leadership coaching program) to address a particular problem (the need for high-quality PL for novice school leaders) within a specific context (LSS) (Herr & Anderson, 2015). This insider participatory action research was implemented with the notion that change will occur (increased self-efficacy and improvement of the LCP) (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

The action research study was conducted in a mid-sized, mid-Atlantic local school system (LSS) of approximately 45,000 students, 6,000 staff members, and 68 schools (38 elementary, 13 middle, 10 high, 3 public charter, and 4 specialized schools). This study's population of interest was novice school administrators. All newly promoted school-based administrators (coachees) for the 2021-2022 school year, leadership program coaches, and principal supervisors who have functioned as collaborators in the creation of the leadership coaching program were invited to participate in this study.

Before beginning the program, the LSS requested all coachee program participants to complete a self-efficacy scale adapted from Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2004), the Principal Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale. Upon completion of the program, the coachees repeated self-efficacy scale. The study included the six coachee self-efficacy scales that had completed

matched pairs. As part of the study, 12 school-based administrator participants participated in two semi-structured interviews: one mid-course of the coaching experience and one close to its conclusion. Additionally, for the purposes of the study, principal supervisor participants completed a survey after the intervention. My researcher's log recorded any other mentions of the program, coaches, or coachees during district meetings, professional learning experiences with the coaches or coachees, and during data analysis and discussion; this log served as qualitative data. All participants participated voluntarily in the study, with the guarantee of confidentiality of their responses if they took part.

### **Structure of the Leadership Coaching Program**

Herr and Anderson (2015) stated that action research requires some form of intervention. In this action research study, the leadership coaching intervention was provided as a part of the leadership coaching program (LCP). Each coachee was matched with a veteran school administrator, termed *coach*, for the purposes of the program and this study. Each coach received five hours of training in the leadership coaching core competencies before beginning coaching sessions (International Coaching Federation, n.d.-a). Coaches formed a professional learning community focused on a book-study and “problems of practice experience” throughout the coaching program. Coaches were also offered two additional, optional book study learning opportunities focused on coaching skills and practices. Each coachee received coaching through one-on-one chats, emails, and site visits to their schools. While stated requirements indicate that interactions occur at a minimum of bi-monthly sessions, the reality of demands and challenges of COVID 19, increased student behavior because of trauma and distance learning, and staff shortages across the board made meeting those requirements challenging in many cases.

Although 65 coaching hours should have been accounted for per coach, the average number per coach was 53 hours after eleven months into the program.

## **Measure**

Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2004) Principals Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES) is an 18-item scale that addresses three domains of a school administrator's self-efficacy: management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. Each question on the scale uses a 9-point Likert scale: 1 being "none at all" and 9 being "a great deal". The scale uses the Instructional Leader Licensure Certification Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) as the foundation. However, since 2015 school leader standards have been updated. Therefore, I created an adapted version of the PSES that directly aligns to the new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The adapted scale uses current language that exists in the standards, which more mirrors the role of educational leaders in 2021 (see Appendix M). The adaptations will be addressed more at length in Chapter 3.

## **Definitions of Key Terms**

- Educational Leadership: "influencing teachers and other stakeholders. The process of influence ideally leads to an effective learning climate which all stakeholders (such as pupils, teachers, parents, society) experience as an added value and keeps all the organizational processes in the school (among others, monitoring the instructional process, managing personnel, and allocating resources) running smoothly" (Daniels et al., 2019, p. 111)

- Leadership Development: all learning activities that aim to contribute to a leader's professional growth (Daniels et al., 2019)
- Leadership Coaching: a bi-directional, thought-provoking, reflective process to deepen and expand an individual or groups' capacity to achieve desired results and facilitate growth (Anderson & Wasonga, 2017; Correia et al., 2016; Wise & Cavazos, 2017; International Coaching Federation, n.d.)
- Coach: one who provides coaching serves as a partner in leadership development (Carey et al., 2011, Robertson, 2009).
- Coachee: one in receipt of the coaching services (Carey et al., 2011, Robertson, 2009).
- Coaching Competencies: foundational coaching skills and approaches separated into four domains: setting the foundation, co-creating the relationship, communicating effectively, and facilitating learning and results (International Coaching Federation, n.d.)
- Self-Efficacy: An individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance success or achievements (Bandura, 1977, Bachkirova et al., 2015)

### **Significance of the Study**

This action research study focused on novice principals and assistant principals regarding their leader self-efficacy. A principal's effectiveness affects student achievement, student absenteeism, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher retention (Grissom et al., 2021). Exploring leadership coaching as a means of personalized professional learning

to acclimate novice principals to the role and increase their self-efficacy serves their students, staff, communities, and the school system at large.

This study aimed to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy (Wenger et al., 2002; Bandura, 1977). It further sought to examine participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or adjustments so that the program is the most effective and influential for the leaders it serves. By extension, it will then affect the students, staff, and communities they do. The hope is to create a foundational program that transforms how this mid-Atlantic school system onboards its new school leaders, creating powerful learning experiences and increasing job retention and satisfaction among those new to the role.

This study can affect the school system as an organization if the program influences the novice leaders' self-efficacy and impacts their effectiveness. If shown to be influential, the leadership coaching program can create systemic change for leaders across the organization. Expanding the program across all departments and divisions could benefit leaders beyond school-based leaders. By providing coaching as an onboarding opportunity, the school system can continue to provide support and personalized professional learning tailored to meet individuals' needs.

Daniels et al. (2019) states that school leader's professional development remains "fairly vague" however most existing research focuses on formal training (p. 122). Focusing on a more personalized approach to professional learning, this study will contribute to the knowledge of research about principal professional learning focused on a community of practice coaching model.



## Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation begins with an explanation of the critical importance of the school principal while painting a picture of the ever-changing dynamics and challenges the role presents. I highlight the need for comprehensive, high-quality professional learning to support leadership development in a mid-Atlantic school system and sets the purpose for the study (see Table 1). In Chapter 2, the literature review includes background information on high-quality leadership development, using communities of practice as leadership development, coaching as leadership development, and its relation to self-efficacy. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 describes the results of the study in relation to the research questions. Finally, Chapter 5 addresses the findings and implications of the study.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Chapter 1*

Section	Summary
Purpose of the study	To understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy. It further sought to examine participants' recommendations and feedback for programmatic improvements or adjustments.

Section	Summary
Theoretical Frame	Communities of practice (CoP) emphasizes the use of <i>community</i> to promote social learning through the joint enterprise of the coaching experience focused on the <i>practice</i> of educational leadership. The collaborative and continual social exchange works to establish the <i>domain</i> of school leader for the novice school administrator/coachee. Coaches use powerful questioning and challenge governing variables and assumptions to push leadership thinking forward (Double Loop Learning). The dyad works together to increase leader self-efficacy through sharing of knowledge (vicarious experiences), exchanging of feedback (verbal persuasion), establishing goals, execute strategies, and collection of data (performance mastery), and focusing on social, emotional wellness (emotional arousal).
Contributions to the Field of Educational Leadership	The study adds to the limited body of knowledge regarding educational leadership coaching (Robertson, 2009) and the vague research on principal leadership development (Daniels et al., 2019).
Contributions to Practice	The study results informs the leadership coaching program which can then be adjusted and enhanced to create the most effective and influential leadership coaching program for the leaders it serves. Additionally, understanding the nature of the program and its influence can initiate systemic change for leaders across the system, not only for those in an instructional capacity but also for those across departments and divisions.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that in qualitative research, the review of literature helps to substantiate the research problem and provides a “backdrop for the problem or issue that has led to the need for the study” (p. 27). A literature review helps the researcher understand results from studies like the one being undertaken, relates the current study to the larger body of literature, and helps to provide a framework for establishing the importance of the study and determine gaps in current literature (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The objective of this chapter is to provide literature that frames the critical need for strong leadership development for school administrators. It further discusses the use of a leadership coaching *community* grounded in Wenger’s (2002) communities of practice to provide leadership development for the novice school administrators focused on the common *practice* of educational leadership to influence their professional growth and self-efficacy as they establish their new *domain* of school leader. The research questions that guided the study were:

### Research Questions

1. What is the influence of the leadership coaching **community** on the coachee/new school leaders’ self-efficacy?
  - a. How is the educational leadership **practice** of the coachee influenced?
  - b. In what ways is the coachees’ **domain** of school leader influenced?
2. In what ways could the leadership coaching programming be adjusted to better meet participants’ needs?

This literature review is organized into six main sections: 1) Why School Leaders, 2) Principal Leadership Development, 3) Communities of Practice as Leadership Development, 4)

Leadership Coaching as Leadership Development, 5) Double-Loop Learning, and 6) Self-Efficacy. ERIC was a primary research database used to identify empirical and conceptual research as it focused on the educational environment. Multiple other databases were used such as Academic Search Ultimate, JSTOR, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and ProQuest to include research from other disciplines. The following key words were used to guide searches in the data bases: *leadership coaching, executive coaching, coaching and education, mentoring, coaching, GROW model and coaching, leadership development, professional development, school principal development, educational leadership development, novice principals, professional growth, communities of practice, double loop learning, educational leadership, self-efficacy, leadership efficacy, and principal self-efficacy.*

### **Why School Leaders**

At the helm of excellent schools, you will find exceptional leadership (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007). An effective educational leader positively impacts student achievement, employee retention, and job satisfaction and is second only to classroom instruction among the school-related factors that impact students' success (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004). While their import is clear, the role of school leader continues to increase in complexities and demands while at the same time, experience levels are declining (Grissom et al., 2021; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). It has become an imperative for local school systems to invest in high quality professional learning to prepare new hires for the challenging and dynamic role of school leadership (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Wise & Cavazos, 2017; Augustine-Shaw, 2015; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, Grissom et al., 2021). The success of our students, schools, and communities depends on it.

## **Principal Leadership Development**

With the increase in demands of the position, decrease in experience level, and incredible magnitude and scope of impact of the principal on student and teacher outcomes, improving principal leadership is essential. The Wallace Foundation (2007) stated that providing high-quality professional learning and support ensures school leaders have the skills and capacity to meet the demands and realities of the role. Darling-Hammond et al. (2022) found that high-quality PL programs correlate with positive outcomes for leaders, teachers, and students. Developing effective leaders strengthens individuals and the organization (Aas, 2017). Therefore, principal leadership must be prioritized and considered critical (Grissom et al., 2021).

### **Adult Learning Theory Provides the Foundation**

High-quality professional learning commits to and drives continuous improvement, engages participants in collaborative learning, and facilitates shared responsibility for improving education for all students (Learning Forward, 2022). Knowles et al.'s (2005) seminal research on adult learning theory provides the foundation for high quality professional learning by using six assumptions:

- Adults need to know why they need to learn something before attempting to learn it.
- Adults need to have agency over their own learning.
- Adults have a vast array of experiences that help create the identity they bring to the learning environment, shaping their motivation and engaging with the material.
- Adults learn best when they are at the stage of readiness, the content is relevant, and the context is realistic.
- Adults learn best when learning activities are problem based and highlight practical skills

- Adults respond best to internal motivators.

Drawing from Knowles et. al (2005), researchers determined an integrative model of practical application and skill attainment using problem-based learning, including experiential and research-based knowledge, was necessary for school leader development (Dyer & Renn, 2010; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Guskey, 2021). They highlight the need for learning to be contextual and the power of linking learners to cohort groups and peers to integrate theory into practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Dyer & Renn, 2010; Aas, 2017). Principals leaders need to be agents of their learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Dyer & Renn, 2010). Through the critical investigation of practice and role, tensions are revealed both individually and systemically. When the tensions link to leaders' daily leadership practice, they become resources for reflection, enhance leaders' knowledge and competence, and increase confidence (Aas, 2017).

### **Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Provides the Framework**

Features of an effective leadership development program are grounded in a theory of action that places instructional leadership, specifically, student achievement and learning, at its core (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Dyer & Renn, 2010). All ten Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) surround and influence student learning which is at the center of the work of all school leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Therefore, leadership development must align with the PSEL and the districts' learning goals and priorities while being responsive to the needs of school leaders (Wallace, 2006, Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Effective principal development programs ground themselves in the standards that guide principals in their everyday practice, which simultaneously serve as the LSS's

foundation for the evaluation process (Maryland State Department of Education, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Professional learning support is more likely to have an impact because they focus on the following:

- facilitating instructional interactions with teachers (PSEL Standard 4 and 6)
- building a productive school climate (PSEL Standard 3 and 5)
- creating a culture of inquiry, collaboration, and professional learning communities (PSEL Standard 7)
- using effective strategies and resource management processes (PSEL Standard 9)

which directly aligns with the PSEL standards (Grissom et al., 2021).

### **Shifting from Compliance to Personalized Principal Development**

Despite the understanding of the importance of principal development, there is much to explore regarding the effectiveness of principal PL due to limited research availability (Daniels et al., 2019). Yet, states and local school systems are investing human and capital resources on principal development, cognizant that principals are a critical factor in the success of student and teacher outcomes (Riley & Meredith, 2017, Grissom et al., 2021). Riley and Meredith (2017) found that 73% of respondents, comprised of principal-focused state education agency action groups, reported support and professional development for veteran principals was a current or emerging priority, and 75% of respondents said the same for novice principals (p. 2). Further, 60% reported focused use of Title IIA funds for principal development (p. 3). Turnbull et al. (2016) found that in focus groups, “compliance-oriented” PL that is intended for mass consumption was rated less highly than they did one-on-one support from mentors, coaches, and supervisors. The study revealed low ratings for traditional district-run professional development,

which raises more fundamental questions about adjusting and reshaping these types of courses and workshops to be more valuable to the participants.

Personalized learning, collaborating with colleagues and other leaders, and coaching best help to facilitate school improvement efforts (Klar et al., 2020). Turnbull et al. (2016) found that some districts attempted to personalize professional development offerings to align to principals' needs and professional growth; however, as of 2015, no school district claimed to have successfully done it. Levin et al. (2020) determined that local policy makers use five key components for principal professional learning that focus on content and delivery to ensure it is authentic and job-embedded:

- Focus on school-wide instruction for whole child education
- Focus on leading equitable school environments
- Problem based and context specific learning experiences and opportunities
- Mentors and/or coaches to provide more individualized support
- Opportunities for collaborative learning or networking

Providing opportunities for reflection in professional learning helps link research-based knowledge to practice (Darling Hammond et al., 2010). Coaching combines individualized PL support with the needed reflection linking knowledge to practice. Engaging in a metacognitive process allows leaders to explore personal and district expectations of the role and daily leadership practices, resulting in tension (Aas, 2017). Professional learning should reflect various structures, collaborations, and institutional arrangements, allowing leaders to engage in a reflective process that address the tensions and enhance leaders' knowledge and competencies, building self-confidence to implement changes to practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Aas,



2017). Researchers also suggest tailoring leadership development participants' work experience (novice, experienced, aspiring), developmental needs, and prior schema (Davis & Leon, 2011; Daniels et al., 2019).

Criticism of professional learning includes misalignment between program content and participants' need, disconnect between the program with school or system core values, mission, and priorities, lack of job-embedded priorities, and lack of up-to-date, relevant technologies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Despite the research about the foundations of professional development, there is limited data on its effectiveness (Guskey, 2021). Typically, researchers collect anecdotal evidence or feedback about the relevancy of the experience to their role or context versus correlational data connecting the experience directly to student outcomes (Daniels et al., 2019; Guskey, 2021).

### ***Leadership Coaching Community as Personalized Leadership Development***

The leadership coaching program (LCP) provides personalized professional learning through a community of practice model (Wenger, 1998). The LCP creates a *community* of school-based administrators focused on leadership development and the establishing the school leader *domain* for the novice leader/coachee. The community focuses on the *practice* of educational leadership (Wenger, 1998). Organized around the key elements of high-quality professional learning, using the PSEL standards as a foundation, the LCP creates support and relevant, experiential professional learning for both coach and coachee (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012).

A community of practice (CoP) is the “social process of negotiating competence in a domain over time” (Farnsworth et al., 2016). It involves learning in the participants' lived

experiences, which allows for a more personalized, heuristic approach to learning (Wenger, 1998; Smith et al., 2019). A CoP focuses on action (what we do), belonging (who we are), and interpretation of what we do (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (2002) states that a community of practice is a group of people that share similar challenges, passions, pursuits, goals, and a desire to develop their knowledge or skills in a particular topic through social interaction (Wenger et al., 2002); Snyder et al., 2004).

Organizations that seek to intentionally build effective leadership capacity must focus on building both human and collective social capital (Roberts, 2013). The development of a solid network through creating a community of practice (CoP) can assist in problem-solving, professional development, and the transference of best practice (Snyder et al., 2004; Roberts, 2013). Communities of practice focus on both the individual and the collective organization development. A CoP forges relationships with school leader colleagues to share ideas and problem solve, reflect on practice, and serves as a resource for development and support when needed (Davis & Leon, 2011; Tingle et al., 2019). The continuous process of knowledge creation through social interaction, while remaining cognizant and immersed in the contextual, real-world environment, invites learning and growth (Smith et al., 2019).

### **The Evolution of Communities of Practice**

CoP originated in Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on situated learning. The researchers suggested most workplace learning occurs in a social relationship or context rather than in a classroom-type setting or situated learning. The researchers focused on novices (coachees) and experts (coaches) and how the newcomers created their identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learning through informal gatherings where the veteran professionals shared practices and

experiences with those seeking counsel became a way to improve practice and brainstorm ways to address recurring issues (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Wenger (1998) refined the concepts of a CoP. The four components of Wenger's social learning theory: community, practice, identity, and meaning serve as the foundation of a CoP. *Community* references social configuration that helps to define and structure the work. Wenger (1998) uses the phrase, "learning as belonging" to describe community. *Practice*, or "learning as doing," is the way of talking about our changing abilities individually and collectively within the community (Wenger, 1998). By being a part of a community, learning changes who we are and creates personal histories helping to establish our *identity*, "learning by becoming.". Our identity not only impacts us within the community but also can affect how any individual works beyond the community (Wenger, 1998; Farnsworth et al., 2016). *Meaning*, "learning as experience,", establishes a way to describe the changing ability of the community participants both individually and as a collective (Wenger, 1998; Farnsworth et al., 2016). The components are intertwined and collectively defining (Wenger, 1998).

Although Lave and Wenger (1991) stress the importance of the CoP forming naturally, which seemed to disqualify formal mentoring or coaching relationships as a CoP (Li et al., 2009), Wenger et al. (2002) focus on using CoP as a professional learning strategy for organizational learning where the organization can facilitate and cultivate the CoP to enhance learning or competition. Wenger et al. (2002) provide a tool for organizations to manage knowledge creation and learning. The design of each community creates their own "internal direction, character, and energy" (p. 51). The researchers derived seven principles:

1. Design for evolution.

2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives.
3. Invite various levels of participation.
4. Develop both public and private community spaces.
5. Focus on value.
6. Combine familiarity and excitement.
7. Create a rhythm for the community (p. 51).

The seven design principles showcase the understanding of how the elements of a CoP design work together which allows for adaptability and spontaneity. Individuals and organizations have different interpretations of what constitutes a CoP, which can make it challenging to apply the concept and take advantage of its benefits for organizational learning (Li et al., 2009).

Social structures like CoP can foster learning, develop competencies, and manage knowledge (Wenger 2002). Wenger et al. (2002) refined the theory to include three components in the structural model of CoP: domain, community, and practice. First, the *domain* establishes the focal issues and the sense of members' identity with the topic and the area in which the community has "legitimacy to define competency" (Snyder et al., 2004; Farnsworth et al., 2016). Domain also provides the mutual foundations, purpose, values, and boundaries that enable members to decide what is worth sharing and present their ideas (Wenger et al., 2002; Li et al., 2009). Next, the *community* establishes the "social fabric of learning" (Snyder et al., 2002, p. 28). A CoP fosters trust and bonding relationships amongst its members and encourages vulnerability to share ideas, ask questions, and be open to inquiry. Members of the community engage in activities, discussions, and interactions in pursuing the interests of the domain

(Wenger-Traynor, E. & Wenger Traynor, B. 2015). Finally, *practice* is the framework, concepts, tools, information, documents, resources, and strategies the members share.

The three elements make a CoP an ideal knowledge structure and a means of timely, relevant, and contextual professional learning that helps form identities through realistic experiences (Knowles, 2005). Learning to become principals and assistant principals (domain) with a strong foundation of educational leadership (practice) through the shared experiences and exchange of knowledge with colleagues (community) rather than learning about educational leadership from theories and strategies in a sit and get professional learning is the power of a CoP (Smith et al., 2019).

### **Leadership Coaching Community**

The leadership coaching community in this study functions as a programmatic community of practice. Coaches form a community amongst themselves. Learning together about being coaches and solving problems of practice as they engage with their coachees. Each coach and coachee create a small community. They are working together in the domain of principalship on the practice of educational leadership. The coaching process supports leader identity construction (Lackritz et al., 2019). The coach/coachee partners use the framework of educational leadership to share resources, exchange knowledge, and work to establish competency and identity in the domain of the school leadership role of principal or assistant principal. The program exists as an overarching umbrella of community. Wenger et al. (2002) also introduces the part of the facilitator who handles the group's day-to-day activities, recruitment, and providing resources to the members. Smith et al. (2019) refer to them as enablers. The crucial role of the enabler was the building and nurturing of trust to create an

environment where learning and transformation could occur (Smith et al., 2019; Roberts, 2013). For this study, the leadership development team functions as the enablers of the LCP coaching community.

### **Leadership Coaching as Leadership Development**

Coaching started in the business world for struggling executives, then shifted to the preparation or development of employees seen as having potential (Carey et al., 2011). Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) conducted a seminal literature review of executive coaching, examining the practice articles to the empirical articles to establish connections. Executives viewed executive coaching positively and felt it facilitated growth and development (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). However, the researchers revealed that although there is some evidence of the effectiveness for increasing performance, it was limited.

Ten years later, Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) built on Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson's (2001) original literature review to further examine the literature on coaching within the next decade. The researchers found that from the years 1937-1999, there were 93 total articles, dissertations, and empirical studies published about coaching. It was not until the 1990s that coaching research became more prevalent. However, as Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson (2001) stated few quantitative studies have been conducted; coaching research has focused on primarily qualitative content analysis. Research of coaching relies heavily on the use of case study methodology to describe the process and effect on individuals (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). According to Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011), the research showed a need to clarify coaching and other forms for development interventions (i.e., mentoring or counseling), better

understand what aspects of coaching are essential beyond the relationship, and explore the readiness of coachee to engage in a coaching relationship.

In education, from 1995 through 2005, mentoring was a focus as a professional development strategy. More recently, it has shifted toward coaching (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Coaching has become one tool used in leadership development programs, as its goal is the growth and development of the coachee (Moen & Allgood, 2009; Aas, 2017; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). For this study, *leadership coaching* is defined as a bi-directional, thought-provoking, reflective process to deepen and expand an individual or groups' capacity to achieve desired results and facilitate growth (Anderson & Wasonga, 2017; Correia et al., 2016; Wise & Cavazos, 2017; International Coaching Federation, n.d.).

Coaching for leaders focuses on the individual, school, and organization within the coachee's given context (Lochmiller, 2014). Coaching can affect individuals and organizations by supporting the attainment of personal and professional goals, retention, succession planning, and performance improvement (McNally & Lukens, 2006). Weinstein et al. (2009) found that transitions for leaders, whether new to the role or position, were critical for leadership development and support to help sustain a focus on teaching and learning. Establishing a principal mentor or coach relationship gives the new leader (coachee) an experienced, credible support system within a risk-free environment to help determine their school's needs and potentially offer advice and feedback when needed (Tingle et al., 2019). More informal learning can lead to unexpected and influential transformation through fruitful discussions where the smaller group size and intimacy allows principals to test out views and opinions not shared in large groups feel more at ease (Daniels et al., 2019). Coaches provide needed support for school

leaders and help them reframe challenges (Lochmiller, 2018). As a natural result of coaching, leaders see improved ability to analyze a focused task and strategies, leading to increased self-efficacy (Moen & Allgood, 2009). Research shows that when principals take part in professional learning experiences such as social learning, mentoring or ongoing coaching and collaboration it has a positive impact on leadership practices or student achievement (Herman et al., 2017, Bachkirova et al., 2015, Wise & Cavazos, 2017). Coaching is a viable solution for sustainable change (Carey et al., 2011).

Robertson (2009) posits that leadership learning through partnerships, like coaching, requires entering the partnership as an equal and a willingness to be present in the leadership context and in the relationship. She further explains it requires active listening, adaptation, connection, and engagement in the journey of learning and leading. “When leaders have a leading learning relationship with a colleague, based on concepts of professional partnership, it challenges them to reflect on their current ways of working with adults and students,” highlighting the benefits to both members of the dyad (p. 43). Approaching the coaching relationship as a partnership helps to avoid the feeling of “imposed and contrived collegiality” (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990). In this study, a *coach*, defined as one who provides the coaching, serves as a partner in the leadership development of the *coachee*, defined as one in receipt of the coaching services (Carey et al., 2011, Robertson, 2009). In a coaching partnership, both coach and coachee will gain from experience, the teacher is the learner, and the learner is the teacher (Robertson, 2009).

Carey et al. (2011), through an integrative literature study, revealed four common elements within the coaching models:



- relationship building
- problems solving processes
- action and transformation
- structural and intrinsic mechanisms for the achievement of outcomes

The coaching processes focus on action, accountability, personal responsibility, and a safe, supportive learning environment through powerful questioning and active listening (Moen & Allgood, 2009; International Coaching Federation, 2019). Coachees generate solutions, strategies, and accountability measures (Moen & Allgood, 2009; Whitmore, 2002). The self-directed coaching process raises the coachee's self-awareness regarding their chosen goals and strategies to propel their growth and learning (Whitmore, 2002; International Coaching Federation, 2019; Moen & Allgood, 2009). New leadership learning often follows a point of vulnerability, and trust develops through shared vulnerability (Robertson, 2009). Trust is a critical element to the learning and coaching process (Robertson, 2009; Moen & Allgood, 2009; International Coaching Federation, 2019). A learning relationship based on trust fosters collaboration and correlates increased self-efficacy and performance (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Moen & Allgood, 2009). The increased self-efficacy through coaching suggests it is a viable solution for sustainable change (Carey et al., 2011).

There are differing views and definitions of coaching, processes, and coaching competencies throughout the literature and research (Carey et al., 2011; van Nieuwerburgh, 2019). Much of the research focuses on self-perceptual data on improved leadership practice (Robertson, 2009). However, it is emerging as a transformational relationship to “enhance all aspects and all sectors of education (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012, p.38). Coaches need sustained

professional learning, programming often requires funding, and it is not to be considered a quick fix (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). Sustained and rigorous research on coaching in an educational context is limited; the research is more exploratory (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Robertson, 2009). Conducting additional research on the correlation of coaching leadership to student achievement and instructional practice would prove beneficial and worthwhile (Robertson, 2009).

### ***GROW Model***

The LCP provides the GROW model professional learning for coaches as they facilitate sessions with their coachees (see Appendix E). Whitmore (1992) published *Coaching for Performance* and the GROW model. GROW is close to the action research cycle: goal setting, reality check, options available, and wrap up. Whitmore's (1992) GROW model originated in performance coaching for business. However, it is now in use for education as it is one of the most researched models (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). There are, however, concerns that because it is outcomes-based, it may impede learning (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). It becomes imperative as coaches of educational leaders that it is not used as a lock-step process, leading to frustration and boredom (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). The process needs to be fluid and adapted to the coachee and the context of their school issues as they arise.

The drawbacks to the GROW model often originate not in the model itself but in how coaches use it within their coaching practice (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). For educational leadership coaching, it is essential to use a model that focuses on the outcome and emphasizes and supports the learning process (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012). As the CoP enablers, the leadership development team creates a monthly resource to help coaches focus on timely topics using the GROW model. The resource addresses the common systemic issues, but ultimately, the coachee

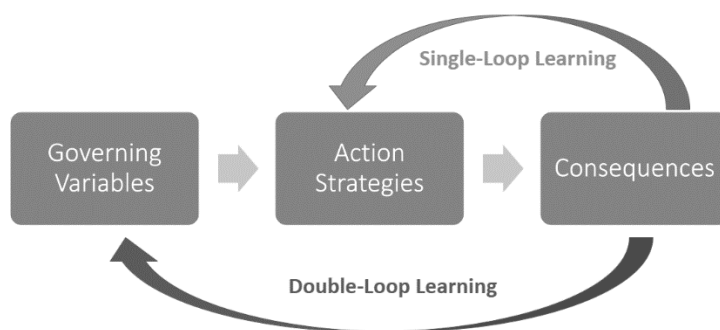
should choose topics to meet their individual needs (see Appendix F). Using the GROW model, the LCP uses the foundation of double loop learning and the challenging assumptions and variables to help encourage reflective practice and challenge thinking about behaviors, actions, and beliefs to move leadership practice forward (Argyris, 2002; Argyris & Schön, 1978).

## Double Loop Learning

Argyris (2002) suggests “learning can be defined as detection and correction of error” (p. 206). In a single loop learning process, errors are recognized and corrected, or adjusted. For example, changing methods or strategies and improving efficiencies to achieve goals or outcomes is single loop learning (Cartwright, 2002). However, first examining errors by changing the governing values and assumptions and then changing the actions is double-loop learning. It involves questioning “why or why not” rather than simply making a change or correction. It teaches people how to deeply contemplate their assumptions and beliefs that govern their behavior in new and more effective ways of breaking down their defenses that block learning (Cartwright, 2002; Argyris, 1991) (Figure 2).

### Figure 2

*Argyris and Schon (1978) Double-Loop Learning Theory*

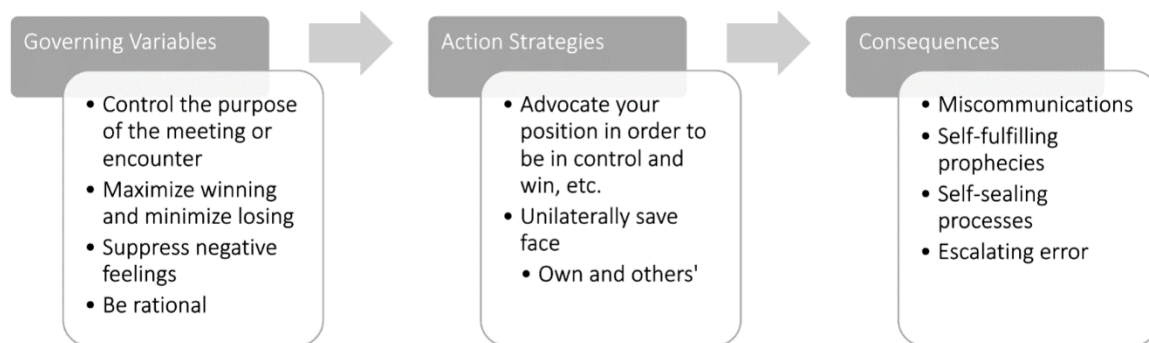


Argyris (1991) defines a theory of action as “a set of rules that individuals use to design and implement their behavior as well as understand the behavior of others” (p. 7). Argyris (1991) clarifies that there is often a difference between an individual’s espoused theory and their theory-in-use. As he states, there is discord between how they think they act and how they genuinely act. For administrators, this might mean they espouse that all decisions and actions are done “in the best interest of children,” yet decisions or remarks made in meetings or the culture they create do not always clearly reflect that belief, which causes tension and erodes credibility and trust. Argyris (2002) further clarifies two theories-in-use, Models I and II.

Model I theory-in-use requires defensive reasoning (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*Argyris (2002) Model I Theory-in-Use*



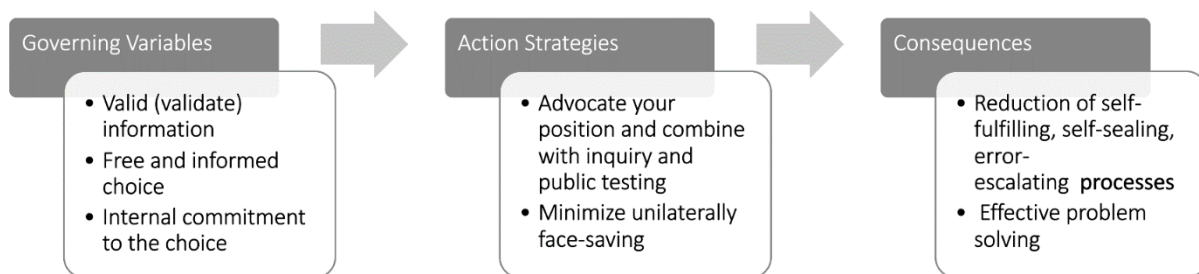
The intent is to avoid feelings of embarrassment, threat, vulnerability, or incompetence (Argyris, 1991). The consequences are defensive behaviors, miscommunications, misunderstandings, and self-fulfilling and self-sealing processes (Argyris, 2002). Model I often leads to “self-fueling processes that maintain status quo, inhibit genuine learning and reinforce deception” (Argyris, 2002, p. 212). Argyris (2002) posits humans learn their theories in use early in life, and

therefore, their subsequent actions are well-practiced and seasoned. Those who typically achieve success have difficulty encountering significant challenges or failure and may experience roadblocks throwing them into what Argyris (1991) refers to as “the doom loop.” This quick downward spiral occurs when individuals are not experiencing their typical successful trajectory that can be counter-productive against learning, leading to excuse-making and negative behavior (Argyris, 1991).

Model II theory of action is grounded in the governing values of valid information, free and informed choice, and internal commitment to the choice (Argyris, 2002) (Figure 4).

#### Figure 4

*Argyris (2002) Model II Theory-in-Use*



Encapsulated within the values is the assumption that the power of learning comes from having reliable information, being proficient, taking personal responsibility, and continuing to monitor the effectiveness of your decisions (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Model II encourages inquiry and challenge to help learners evaluate and advocate their positions. Productive reasoning (versus defensive reasoning) reduces the consequences typical of Model I, such as self-fulfilling and self-sealing processes and errors, as well as the increase in problem-solving (Argyris, 1991). Using

Model II theory of action interrupts organization defensive routines and processes, challenges the status quo, and creates learning processes and systems that encourage enduring double-loop learning (Argyris, 1991).

It is essential to understand that it is not about the elimination of Model I. Individuals should become enlightened of their lack of awareness, which provides “two degrees of freedom when choosing how they will act” (Argyris, 2002, p. 216). Model I may be more useful when learning single loop skills that are a part of existing routines. In contrast, Model II serves better at solving new or non-routine challenges or embarrassing problems (Argyris, 2002). Coaches assist in their coachees’ awareness of these internal maps, so they can reflect on “how their present assumptions are counterproductive for the very kind of learning they need to be effective” (Argyris & Schon, 1978).

Using coaching to challenge assumptions and values forces coachees into a cognitive process related to performance that is critical to their growth and development (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Moen & Allgood, 2009). Coaching involves cognitive evaluation about an individual task-specific capability through reflection and questioning (Moen & Allgood, 2009). Through critical questions, a coach can guide the coachee through an inquiry process which gets to the core perceptions about leading and managing (Cartwright, 2002). Focusing on double-loop learning, a coach can focus on the coachee’s thinking, leading to the examination of the underlying values, assumptions, and beliefs that drive a leader in their practice (Witherspoon, 2004). The smaller group size and intimacy of coaching allow principals to test out views and opinions not shared in large groups and feel more at ease (Daniels et al., 2019).

A knowledge-intensive workplace, such as a school system, specifically in the role of a school principal, thrives on exchanging ideas and experiences to enhance the collective pool of knowledge and generate innovative ideas (Argyris, 1991). For leadership practices to flourish, debate and discourse are needed. Therefore, the importance of criticism, learning, and reflexivity, or as Argyris (1991) refers to it, double-loop learning, cannot be understated. Cartwright (2002) challenges leadership developers to use double-loop learning to “change habits of thinking, challenge and restructure deeply held assumptions, and act in new and unfamiliar ways” (p. 70). Robertson (2009) shares that an examination of values and beliefs is essential in leadership development, creating double-loop learning, which leads to reflection of action and inaction (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Schon, 1987).

### **Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is one of the most critical elements to successful leadership and team performance (Hannah et al., 2008). Moreover, it positively affects effective leadership, motivation, resilience, and performance (Hannah et al., 2008; Skaaalvik, 2020). In a highly cognitively, emotionally, and physically demanding position, novice school leaders, now more than ever, need to increase their leader self-efficacy to endure and thrive in their role. Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), as part of a social cognitive theory, suggests that cognitive processes play a significant role in attaining and retaining new behavioral patterns. Bandura (1977) defined efficacy expectation as “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce outcomes” (p. 193). Bandura (1977) differentiates the efficacy expectations from the expectations of the outcome because individuals may doubt their abilities to achieve a result, but it does not influence their behavior. Expectations of personal mastery

affect both initiation and persistence of behaviors. Efficacy expectations also influence effort and persistence and assist an individual's ability to cope in the face of challenging or threatening situations (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is a determining factor in the level of effort one puts forth and how long one will sustain that effort in the face of obstacles and challenges, which is critical as a school administrator (Bandura, 1977). Efficacy expectations vary in terms of magnitude (level of difficulty), generality (general to specific), and strength (weak to strong). *Self-Efficacy* for this purpose of this study is an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance success or achievements (Bandura, 1977, Bachkirova et al., 2015).

Bandura (1977) defines four sources of efficacy expectations: personal mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. The most influential source is one's *performance accomplishments* based on individual mastery experience. Success raises one's mastery experiences, and repeated failures lower them, especially if they occur early in the experience or event. Once enhanced, self-efficacy generalizes to other situations which differed from the original area or goal of focus (Bandura, 1977). As coach and coachee dyads focus on one area or goal and self-efficacy improves, the influence may spread across regions of principal leadership. Experiences of mastery are a critical source of efficacy for a leader (Moen & Allgood, 2009). *Vicarious experiences* or seeing others successfully performing activities and tasks helps to generate expectations in the observers, thus improving their performance by learning from what they have observed (Bandura, 1977). Coachees have leadership coaches to provide vicarious experiences and model behaviors during sessions. *Verbal persuasion* focused on activities where people are led through suggestion into believing they can cope successfully



with specific tasks, strategies, or goals with what overwhelmed them in the past (Bandura, 1977). Coaching and providing feedback to inspire and motivate principals to focus on their goals are types of verbal persuasion (DeWitt, 2019). *Emotional arousal* affects self-efficacy because high emotional arousal can debilitate performance. An individual's state of anxiety and vulnerability to stress affects their judgment concerning completing tasks or goals (Bandura, 1977). Reducing emotional arousal can reduce avoidance behaviors. As a coach, emphasizing social and emotional wellness and providing a safe, supportive environment can reduce emotional arousal for coachees (DeWitt, 2019).

McCormick (2001) states, "every major review of leadership literature lists self-confidence as an essential characteristic for effective leadership" (p. 23). A positive relationship exists between leadership self-efficacy and leader effectiveness regarding potential, performance, and behavioral ratings (Moen & Allgood, 2009; Anderson et al., 2008; Dwyer, L.P., 2019). Coaching as a means of leadership development has been linked to increased leadership self-efficacy (Moen & Allgood, 2009; Moen & Skaalvik, 2009; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Dwyer, L. P. 2019).

Moen and Skaalvik (2009), in a study on executive coaching using 20 executives, found a significant increase in pre-post leadership efficacy ratings after a one-year coaching experience compared to a control group. Similarly, Moen and Allgood (2009), using a 32-item scale survey of 127 executives and middle managers, found the experimental group, who received coaching, experienced increases in self-efficacy at a higher rate than those in the control group who did not. Ladegard and Gjerde (2014) found an increase in leadership self-efficacy for their 24 middle-and upper-level leaders that experienced executive coaching compared to the control

group. “Successful executive coaching should promote the executives’ awareness about, and ability to use, effective task-specific strategies... [which is another] positive effect of coaching on self-efficacy” (Moen & Allgood, 2009).

Dwyer (2019) is a literature review of self-efficacy research found that many studies have reported positive relationships with potential, performance, and behavioral ratings of leaders. However, there is research that contrastingly questions whether leadership self-efficacy is always a positive leadership attribute. Argyris (1991) suggests caution with self-efficacy in that being overly confident or reliant on self-efficacy leads to defensive reasoning. Focusing the leadership coaching program (LCP) on real leadership problems and challenges, allows the coach/coachee dyad to facilitate productive reasoning conversations rather than defensive ones (Argyris, 1991).

Research indicates that exemplary professional development programs include individualized support such as a coach, peer network, and structures that provide job-embedded, authentic, applied learning activities like a professional learning community or community of practice (CoP) (Darling-Hammond et al. 2022). Communities of practice (CoP) emphasizes using *community* or peer network to promote social learning through a joint enterprise focused on a shared *practice*, applied learning. The CoP provides a safe space for school leaders to come together to share, exchange ideas and resources, and discuss problems of practice (Wenger 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). The collaborative and continual social exchange works to establish the participants' *domain*, increasing their confidence in their role as school leaders within the context of the school system or organization (Wenger 1998; Wenger et al., 2002). Learning networks and communities within the organization's context is a vital component of a school

leader's professional development, contributes to easing the loneliness of the job, and helps to develop greater confidence (Daniels et al., 2019). Research indicates that participation in high-quality professional learning corresponds with increased school leader self-efficacy, positively affecting work performance and effectiveness, benefitting students, staff, and the organization at large (Finn et al., 2007; Hanna et al., 2008; Dwyer, 2019; Levin et al., 2020).

### **Summary**

Developing influential leaders supports individuals and the organization (Aas, 2017). Therefore, providing opportunities for principal leadership development must be prioritized and considered essential (Grissom et al., 2021). Coaching creates authentic, job-embedded professional learning that is personalized, contextual, and problem-based (Levin et al., 2020). The purpose of this action research study was to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy (Wenger et al., 2002; Bandura, 1977). It further examined participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or adjustments. The study used a community of practice model, creating a leadership development structure focused on the practice of educational leadership. The professional learning experience establishes the domain of school leaders through the joint enterprise of leadership coaching. Trust-based coaching relationships fosters collaboration and correlate with increased self-efficacy and performance (Fletcher & Mullen, 2012; Moen & Allgood, 2009). Coaches use power questions to focus on the coachee's thinking, leading to the examination of the underlying values, assumptions, and beliefs (double loop learning) that drive a leader in their practice (Witherspoon, 2004). The literature review suggests that by providing learning partners, both leaders will develop and grow (Table 2).

**Table 2***Summary Literature Table*

PROBLEM STATEMENT	PURPOSE STATEMENT	MAIN CONCEPTS/ LITERATURE	RESEARCH QUESTION(S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School principals have a significant impact on students and staff.</li> <li>School administration more complex and demanding</li> <li>Many of the current principals are considered novice or have less than 5 years' experience.</li> <li>Critical need for high quality, comprehensive leadership development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy.</li> <li>To examine participant's recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or enhancements.</li> </ul>	Leadership Development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Guskey, 2002, 2021; Knowles et al., 2005; Aas, 2017; Turnball, 2016, Daniels et al., 2019)	RQ2: In what ways could the leadership coaching programming be adjusted to better meet participants' needs?
		Community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002)	SQ1: How is the educational leadership <b>practice</b> of the coachee influenced?
		Leadership coaching (Robertson, 2008; Moen & Algood, 2009; Tingle et al, 2019; Fletcher & Mullen, 2012)	SQ2: In what ways is the coachees' <b>domain</b> of principalship influenced?
		Double Loop Learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978; Argyris, 1991, 2002)	
		Self-Efficacy (Bandura, 1977)	RQ1: What is the influence of the leadership coaching <b>community</b> on the coachees' leadership self-efficacy?

In the following chapter, the methods and research design for exploring the school administrators' self-perceptions of professional growth and self-efficacy engaged participating in the LCP will be described. Details about the participants, data sources, and analysis as well as my researcher positionality and the boundaries of the study will be shared.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As the complexities of principalship increase and experience levels of new administrators decrease, the need for high-quality personalized professional learning becomes critical. School leaders have a significant impact on their students, staff, and community. It is critical to create and sustain effective structures and programs to ensure success as they begin this integral leadership role.

The purpose of this action research study was to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy (Wenger et al., 2002; Bandura, 1977; Herr & Anderson, 2015). The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the influence of the leadership coaching **community** on the coachee/new school leaders' self-efficacy?
  - a. How is the educational leadership **practice** of the coachee influenced?
  - b. In what ways is the coachees' **domain** of school leader influenced?
2. In what ways could the leadership coaching programming be adjusted to better meet participants' needs?

This chapter details the study's research design, the context in which the study took place, researcher positionality, and the participants included in the study. It continues with a description of the data collection and analysis processes, pilot testing, the boundaries and trustworthiness of the study.

## **Research Design**

Grogan et al. (2007) stated, “Action research helps leaders learn about action and interrogate the consequences of their actions” (p. 6). This participatory action research (PAR) study allowed me, as the supervisor of the leadership coaching program (LCP), to learn about the leadership coaching program (action) and its influence on the self-efficacy of the new leader’s it serves (consequences) through surveys, interviews, and my researcher's log. In participatory action research, the researcher and school practitioners (coaches, coachees, and collaborators) partner to serve as change agents. The researcher and school practitioners focus on defining and addressing a problem specified for a unique context and environment (mid-Atlantic local school system) using an inquiry process (Grogan et al., 2013, Efron & Ravid, 2020). In action research, the “participants are a natural part of the inquiry setting” (Grogan et al., 2007, p. 5). The collaborative partners become architects of knowledge and theory and generate solutions that strengthen the organization (Efron & Ravid, 2020). I used an action research design to improve the leadership coaching program through an iterative cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Lewin, 1948). Since the pilot, I adapted and refined the LCP based on initial observations, reflections, and data collected prior to the full launch in September of 2021. As the main instrument of research and supervisor of the LCP, I am highly involved and engaged with the LCP community members.

As the leadership development supervisor, I was an “insider collaborating with other insiders” in the leadership coaching community (Herr & Anderson, 2015), which as the researchers suggested may have a more significant impact on the setting and the possibility of being more democratic. However, power relations are in constant operation in this type of action

research and taken into consideration. Herr and Anderson (2015) suggested that "insider collaboration with other insiders" action research moves toward working as a collaborative group engaging in learning and change, influencing organizational change, and offering opportunities for personal, professional, and instructional transformation (p. 37). The findings of this study allowed for the transformation of practice and worked within the local school system to disrupt the status quo of "sit and get" PL for new leaders and helped create a foundational, impactful leadership coaching program that endures (Efron & Ravid, 2020).

This study was a qualitative participatory action research design that included the completion of pre/post self-efficacy scales, in-depth interviews with both coach and coachee participants, one mid-intervention and one at the conclusion, and principal supervisor surveys because of supervisors' closeness to the problem and action. The data gathered from the insiders enabled me to engage with the information to reflect, plan, act, and continue to observe, continually adjusting as needed based on what is seen, heard, and felt. My researcher logs and memos helped to facilitate the process of reflection, planning, and action when collecting and analyzing the data and attending meetings or professional learning experiences with coaches, coachees or collaborators. The practical interest of the study guided judgments and knowledge about the leadership coaching program (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The results allowed me as supervisor of leadership development to continue adjusting and improving the leadership coaching program, which directly affects the leaders of the LSS thus impacting the students, staff, and communities in the district.

## **Setting/Context**

Action research is unique to the setting and context (Efron & Ravid, 2020). The study was conducted in a mid-sized, mid-Atlantic local school system (LSS) of approximately 45,000 students and 6,000 staff members that serve 68 schools. About 165 of those staff members are school-based leaders. As of September 2021, the LSS had approximately a quarter of principals new to the role or school system (first or the second year). More specifically, the percentage of principals in their first or second year in the position or school system ranges from 23-35% at each level: Elementary: 23%, Middle: 35%, and High: 23%. The percentage of assistant principals new to the role or school system varied more significantly per level: Elementary: 45%, Middle: 30%, and High 18%. In September 2021, six new principals (Elementary: 5; Middle: 1) and 14 assistant principals (Elementary: 7; Middle: 4; High: 3) comprised the newly promoted or hired school-based administrators of the local school system that will be participating the leadership coaching program in its first official year of implementation. In the winter of 2022, seven new school-based administrators were hired (two new elementary principals, one elementary assistant principal, two middle school assistant principals, and two high school assistant principals). Each received a coach to assist with their transition to the new role.

The participants in the study were part of the leadership coaching program (LCP) as either a coachee (novice school administrator), coach (veteran school administrator), or collaborator (principal supervisor). The study took place in the LSS where the leadership coaching program was created, piloted, and implemented. The leadership coaching program (LCP) was nuanced to serve the system's needs both in its approach, content, and resources. It



allowed the LSS to continue adjusting and creating a sustainable, effective leadership program that improves leadership practice affecting students and staff throughout the county.

As previously mentioned in the Background section of Chapter 1, all newly promoted school administrators were assigned a leadership coach once hired. All leadership coaches were selected via a rigorous application process, provided training, and were financially rewarded with a \$5,000 stipend. The LSS principal supervisors and I collaboratively met to match the coach and coachee partners, matching both strengths and previous experiences. Coaches were required to establish sessions or check-ins bi-monthly (see Chapter 1 for roles and responsibilities). The study occurred in the first full year of implementation, which began in August of 2021.

### **Participants**

The complete target population of leadership coaching participants were invited to participate in the study. The target population included newly promoted school-based administrators for the 21-22 school year, their corresponding coach, and principal supervisors in a mid-sized Mid-Atlantic, local school system (LSS). For the 21-22 school year, there were six principal coach/coachee partners: five at the elementary level and one at the middle school level. Additionally, 12 assistant principals were grouped among five coaches: two groups at elementary, two at middle and one at high school. All participants in the Leadership Coaching Program were invited to participate. Of those that volunteered, I randomly selected 12 coach and coachee participants for the study (6 of each) (see Table 3 and 4). Only two sets of participants were coach/coachee partners.

**Table 3***Demographics of Coachee Participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Position	Years in Ed.	Years in Admin
Bobby (Coachee)	Male	White	Assistant Principal	11	0
Carrie (Coachee)	Female	White	Principal	26	9
Cori (Coachee) <sup>1</sup>	Female	White	Principal	15	7
Erin (Coachee) <sup>2</sup>	Female	White	Principal	17	2
Mary (Coachee)	Female	White	Assistant Principal	15	4
Stacey (Coachee)	Female	White	Principal	22	7

*Note:* <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> indicates the two coach/coachee pairings.

**Table 4***Demographics of Coach Participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Position	Years in Ed.	Years in Admin
Donovan (Coach) <sup>2</sup>	Male	Hispanic	Principal	23	11
Jane (Coach)	Female	White	Principal	24	12
Lia (Coach)	Female	White	Principal	23	7
Molly (Coach) <sup>1</sup>	Female	White	Principal	16	10
Preacher (Coach)	Male	White	Principal	36	23
Tim (Coach)	Male	White	Principal	27	17

*Note:* <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> indicates the two coach/coachee pairings.

Five principal supervisors for the district were invited to serve as participants. Only four responded affirmatively. All four completed the principal supervisor survey. Participants represented all levels of a PreK-12 public education school system: elementary, middle, and high school. All participants were part of the leadership coaching program as coachees (novice administrators), coaches (veteran administrators), or collaborators (principal supervisors).

Both the coachee (new school administrators) and the coach (veteran administrators) provided insight into how the leadership coaching community influenced coachee's self-efficacy in the practice of educational leadership. They further shared specific information about how the community affected coachee's acclimation to their new role in the domain of school leadership. Both imparted valuable insights into programmatic improvement and adjustments for the future. Since the leadership coaching program's inception, principal supervisor participants served as collaborators but are not directly part of the leadership coaching community. As collaborators, principal supervisors assisted in matching coaching partners, provided systemic alignment to priorities and hot topics/issues, gave feedback on professional learning, resources, and programmatic documents like the coach job description and roles and responsibilities document. The principal supervisors provided insight into how the leadership coaching experience translated into practice. More specifically, their insight on the influence of the program on the educational leadership practice of the participants in the program was an invaluable data source, keeping any identifiable information confidential. They also shared suggestions for future adjustments from their perspectives.

Participation was voluntary, and participants were able to stop participation at any point in the study. Each participant submitted a signed letter of consent (see Appendix P) to participate

and was provided with a written explanation of the study. I informed participants of any emotional costs of participation, such as feelings of emotion due to revisiting anxieties or vulnerabilities of their experiences. I shared the benefits of participating, such as shaping the program and providing valuable feedback to support future leaders and programming. Each coach and coachee participant received a 20-dollar gift card as compensation for their time. Each principal supervisor that completed received a five-dollar gift card for their time. Confidentiality was assured by having each participant choose their own pseudonym for the study. To safeguard the data, I stored all collected information on a thumb drive.

### **Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

Data were collected throughout the 2021-2022 school year, from September through June. Three primary data sources were used: interviews (mid-intervention and end of intervention), coachee self-efficacy survey and principal supervisor survey (see Table 5).

**Table 5***Research Question-Data Source Grid*

Research Question	Data Source						Analysis
	Interview Protocol 1		Interview Protocol 2		Survey	Survey	
	Questions	Self-Anchoring Scale (6)	Questions	Sorting Activity (8-10)	Principal Self-Efficacy Scale	Principal Supervisor: Questions and Feedback	<b>Sampling:</b> Complete target population <b>Group characteristics sampling:</b> Identify patterns and themes for set cases in the group (Patton, p. 528) <b>Content Analysis:</b> identifying organizing and categorizing the content of narrative text (Patton, p. 551) <b>Coding</b> Examining at coach, coachee, and programmatic levels (whole sample)
RQ1: What is the influence of the leadership coaching <b>community</b> on the coachee/new school leaders' leadership self-efficacy?	4	X	1, 7 10	X	X	8	Semi structured interviews, recorded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenging assumptions, values</li> <li>Transformation</li> <li>Learning</li> <li>Trust</li> </ul> Compare the pre-test to post-test adapted PSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confidence</li> <li>Comfortable</li> <li>Effective</li> </ul>
SQ1: How is the educational leadership <b>practice</b> of the coachee influenced?	4		4, 5, 6	X		4,5	Semi structured interviews, recorded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange of tacit and explicit knowledge</li> <li>Acclimation (coachee)</li> <li>Reinvigoration (coach)</li> </ul>
SQ2: In what ways is coachees' <b>domain</b> of school leader influenced?	3, 4		2, 3	X		1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem solving</li> <li>Support</li> <li>Relationship</li> <li>Challenge/Question</li> </ul>
RQ2: In what ways could the leadership coaching programming be adjusted to better meet the participants' needs?			8, 9			6,7	

*Interviews*

The preponderance of data was collected through semi-structured interviews via zoom. Interviews provided a window into the participants' lives, always beginning with the assumption that their perspectives are meaningful and can be made explicit (Patton, 2015). The participant interviews brought forth perceptions on the systemic action to address problems and change (Herr & Anderson, 2015). More specifically, the two interviews (mid-course and end of the program) yielded insight into the leadership coaching program (action) for addressing the novice school administrator's professional learning needs while acclimating to their new role to increase the self-efficacy of the inexperienced leaders (change).

Semi-structured interviews included a predetermined set of questions but allowed the interviewer some flexibility with probes to further explore responses to garner more information. Weiss (1994) states, “Interviewing gives us access to the observation of others. Through interviews, we can learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived” (p. 1). The members of the community had thoughts and perspectives that I, as the researcher, do not. It was critical to gather their perceptions of the experience and impact of the leadership coaching program. Mid-program semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the coach and coachee community members to discover experiences and perceptions about the program (see Appendix H and I). Open-ended questions, including self-anchoring scales, were posed to invite insights and perspectives about the leadership coaching program’s influence on professional growth and leadership efficacy. I also conducted final interviews with participants, including two sorting activities (see Appendix J and K). Each interview was recorded and transcribed. I used rev.com for the transcriptions.

### ***Self-Efficacy Survey***

Self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance success or achievements (Bandura, 1977; Bachkirova et al., 2015). Self-efficacy is critical to the success of a leadership coaching program. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis’ Principals Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES) is an 18-item scale that addresses three domains of a school administrator’s self-efficacy: management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. Each question on the scale uses a 9-point Likert scale: 1 being “none” and 9 being “a great deal” (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, pp. 579-80).

I adapted the Tschannen-Moran and Gareis' (2004) Principal Self-Efficacy Survey to create a new self-efficacy survey for all coach and coachee program participants; it served as a tool to promote dialogue and reflection (see Appendix L & M). The data source was not only a tool for reflection for the partners but served as a data source for this action research study. The adapted self-efficacy survey allowed me to reflect on the influence of the LCP on the novice leaders' self-efficacy after the coaching experience for further planning, follow up actions, and refinements (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

The content of the original scale was based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards from 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). However, in 2015 the Professional Standards for Education Leaders were created and approved. The new, updated standards highlight the shifts and changes to the current role of the principal (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). In cross walking the original PSES (Principal Self Efficacy Scale) with the PSEL standards, it became apparent that it was necessary to update the initial principal self-efficacy survey to adjust the language to mirror the shifts in the standards (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Principal Self-Efficacy/Principal Standards for Educational Leaders Crosswalk*

PSEL Standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015)	Principal Self-Efficacy Scale Survey Items (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004)	Updated Language using wording from Professional standards for Educational Leader Standards (PSEL)	PSEL Standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015)
	<b>Stem:</b> "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."	<b>Stem:</b> "In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."	
10	facilitate student learning in your school?	develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment?	4
1	generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school?	develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education?	1
	manage change in your school?		
	handle the time demands of the job?		
	promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population?		
5	create a positive learning environment in your school?	cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community?	5
10R	raise student achievement on standardized tests?	act as agents of continuous improvement?	10
8R	promote a positive image of your school with the media?	engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways?	8

6R	motivate teachers?	develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel?	6
1	promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?	foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff?	7
	maintain control of your own daily schedule?		
9	shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?	Shape the operational policies and procedures necessary to manage school operations and resources?	9
3R	handle effectively the discipline of students in your school?	strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices	3
3R	promote acceptable behavior among students?		
	handle the paperwork required of the job?		
2	promote ethical behavior among school personnel?	act ethically and according to professional norms and promote such behavior among staff?	2
	cope with the stress of the job?		
	prioritize among competing demands of the job?		

R=Related but not direct connection



The adapted self-efficacy survey was sent via email to each coach and coachee at the onset of the LCP and used again at the end of the coaching experience to look for growth. It was administered using a google-form assessment. It serves as a means of programmatic data for the LCP. Only six coachees completed both the pre and post self-efficacy scales.

### ***Principal Supervisor Survey***

Herr and Anderson (2015) state, “Action research is best done in collaboration with others who have a stake in the problem under investigation” (p. 3). Principal supervisors have a considerable stake in the increased self-efficacy and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the school-based administrators. They have keen insight into implementing the leadership coaching program as collaborators. As they work with principals, they have firsthand knowledge of how the impact on the school communities and leadership practice. Principal supervisor participants were asked to complete an online eight-question survey that includes rating scales and open-ended questions to garner insights and perceptions from their unique perspective on the influence of the LCP (see Appendix N). They also provided essential learning about ways to improve and adjust the program to better meet the needs of leaders in the future for the pivotal role of school-based administrator.

### ***Researcher Logs***

Researcher logs and memos served as an additional data source. As the researcher working as a collaborative partner with the school practitioners (coaches, coachees, and collaborators) in this participatory action research it was imperative to document my reflections throughout the process. As an insider, action researcher, logs and memos allowed me to formally translate the work associated with the LCP I already do as part of my daily and weekly routines

as data for the study (Herr & Anderson, 2015). My researcher log recorded my reflections, analysis, and self-critiques (Maxwell, 2013) as the primary instrument of the research when I am working with data collection and analysis and in situations or meetings throughout the study where mentions of the program, coaches, or coachees were explicitly made. Maxwell (2013) explains that researcher memos are a way of writing to facilitate metacognition about your topic, therefore helping the researcher understand it. Organized memos that include deep reflection, thorough analysis, and self-critique are requirements for valuable memos (Maxwell, 2013). I used a chart to help organize my memos (see Appendix O). I kept the log throughout the course of my study. As the supervisor of leadership development and the chief instrument of research I also used the log to take note of any mentions or discussions about the LCP during my monthly leadership development collaboration meetings with the principal supervisors.

### ***Pilot Study/Pilot Testing***

I conducted a pilot test of the final interview protocols to determine the quality of the questions and the time to complete the full battery of questions. I asked four participants, a mix of coaches and coachees, from the pilot year of the leadership coaching program to pilot test the interviews. With their knowledge of the program, they provided valuable insight into the language of the questions. Their answers to the questions allowed me to adjust the interview protocol to ensure that the research questions were addressed. The pilot helped determine the length of the time each data source required so that I could state the required time frame needed for future participants with relative accuracy. The pilot test included open-ended questions, sorting activity, and self-anchoring scales.

## **Data Analysis**

Patton (2015) states that data analysis is a complex, multifaceted of “disciplined science, creative artistry, skillful crafting, rigorous sense-making, and personal reflexivity... molding interviews observations, documents and fieldwork into findings” (p. 521). I used Miles et al. (2014) as a guide for data analysis: data condensation, data display, and conclusion/verification. Data condensation makes data stronger by selecting, highlighting, streamlining, or transforming data that appear in the larger collection of interviews, surveys, and field notes (Miles et al., 2014). Through this process of summarizing and coding, I developed themes and patterns that emerge from the data to develop the story that the data are telling. I created data displays using vivid, descriptive text to highlight the data. Finally, I drew and verified conclusions using peer checks with the leadership development team and member checks with coach, coachee, and collaborator participants.

Miles et al. (2014) suggests data collection, condensation, display, and conclusion/verification are iterative processes that traverse throughout the study. I identified patterns and themes for set cases in the target sample group population (Patton, 2015). For each data set, I conducted a thorough content analysis, “identifying organizing and categorizing the content of narrative text” (Patton, 2015, p. 551). Using the entire sample, I explored coding at the coach, coaches, and programmatic levels using in vivo coding. A “start list” of codes was included in Table 5 for the corresponding data source and research question (Miles et al., 2014).

## **Boundaries**

The current study had several bounds. First, all participants were principals from the same mid-Atlantic, mid-sized school system who self-selected to participate in the study. The

participant coaches were motivated to become coaches and applied for the role. Conversely, all novice principals were required to take part in the leadership coaching program. Thus, although they may have elected to participate in the current study, they did not elect whether to be a part of the coaching experience. Bachkirova et al. (2015) state that the success of a coaching experience often depends on the attitude of the client/coachee.

Although I do not directly supervise any of the principals, my role as the supervisor of leadership development for the school system and the leadership coaching program is supervisor. Therefore, my position may have had a coercive effect on the participants. As an architect of the program, I also may have a bias that influenced the participants or the study. I continuously monitored and accounted for my research positionality bias through reflective memos and member checks.

Another boundary of the study was the number of participants in the study being dependent upon the number of school system promotions. The study was also bound in that we are beginning the reopening after a pandemic. Much of the coaching was conducted via online platforms such as google-meet, phone calls, or even emails. Some participants intentionally shifted sessions back to face to face, even including site visits and meetings at restaurants or other neutral off-site locations.

Unlike in a traditional year, both coach and coachee came to the coaching session more on equal terms. No principal has ever led through the reopening of a school after pandemic conditions, with time consuming contact tracing protocols, threats of quarantining students and staff, teachers and substitute shortages, and the social unrest and social, emotional distress that continues to plague America's schools of today. The continual pressure to catch students up from

their lost year all impacts school administrators as they begin their 201-2022 school year. All the afore-mentioned conditions also affect the principals and their abilities to participate in the leadership coaching program. The ever shifting and always urgent demands of all school leaders during the pandemic created an enormous challenge for all school leaders.

### **Trustworthiness**

Patton (2015) stated, “The credibility of your findings and interpretations depends on your careful attention to establishing trustworthiness” (p. 685). Four constructivist criteria help to establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility assures fit between the views of the participants and the researcher’s reconstruction and representation (Patton, 2015). To establish verisimilitude, I used context-rich descriptions to capture the perceptions and experiences of the participants fully. I instituted member checks throughout data collection to ensure that the data collected, summarized, and displayed represents their thoughts and perspectives. I used my team to help to alert me to potential bias. Using the perspectives of both coaches and coachees provided fuller and more detailed descriptions and insights into the experience. By recording my interactions in meetings throughout the study with other members of the LSS that interact with members of the coaching community, I was further able to triangulate the data.

Transferability allowed for the generalization of the research findings. Action research is specific to a particular problem, action, and setting, therefore, limits transferability. Herr and Anderson (2015) suggest using successful collaboration through an action research study to document the process and the product, which can transfer to someone in a similar context (i.e., another school system). Patton (2015) states that it is necessary to provide sufficient information

on the current case to establish similarity to other instances where the findings might be transferred. Other school systems may want to use a leadership coaching program or establish a coaching community (Patton, p. 685). Therefore, I provided a thick, rich description so that readers can determine connections or transfer findings applied to their context.

Dependability necessitates a focus on the inquiry process to ensure consistency. It also requires detailed documentation that has clear connections to theory and existing literature with a coherent design that stays stable over time and across methods (Patton, 2015; Miles et al., 2014). The research questions driving the study were clear, and the study's design was reasonable to explore them. The current study was grounded in multiple theories: a community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002), double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978), leadership coaching (Robertson, 2009; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). I used colleague reviews when looking at the coding and analyzing the data. Members of the leadership development team served as reviewers.

Confirmability established a distinct connection from data gathered to assertions, findings, and interpretations (Patton, 2015). I kept a research log that described the process, both explicit and metacognitive, throughout the study. I monitored and analyzed my research bias through logs and memos. I documented and detailed the process of data collection, condensation, display, and conclusions. I kept a detailed codebook that will be kept and available for audit. I kept the data for reanalysis.

Action orientation qualitative research provides projects that address problems in each context leading to more positive actions (Miles et al., 2014). The current study addressed the problem of decreasing experience levels and increased complexities of educational leaders. It

provided necessary understanding and insights into the perceptions of a leadership coaching community and its influence on professional growth and leadership self-efficacy. It allowed the LSS to adjust for the program to support future leaders in the program, both novice and veteran school leaders. If the program is successful, it may expand beyond the focus of school-based leaders to others within the LSS, or other school systems may see the approach as useful.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the research purpose with the aligned research questions, described the research design, including with context of the study, researcher's positionality, and participants. It further detailed the data collection procedures and plans for pilot testing and analysis. The chapter concluded with the boundaries and trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 4 will present the results of the data analysis. Chapter 5 will present a discussion on the findings and implications for future research.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Leadership coaching provides personalized, relevant professional learning and support to new school-based leaders (coachees) helping them acclimate to their new role and build leadership efficacy. The purpose of this action research study was to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' perceptions of self-efficacy (Wenger et al., 2002; Bandura, 1977). It further examined participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or adjustments. I collected data through three sources: semi-structured interviews, principal supervisor surveys, and principal self-efficacy scales to examine the following research questions:

1. What is the influence of the leadership coaching **community** on the coachee/new school leaders' self-efficacy?
  - a. How is the educational leadership **practice** of the coachee influenced?
  - b. In what ways is the coachees' **domain** of school leader influenced?
2. In what ways could the leadership coaching programming be adjusted to better meet participants' needs?

The first section of this chapter describes the data collected from the three data sources and details the analysis process.

In the second section of the chapter, I present the findings of the study by describing the main themes and sub-themes that emerged in the data in relation to the research questions posed.

Verbatim quotes from coach, coachee, and principal supervisor participants portray their views accurately and reveal insights from their insider perspectives. As I examined the influence of the leadership coaching community on school leaders' self-efficacy, educational leadership practice,



and school leader domain, three key themes emerged: a. essential learning conditions, b. coaching as professional learning, and c. coach as a key resource. Additional sub-themes surfaced including the following: trusting relationships, safe learning environment, knowledge exchange, network building, go to person, and thought partnership. A fourth theme emerged in relation to the ways the leadership coaching program could better meet participants' needs: community structures. The subthemes identified were valuable components and recommendations for improvement. I also present an additional finding of the study that reached beyond the scope of the research questions.

### **Data and Analysis**

Three sources provided the data used to analyze the research questions and determine themes. The primary data source was the 12 mid-interval and 12 end-of-interval semi-structured online, face-to-face interviews with six coach and six coachee participants in the Leadership Coaching Program (LCP). The secondary data source was the survey results from four principal supervisors who collaborated with the LCP. Finally, the six pre/post-self-efficacy surveys compared coachee self-efficacy perceptions before and after the coaching intervention. LCP participants (coaches, coachees, and collaborators) were fundamental to the action research process.

### **Interview and Survey Data**

Coachees, coaches, and principal supervisors were asked complementary questions via interviews or surveys. Transcriptions of the interviews and the data from the surveys were analyzed question by question to determine initial codes at each level of coach, coachee, and

program. However, the data will be presented using a comprehensive approach in the findings section of the chapter detailing the emerged patterns and themes across all data sets and levels.

### ***Interview and Open-Ended Question Survey Data***

I conducted a preliminary exploratory analysis of all the transcribed interviews and the principal supervisor survey questions to determine initial In Vivo and open codes while also using the provisional codes that surfaced through the self-anchoring scale activity, further discussed in the following section. One hundred eighty-one initial codes emerged through the exploratory analysis. Following the initial exploratory analysis of the transcripts, data were uploaded to the qualitative analysis software NVivo 12 for further coding and analysis. I also used the auto-code feature, more specifically a high-frequency word count matrix, to look for words or phrases that were repeated throughout the transcripts. The high frequency word count matrix helped to ensure alignment to the initial codes and to carefully examine any high-frequency words missed in preliminary coding to mitigate bias.

The next step was to create nodes based on the categories and patterns in NVivo 12. Using the NVivo software, second-round coding allowed focused coding to group the initial codes by looking for categories and patterns. The focused codes highlighted patterns, which allowed me to identify themes and subthemes within the data. Based on the themes and subthemes, I wrote statements of findings for each theme (see Appendix Q). As I analyzed the multiple data sources, I looked for points of congruence and discord between all the data sets and notated them in my researcher's log. I wrote reflective memos detailing the connections and questions that surfaced while triangulating the data.

## *Self-Anchoring Scale*

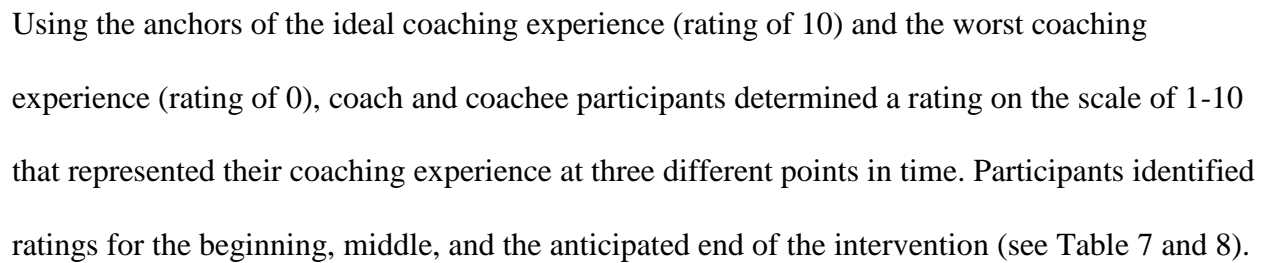
As part of the mid-interval interview, coaches and coachees participated in a self-anchoring scale activity. The first part of the activity asked participants to describe the ideal and worst coaching scenario. I used WordCloud Generator by inputting the words of the participants to determine high-frequency words or phrases to analyze the participants' perceptions of the ideal (see Figure 5) and worst coaching experiences (see Figure 6). The question provided opinions and thoughts that highlighted a list of provisional codes.

**Figure 5**

*Descriptions of the Ideal Coaching Experience*



*Describe the Worst Coaching Experience*



**Table 7***Coach Self-Anchoring Ratings of Coaching Experience*

Coach	Start of Interval	Mid-Interval	Anticipated End of Interval	Actual End of Interval
Donovan (Coach) <sup>1</sup>	3	7	10	10
Jane (Coach)	8	9	10	9
Lia (Coach)	4	8	9	8
Molly (Coach) <sup>2</sup>	5	9	10	9
Preacher (Coach)	3	7	9	9
Tim (Coach)	3	8	9	9

*Note:* Ratings identified on the scale of zero being the worst experience to ten being the ideal coaching experience. <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> indicates the two coach/coachee pairings.

**Table 8***Coachee Self-Anchoring Ratings of Coaching Experience*

Coachee	Start of Interval	Mid-Interval	Anticipated End of Interval	Actual End of Interval
Bobby (Coachee)	5	8	9	9
Carrie (Coachee)	5	9	9	9
Cori (Coachee) <sup>2</sup>	7	9	10	10
Erin (Coachee) <sup>1</sup>	1	1	1	1
Mary (Coachee)	5	9	9	9
Stacey (Coachee)	10	10	10	10

*Note:* Ratings identified on the scale of zero being the worst experience to ten being the ideal coaching experience. <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> indicates the two coach/coachee pairings.

Although coaches and coachee began the experience on varied levels of the continuum from worst (0) to ideal coaching experiences (10). Ninety-two percent of the coach/coachee participants felt they would reach an ideal or close to ideal coaching experience by the end of the intervention (9 or 10 ratings).

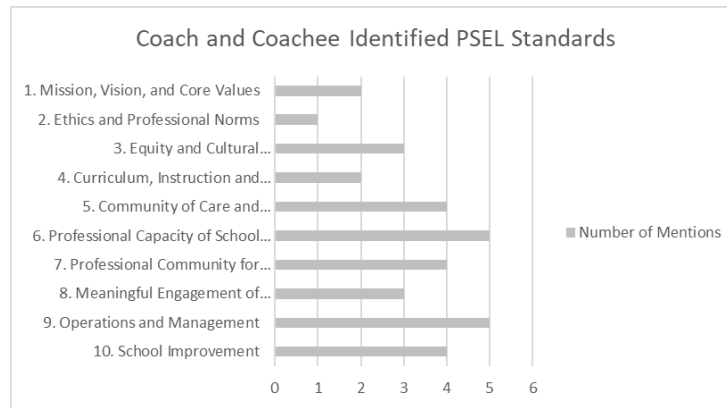
During the end-of-interval interview, participants revisited the self-anchoring activity. Participants were asked if they had reached the rating initially predicted in the mid-interval interview and to explain why or why not. One coachee participant, equating to 8%, remained at the 0-2 rating. Sixty-seven percent or 8 participants fulfilled their anticipated end-of- ratings. Twenty-five percent of participants (3 participants) felt that they did not reach their predicted end rating for a multitude of reasons, which will be further discussed in the findings section of the chapter.

### ***Sorting Activity***

Participants identified two to three Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) that grew their self-efficacy the most during the end-of-interval interview. As part of the annual principal and assistant principal evaluation process, the local school system selects priority PSEL standards as the focus areas based on district priorities. It is important to note that the local school system designated standards 3 (Equity and Cultural Responsiveness), 5 (Community of Care and Support for Students), and 6 (Professional Capacity of School Personnel) as focus standards for school leaders during the 21-22 school year. While there are some commonalities in the data among participants and connections to the focus areas identified by the district, the diversity of responses highlighted the personalized coaching approach (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

*Identified PSEL where the leadership coaching experience most influenced leader efficacy*



Operations and Management (standard 9), and Professional Capacity of School Personnel (standard 6), were mentioned most often by participants, each identified five times. Closely ranked, School Improvement (standard 10), Professional Community for Teachers and Staff (standard 7), and Community of Care and Supports for Students (standard 5) had four mentions each. The most mentioned standards align with the themes addressed in the findings section.

### ***Principal Survey Data***

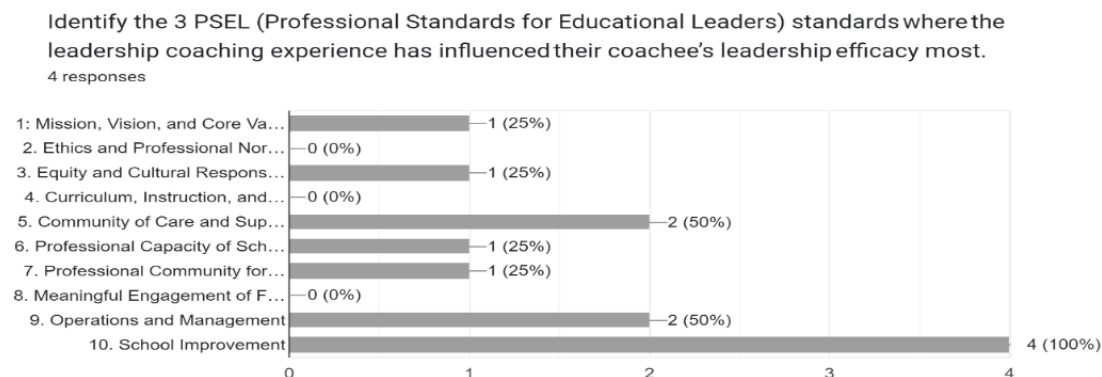
Principal survey data revealed that principal supervisors perceived that the LCP influenced the acclimation of new school leaders to their role. Principal supervisors rated the level of influence the leadership coaching program had on the acclimation of new school leaders. On a scale of one, not influential, to five, highly influential, three out of four principal supervisors rated the level of influence a four. One principal supervisor rated the level of influence a three.

Further, looking at the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, principal supervisors felt that School Improvement, Operations and Management, and Community of Care

and Support for Students were the standards perceived by principal supervisors as most influential on new leaders' self-efficacy (See Figure 8).

**Figure 8**

*Principal Supervisor Identified PSEL Standards*



The data revealed and alignment between the end-of-interval coach/coachee interview sorting activity and principal supervisors identified PSEL standards. The sorting activity indicated that the leadership coaching experience influenced the new leaders' self-efficacy in School Improvement (standard 10), Operations and Management (standard 9), and Community of Care and Supports for Students (standard 5). However, numerous coach/coachee participants mentioned standard 6 (Professional Community of School Personnel) during the sorting activity when asked to identify the most influenced PSEL standards. Only one principal supervisor felt it was a PSEL that influenced self-efficacy. Both standards 5 and 6 were focus standards for the school system in 21-22, which may have impacted their emphasis during coaching sessions. Standard 3 was the third focus standard identified by the school system in the 21-22 school year; a few coaches and coachee participants mentioned Equity and Cultural Responsiveness as



influencing their self-efficacy. However, zero principal supervisors identified standard 3 as a PSEL standard that influenced coachees' self-efficacy.

### Self-Efficacy Data

I compared pre- and post-self-efficacy data for six program participants as it is programmatic data the LCP asks of all participants. The LCP asked all coachees in the program to submit the self-efficacy scale twice: pre- and post-intervention. I used only coachee participants with matched pairs of pre- and post-self-efficacy data (n=6); I calculated average scores for each item for both pre- and post-surveys. I figured total averages for the overall scale, statements related to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, and those related to management. Finally, I determined the difference between pre- and post-scores and the percent of change for each item and total (see Table 9).

**Table 9**

#### *Principal Self-Efficacy Evaluation Pre-Post Results*

<b>In your current role as principal, to what extent can you...</b>	<b>Pre</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Change</b>
develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment?	5.50	5.83	0.33	6.06%
develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education?	6.50	7.17	0.67	10.26%
manage change in your school?	6.00	7.50	1.50	25.00%
handle the time demands of the job?	6.17	7.33	1.17	18.92%
cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community?	7.83	7.00	-0.83	-10.64%
act as agents of continuous improvement?	6.00	6.83	0.83	13.89%
engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways?	6.50	6.50	0.00	0.00%

	<b>Pre</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Change</b>
develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel?	6.17	6.00	-0.17	-2.70%
foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff?	7.50	6.67	-0.83	-11.11%
maintain control of your own daily schedule?	5.83	6.00	0.17	2.86%
shape the operational policies and procedures necessary to manage school operations and resources?	6.17	6.83	0.67	10.81%
strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices?	6.83	7.00	0.17	2.44%
handle the paperwork required of the job?	6.33	7.67	1.33	21.05%
act ethically and according to professional norms and promote such behavior among staff?	8.33	8.67	0.33	4.00%
cope with the stress of the job?	6.00	6.67	0.67	11.11%
prioritize among competing demands of the job?	6.67	7.00	0.33	5.00%
<b>AVG. TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>6.52</b>	<b>6.92</b>	0.40	6.07%
<b>AVG. TOTAL PSEL Score</b>	6.73	6.85	0.12	1.73%
<b>AVG. TOTAL Management Score</b>	6.17	7.03	0.86	13.96%

*(n=6 coachees)*

Interestingly, the management score rendered the highest percent of change. Additionally, the areas of School Improvement (standard 10), Operations and Management (standard 9), Mission, Vision, and Values (standard 1) were the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders coachees rated the most growth. The results of the self-efficacy survey align to the PSEL standards disclosed as most influential through the sorting activity and with the qualitative responses further discussed in the findings section of this chapter.

Although principal supervisors and interview participants perceived that standard 5, Community of Care and Support for Students, had a noteworthy influence on new leaders' self-efficacy, the coachees' perceptions of self-efficacy differed. Coachee's perceptions of self-efficacy in standard 5, Community of Care and Support for Students, decreased by 10.64%. Similarly, standard 7 (Professional Community for Teachers and Staff) was mentioned often as a standard where the leadership coaching experienced influenced self-efficacy in the sorting activity, yet self-efficacy ratings decreased significantly from pre to post by 11.11%.

The following section of this chapter presents the findings of the analysis and showcases the connections between the quantitative data collected in the self-efficacy survey, sorting activity, and principal supervisor survey with the themes in the qualitative data.

### **Translating Findings into Themes**

The study focused on the influence of the leadership coaching **community** on the coachee/new school leaders' self-efficacy, research question one (RQ 1). Moreover, it examined how the coaching experience influenced the coachees' educational leadership **practice**, sub-question one (SQ1), and their **domain** of school leader sub-question two (SQ3). Three main themes emerged related to research question one and the related sub-questions: essential learning conditions, coaching as professional learning, and the coach as a key resource. The study also examined adjustments and improvements for the leadership coaching community (RQ2). Community structures emerged as a theme with sub-themes of valuable components and recommendations for improvement. This section details the themes and subthemes regarding each research and sub-question.

## **Learning Conditions Essential to Building Self-Efficacy (RQ1)**

To increase self-efficacy through the leadership coaching community, the right conditions must be established and maintained. For meaningful learning to occur, a relationship founded on trust and a safe learning environment must be formed and cultivated along the way. If not, the learning experience only touches the surface rather than digging into the complexities and challenges of school leadership and potentially becomes compliance driven rather than developmental. Strong coaching partnerships started from the first encounter and build over time; it required a relationship built on trust and a safe learning environment to allow a coachee to be vulnerable, share openly, and accept feedback.

### ***Trusted Coaching Relationship***

The critical importance of establishing a trusting relationship between coach and coachee emerged as a key theme across all participants in interviews and surveys. Notably, the participants' responses to the self-anchoring activity, initially posed in mid-interval and revisited in the end-of-interval interviews, highlighted the essential elements of relationship building and trust in a coaching relationship. One principal supervisor participant shared, "the coach/coachee experience at its core develops trusting relationships where questions can be asked about how to motivate, engage and foster a learning environment that promotes and achieves measurable outcomes."

The establishment of a trusted relationship was essential to the success of the Leadership Coaching Program (LCP) experience. From the first moment, the relationship starts to form or can be hindered. As a coachee Carrie shared, coachees and coaches "need to take the time to create a relationship and that position of trust, because [the LCP experience] has the potential to

just be surface" if the relationship and trust are not present. Coachee Stacey shared, "my coach and I connected immediately. [She] texted me after that first meeting to make sure that I did know her number and that she meant that when I needed to talk to go ahead and reach out."

Similarly, Coachee Bobby shared, "I feel like honestly, [my coach] was the perfect person for me to work with and learn from. She gets me, where I am coming from." Coach Jane reported, "I think [the LCP] increases the relationships and strengthens them, and so people are freer or feel more comfortable asking for support...this is about helping each other and doing work to help beyond your building." It only took those first few moments to create an impression and set the tone positive or negative for the experience.

While some partnerships were quick to gel, others built over time or not at all. Coachee Cori shared, "I think in the beginning, I don't know that we would've talked as candidly as we do now because we have the relationship and the trust." Partnerships formed through a trusting relationship which begins at the first encounter and sets the stage for the experience. Without a solid foundation, the experience was at most compliance or "a social check in," as Erin shared in her end-of-interval interview. Coachee Erin openly shared,

The first time that my coach joined me at my school, some of the things that were said were first, 'I can't believe they put somebody like you here. This is a very big school, big job. You are building a new building. It sure does seem like somebody with experience would be a lot better in this role;' they also shared the number of minutes to retirement, how done they are with the job, how they can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

In the Self-Anchoring Activity, Erin rated her coaching relationship a one, (the anchor of zero being the worst possible coaching relationship). The rating of one endured for the entirety of her

coaching experience. Although Erin was excited for the opportunity for coaching, she was disappointed from the onset. She felt that her coach was only “checking a box” to fulfill the required hours. For meaningful learning to occur, a trusted relationship must be established from the first encounter and nurtured along the way.

### ***Safe Learning Environment***

Effective coaching relationships require creating a safe environment where trust is a foundation and curiosity prevails rather than judgment. Coachees, coaches, and principal supervisor collaborators alike continually remarked on the key component of a “safe space” or a non-evaluative person to be able to ask questions and vent frustrations when coachees were unsure or needed to share. Coachee Mary shared, “the [LCP] provided a lot of ways to push ourselves forward in a very non-evaluative way because we were not evaluating each other or judgmental towards each other.” Correspondingly, a principal supervisor stated,

When you have a non-evaluative person who you can go to for information, there is no concern about how it will reflect on you as a leader that you needed help. While our directors are accessible and always willing to support leaders, they are also the ones who evaluate principals so a new principal may not feel as comfortable asking what is perceived as a 'silly question.'

Being willing to share with your coach that you do not know something or that you have a “silly question” allows for open and honest conversations. Carrie, a veteran local school system leader but new principal, shared how that openness is experienced in her coaching relationship: “You know, there are times when I am like, I have no idea what I am doing. What am I supposed to be doing?” The safe learning environment created allowed her to show up and admit to having “no

idea what she is doing” and it opened the door for a fruitful and productive conversation about her goals and what she needed at that moment. Coachee Stacey, an experienced leader but new to the local school system (LSS) shared, “The [LCP] has been a great opportunity for me to understand the system from a strong leader who has history in the system. The pairing was fantastic. It provided me the opportunity to ask questions in a safe arena so that I did not feel silly if you will.”

As experienced leaders, it is often difficult to admit we do not know. Creating a safe environment allows for silly or challenging questions, honest reflection, and feedback. Carrie, a coachee, concurred with the other participants about the need to be vulnerable but extended the idea for both coach and coachee. She shares, “The vulnerability for both of us is there. I think that in the principal role, you do have to come across as very competent, but you also have to know where you are able to be vulnerable.” Coach Molly stated, “It's nice to have someone to unpack with and be able to be vulnerable with, because what you understand when you're in this job, it is a cumulative effect when the weight builds and builds.” One principal supervisor remarked

when a new administrator is managing through a significantly difficult parent situation, the coach can provide insight, guidance and related experience that not only allows the new administrator to work through the situation but reminds him/her that even veteran admin manage similar situations. When a new admin is working on something that he/she has not had extensive experience with before (budgets, creating schedules) a coach is a non-evaluative, safe person who can provide assistance without any fear of judgement.

A new school administrator acclimating to the new domain of school leader and building educational leadership practice, benefits from having a safe space to take risks and ask questions openly and with vulnerability is essential to build self-efficacy.

### **Personalized Professional Learning Influences Educational Leadership Practice (SQ1)**

Once the relationship was established, the exchange of knowledge through coaching conversations and network building provided personalized, just-in-time professional learning for the coachee. The social learning exchanges of tacit and explicit knowledge and building networks provided an onboarding opportunity to acclimate the new school leader domain and build their leader efficacy by focusing on the educational leadership practice of the coachee.

#### ***Knowledge Exchange through Coaching Conversations***

Coaches and coachees exchanged knowledge through coaching sessions. Coach, coachee and principal supervisors highlighted the importance of conversations during coaching sessions. Most one-on-one principal coachees and group coachees benefited from the collaboration and conversations with coaches and colleagues. Conversations focused on a variety of topics where resources and ideas were shared based on the needs of the coachee, such as teacher evaluation, creating opportunities for developing teacher leadership, town halls, Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, walk-throughs, student discipline and even timelines and time management strategies.

Cori and her coach Molly both discussed the benefits of sharing resources during their sessions. It is part of the benefit of having a veteran principal as a coach, shared Molly. Her coachee Cori shared how her coach is helpful and willing to give suggestions and provide resources that she uses in her leadership practice. Cori shared, “[my coach] shared a lot of



documents with me, how they've structured things and that's been really helpful to process and think about how we could borrow for our own school needs.”

Coachee Mary felt like coaching sessions were one of the highlights of her month because it was “one of the like key places that I could actually get some information or resources outside of my building administrator.” A principal supervisor wrote, “When we equip new leaders with the resources they need, there is an increased confidence in their ability to do their jobs.” As coachees focused the conversations based on their needs and context, timeliness and relevancy of the resources and support followed. Coachee Mary reinforced the importance of the just-in-time resources and support: “This is happening to me right now, and I need some ideas versus here's something that might happen to you during the school year.”

Not all coaching partnerships were effective. Erin experienced a role reversal in her coaching relationship. From her perspective, the coachee became the coach. Erin shared,

a lot of the conversation that we are starting to have now is, honestly, me coaching and me talking about some of the innovative things that we are doing... I feel like I am giving a little bit of PL [professional learning] every time, not vice versa, which is what I would have hoped. I would have hoped that there would have been some insight or talking through something but there is not.

While Erin’s response was atypical in the data collected, it was important to note. Erin and her coach struggled building a trusting relationship from the first encounter. Erin distinctly recalled her sessions being more “social check-ins” rather than professional learning that moved her leadership forward which she was seeking and thought she would get through the LCP.

While task-oriented conversations dominated for most of the school year, towards the end of the year coaches and coachees started to see a turn. Coach Molly shared,

What is great, too, is I feel like as she has grown, our conversations have become richer.

So, we have gone from more immediate problem solving ... I would guide her through processes and ask a lot of questions through some of her challenges to help guide her through where she should go next.

Coach Jane revealed that although her coachee had the original goal of focusing on mission, vision, and core values, it was not initially addressed. However, by the end of the experience, coach and coachee collaboratively worked on a plan of action for the coachee to address mission, vision and values the following year.

#### **Context influences conversations.**

Many coaches shared they believed conversations going into the experience would be more about the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders or leader dispositions. However, as the year unfolded, many coaches and coachees divulged that task-oriented or urgent issues dominated the coaching sessions, especially through late winter. The historical context of the study factored into the coaching conversations.

The study took place as schools were still struggling with the unprecedented effects of the pandemic. Students struggled re-entering school full-time face -to -face after virtual or hybrid school experiences, COVID caused the need for mitigation strategies and contact tracing which increased demands on school leaders, and staffing shortages created additional stressors when positions could not be covered-- all of which influenced the implementation and results of the LCP.

Those topics and the need for quick solutions rose to the top of many agendas. As Jane shared, “COVID has definitely been the barrier that's kind of monopolize a lot of conversation a lot of time.” She shared that although she and her coachee needed to talk about COVID and related items, she understood, “They're important, but not necessarily what's going to move kids forward.” Lia, another coach, shared that conversations were task oriented because of pandemic related responsibilities,

It was not normal, there was a lot more conversation to acclimate to parts of the role that were not traditionally parts of the role. Being able to talk about the contact tracing and the communication and the quarantine timeline, all the things that are not normally part of what their role would be.

Relevantly, coachees reported the greatest increase in self-efficacy in the questions designated as “management” of the self-efficacy survey with an overall 13.96% increase from pre to post. These questions specifically pointed to the day-to-day handling of their role such as managing stress, handling paperwork, controlling their schedules, managing change, and prioritizing tasks. More specifically, managing change increased by 25.00%, handling paperwork by 21.05%, and handling the demands of the job by 18.92%. Coachees reported only a 1.73% increase overall on PSEL -related questions on the survey. However, coachees experienced a significant increase in self-efficacy on three PSEL standards: Operations and Management (standard 8), School Improvement (standard 10), and Mission, Vision and Values (standard 1) with over 10% change in all three. It is important to note, standard 8, Operations and Management, refers to managing *school* operations and resources focused on student achievement and well-being.

Coach Lia felt that the focus of conversations would have changed in a different situation given it was a unique year and context such as the pandemic continuing, students returning to school full-time, and staffing shortages in many key positions. Cori, a principal coachee shared “that is due to the type of year we had; just all the changes that keep coming through. [asking] how are you dealing with this? ...thinking through with her...how can we manage this?” Tim shared his conversations with his assistant principal coachees were also very “task oriented, you know, handling discipline that's paperwork, handling observations, evaluations, and managing the building.” Coach Jane shared that “COVID has sidetracked some of the original things that we wanted to do because it is what we must do, but it is also helped us remember to revisit the most important things, so we do not get lost and all the COVID details.” She shared that “as the year progressed, there were more things on principal's plates to manage with that.”

### ***Staffing and student challenges.***

Struggles with students and staff also dominated conversations, which aligned to the PSEL standards identified as focus areas through the sorting activity of the endof-interval interview. Participants indicated Standard 5 (Community of Care and Support of Students) and 6 (Professional Capacity of School Personnel) as areas of focus during coaching conversations that influenced self-efficacy. Stacey, a principal coachee, shared

There have been a lot of staffing changes this year, as far as people needing to take long-term leave. And because it has been a lot, I do not know if it has been something that was prior to them being at the school prior to COVID, or if it is something that is in response to coming back to this full workforce modality.

Coach Preacher concurred that many staffing questions came up during coaching sessions. He felt much was due to the pandemic itself and the mental health of staff. One principal supervisor agreed, “It seems that new principals often had problem solving situations to share with their coach that were staff related, and how to make the school your own (establishing a footprint) without causing too much stress on staff.”

Along with staffing issues, student issues rose to the fore of many coaching conversations. Coachee Cori started the year with high hopes that things would be “more normal” since the students were back full time, but the year was riddled with challenges. She shared, “the kids came back ...had totally forgotten what school was supposed to be like. And so, the first few months were difficult.” Coachee Cori continued, “We're not getting to classrooms every day because there are too many kids in crisis.” Coach Preacher noted “kids are not able to self-regulate enough for us to even be able to get to the conversations of instruction.” Coachee Bobby disclosed that “the needs of our students are so great and so widespread that a lot of the day is just really spent putting out fires and working with students who have a variety of needs that we couldn't even anticipate.”

The LCP established a community for coaches and coachees to promote social learning focused on the practice of educational leadership. Although topics tended to be task-oriented, given the context of the school year and challenges with staff and students, self-efficacy in some areas did increase, especially in the management area.

## ***Network Building***

The coaches worked to establish community within their coaching groups as well as helping their coachee extend their professional learning networks so that they could connect to other colleagues. The establishment of networks increased diversity of perspectives and ideas. Coachees shared that having their coach helped counteract the loneliness of the role in a year where systemic professional learning was paused. Typical collaborative meeting structures were not held due to the pandemic, so leaders felt more isolated than usual. Having the LCP community allowed for both coach and coachee to have a built-in network and benefit from the experience. Coachee Erin summarized it eloquently:

The whole experience and the networking alone of having people and then your person's people become your people. That alone is the life raft that we all need to be able to come together. That is what is pushing you through, it is isolating being a principal and it is lonely. [The LCP] could take that away. To know that there is somebody you can text...they are going to be there when you need it. It has a huge potential for you to find your people if it is done. Right.

The LCP differentiated structures for one-on-one principal coaches and group coaching for assistant principals. A Principal Supervisor felt that "... having one on one coaching for principals but small cohorts for APs is good. I like the opportunity for APs who are new to administration to build a network of colleagues."

A typical year includes multiple opportunities to collaborate and engage in collegial dialogue through professional learning and meeting structures. With the challenges of the year, those systemic opportunities were paused by the executive leadership of the LSS. Therefore, any

typical opportunities for collaboration and collegial discourse were minimal and mostly via google meet if they were held. The ability to meet with a coach or coaching group helped balance feelings of isolation and loneliness of the new role that may not have been felt in previous years. Therefore, having a coach and a community to rely on both in times of struggle and celebration to get reassurance was deemed essential. It was especially important for leaders new to the LSS. As Coachee Stacey shared,

Having her guide, me, not just through our conversations, but to meet other leaders, it was nice to go to meetings and be introduced to other leaders. Just to further my reach with who I can talk to, have those trusted colleagues, and think partners as I go through the work.

Coaching partnerships and groups became support networks. Coachee Mary shared “it's been really powerful just even to know that there are other people going through the same things you are or sounding boards for each other.” Tim shared that his coachees created a mini network of their own to share items. He felt his coachees

have someone else who is not only a friend and a colleague but gets it. Our conversations [were] around, yes, this is hard, insanely hard, ridiculously hard, but you are doing a really good job. It is hard for everyone. It is not hard because this is not the job for you. It is hard because of the circumstances.

Similarly, Lia's coachees connected and reached out to each other beyond their coaching sessions. They connected with their coach but also directly with one another.

The networks also provided an opportunity to broaden perspectives. Many coaches and coachees alluded to the benefit of hearing multiple perspectives and learning what was happening in other school buildings. Coach Jane shared,

The biggest thing is it makes everyone reflective and broadens their perspective. Just even knowing what is going on in another building, what other buildings they are facing, how they are addressing it, what is important to certain communities. ... It broadens your perspective to know what other schools are working with.

Coachee Bobby reflected on the benefit of having the additional insight of a principal that was not his supervisor. He shared, “it has allowed for that collaboration together. It let me see someone like my boss, but also does things differently. I can see his perspective, see her perspective, see where their ideas align, but also what is different.” Mary shared that she had the benefit of other APs in her coaching group with experience outside of the LSS. It brought new perspectives to learn how things were done in different school systems. She also shared coaching sessions were “really the only time outside of my circle of people that were already resources that I was able to talk to other people.”

The social learning that transpired through the exchange of tacit and explicit knowledge aided in building self-efficacy. Coachees were able to focus on building their educational leadership practice through focused coaching conversations on timely, relevant topics and issues based on their own context. Creating networks helped alleviate some of the isolation and weight that comes with the role of a school leader especially during a year of paused professional learning and collaborative meeting structures. It allows school leaders to broaden their



perspectives and learn from colleagues which builds their educational leadership practice thus increases their self-efficacy.

### **Coach as a Key Resource in Establishing Domain of School Leader (SQ2)**

Coaches served as a key resource for their coachees. They were often the “go to person” for the coachee. Having a go to person was an essential support for a new school leader. The personal and professional support allowed new leaders to acclimate to their roles and build their domain of school leader. Coaches served as a “thought partner” or a partner in the unpacking and problem solving of the complex and intense work of school leadership. Coaches used questioning, feedback, and opportunities for reflection to help school leaders build their identity as a school leader thus improving their self-efficacy.

### ***Coach as a “Go to Person”***

Coachees shared that there was comfort in knowing there was always someone they could count on during their first year in their new role as school leader. Coaches and coachees spoke of the importance of having a go to person when acclimating to a new role. One principal supervisor shared that a new principal coachee, although not new to the LSS, but new to the role felt that having a coach as a go to resource was beneficial. Coachees also shared the importance of the professional and personal support, reassurance, or safe place to vent they received from their coachees. Coachee Cori shared that

when you are the only one making those decisions you need that reassurance, you know, and I have it from a previous mentor that I was with, but it is nice to have someone else too, who has never worked with you in this capacity and just seeing you for what you are

in that moment and not how you were an AP before, you know, like it is nice to have both.

In agreement, Coach Jane revealed that

it was nice to have someone who she knows is always going to be the other end of the phone or a Google meet or whatever it might be that she could you know, ask for help advice, run things by and it would be in a timely, right when she needed it.

Coach Donovan reflected on his own first year as principal and stated that he would have loved to have a “just in case person”. He felt that it was a huge benefit and comfort knowing a coach was there if you needed them. Mary, an AP coachee, shared similar thoughts, “Sometimes even just knowing that you have somebody that you can reach out to is enough. It made me a little bit more of a confident leader.” One principal supervisor wrote

People new to the role of principal often have ideas for how they want to effectively lead, but also are uneasy with will they be successful. New principals are always listening and watching the veterans for advice and modeling, and where I think the [LCP] brings the most value is strategically pairing new principals with the veterans we "want" them to listen to and learn from. This gives [the LSS] the best chance for positive, successful on-boarding with good habits and attitude, versus the chance that they could pick up bad habits or unsuccessful leadership traits from random relationships they would develop with their principal colleagues.

Multiple coachees mentioned coachees being overwhelmed and exhausted. Coach Lia shared, “It's just in a unique time, because of the circumstances of the expectations of the roles, really just trying to navigate and be respectful of we are all maxed out.” The coaching experience

although beneficial, she shared, "it is also the pull and tug personally on your schedule. You are giving up something. You are making time for this in-person." Mary shared that

There are periods of time where we feel very defeated and like we are not good enough and we are not doing what we need to do. So sometimes just even having someone ask a question that you felt like, well, I can give input and kind of be a part of the discussion kind of helped reaffirm why we are here and like that we do have strengths and that there are going well, even when you feel like that day has been terrible. That component was valuable.

A huge part of the support that coaches offered, especially in a challenging year with the issues from the pandemic, staffing and student challenges was the social emotional support provided. Bobby felt that was the best part of the coaching process for him. His coach helped him to reflect on "Hey, how are you doing beyond school? How are you beyond work? Are you shutting the phone off on the weekends?". He felt it helped to have someone else say, "You need to move away from work for a little bit." As a new leader it is hard to find balance, but he shared, "I listen when they say it now." Lia, an AP coach shared that she had conversations with her coachees in a similar vein about making sure to disconnect and prioritizing family because they were struggling with boundaries. Coachee Carrie shared a comparable story of her coach calling to make sure she was "okay" especially after a heated principal meeting noticing she was exceptionally quiet. Tim, an AP coach, shared that he noticed the stress on his coachees and knew he needed to put agenda items on the back burner and focus on their personal well-being. He shared,

There's been a couple times where I've gone on, I've seen just the sunken eyes and the blackness, and we're just tired and putting a pause, maybe on an agenda item and just talk where we are as human beings, and how you're doing as a person.

The support that coaches provided was tailored to the coachees they served to help establish themselves in the domain of school leader. As their “go-to person” coaches provided just in time, relevant resources, ideas, reassurance, and feedback focused on building the educational leadership practice of the coachee. Coaches also focused on the emotional well-being of their coachee during a challenging year, understanding that their mental state was a critical factor in their educational leadership success.

### ***Coaching as a Thought Partnership***

In addition to being the “go-to person”, coaches served as a catalyst for reflection and a source of accountability as they worked toward achieving goals. Coaches served as thought partners by asking purposeful questions and giving feedback to problem solve, challenge thinking, and provide key reflection opportunities to help new administrators acclimate to their school leader domain.

Coaches and coachees both shared the importance of maintaining a coaching stance versus shifting to advice giving or being more directive in their approach. Coaches shared that having a clear understanding of the role of coach helped in their facilitation of coaching sessions. Preacher, a principal coach, shared, “I had to be thoughtful and not come out of the gate as a directive type...I had to be more reflective in asking the right questions specific to the situation [my coachee] is asking guidance or coaching on.” Coach Molly reflected that using thoughtful questioning to guide her coachee during sessions to talk through processes and challenges that

were popping up in the building. Another coach, Jane, shared, “The person I am working with has all the skills. It is just helping that person to be reflective and revisiting the most important things and to drive everything else.” Coach Jane recognized she did not need to provide the answers or advice. She gave her coachee the opportunity to reflect and find their way through the challenges and help to prioritize or focus on the bigger leadership picture.

From the coachee perspective, Cori shared that staying true to the coaching role was important rather than shifting to advice giving or needing to impart knowledge such as “Hey, I’ve been an experienced principal, let me teach you.” The coach was thought to be a helpful collaborator, problem solver, and challenger. Stacey refers to her coach as her thought partner and as a new leader to the LSS, it was a critical support system. She explains, “it’s given me a different look, when we talk about different topics...those conversations are important because I’m able to come back into my building and further refine what we’re doing here.” One principal supervisor shared

Specifically [one coach] was very helpful in [a coachee] (out of county new principal) acclimate to [the LSS]. They met regularly and [she] often spoke of [her coach’s] help with problem solving, who to call, how [the LSS] approaches certain processes, etc...Also, [another coachee] shared frequently with me that [his coach] was of great assistance [sic] with helping him with decision making, problem solving, etc...[the coachee] was not new to [the LSS] but was new to the role and he shared having [a coach] as a go to resource was very beneficial.

In addition to problem solving and helping with decisions, coachees shared how coaches challenged their thinking. Coachee Carrie shared how her coach challenged her. She stated, “He

really does cause me to question a lot. He does not give a lot of answers and really causes, forces me to stretch my thinking.” Coachee Stacey spoke of scenarios where there is no definitive answer to how beneficial it was to have a “thought partner” to talk through it and how needed it was for her this year. She shared,

What is important? Because this coach, she and I can reach out and be like, hey, did we miss that? Was that not shared? Was it shared? Did it fall in here? It is about having a trusted friend and a thought partner so that you can navigate this together.

Not only did coachees learn from coaches but also from their colleagues. Assistant principal coachees learned and grew with and from both coaches and other new colleagues/coachees. One Assistant Principal (AP) coachee, Mary, shared,

Our monthly chats were something I looked forward to even having that ability to vent a little bit or, you know, talk through some problems that we were having. I do think it was a good resource for that for sure. I enjoyed that component of it.

Coaches used thought provoking questioning to challenge assumptions, offered feedback, and provided opportunities for reflection to build self-efficacy. Coachees were able to unpack thinking and problem solve with coaches and other coachees building their educational leadership practice and school leader domain.

### **Community Structures to Ensure Participants’ Needs are Met (RQ2)**

The leadership coaching program provided structures, resources, and professional learning to enable the community to thrive. As Erin shared, “I think [the LCP] did a really nice job of putting structures in place to help coaches be successful.” At the end-of-interval interviews and surveys, coaches, coachees, and principal supervisors were asked about the

adjustments or additions they would add as well as the essential components that needed to continue. The data provided insights into which components participants deemed valuable and provided recommendations and feedback from their unique perspectives within the coaching community.

### ***Elements to Continue***

Participants shared their perception of the valuable community structure components that should continue. School system support, the monthly agenda with suggested topics for discussion, required professional learning for coaches, and clear expectations developed as elements that should continue.

#### **School system support**

Coaches, coachees, and principal supervisors felt that local school system (LSS) support was essential as it indicated its importance for new school leaders and demonstrated commitment to the program's success. One way a principal supervisor felt that the system demonstrated its value was through financial support. They felt that the stipend for coaches was important to continue,

While I do not think most people do it for the money, it is important to validate the work that we ask people to do and a stipend like the one offered here raises the level of importance and as a result it increases the commitment level. If someone is being paid to do something, it is taken more seriously than if it is volunteer.

Carrie agreed that the systemic support was critical. She shared, "having that structure in place that's supported by the system is key."

#### **Monthly coaching guides**

The LSS leadership development team, in conjunction with principal supervisors, provided monthly coaching guides that provided suggested topics for coaches to use in coaching sessions. Most coaches reported using the agenda as a starting point and asked coachees to add their topics of interest or need depending on their current context. Coach Tim shared his coachees started to contribute to the agenda after the first couple of months. His coachees started to “open up” about what they needed and wanted to discuss during their sessions. One coach, Preacher, indicated parts of the coaching guide were beneficial but it was necessary to personalize sessions based on context and needs. Preacher candidly shared, that for him,

the coaching guides, while some of it is good, some of it was not practical in what building level administrators were facing. Some of it was time driven. Some of it was yes, but I think you, I think some of those [topics] have to be adapted to where you are at in the seat.

Coach Molly shared, having “some systemic guidance” and direction on “where to go with conversations” had her feeling “so much more prepared and effective.” Coach Jane concurred sharing that keeping the monthly topics would be important as it was helpful in planning for sessions. Although she would draft her own, the agendas from the LCP confirmed her thinking and she felt like she was, “on the right track of topics to talk about.” Coach Lia communicated that not only were the agendas beneficial they helped keep you organized, but it also “established consistency across the coaching experience for all coachees that was very helpful.” Coach Tim shared the agendas “provided the hot button topics at that point in time that were relevant.” Coachee Mary appreciated having the agenda too, as she stated “I know [my coach] used to send that out to us ahead of time. So, we knew what we were going to talk about.” Agendas provided



an avenue for the collaborators to provide some consistent systemic topics and guidance while maintaining the essential component of keeping the coachee's needs at the center of each coaching session.

### **Required coach professional learning**

Coaches and principal supervisors felt that the professional learning (PL) for coaches was a critical component and needed to continue. A principal supervisor stated, "the PL for [the LCP] coaches I believe was beneficial and also set the tone for the importance of this work." Another principal supervisor wrote, "I think the coaches are given very specific training and supports to be effective which they can carry across other areas of their role."

Many coaches mention the book studies that were offered. One was mandatory and two others were offered as optional. Coaches Jane, Preacher, and Tim shared that keeping the book studies was essential. Coach Preacher enjoyed the book talks both in content and the virtual delivery method. He shared "you want to better yourself as a coach. How can I coach better? I think those things, and I might even require three different book talks, one at the beginning, one at the middle and one at the end." Coach Tim shared, "I love the book studies... I am a nerd at heart when it comes to leadership ... I think that [the LCP] did really good job of making us as coaches feel okay to be vulnerable within our groups, because when it comes to those situations, I might know you by name, but you are an elementary school principal, but I might not know who I am opening up to and where is this going to go?" Coach Jane suggested participating in the book study earlier may have been even more useful. She stated, "if people are preparing to be coaches, if they could do that before July one starts then that way ... they are there for... the people they are going to coach."

### **Clear expectations**

A principal supervisor shared “Expectation and accountability for [the LCP] coaches and mentees to meet regularly” should continue. To establish the expectations for both coaches and coachees, the LCP held an opening session for the entire community: coaches, coachees, and principal supervisors. It also provided the opportunity to meet everyone in the community. Coachee Mary shared, “I am glad like our initial meeting was in person as a total group. That was good and powerful to be able to do that and learn more about what we would be doing.” Coaches were required to keep logs of the hours spent coaching to attempt to hold coaches accountable. While it was a stated expectation, consistent coaching sessions both in date, time and duration proved challenging for many coach/coachee partners which will be discussed in the “recommendations” section of the chapter.

### ***Recommendations for Improvement***

Although there were aspects participants wanted to see continued, there were also recommendations for future improvements or adjustments. Participants felt that intentionally blocking time for coaching sessions, a coach-coachee book study, coach-coachee-supervisor alignment and expanding the LCP would enhance the existing program.

### **Preserving coaching time**

Understanding the remarkable demands and complexities that school leaders faced every day, time is a valuable commodity. In the self-anchoring survey completed in the mid-interval interview with coaches and coachee participants, time, scheduled, ongoing, and accessible were words shared by many. However, finding and scheduling time for coaching sessions became a

struggle. Many coaching partners found themselves having to reschedule sessions, cut them short, or cancel because one of the partners was unable to meet. As coach Molly shared,

I will tell you what the limitation is, is the time in just acknowledging that our jobs are really demanding. And this is something done in addition to, and what we found was with things unanticipated, like the COVID spike and just with the volume of things to do at the end of the year that we had a pause on the last two years. I think we both were inundated at once.

Coach Lia was initially optimistic that schedules would lighten to allow for more in person sessions or site visits however, as the year progressed, she determined that “was not the case. And that the schedules only got crazier as the spring went on.” Coachee Bobby shared similar thoughts, “We meet in the morning... But then things happen. A bus called out. Sub coverage is crazy. You cannot predict it. It is just rushed because of the nature of the way things are right now.”

However, coachees and coaches alike wished that coaching sessions were held consistently and for solid chunk of uninterrupted time. Coach Lia shared,

That is just the dynamic of [this year], there were great, positive, productive times when we were not interrupted at all. And we could focus on the full agenda, and we could have the full discussion. And then there were times where a call's coming on somebody's radio and somebody has to run out of the meeting, or someone does not even get to log into the meeting.

Coachee Carrie shared she had a standing appointment with her coach but, "I would love to have more time carved out to just stop and have that be our focus. You know at seven o'clock, you

have coverage and people coming in and out.” Coachee Bobby and his coach also had to postpone sessions, reschedule, and even shorten sessions due to the demands of the role. He reflected, “we had to postpone a couple sessions and then try to fit in, you know, maybe 15 minutes rather than having a half hour 45 to an hour.” There were also times he shared when there was too much going on and it was necessary to cancel.

Some partners were able to stick to their scheduled meeting times. Coachee Stacey indicated that she and her coach met “monthly at minimum in-person outside of the building” at a nearby restaurant. Coachee Mary felt that the “monthly check-ins or meetings is definitely important to kind of otherwise I feel like things get too far out.” Coach Lia tried to be creative in her scheduling with her coachees so that they would be able to be fully present by using days when staff was not in the building, “the early dismissal days, or the teacher workdays, days that kids weren’t in the building, so that we all didn’t feel ... that pull from kids and needs at the time that class is in session.”

### **Coach-coachee shared learning experience**

Multiple participants suggested coaches and coachees engage in a book study or article reading together to have a common learning experience. Carrie suggested, “doing a book study with a coach and having that same lens and that same language” would be a positive addition. Her coach Preacher suggested the same. Coach Molly expanded on the idea of a coach/coachee book study to include more times that the coaches and coachees got together as a full group. She shared, “I don’t know if it, it would be interesting to do like book studies with the coaches and the coachees, kind of learning together on stuff and maybe that could be part of like then coming together more frequently.” Similarly, coachee Erin felt a common learning experience would be

beneficial. However, she indicated that it should be the “coach's responsibility to find the professional resource or the book that you are going to read together... It is something you read together. I think that [would be] powerful.” Having coaches provide the resource would allow for the experience to be personalized and relevant to the coachee.

### **Coach-coachee-supervisor alignment**

Another repeated recommendation was creating alignment between coach, coachee, and the supervisor of the coachee. A principal supervisor stated “the information coaches have about coachees is limited and so their time may not always focus on the most intensive needs of the coachee. Coaches work from what the coachee shares.” Coach Donovan shared that he thought it would be beneficial to have follow up “meetings with the director and the coach” for principal coachees so that “the three of you would sit down and collaborate together some way.” Coach Jane reflected that while she did not reach out to a supervisor understanding that coaching required a safe space, “it would have been nice to hear from a director. What do you think that person could use help with to work on? I think that could have been beneficial.” Coach Lia, as an AP coach, shared,

maybe even having an opportunity for the coaches and the principals of the coaches to have at least one session together at the beginning of the experience..., to talk about the two parts of how to support someone new in their role, because then it helps to delineate and really build a partnership between the two of us that we both have the same end goal in helping them to be successful.

### **Expansion of LCP**

Finally expanding the LCP in duration and reach was recommended. Coach Molly felt that a two-year coaching program would be of benefit. She shared, “I could see myself strategically laying out what year one coaching looks like and then year two, the types of conversations and reflections and you know, things that we could get at too.” A principal supervisor wrote in their survey, “I would love to see the coaching expanded to other system leaders. An example would be our special education program coordinators. They are in leadership positions that require a skillset similar to a building level leader but often do not have the same opportunities for ongoing professional learning and growth related to leadership.”

While there are many components of the LCP that participants felt were necessary to maintain, there were others that they felt could be added or adjusted. The recommendations will be further discussed in the implications for practice in the next chapter.

### **Additional Theme Reaches Beyond Scope of Research Questions**

While the research questions focused on the new school leaders’ self-efficacy perspectives and program enhancements, an additional theme emerged beyond the scope of the study. Beyond being influential to the coachees, many coaches and coachees alike referenced the LCP being “mutually beneficial” or “a give and take.” In fact, one of the principal supervisors shared “I see more of an impact, at this point, on the self-efficacy of the coach. I think the coaches are given very specific training and supports to be effective which they can carry across other areas of their role.” Another principal supervisor shared,

I believe that the leadership coaching community will become/evolve into a leadership network that will promote self-efficacy long after the formalized program has ended for new administrators. This network of LCP trained coaches/coachees share the value of

sharing, collaborating, and developing school improvement strategies as they continue their career journey.

Every coach interviewed mentioned the benefits of being a part of the LCP in some way. Both Coach Molly and Lia shared that they grew from the experience as people, school leaders, and coaches. Multiple coaches spoke about how the work as coaches transfers to their school leadership roles.

Coach Jane and Preacher shared that the learning was reciprocal in their coaching relationships. Jane shared, “I knew I was going to learn as much from her experiences as well.” Preacher talked about a “give and take.”

What you gain is a conversation between two colleagues, about how to better meet the needs of the all-encompassing building, the staff, the maintenance, when the air's not working, when the phones are down, when the technology's not what you need it to be.

So, it really becomes a give and take.

Coach Molly and Jane spoke about mutually reciprocal or mutually beneficial relationships. Both coaches spoke about learning from reading articles or talking through challenges or strategies with their coachees. Tim concurred in that the role of coach “allows for self-reflection and it pushes you.” Coach Donovan candidly shared that “a lot of time it is me learning from her rather than the other way around.”

Multiple coachees also remarked about the learning being mutually beneficial. Carrie shared, “it is a hundred percent give and take at least it has been in my situation. I am calling [my coach] asking him questions, but he is calling me and asking me questions too.” Stacey shared,

It is some equal shared conversations of what we are doing to get through what is happening each month, what is happening each week. I would hope that I was able to give my coach as much as she gave me, just being able to know what we both need to be successful, to try things, to stretch ourselves.

Coachee Cori acknowledged that collaborating with someone who has more experience was beneficial but having a coach that was “still willing to learn, listen and grow and wants to try new things alongside you [was] nice.” This finding will be further addressed in chapter 5.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this action research study was to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy (Wenger et al., 2002; Bandura, 1977). It further examined participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or adjustments. The LCP used a community of practice model, creating a leadership development structure focused on the practice of educational leadership. The professional learning experience establishes the domain of school leaders through the joint enterprise of leadership coaching. The study also relied on leadership coaching to provide personalized, relevant professional learning and support to new school-based leaders (coachee) in a local school system while providing a leadership learning growth opportunity for the veteran leader (coach) working to increase self-efficacy. Chapter four described three main themes that emerged related to influence of the leadership coaching coaching **community** on the coachee/new school leaders' self-efficacy (RQ 1), the coachees' educational leadership **practice**, sub-question one (SQ1), and their **domain** of school leader sub-question two (SQ3). The three themes are as follows: essential learning conditions, coaching as



professional learning, and the coach as a key resource. The chapter also detailed adjustments and improvements for the leadership coaching community (RQ2). Community structures emerged as a theme with sub-themes: valuable components and recommendations for improvement (see Table 10). Chapter 5 will present a discussion of the findings and implications for future research.

**Table 10**

*Findings and Analysis Summary*

Research Question	Analysis: Themes and Subthemes	Findings
RQ1: What is the influence of the leadership coaching <b>community</b> on the coachee/new school leaders' leadership self-efficacy?	Essential Learning Conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trusting relationships</li> <li>• Safe learning environment</li> </ul>	Coaching requires establishing and maintaining a relationship founded on trust.  Creating a safe learning environment where curiosity prevails rather than judgement is essential.
SQ1: How is the educational leadership <b>practice</b> of the coachee influenced?	Professional Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge exchange through Coaching Conversations</li> <li>• Network Building</li> </ul>	Partners exchanged explicit and tacit knowledge through coaching conversations where relevant resources, ideas, insights, and firsthand experiences were shared.  Coaching builds valuable networks which broaden perspectives and decreases isolation of the role.
SQ2: In what ways is coachees' <b>domain</b> of school leader influenced?	Key Resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Go to person"</li> <li>• Thought partner</li> </ul>	Coaches served as the "go to person" providing personal and professional support.  Coaches served as thought partners to push educational leadership practices and thinking forward through problem solving, questioning, feedback, and promoting reflection
RQ2: In what ways could the leadership coaching programming be adjusted to better meet the participants' needs?	Community structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuable Components</li> <li>• Recommendations for improvement</li> </ul>	Many components of the LCP are valuable and should be maintained.  Additional components and adjustments would improve the leadership coaching program.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

School leaders significantly impact student achievement, absenteeism, and teacher job satisfaction and retention. School systems are promoting younger, less experienced leaders, and the role's complexities continue to increase. Therefore, high-quality professional learning is imperative to ensure school leaders have the competencies and skills to succeed (Grissom, 2021). Historically, the local school system (LSS) in the study provided some "sit and get" professional learning for new school leaders in the first few days of their role. A few new leaders were assigned an informal mentor, but the LSS inconsistently utilized mentoring and did not offer training for those serving as a mentor. To address the changing needs of the LSS, a Leadership Coaching Program (LCP) was implemented to assist new leaders in acclimating to their new position and build their leader efficacy, thus increasing motivation, resilience, and performance (Bandura, 1997). Gathering feedback was integral to evolution and improvement of the program so that it continues to be influential and impactful for future school leaders.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings, including an alignment to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and research questions. It continues with the implications for practice and policy as well as possible future research. The chapter closes with a conclusion of the research.

### **Discussion of Findings and Recommendations**

Participants shared that cultivating the right learning environment for the leadership coaching community was critical for the partnership to thrive. Coaches facilitated a personalized, relevant professional learning experience and served as a vital resource to coachees to increase

self-efficacy (RQ1). According to the findings, building self-efficacy in new leaders through a coaching community necessitated three criteria:

- Establishing essential learning conditions.
  - Coaching requires establishing and maintaining a relationship founded on trust.
  - Creating a safe learning environment where curiosity prevails rather than judgment is essential.
- Personalizing professional learning.
  - Partners exchanged explicit and tacit knowledge through coaching conversations where the coach shared relevant resources, ideas, insights, and firsthand experiences.
  - Coaching builds valuable networks which broaden perspectives and decreases isolation of the role.
- Coaches serving as a key resource.
  - Coaches served as the "go-to person," providing personal and professional support.
  - Coaches were "thought partners" to push educational leadership practices and thinking forward through problem-solving, questioning, feedback, and promoting reflection.

An additional finding beyond the scope of the research question emerged. Although the goal of the LCP was to build the self-efficacy of the coachee, participants disclosed that the professional learning experience was mutually beneficial for both partners. Coaches and coachees both benefitted from the experience. The participants discussed the time as a “give and take.” It

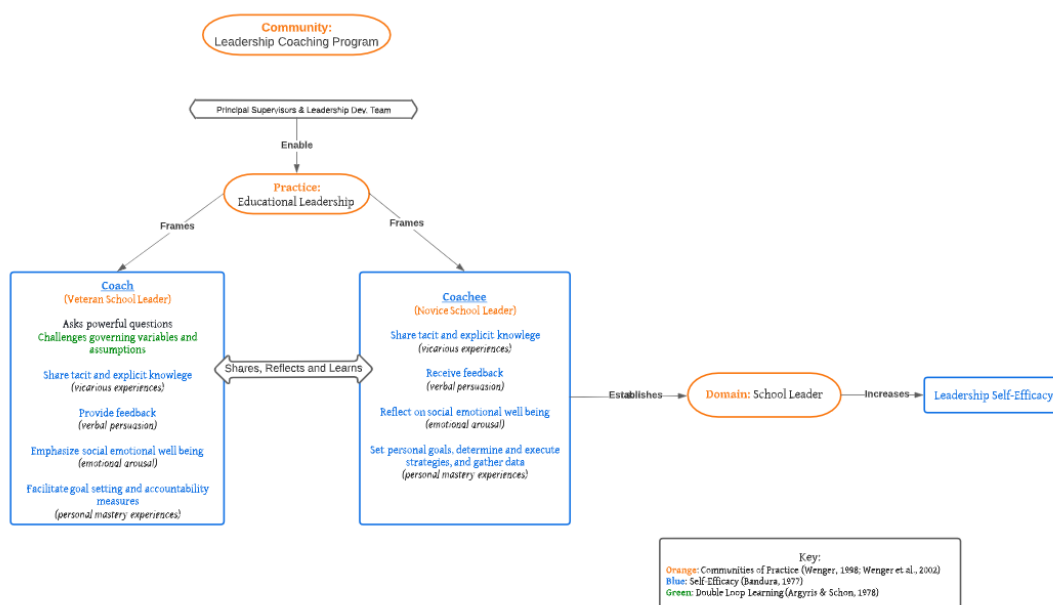
emphasized the importance of creating a community focused on a joint enterprise (coaching experience) focused on the shared practice (educational leadership), which increased the leader efficacy of both partners.

### Coaching requires a trusting relationship to influence a new school leaders' self-efficacy

The conceptual frame in chapter 1 illustrates the function of the leadership coaching community in building a new leader's self-efficacy (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

#### *Conceptual Framework*



The study used a community of practice (CoP) model (Wenger, 1998), which emphasizes the use of a *community* to promote social learning through the joint enterprise of the coaching experience. Principal supervisors and the leadership development team collaborate to provide structures, systems, and resources to help coaching community coaching community thrive (Wenger et al. 2002). The reciprocal and continual social exchange during coaching sessions

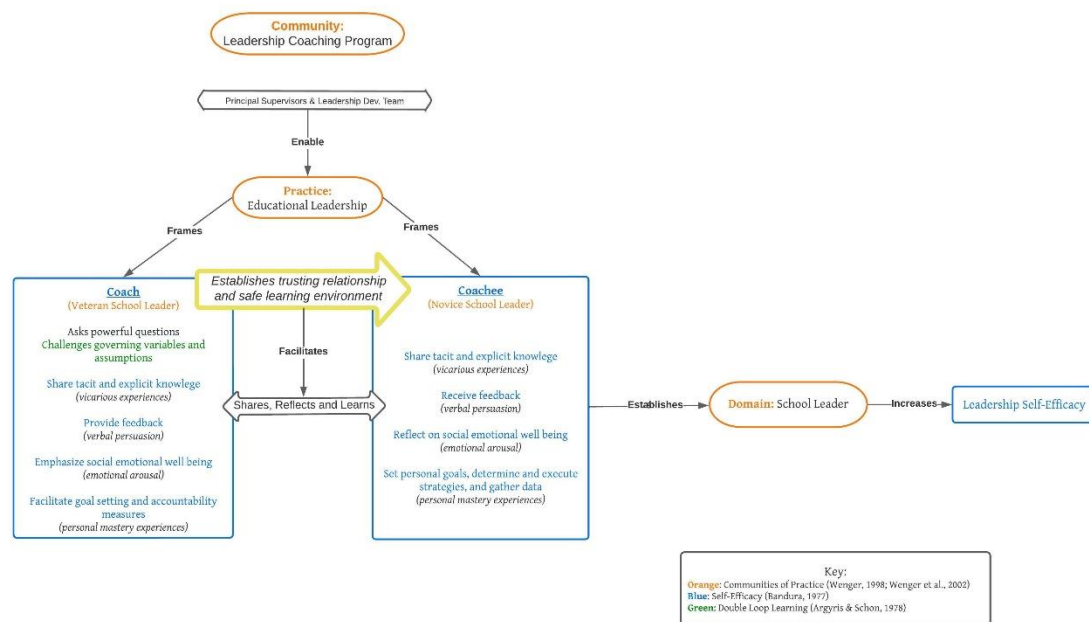
leads to sharing, reflecting, and learning, working to establish the school leader domain for the novice school administrator/coachee (Wenger et al., 2002). The social interaction between coach and coachee facilitates building self-efficacy through the sharing of knowledge (vicarious experiences), exchanging of feedback (verbal persuasion), establishing and monitoring of goals and strategies (performance mastery), and focusing on social, emotional wellness (emotional arousal) (Bandura, 1977). Coaches use powerful questioning and challenge governing variables and assumptions to push the coachee's leadership thinking forward focused (Argyris & Schon, 1978).

The findings of this study support the conceptual and theoretical frames illustrated in Figure 1. However, after analyzing the findings, it was glaringly apparent the conceptual frame neglected a critical element. To establish an effective and productive coaching partnership, participants overwhelmingly shared that creating relationships based on trust and cultivating a safe learning environment was essential to effective learning. The vital role of relationship building was not part of the initial conceptual frame yet was critical in openly sharing the complexities and challenges faced by school leaders. My findings support previous research that indicates that school leaders benefit from social learning, such as communities of practice and coaching, by establishing a trusting relationship that provides the safe for sharing ideas, reflective questions, and open, honest feedback (Tingle et al., 2019, Wenger-Traynor, E. & Wenger Traynor, B. 2015). Trust is a critical element in the learning and coaching process. Coach/coachee partners develop trust through shared vulnerability (Robertson, 2009). Participants emphasized that a trusted relationship and a non-evaluative, judgment-free environment provided the necessary conditions for the new leader to engage openly, share

vulnerably, and accept feedback focused on the *practice* of educational leadership. Therefore, I revised my conceptual frame to include establishing a trusting relationship and creating a safe learning environment (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9**

*Revised Conceptual Framework*



Without the foundation of trust and a safe learning environment, participants felt the experience was more about compliance. They were hesitant to share or be vulnerable, which impedes the impact of sharing, reflection, and learning. Coachee Erin shared her coaching experience did not facilitate her growth and development as a school principal. She indicated that because it felt like her coach was “checking a box,” she did not feel the need to invest in the relationship or experience. Erin felt that roles reversed toward the end of the experience. She was sharing ideas and resources rather than the opposite. By taking on a coaching role, no one challenged her thinking or asked questions about her decisions. In order to get the professional learning, she

sought, she was forced to reach out to other veteran leaders because her coach was not fulfilling that need.

Data aligned with the International Coaching Federation (ICF) core competencies to establish a framework for any coaching partnership's essential components. One ICF core competency highlights the need to co-create a coaching relationship. Under that umbrella, coaches must create and adhere to agreements, cultivate trust and safety, and maintain their coaching presence with their partners (International Coaching Federation, 2019). A coachee must be able to share vulnerably, be willing to ask questions, be open to challenging questions, and receive feedback to sustain the maximum benefit of the experience. The coach focuses on the coaching process and acknowledges that the coachee is the expert on their leadership journey. The coachee's journey is their own to traverse; the coach provides the mirror to help them reflect and carefully examine their leadership competencies and dispositions to improve their leadership practice and build self-efficacy continually.

### ***Recommendations Related to Relationship Building:***

Participants in the coaching community shared the importance of the essential relationship between coach and coachee partners to facilitate learning. Highlighted in the responses of the coaching community participants, coaches needed from the first moment to create a trusting relationship and the space for coachees to take risks and share openly. As a result, the LSS must provide resources and opportunities for the community and partners to build trust. We must be intentional during professional learning with coaches to focus on effective strategies for building trust and creating a safe learning environment. Additionally, the findings highlight a need for coaches to be explicit about framing their non-evaluative role and staying in

the coaching stance. The findings showcase a need for the LSS to add a periodic touch point with coachees to gather feedback on the relationship and environment.

### **Coaching is professional learning focused on the coachee's educational leadership practice**

Research indicates that exemplary professional development programs include individualized support such as a coach, peer network, and structures that provide job-embedded, authentic, applied learning activities like a professional learning community or community of practice (CoP) (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022). The coachee's educational leadership practice provides the frame for relevant professional learning through the collaborative and continual social exchange between coaching partners (see Figure 9). Participants (coach, coachee, and principal supervisors) revealed in the interviews and surveys that having a coach and network to exchange knowledge was critical to acclimate to their new role. It provided relevant professional learning focused on their needs and context. The professional learning experience allowed leaders to engage in a reflective process that addressed the existing tensions and enhanced their knowledge and competencies, building self-confidence to implement changes to their educational leadership practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Aas, 2017).

Participants revealed that using powerful questioning and having coaches challenge assumptions and thinking pushed leadership thinking forward (Argyris & Schon, 1991). The leadership coaching community helped leaders build self-efficacy by allowing individuals or groups to use their professional experiences and context to determine relevant goals and strategies to attain them (personal mastery). Coaches assisted coachees in unpacking and problem-solving the complex and intense work of school leadership. They posed thought-provoking questions and challenged thinking (double-loop learning), offered feedback (verbal



persuasion), and provided opportunities for reflection on their goals and educational leadership practice (personal mastery).

Coaching conversations helped shape leadership practice using the frame of the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) to establish consistent standards and common language to facilitate and guide the conversations. The standards provide clear expectations for a school leader's complicated and critical role. Leadership development for school leaders must align with the PSEL and the districts' learning goals and priorities while being responsive to the needs of school leaders (Wallace, 2006; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Clifford and Coggshall (2021) reported that principals identified PSEL standards 5 (Community of Care and Supports for Students), 7 (Professional Community for Teachers and Staff), 8 (Meaningful Engagement for Families and Communities), and 9 (Operations and Management) as on the "front burner" of their leadership practice in the 20-21 school year. In contrast, the other standards were on the "back burner." The principals from Clifford and Coggshall's (2021) survey indicated that crisis management and social media/communications management, although not present in the PSEL standards, were leadership responsibilities on the "front burner."

This research focused on a leadership coaching community within the larger structure of a local school system (LSS). Both the leadership coaching community and LSS felt the residual impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as complexities and demands continue to increase for school leaders (coaches and coachees), crisis management is a critical leadership skill. Leadership coaching community participants in the study focused on the same PSEL standards as those highlighted by Clifford and Coggshall (2021). Participants mentioned that the

coaching experience influenced leader self-efficacy concerning standards 5, 7, and 9. With students and staff returning from either hybrid or online learning the previous two years, students struggled to readapt to the face-to-face learning environment. Staff needed to reengage in instructional practices that would best meet their needs and adjust to the demands of an entire classroom of students with more significant needs. Investing time and resources in students and staff was necessary to transition and manage the ever-changing landscape to best meet student and staff needs. Coaches, coachees, and principal supervisors often mentioned the need to manage the crisis that was still morphing and changing in the 21-22 school year. Continual adjustments in COVID protocols and responses to spikes, teacher shortages, including substitutes, meant creative coverage for classes, and the necessity for clear communications with families, kept operations and management, standard 9, at the fore. Unsurprisingly, these PSEL standards were on the "front burner" for school leaders and the coaching community.

For coaching participants, PSEL standard ten, School Improvement, was identified as a standard that influenced leader efficacy. School improvement is a driver of all other PSEL standards and must always remain on the "front burner" despite any challenges or complications. Student achievement, absenteeism, and school culture are often at the center of school improvement.

***Recommendations related to remaining focused on coachee goals and dispositions***

It is crucial to provide new leaders with relevant and timely professional learning. Coaching support is essential for urgent issues and allows the coachee to set and be accountable for goals. As a coaching community, we need to help leaders focus on essential leader dispositions that drive school improvement and effective instructional leadership practices to

shift conversations from the urgent to the strategic and long-term. It begs the question, how often are coaches in the LCP helping their coachee set goals and holding them accountable for implementing strategies and actions to achieve them? Every school leader in the LSS sets goals aligned with the PSEL standards and system priorities. Coaching conversations must continually align to those goals to evaluate progress allowing for adjustments as needed given the coachee's context. The LCP needs to revise the monthly coaching guides to help focus the conversation on the coachee's goals to highlight the importance of establishing and continually revisiting goals and progress.

Change is inevitable in education, and the demands and complexities of school leadership are on the rise. It may not be a pandemic-related issue, but varying levels of crises will continue to dominate school leadership. It is essential to provide further training to help our coaches better facilitate coaching sessions to get coachees out of the weeds to look more strategically at how they lead, leader dispositions, versus focusing on managerial tasks. Direct supervisors are available to support new leaders in the management areas of their roles as they provide day-to-day feedback and support regarding fulfilling their duties as assigned. Coaches must focus coaching conversations on the essential leader dispositions that support effective school leadership practices. The LCP needs to evaluate what resources or professional learning is necessary to help coaches pull coachees out of the hamster wheel of focusing on the urgent and compliance-oriented tasks to get them on the balcony to examine the coachee's leadership dispositions.

## **Coach as a key resource in building coachees' domain of school leader**

Learning needs to be contextual to integrate theory into practice and provide opportunities to connect with cohort groups and peers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Dyer & Renn, 2010; Aas, 2017). Participants shared the value of having a coach serving as a critical resource for personal and professional support for coachees. The "go-to person" (coach) shared resources and discussed related firsthand experiences (vicarious experiences) to help new leaders acclimate to their new role; this was important for leaders as they built their school leader domain. Participants shared the vital significance of coaches' emotional support, indicating how pivotal it was that their coach checked in on their physical and emotional well-being (emotional arousal) (see Figure 9). New leaders get consumed by the role and may not take the necessary time away to spend with family or disconnect to rejuvenate for the new day or week. Drawing from an empty well makes leaders less effective. The social-emotional check-in conversations helped new leaders set boundaries and take the time to rest and restore to be better leaders for those they serve.

Education is seeing a record number of school leaders leaving the profession. The role of school leadership is full of complications and successes, moments of overwhelm and joy, and energy and exhaustion. It is of utmost importance that we prioritize the support and well-being of those in the role to ensure that we keep the leaders currently on the job, especially for our new leaders who are just finding their way. School leaders want to stay in or work for a system where they feel supported and valued. They need support and guidance to help them prioritize their well-being so that they can be their best every day for those they serve. The support benefits the coachees and the organization in retaining and recruiting school leaders.

Features of an effective leadership development program are grounded in a theory of action that places instructional leadership, specifically student achievement and learning, at its core (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Dyer & Renn, 2010). The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) surrounds and influences student learning which is at the center of the work of all school leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Interestingly, there was a decrease in certain areas of the PSEL standards in the results of the self-efficacy survey. The total for the standards overall saw a minimal increase (1.73%). This decrease and moderate increase might be explained by the Dunning Kruger Effect which is a cognitive bias where individuals with limited knowledge or competence may overstate their knowledge or competence. As Dunning (2011) indicates, they are "ignorant of their own ignorance." As new leaders began to learn more about their role, they could be more realistic in rating their self-efficacy concerning the leadership statements in the PSEL standards.

If additional studies were to yield similar results, a follow-up with participants exploring why the decrease occurred would provide essential insight in examining further if the Dunning Kruger Effect impacted the self-efficacy results.

### ***Recommendations related to gathering comprehensive self-efficacy data***

The LCP collects pre/post self-efficacy for all coachees to evaluate the influence of the coaching experience on coachees' self-efficacy. However, during the time of the study, only six coachee participants completed both pre and post surveys. The LCP needs to have pre and post data for all participants to best use the data. Therefore, providing time for completion at the first collaborative session is imperative to ensure 100% participation. It is imperative to seek

additional information on the post self-efficacy survey to evaluate if and how the Dunning Kruger Effect impacted the self-efficacy results. Asking pointed, open-ended questions in addition to the post self-efficacy scale provide insights that prior remain uncovered. The open-ended questions make coachees' thinking visible and allows the leadership development team to adjust or revise based on all the data; self-efficacy scale data alone is not enough data to evaluate coachees' experience.

### **Community structures to better meet participants' needs**

While most participants shared that the LCP experience was valuable, revisions, adjustments, and improvements to the program based on feedback (RQ2) help to maintain a relevant and compelling professional learning experience. Participants felt numerous components of the LCP were necessary to maintain. The LSS demonstrated the value of the LCP by providing financial and human resource support. The monthly coaching guides provided consistent topics and allowed for flexibility in addressing coachees' needs. Clear expectations permitted the coach and coachee to create transparent roles and responsibilities for all LCP participants. The professional learning provided to coaches helped build capacity by developing coaching competencies and skills.

Participants suggested that coaches and coachee partners engage in a shared learning experience, perhaps a book study or article reading, as part of their coaching sessions. The leadership development team will suggest that coaches infuse articles or readings as part of the coaching practice as a shared learning experience if deemed appropriate by both partners. It becomes problematic from a programmatic lens, as anything the leadership development team provides may not be relevant and moves away from the personalized coaching approach.

Participants also recommended an alignment of supervisors, coaches, and coachees to ensure that partners are working toward the same goals and working on areas of concern or challenge as seen by supervisors. This idea requires a delicate balance. A powerful coaching experience necessitates a focus on the goals and priorities of the system, personalized to the context and realities of the coachee. Aligning all supports provided to new school leaders (coaches and supervisors) reduces confusion but must be done in a way that keeps the trusted coach/coachee relationship intact. Perhaps having the coachee be the conduit of any issues or concern shared by a supervisor would facilitate the necessary conversation but does insert an evaluator into the trusted relationship of coach and coachee.

Multiple coaches, coachees, and principal supervisors mentioned the notion of an expansion of the LCP both in duration and scope. Expanding the program to include leaders beyond school-based administrators would be a logical next step. Using the study results, creating a similar onboarding experience generalizable to any position will provide consistent, recursive, personalized professional learning for new leaders in their first year with the LSS. Struggling leaders also need support. It would also be beneficial to have a trusted space for leaders experiencing challenges to receive coaching support to improve their leadership practice and increase their self-efficacy. It requires the LSS to find funding to pay for the expansion of school-based leadership coaches and central leadership coaches. As the study findings indicate, although it is an additional paid responsibility, the professional learning and the experience were beneficial and translated into their everyday leadership practice. It would serve the coachee, coach, and organization at large to implement such a program system wide.

### **Implications**

The data and findings showcased future implications for practice and research. Conducting action research while designing and implementing a program was essential to evaluate its influence and continually adjust to better meet the participants' needs. Through observations, reflections, and data collection, the collaborative group of researchers and school practitioners implemented adjustments and additions to address gaps or identified needs. This section describes a several implications for practice and future research that surfaced through the interviews and surveys.

### **Implications for Practice**

Coaching provides personalized professional learning relevant to the needs of the coachee. Organizations often use the term coach loosely and assign one term, "coach," to mean a broad array of relationships, the purpose of each vastly different. Many organizations, including education, use mentoring, consulting, and coaching synonymously, yet they are very different in their approach. Mentors provide guidance and career advice. Similarly, a consultant gives advice and direction but is more related to professional outcomes or goals. A coach, however, is a partner that engages their coachees in thought-provoking conversations and helps the coachee focus on their professional or personal goals to build self-efficacy and expand their potential. The quality of interactions between coach/coachee, including establishing and cultivating trust and a safe space to share with vulnerability and have a frank, honest conversation, provides the foundation for a productive coaching experience. A lack of a trusting relationship and a safe learning environment significantly inhibits the learning process. Coaches must ask hard questions, challenge assumptions, and resist providing advice or solutions to the coachee's problems. A good coach listens intently without judgment but with keen curiosity. It takes skill



and practice. Therefore, it is imperative to clearly define the coaching role throughout the organization and support those that fulfill it so that they can do so with fidelity to ensure that the coachees benefit from an authentic coaching experience. Too often in education, someone is given the title of coach without having any training or practice in the critical skills necessary to be effective in the role. To ensure a productive and effective coaching experience, it is essential that we stop using the title of "coach" without providing those assigned to the role clarity about the role and a way to learn and practice essential skills to do the job well and with fidelity.

School systems and districts can use this research to start their leadership coaching program. The findings and literature indicate that leaders want collegial, relevant learning to help them grow in their new roles. Moreover, the study's findings and recent literature support coaching as a most beneficial means of personalized professional learning. It is necessary to prioritize the support for new leaders so that school systems can retain their newly hired leaders. Creating systems, structures, and supports to ensure that coaching is a part of the onboarding experience for all leaders will benefit the new leaders and the organization.

Beyond implications for a leadership coaching program, the research findings are significant for other professional learning experiences that create a community or partnerships focused on helping adults acclimate to new roles and experiences. Many institutes of higher education use internships as part of their teaching and administrative degrees or certification programs. All interns acclimate to a new role, be it, teachers, or school leaders, even if the internship is for a short time. Each intern is assigned a supervising teacher or administrator, yet those veteran teachers and administrators may or may not receive some professional learning about facilitating that learning process as a coach or mentor. Often advice-giving is the fallback

approach. Perhaps providing modules on coaching would help amplify the learning experience for those interns as they get ready to launch into the new role.

### **Implications for Future Research**

School leadership will always be a dynamic role that necessitates a calm and effective response when navigating many crises and challenges. Many participants shared that the context of the study impacted their leadership coaching sessions in terms of types of conversation topics and maintaining consistent dates/times. During the study, schools were still dealing with many additional complexities and responsibilities due to the pandemic. Therefore, I believe it would be beneficial to conduct a similar action research study to see if the results are similar or different in a different time period. It would also be beneficial to conduct the study with participants from various school districts rather than focusing solely on one local school system.

An additional finding beyond the scope of the research question emerged. Although the goal of the LCP was to build the self-efficacy of the coach, participants disclosed that the professional learning experience was mutually beneficial. Coaches and coachees both benefitted from the experience. The participants discussed the time as a give-and-take. The finding emphasized the importance of creating a community focused on a joint enterprise (coaching experience) focused on the shared practice (educational leadership), which increased the leader efficacy of both partners. One principal supervisor felt the LCP influenced coaches' self-efficacy more than the coachees'. It would be beneficial to fully explore the coaching community's influence on both partners and to what extent.

Conducting a longitudinal study to evaluate the LCP beyond the first year would be helpful. It would be insightful to see if the networks established through the leadership coaching

community continued past the coaching experience. Many coaches and coachees felt they would continue reaching out to their partners. Additionally, it would be helpful to explore if the influence of that first year had any bearing on their feelings of preparation for year two or self-efficacy going into or during year two. Understanding the long-term influence of leadership coaching on the coachee is critical to determine its impact on their success and effectiveness, directly impacting their students and staff.

The field of coaching needs more experimental design studies to affirm its positive effects on leadership. It would be beneficial to compare leaders who have received a coach during their first year in their new role and those that have not determined if the coaching had an impact on self-efficacy. Continuing to build on the field of existing research but focusing on an experimental design would add to the body of research to highlight the benefits of using coaching as personalized professional learning.

### **Conclusion**

John Wooden, award-winning coach of the UCLA Bruins, said, “A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life.” In my education journey, I have found that to be true. Coaches can impact lives and change the trajectory of those they serve. Knowing that an individual is there for support and to help you attain the goals you set out to achieve is invaluable in leadership and beyond. Literature highlights that educational leaders concur. They are seeking collegial support and interactions that help build their self-efficacy and a place to collaborate and improve leadership practices that are relevant and timely.

This action research study addressed a need for the local school system to support newly hired school-based leaders with a leadership coaching community. In seeking to create a legacy

program that provides high-quality professional learning and supports leaders in acclimating to their new roles, I needed to invite participants to share their experiences so the program can continually evolve and improve. School leadership gets more complex and challenging every year. We must continue to provide learning and support to help leaders as they transition to their new roles so that we can recruit and retain them. High-quality leaders are hard to come by, and local school systems must be intentional and willing to put resources behind research-informed onboarding programs. The success of students, staff, and communities depends on it.

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## Appendix A

### Leadership Coaching Advertisement

The advertisement is a vertical rectangular graphic with a dark gray background. At the top, there are three speech bubbles. The top-left bubble is light gray and contains the text: "DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE FORMAL TRAINING AS A 'COACH' FOR NEW PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS?". The top-right bubble is also light gray and contains the text: "COULD YOU USE A \$5,000 STIPEND?". The bottom-center bubble is a darker gray and contains the text: "DO YOU HAVE GREAT EXPERIENCE AS A SCHOOL BASED ADMINISTRATOR THAT YOU WISH TO SHARE WITH OTHER NEW LEADERS?". Below the speech bubbles, the text "CONSIDER BECOMING A" is in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. Below that, the words "LEADERSHIP COACH" are in a very large, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath this, in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font, is the text: "A LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SYSTEM ACCOUNTABILITY AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT". At the bottom, there is a white rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside this box, the text is in an italicized, sans-serif font. It reads: "For more information, see Job Description & Roles and Responsibilities attached. If interested, please complete the Interest Google Form."

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE FORMAL TRAINING AS A "COACH" FOR NEW PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS?

COULD YOU USE A \$5,000 STIPEND?

DO YOU HAVE GREAT EXPERIENCE AS A SCHOOL BASED ADMINISTRATOR THAT YOU WISH TO SHARE WITH OTHER NEW LEADERS?

CONSIDER BECOMING A

# LEADERSHIP COACH

A LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY CREATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SYSTEM ACCOUNTABILITY AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*For more information, see Job Description & Roles and Responsibilities attached.  
If interested, please complete the Interest Google Form.*

## Appendix B

### Leadership Coach Job Description

Position Title	Leadership Coach	Unit	A&S
Job Code	N/A	Division	ACTS
Grade/Lane	PA1/002	Department	Organizational Development
FLSA Status	Exempt	MSDE Code	Not reported as this is ADL (additional pay)

<b>ROLE</b>
<b>The Leadership Coach will support the school system's administrative onboarding and support structure through a combination of coaching and mentoring, while cultivating growth-focused relationships with school-based administrators to promote excellence in instructional leadership, equity, school culture, school improvement, care and engagement of students, families and community.</b>
<b>ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS</b>
<b>Under the leadership and support of the Supervisor of Leadership Development and the SAIL Directors, the coach performs the following duties:</b>
<b>Flexibly uses coaching and mentoring to support newly hired school-based administrators using the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL).</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages in frequent and on-going dialogue with administrative coachee(s) in order to promote professional growth, fidelity and progress towards school and system priorities.</li> <li>Grounds coaching practice in defined systemic processes, procedures, and values.</li> <li>Employs effective coaching and facilitation skills to guide administrators to plan for and respond to a range of leadership scenarios and challenges.</li> <li>Guides administrators as they grow in the skills and affinities outlined in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL).</li> <li>Serves as a regular point of contact for coachee(s) via phone, email, face-to-face meeting, etc. to process topics of timely concern.</li> <li>Facilitates online learning and collaboration to support the growth of administrative leaders.</li> <li>Collaborates with coachee(s) via face-to-face site visits to explore challenges of practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborates with Leadership Development staff and SAIL Directors to both facilitate and identify relevant professional learning opportunities.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflects and applies knowledge from current research on best practices for improving student achievement, equity, school culture, learning environments, and leadership practices.</li> <li>Collaborates with others to solve problems of practice and facilitate groups to consensus.</li> </ul>
<b>Collects data to document the coaching role and its effectiveness and assists with program evaluation.</b>
<b>Establishes and maintains a trusting, confidential, and non-evaluative relationship with school administrators.</b>
<b>Participates in ongoing professional learning in order to increase the skills and proficiencies related to the components of the role.</b>
<b>Demonstrates high standards of honesty, integrity, flexibility, and responsiveness.</b>
<b>Performs other duties as assigned by the Supervisor of Leadership Development and the SAIL Directors.</b>
<b>REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSDE Administrator I and II Certificate.</li> <li>Earned Master's Degree or higher in the educational field.</li> <li>Minimum of five (5) years of successful administrative experience, including at least three (3) years as a school principal or assistant principal; must have occurred within the last eight (8) years.</li> <li>Demonstrated success in supervision, professional learning, and leadership roles.</li> <li>Knowledge of Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL).</li> <li>Ability to work collaboratively to solve problems and establish trusting relationships.</li> <li>High standards of honesty, integrity, flexibility, and responsiveness.</li> <li>Effective oral, written interpersonal communication.</li> <li>Demonstrated understanding of administrator and teacher evaluation systems and FCPS policies, procedures, and priorities.</li> <li>Capable of performing the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodations.</li> </ul>
<b>PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal coaching experience, certification, or training.</li> <li>Experience facilitating professional learning via Schoology.</li> </ul>

*\*The number of Principal and Assistant Principal Leadership Coaches are determined annually based on identified need*

## Appendix C

### Leadership Coach/Coachee Roles & Responsibilities

Leadership Coach One on One	Administrative Coachee On on One
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes 5 hours of coaching training grounded in the International Coach Federation Coaching Core Competencies</li> <li>• Coaching PLC visits with Leadership Development Team members (3 total)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Book Study: Coach It Further: Using the Art of Coaching to Improve School Leadership-by Peter M. Dewitt</li> <li>◦ Schoology Course</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develops a trusting, confidential and non-evaluative relationship with Administrative coachee.</li> <li>• Regular check ins with Administrative coachee, minimum bi-weekly</li> <li>• Uses Schoology to provide support and collaborate with Administrative coachee</li> <li>• 1 face to face or virtual face to face meeting once monthly with your coachee</li> <li>• 3 site visits to coachees school</li> <li>• Record keeping log for data collection</li> <li>• Reflection/Feedback to Leadership Development Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in a trusting, confidential and non-evaluative relationship with Leadership Coach.</li> <li>• Engages in frequent and on-going dialogue with Leadership Coach in order to promote professional growth, fidelity and progress towards school and system priorities.</li> <li>• Regularly contacts Leadership Coach for guidance on how to plan for and respond to leadership issues, scenarios, challenges and other topics of timely concern. This could occur via phone, email, face to face, Schoology, etc</li> <li>• Collaborates with Leadership Coach via a minimum of 3 face-to-face site visits to explore challenges of practice.</li> <li>• Utilizes Schoology for collaboration and support</li> <li>• Reflection and action steps</li> </ul>
Leadership Coach Group Coach	Administrative Coachee Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes 5 hours of coaching training grounded in the International Coach Federation Coaching Core Competencies</li> <li>• Coaching PLC visits with Leadership Development Team members (3 total)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Book Study: Coach It Further: Using the Art of Coaching to Improve School Leadership-by Peter M. Dewitt</li> <li>◦ Schoology Course</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regular check ins with Administrative Coachee</li> <li>• No site visits</li> <li>• Record keeping log for data collection</li> <li>• Reflection/Feedback to Leadership Development Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in a trusting, confidential and non-evaluative relationship with Leadership Coach.</li> <li>• Engages in frequent and on-going dialogue with Leadership Coach in order to promote professional growth, fidelity and progress towards school and system priorities.</li> <li>• Regularly contacts Leadership Coach for guidance on how to plan for and respond to leadership issues, scenarios, challenges and other topics of timely concern. This could occur via phone, email, face to face, Schoology, etc</li> <li>• Utilizes Schoology for collaboration and support</li> <li>• Completes coachee log/reflections.</li> </ul>

## Appendix D

### Leadership Coach Interview Process

#### Interview Process

- Pre-screen to occur by reading through resumes:
  - Minimum of five (5) years of successful administrative experience, including at least three (3) years as a school principal or assistant principal.
  - Must have occurred within the last eight (8) years.
  - Must have satisfactory or better evaluations for the past three (3) years.
  - May not be on performance action plan or have any disciplinary action within the past three (3) years.
- Leadership Development Team will send email to those invited to interview explaining next steps of the interview process to include (approved by Human Resources Director):
  - the written [interview questions](#) submitted by all applicants 11/2/20 - Document given as forced copy and then linked into a Google form (include directions to share access - anyone with the link) to be submitted.
    - Form should indicate type of coach; principal, assistant principal, either
  - Applicants will be evaluated by a blind interview committee - rubric will be used.
  - Spreadsheet will be created with documents linked for scoring.
- Interview Committee - central leaders (SAIL and Org. Dev and school based leaders) (will rank them all)-top 27ish will be selected - to occur November 5th-16th. Based on scoring
- Leadership Development Team will make all applications blind for the interview committee:
  - Create folders to house the applications
  - Spreadsheet to put scores
  - Rubric
- Selected applicants will complete the High5 Strengths assessment to assist with the "matching" of coaches to [coachees](#).
- High5 Strength test will be sent to all coachees to complete for matching purposes (11/9):
  - Separate AP's from Principals
  - Results will be shared with coaches

Level	Assistant Principal	Principal	Total Coaches Needed
Elementary	10 (3 coaches)	5	8
Middle	5 (2 coaches)	4	6
High	5 (2 coaches)	3	5

#### [Candidates by Level](#)

Elementary/Middle and Middle/High

2 central office representatives and 2 school based leaders serve as screeners for both sections

**Appendix E**

**Leadership Coaching Training**

	Topic	<a href="#">ICF Core Competencies</a> ▼
<a href="#">Module 1</a>	<b>Why Coaching?</b>	Overview of all competencies
	Coaching versus Mentoring Coaching Core Competencies High-Five	
<a href="#">Module 2</a>	<b>Establishing a Coaching Mindset</b>	2-Embodies a Coaching Mindset
	Principal Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES)	
<a href="#">Module 3</a>	<b>Cultivating Trust and Safety with Your Coachee</b>	3-Establishes and Maintains Agreements 4-Cultivates Trust and Safety 5-Maintains Presence
<a href="#">Module 4</a>	<b>Facilitating Growth</b>	6-Listens Actively 7-Evokes Awareness 8-Facilitates Growth
	Grow Model	
<a href="#">Module 5</a>	<b>Group Coaching</b>	<a href="#">Team Coaching Competencies</a>

## Appendix F

### Monthly Coaching Resource

Systemic Timely Topics: September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support on <u>goal setting</u> for the year based on PSEL and School Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Lessons learned in first few weeks of school about COVID               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Review available resources to support you                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="#">COVID-19 Response</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">Contact Tracing and Close Contact Information</a></li> <li>■ <a href="#">COVID-19 Response FAQ</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• How are you balancing your staff needs and your own needs for self-care?</li> </ul>
Monthly Timely Topics: September To be completed by coach/coachee(s) if applicable
<p>→</p> <p>→</p>

### GROW Model

Goal	Reality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What would you like to work on?</li> <li>➤ What is your goal related to this issue?</li> <li>➤ When are you planning to achieve it?</li> <li>➤ What are the benefits for you in achieving this goal?</li> <li>➤ Who else will benefit and how?</li> <li>➤ What will it be like if you achieve your goal?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What actions have you taken so far?</li> <li>➤ What is moving you toward your goal?</li> <li>➤ What are the obstacles you face?</li> </ul>
Options	Wrap Up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What different kinds of options do you have to achieve your goal?</li> <li>➤ What else could you do?</li> <li>➤ What are the principal advantages and disadvantages of each option?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Which options will you choose to act on?</li> <li>➤ When are you going to start each action?</li> <li>➤ How committed are you, on a scale of 1–10, to taking each of these actions?</li> <li>➤ If it is not a 10, what would make it a 10?</li> <li>➤ What will you commit to doing?</li> </ul>

## Appendix G

### Leadership Coaching Log

Coach:		Coachee		
--------	--	---------	--	--

Date	Total Time (in min/hrs)	Tasks Completed (check all that apply)	Method (check)	Comments about Coaching Session:
		<input type="checkbox"/> Regular/Bi-Weekly Check-In <input type="checkbox"/> School/Site Visit <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Face to Face or Virtual Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> "Emergency" coaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Video call (Google Meet/Skype) <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Regular/Bi-Weekly Check-In <input type="checkbox"/> School/Site Visit <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Face to Face or Virtual Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> "Emergency" coaching	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Video call (Google Meet/Skype) <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

## Appendix H

### 1<sup>st</sup> Interview Protocol (Coach)

1. How many years have you been in education? How many with LSS? How many as an AP (Assistant Principal)? Principal?
  2. Think back to when you were first named a Leadership Coach, how did you feel? (Do you remember an email from the director informing you of the position? How were you feeling?)
  3. How, if at all, has that changed over time? (How about now that time has passed) Can you provide an example or story to illustrate how things have changed?
  4. Please describe the times, if there are any to date, when you were exhilarated by the experience. What made them so?
  5. What most concerned you about the role? (Were there any hurdles you needed to overcome?)
  6. Self-Anchoring Scale:
    - At the top of a piece of computer paper, write your participant's words and phrases to describe an ideal coach/coachee relationship. Tell participants to imagine they magically had the power to completely design what the year would be like as they entered the partnership.
    - At the bottom of the paper, write your participant's words and phrases to describe the worst first year in a coaching relationship.
    - Draw a ladder along the left-hand border of the page, connecting the ideal descriptions and the worst possible. Number the equidistant steps from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top.
    - Ask participant to pick the step that fits how he/she felt two months into the role of principal/coach (August 2021). Write the word *past* and the step selected in the middle of the paper.
    - Next, ask participant to pick the step that fits how he/she feels now (Dec. 2021-Jan. 2022). Write the word *now* and the step selected, above or below the *past* selection.
    - Next, ask participant to pick the step that he/she thinks he/she will feel in the future (June 2022). Write the word *future* and the step number selected above or below the others.
    - Ask participant why the *past to now* steps are different (or the same) and jot notes on the page with your participant's responses.
- Finally, ask participant why the *now to future* steps are different (or the same) and jot notes on the page with participant's responses.
7. How, if at all, has the leadership coaching community influenced the leadership self-efficacy of your coachee partner to date?



## Appendix I

### 1<sup>st</sup> Interview Protocol (Coachee)

1. How many years have you been teaching? How many with the LSS? Any prior administrative experience?
2. Think back to when you were first named an AP/Principal, how did you feel? (Do you remember that initial phone call from HR (Human Resources) or the director informing you of the promotion? How were you feeling?)
3. How, if at all, has that changed over time? (How about now that time has passed) Can you provide an example or story of how things have changed?
4. What were you most enthusiastic about when you became an AP/Principal? (What excited you most when you applied or were hired?)
5. What most concerned you? (What kept you up at night?)
6. Self-Anchoring Scale:
  - At the top of a piece of computer paper, write your participant's words and phrases to describe an ideal coach/coachee relationship. Tell participants to imagine they magically had the power to completely design what the year would be like as they entered the partnership.
  - At the bottom of the paper, write your participant's words and phrases to describe the worst first year in a coaching relationship.
  - Draw a ladder along the left-hand border of the page, connecting the ideal descriptions and the worst possible. Number the equidistant steps from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top.
  - Ask participant to pick the step that fits how he/she felt two months into the role of principal/coach (August 2021). Write the word *past* and the step selected in the middle of the paper.
  - Next, ask participant to pick the step that fits how he/she feels now (Dec. 2021-Jan. 2022). Write the word *now* and the step selected, above or below the *past* selection.
  - Next, ask participant to pick the step that he/she thinks he/she will feel in the future (June 2022). Write the word *future* and the step number selected above or below the others.
  - Ask participant why the *past to now* steps are different (or the same) and jot notes on the page with your participant's responses.
  - Finally, ask participant why the *now to future* steps are different (or the same) and jot notes on the page with participant's responses.
7. How, if at all, has the leadership coaching community influenced your leadership self-efficacy to date?

## **Appendix J**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Interview Protocol (Coach)**

1. When we had our initial interview, using the self-anchoring scale, you shared that by the end of the coaching experience you expected to be on a level of X reasoning that ... (read the self-anchoring scale-end of intervention from participants). Now that we're at the end, where do you rank yourself today? (Mark the number in a different color). Tell me a bit about why you put yourself there. (What is the difference between where you anticipated you would be versus the reality of where you are now at the end of the experience?)
2. If you could use a metaphor to describe the years' experience as a first-year coach? Why? (Would it be described as a roller coaster ride, smooth sailing, bumpy road, or one of your suggestions?)
3. How would you describe your coaching experience in influencing the acclimation of your coachee to their new role of school leader?
4. From your perspective as coach, how has the coaching experience influenced your coachee's educational leadership practice? (Tell me how the coaching experience impacted your coachee's principalship and leadership)

#### **Sorting Activity:**

List Professional Standards for Educational Leaders PSEL standards on cards.

- 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 of 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

5. Ask participants to pull out the 2 or 3 PSEL (Professional Standards for Educational Leaders) standards where the leadership coaching experience has influenced their coachee's leadership efficacy most. What are some examples from daily practice or coaching sessions that would help me to paint a picture?
6. Ask participants to select what 2-3 PSEL standards were least influenced their coachee's leadership efficacy? Why do you perceive that do be true?
7. How would your principal supervisor/principal describe the influence of the coaching experience on your coachee's leadership self-efficacy throughout the year? (How would others describe how the coaching program impacted your coachee's professional growth?)
8. If you could wave a magic wand and make any adjustments or improvements to the leadership coaching program, what would they be? What sort of impact do you think those changes would have?

9. What would you be sure to continue? Why?
10. How does the leadership coaching community influence the leadership self-efficacy of the coach and coachee partners?

## **Appendix K**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Interview Protocol (Coachee)**

1. When we had our initial interview, using the self-anchoring scale, you shared that by the end of the coaching experience you expected to be on a level of X reasoning that ... (read the self-anchoring scale-end of intervention from participants). Now that we're at the end, where do you rank yourself today? (Mark the number in a different color). Tell me a bit about why you put yourself there. (What is the difference between where you anticipated you would be versus the reality of where you are now at the end of the experience?)
2. If you could use a metaphor to describe the years' experience as a first-year coach? Why? (Would it be described as a roller coaster ride, smooth sailing, bumpy road, or one of your suggestions?)
3. How would you describe your coaching experience in influencing the acclimation to the role and the practice of school leadership?
4. As a new school leader, how else has the coaching experience influenced your educational leadership practice? (Tell me how the coaching experience impacted your leadership practice)

#### **Sorting Activity:**

List Professional Standards for Educational Leaders PSEL standards on cards.

- 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 of 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

5. Ask participants to pull out the 2 or 3 PSEL (Professional Standards for Educational Leaders) standards where the leadership coaching experience has influenced their leadership efficacy most. What are some examples from daily practice or coaching sessions that would help me to paint a picture?
6. Ask participants to select what 2-3 PSEL standards were least influenced? What are some examples from daily practice or coaching sessions that would help me to paint a picture? How would your coach describe the influence of the coaching experience on your leadership self-efficacy throughout the year? (How would others describe how the experience impacted your professional growth?)
7. How would your principal supervisor/principal describe the influence of the coaching experience on your leadership self-efficacy throughout the year? (How would others describe how the coaching program impacted your coachee's professional growth?)

8. If you could wave a magic wand and make any adjustments or improvements to the leadership coaching program, what would they be? What sort of impact do you think those changes would have?
9. What would you be sure to continue? Why?
10. How does the leadership coaching community influence the leadership self-efficacy of the coach and coachee partners?

## Appendix L

### Permissions for Self-Efficacy Scale

#### Initial Email Request:



Myers Karine J.  
Sat 7/17/2021 2:32 PM  
To: mxtsch@wm.edu



Good Afternoon Dr. Tschannen-Moran,  
I hope this email finds you well. I am emailing to seek permission to use the Principal's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale for my dissertation research with school-based administrators. My current plan is to use an adapted form of the scale for a qualitative action research study on the perspectives of school administrators in a leadership coaching community on their professional growth. The following research questions will guide the study:

- What are the perceptions of professional growth for coach/coachee school administrator dyads in a leadership coaching community?
  - What is the influence of the leadership coaching community on the educational leadership practice of each member of the coaching dyad?
  - What is the influence of the leadership coaching community on the identity (coach: coaching or coachee: principalship) of the participants?
  - In what ways, could the leadership coaching programming be improved or adjusted to meet the needs of the participants better?
- How does the coach/coachee dyads perceive the leadership coaching program influences their leadership self-efficacy?

Please let me know if you have any questions. I have enjoyed reading your work and appreciate the consideration.

Take care,  
Karine

*Karine J. Myers*

Doctoral Candidate  
Doctorate of Organizational Leadership  
Cohort 2022

#### Approval Letter:



July 22, 2021

Karine,

You have my permission to use the Principals' Sense of Efficacy Scale, which I developed with Chris Gareis, in your research. The best citation to use is:

Tschannen-Moran, M. & Gareis, C. (2004). Principals' sense of efficacy: Assessing a promising construct. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42, 573-585.

You can find a copy of these measures and scoring directions on my web site at <http://comppeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch>. I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for these measures as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran  
William & Mary School of Education

## Appendix M

### Adapted Self Efficacy Scale

STEM: <i>"In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."</i>	Not at all		Very Little		Some Degree		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal
1. develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. manage change in your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. handle the time demands of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. act as agents of continuous improvement?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. maintain control of your own daily schedule?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. shape the operational policies and procedures necessary to manage school operations and resources?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. handle the paperwork required of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. act ethically and according to professional norms and promote such behavior among staff?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15. cope with the stress of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
16. prioritize among competing demands of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2004)

## **Appendix N**

### **Principal Supervisor Survey**

1. Rate the level of influence the leadership coaching program had on the acclimation of the novice school leaders (coachee) to their new role.

None    Very Little    Some Degree    Quite a Bit    A Great Deal

2. Provide specific examples of how the leadership coaching program impacted the acclimation of the novice school leaders (coachee) to their new role (removing any identifiable information for specific cases).

3. If you felt the leadership coaching program did not influence the participants, why do you believe this to be the case?

4. Identify the 3 PSEL (Professional Standards for Educational Leaders) standards where the leadership coaching experience has influenced their coachee's leadership efficacy most.

- 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 of 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

Based on your perspective, explain your choices.

5. If you could wave a magic wand and make any adjustments or improvements to the leadership coaching program, what would they be? What sort of impact do you think those changes would have?

6. What would you be sure to continue? Why?

7. What ways have you seen or heard the coaching skills and knowledge translate into educational leadership practice?

8. How does the leadership coaching community influence the leadership self-efficacy of the coach and coachee partners?



## Appendix O

### Researcher Log

Researcher Log	Comments, Ideas, Mentions, Feedback			Reflection Notes
Meeting/Session/Experience (Date)	Coach	<del>Coachee</del>	Community	

**Appendix P**  
**IRB (Institutional Review Board) Application**  
**Hood College**  
**Institutional Review Board**  
**Research Proposal Template**

**1. Title of Proposal:**

Leadership Coaching Community Participation: New School Administrators' Self-Efficacy Perspectives

**2. Principal Investigator (PI):**

Karine Myers

**3. PI Department:**

Graduate School, Doctorate of Organization Leadership Program

**4. PI Contact Information:**

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**Cell Phone:** 240-457-8085

**5. Faculty Sponsor and Contact Information (if PI is a student):**

Dr. Jennifer L. Cuddapah, Chair; email: [cuddapah@hood.edu](mailto:cuddapah@hood.edu)

Dr. Nisha Manikoth, DOL program coordinator; email: [manikoth@hood.edu](mailto:manikoth@hood.edu)

**6. Other Investigators (name, e-mail address, and if student, class year):**

Not applicable

**7. Date of this Submission:**

TBD

**8. Proposed Duration of the Project** (indicate starting and ending dates):

**Start Date:** September 2021

**End Date:** April 2022

**9. Background Information and Research Questions/Hypotheses:**

As the complexities of principalship increase and experience levels decrease, the need for high-quality personalized professional learning becomes critical. A school administrator's impact on their students, staff, and community is significant (Grissom et al., 2021). Creating and sustaining effective structures and programs to ensure success both as they begin this leadership role through their veteran years becomes paramount.

The purpose of this qualitative, action research study is to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy (Wenger et al., 2002; Bandura, 1977). It further examines participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or adjustments (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

The current study is grounded in three seminal works, Wenger's (1998) communities of practice social learning theory, Argyris and Schön's (1978) theory of double loop learning theory, and Bandura's (1977) theory of personal self-efficacy. More specifically, the current study is informed by the three components of Wenger's (2002) Communities of Practice (CoP) Social Learning Theory: domain, practice,

and community. The leadership coaching program facilitates the creation of multiple CoP's within its structure. One of the CoP's, the coach/coachee, focuses on a dyadic relationship between a coach and coachee which establishes a learning loop that facilitates a principal's self-reflection to focus on their values, assumptions, and governing variables that lead to their actions and subsequent results (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Through communities of practice, the partners work together to achieve goals set by the coachee. Within the CoP, members are focused on their personal mastery experiences, sharing vicarious experiences, giving, and receiving feedback (social persuasion) while providing the requisite trusting environment to increase self-efficacy in the role of principal or coach (Bandura, 1977). The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the influence of the leadership coaching **community** on the coachee/new school leaders' self-efficacy?
  - a. How is the educational leadership **practice** of the coachee influenced?
  - b. In what ways is the coachees' **domain** of school leader influenced?
2. In what ways could the leadership coaching program be improved or adjusted to meet the needs of the participants better?

#### **10. Human Participants:**

##### **A. Who are the participants?**

Newly promoted school-based administrators for the 21-22 school year, their corresponding coach, and principal supervisors in a mid-sized Mid-Atlantic, local school system (LSS) will be invited to participate in this study (see Appendix A).

Participants will represent all levels of a PreK-12 public education school system: elementary, middle, and high school. The coaches and coachees will represent both principals and assistant principals. All participants will be a part of the leadership coaching program as coachees (novice administrators), coaches (veteran administrators), or collaborators (principal supervisors).

**B. How many participants do you plan to have in your study?**

There are 14 coaching dyads for the 21-22 school year. Therefore, a random selection of coach and coachee participants will be used to create a maximum of 12 participants (6 of each). There are five principal supervisors for the district that may serve as participants.

**C. How will the participants be contacted or recruited?**

All participants will be invited to participate via email. In that email, I will explain the purpose of the study and its significance. A copy of the emails for both participant groups are provided in Appendix B and C. I will emphasize the non-evaluative nature of the study and that confidentiality of their responses will be guaranteed if they take part. I will ensure that their identities are protected using pseudonyms in my writing. Participants will also be informed of their ability to stop participation at any point in the study.

**D. Will the participants be compensated for participating?**

Coach and coachee participants will be receiving a \$20 Amazon gift card for full participation in the study. Principal supervisor participants will receive a \$5.00 coffee gift card for completing the on-line survey.

- 10. Procedures:** Participants (coach and coachee) will be asked to participate in three different activities throughout the duration of the leadership coaching experience. I will also emphasize the non-evaluative nature of the research and its focus on the program's influence versus individual participants. I do not formally evaluate any of the participants in the study. Any information collected will use pseudonyms and will maintain confidentiality. In the abundance of caution due to COVID 19, all data will be collected digitally or via zoom or google meet. There will be no face to data collection used in this study. The activities are listed below in chronological order:
- a. **Adapted Self-Efficacy Survey** (Pre/Post)-each coach/coachee participant will complete a survey via Google Form using an adapted version of Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) Principal Self-Efficacy Scale. The survey will be issued at the onset of the program and again at the closing of the experience.
  - b. **Interview Protocols-** each coach/coachee participant will complete two semi-structured, one on one interview protocols via google meet or zoom.
    - i. Interview Protocol 1- mid-coaching program
    - ii. Interview Protocol 2- the end of the experience

Principal supervisor participants will be asked to participate in one activity at the culmination of the study. The activity is listed below:

- c. **Principal Supervisor Survey** – each principal supervisor participant will complete an anonymous survey which will be sent via email toward the end of the leadership coaching experience.

12. **Consent:** Participants will give consent by completing the Hood College Informed Consent after expressing interest in being part of the study (see Appendix K).
13. **Risks and Debriefing:** The study has minimal risk. The participant may feel some emotional distress when revisiting difficult or stressful times during their coaching experiences.
14. **Privacy and Storage of Data:** The records of this study will be kept private. I will not use the names of any school administrator in my writing or data collection. I will use pseudonyms for the district, leadership coaching program, and all participants. All survey data collected will be done using pseudonyms, and directions will ask that any identifiable information (i.e., participant names, schools, etc.) be removed, or they will be redacted. I will store all collected data on one drive. All the data collected will be password protected. Only leadership coaching program coordinators will have access to the data. Interviews will be audio and video recorded to be transcribed. Identities and likenesses will be protected to the fullest extent possible. In any sort of report that is published or presentation that is given, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant.

## **Appendix A**

### **Email Verification of Local System's Knowledge of Research**

From: Gay, Natalie A  
Sent: Thursday, July 8, 2021, 11:31 AM  
To: Myers, Karine J  
Cc: Markoe, Michael D; Harris, Keith R  
Subject: RE: Hood Doctoral Research - K. Myers

Hi Karine,

Thank you for submitting a summary from your dissertation. Yes, you will need to submit the FCPS (Frederick County Public Schools) research application to be granted final approval to conduct research. This email confirms that FCPS has received your intentions to conduct research within FCPS. You are granted preliminary approval at this time. Final approval will be based upon receipt, review, and approval of your complete application by a designated FCPS Research Committee. It is understood that some data collection efforts may already be underway by FCPS staff for the LIFT (Leaders Inspire and Facilitate Transformation) program for program refinement and/or feedback purposes. However, use of these data and/or collection of new data for the sole purposes of your dissertation will require final Committee approval.

Below is information pertaining to the FCPS research application process.

Per FCPS Regulation 200-41, any individual or agency wanting to conduct research within FCPS must complete and submit an application. The application will be reviewed by a designated FCPS Research Committee. The application will be reviewed in accordance with the regulation (<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/doc.php?number=200-41>). You can find an online submission form on our department's website: <https://www.fcps.org/centraloffice/centraloffice-research-development-accountability>. All supporting documentation should be sent to me via email.

If I can assist you in any way in your dissertation work, please let me know.

Hope you are having a great summer so far!

Natalie

Natalie Gay



Coordinator, Data Analysis & Research  
System Accountability and School Administration (SASA)  
Frederick County Public Schools  
191 S. East Street, Frederick MD 21701  
p) 301-696-6890 / f) 301-696-6956

From: Markoe, Michael D  
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:07 AM  
To: Myers, Karine J <[Karine.Myers@fcps.org](mailto:Karine.Myers@fcps.org)>; Gay, Natalie A <[Natalie.Gay@fcps.org](mailto:Natalie.Gay@fcps.org)>  
Subject: RE: Hood Doctoral Research

Good Morning, Natalie,

As noted, I am aware of and support Karine's dissertation study.

Thank you,

Mike

**Michael Markoe, Ed.D.**

**Deputy Superintendent**

**Frederick County Public Schools**

## **Appendix B**

### **Coach/Coachee Participant Interest Email**

Dear (insert name of coach/coachee here),

My name is Karine Myers and I am the Supervisor of Leadership Development in our county. I have served in many roles within our school system including assistant principal and principal. I serve to provide a comprehensive system of support and relevant research informed professional learning for all leaders.

When I am not at work, I am a doctoral student at Hood College. As part of the requirement for my doctoral program I must plan, implement, and analyze original research. To further leadership professional development, I am researching their leadership coaching as a means for personalized professional learning for novice school leaders. Recently our county has implemented a new leadership coaching program. You have been identified as a potential candidate for my study because you are participating in the new leadership coaching program as either a coach or coachee.

There are three parts to the study. The first is a 10-15-minute survey you would fill out digitally and send to me. It will be done at the onset of the coaching experience and repeated toward the end of the experience. The second is a 15-30-minute interview of 7 questions each asking about your perspectives and experiences mid-way through the coaching experience. The third is an additional interview toward the end of the experience which consists of 13-14 questions therefore will be 30-45 minutes. You may drop out at any time, for any reason without consequence. All the information collected is confidential and pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity.

As a small token of my gratitude, I will be sending each participant a \$20.00 gift card to Amazon, if you are interested and at your convenience. Please contact me at [karine.myers@fcps.org](mailto:karine.myers@fcps.org) or [kjm1@hood.edu](mailto:kjm1@hood.edu) to let me know if you are willing and interested so I can send you the consent form and next steps. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact Dr. Jolene Sanders, Institutional Review Board, Hood College at [sandersj@hood.edu](mailto:sandersj@hood.edu).

Thank you,

Karine Myers

## **Appendix C**

### **Principal Supervisor Participant Interest Email**

Dear (insert name of coach/coachee here),

My name is Karine Myers and I am the Supervisor of Leadership Development in our county. I have served in many roles within our school system including assistant principal and principal. I serve to provide a comprehensive system of support and relevant research informed professional learning for all leaders.

When I am not at work, I am a doctoral student at Hood College. As part of the requirement for my doctoral program I must plan, implement, and analyze original research. To further leadership professional development, I am researching their leadership coaching as a means for personalized professional learning for novice school leaders. Recently our county has implemented a new leadership coaching program. You have been identified as a potential candidate for my study because you are participating in the new leadership coaching program as a principal supervisor collaborator.

As a principal supervisor participant, there is only one part of the study. You will complete an on-line survey consisting of nine questions that would take approximately 15 minutes of your time toward the end of the leadership coaching program. You may drop out at any time, for any reason without consequence. All the information collected is confidential and pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. Additionally, I ask that any identifiable information about coaches and coachees be removed from your surveys so they may also be kept confidential in the process.

As a small token of my gratitude, I will be sending each participant a \$5.00 gift card to a coffee establishment, if you are interested and at your convenience. Please contact me at [karine.myers@fcps.org](mailto:karine.myers@fcps.org) or [kjm1@hood.edu](mailto:kjm1@hood.edu) to let me know if you are willing and interested so I can send you the consent form and next steps. If you have any questions or


concerns regarding the study, you may contact Dr. Jolene Sanders, Institutional Review Board Chair, Hood College at [sandersj@hood.edu](mailto:sandersj@hood.edu).

Thank you,  
Karine Myers

## Appendix D

### Permissions for Self-Efficacy Scale

#### Initial Email Request:

 Myers Karine J.  
Sat 7/17/2021 2:32 PM  
To: mxtsch@wm.edu

Good Afternoon Dr. Tschannen-Moran,  
I hope this email finds you well. I am emailing to seek permission to use the Principal's Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale for my dissertation research with school-based administrators. My current plan is to use an adapted form of the scale for a qualitative action research study on the perspectives of school administrators in a leadership coaching community on their professional growth. The following research questions will guide the study:

- What are the perceptions of professional growth for coach/coachee school administrator dyads in a leadership coaching community?
  - What is the influence of the leadership coaching community on the educational leadership practice of each member of the coaching dyad?
  - What is the influence of the leadership coaching community on the identity (coach: coaching or coachee: principalship) of the participants?
  - In what ways, could the leadership coaching programming be improved or adjusted to meet the needs of the participants better?
- How does the coach/coachee dyads perceive the leadership coaching program influences their leadership self-efficacy?

Please let me know if you have any questions. I have enjoyed reading your work and appreciate the consideration.

Take care,  
Karine

Karine J. Myers  
Doctoral Candidate  
Doctorate of Organizational Leadership  
Cohort 2022

#### Approval Letter:



July 22, 2021

Karine,

You have my permission to use the Principals' Sense of Efficacy Scale, which I developed with Chris Gareis, in your research. The best citation to use is:

Tschannen-Moran, M. & Gareis, C. (2004). Principals' sense of efficacy: Assessing a promising construct. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42, 573-585.

You can find a copy of these measures and scoring directions on my web site at <http://wmpcople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch>. I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for these measures as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran  
William & Mary School of Education

## Appendix D

### HOOD COLLEGE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**IRB Use Only:**

#### **Leadership Coaching Community Participation: New School Administrators' Self-Efficacy Perspectives Consent Form**

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to be a participant in a research study about the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of self-efficacy. You were selected as a participant because you are participating in the leadership coaching community as a coach, coachee, or collaborator. We ask that you read this document and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. We require that participants in this study be at least 18 years old. The study is being conducted by Hood College.

#### 2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of a leadership coaching community on new school-based administrators' self-perceptions of leadership self-efficacy. It further examines participants' recommendations and feedback for possible programmatic improvements or adjustments. Research highlights school leaders' importance on student achievement and absenteeism and teacher retention and job satisfaction. Providing professional learning to ensure school leaders have the skills and knowledge to lead their schools effectively is imperative as the role has become more complex and demanding. Coaching personalizes professional learning and has been determined to affect the self-efficacy of leaders, which is foundational for influential school-based leaders.

#### 3. DURATION

The length of time you will be involved with this study is September 2021 through April 2022, which is 8 months, close to the duration of the length of time of your participation in the coaching community.

#### 4. PROCEDURES

In the abundance of caution, all data collection procedures will take place via google meet or zoom and on-line survey. **If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:**

**Coaches and Coachees:**

1. Complete a Principal Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale Survey which will be sent to you via email. It will be sent to you to complete twice: once in September and once again in April. You are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer.
2. Participate in two one on one semi-structured interviews with me. The first interview which will occur in December via google meet consists of six questions. The second interview in April will consist of 13 questions.

**Collaborators (Principal Supervisors):**

Complete an 11-question survey which will be sent to you via email in April. Please do not include any names or identifying information in the survey. You are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer.

**5. RISKS/BENEFITS**

This study has minimal risks besides the revisiting of emotional or trying experiences or events in their leadership or coaching practice. The benefits of participation are those leaders who choose to participate in the study will receive a \$20.00 gift card to Amazon (coach/coachees) and \$5.00 (principal supervisors). This study has the power to inform decisions about the leadership coaching program as well as adjustments and revisions to the program to increase its impact and effectiveness for current and future participants. This research is important in that it will provide invaluable information to determine the benefits of a leadership coaching program extending beyond the scope of the school principal to other leadership roles and for other school systems looking for a solution to support novice and veteran school principals.

**6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The records of this study will be kept private. I will not use the names of any school administrator in my writing or data collection. I will use pseudonyms for the district, leadership coaching program, and all participants. Survey data collected will include directions to remove personally identifiable information such as names and schools or it will be redacted by the researcher. I will store all collected data on one drive. All the data collected will be password protected. Only leadership coaching program coordinators will have access to the data. Interviews will be audio and video recorded to be transcribed. Your identity and likeness will be protected to the fullest extent possible. In any sort of report that is published or presentation that is given, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant.

**7. VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Hood College or any of its representatives. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting those relationships. At any time, you wish to withdraw, you may do so immediately without penalty. If you choose to withdrawal, please email Karine Myers at [kjm1@hood.edu](mailto:kjm1@hood.edu) or by phone at 240-457-8085.



*You are under no obligation to complete the study and participation is completely voluntary.*

## 8. CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

The researcher(s) conducting this study is Karine Myers. You may ask any questions you have right now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at 240-457-8085.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak with someone other than the researcher(s), you may contact Dr. Jolene Sanders, Institutional Review Board Chair, Hood College, 401 Rosemont Ave., Frederick, MD 21701, [sandersj@hood.edu](mailto:sandersj@hood.edu).

## 9. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

The procedures of this study have been explained to me and my questions have been addressed. The information that I provide is confidential and will be used for research purposes only. I am at least eighteen years old. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw anytime without penalty. If I have any concerns about my experience in this study (e.g., that I was treated unfairly or felt unnecessarily threatened), I may contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Jolene Sanders at [sandersj@hood.edu](mailto:sandersj@hood.edu) or the Chair of the sponsoring department of this research, Dr. Jennifer Cuddapah at [cuddapah@hood.edu](mailto:cuddapah@hood.edu) regarding my concerns.

Participant signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix Q

### Code Book Example

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Quotes
Coaching is a trusted relationship	Partnering	Partnering (26) Open (14) Built over-time (6) Investment (4) First encounter (2) Mindset (2) Preparation (2) Mentally present (1) Does not end (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the coach/coachee experience at its core develops trusting relationships where questions can be asked about how to motivate, engage and foster a learning environment that promotes and achieves measurable outcomes (principal supervisor)</li> <li>Two people need to take the time to create a relationship and that position of trust, because [the LCP experience] has the potential to just be surface (Carrie)</li> <li>So my first encounter with my coach, the first time that my coach joined me at my school, some of the things that were said were first, "I can't believe they put somebody like you here. This is a very big school, big job. You're building a new building. Sure does seem like somebody with experience would be a lot better in this role;" also shared number of minutes to retirement, how done they are with the job, how they can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and then share that they were excellent at playing political games so if I ever needed help with politics to let them know. (Erin)</li> <li>my coach and I connected immediately. And even to the point where my coach actually texted me after that first meeting, just to make sure that I did know her number and that she meant that when I needed to talk to go ahead and reach out.(Stacey)</li> <li>But I think in the beginning, I don't know that we would've talked as candidly as we do now because we have the relationship and the trust. (Cori)</li> <li>I feel like honestly, [my coach] was the perfect person for me to work with and learn from. She kind of gets me, where I'm coming from. (Bobby)</li> </ul>

	Safe Space	Relationship (47) Safe environment (3) Confidentiality (1) Express Fears (1) Take risks (2) Trust provides foundation (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So I think it was, it, it provided a lot of ways to push ourselves forward in a very non evaluative way because you know, we weren't evaluating each other or judgmental towards each other (Mary)</li> <li>• When you have a non-evaluative person who you can go to for information, there is no concern about how it will reflect on you as a leader that you needed help. While our directors are accessible and always willing to support leaders, they are also the ones who evaluate principals so a new principal may not feel as comfortable asking what is perceived as a 'silly question'</li> <li>• The vulnerability there for both of us has really is there. And I think that's in the principal role, you do have to come across as very competent, but you also have to know where you're able to be vulnerable. There are times when I'm like, I have no idea what the heck I'm doing. What am I supposed to be doing? (Carrie)</li> <li>• I've loved this year. This has been, you know, a great opportunity for me to understand the system from a very strong leader. Who's had some, um, history in the system. So as I said before, the pairing was fantastic. It provided me the opportunity to, um, ask questions in a, in a safe arena so that I didn't feel silly if you will. (Stacey)</li> <li>• And so it's nice to have someone to unpack that with and be able to be vulnerable with, because it's a, what you understand when you're in this job is it's a cumulative effect when the weight builds and builds. And so someone to be able to, to process those things and listen and build trust. (Molly)</li> <li>• when a new administrator is managing through a significantly difficult parent situation, the coach can provide insight, guidance and related experience that not only allows the new administrator to work through the situation, but reminds him/her that even veteran admin manage similar situations. When a new admin is working on something that he/she has not had extensive experience with before (budgets, creating schedules) a coach is a non-evaluative, safe person who can provide assistance without any fear of judgement. (principal supervisor)</li> </ul>
Statement of findings: Effective coaching relationships require creating a safe environment where trust is a foundation and curiosity prevails rather than judgement. Strong coaching partnerships start from the first encounter and build over time; it requires an investment and openness to the experience and the journey.			