

PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:
THE VIEW FROM THE CLASSROOM AND THE OFFICE

By

Renee A. Peterson

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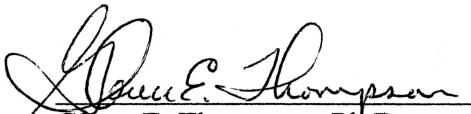
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the College of Education, have examined and approved this dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

 Chair
Glenn E. Thompson, Ph.D.
Frostburg State University
Assistant Professor of Education
Doctoral Program Coordinator

March 11, 2016
Date


Lori Y. Brown, Ed.D.
Allegany County Public Schools


Courte C. W. Voorhees, Ph.D.
Frostburg State University
Assistant Professor

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Colossians 3:23-25 "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

Abstract

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The purpose of the study was to examine the perception of administrative support from the perspective of teachers and principals. Many teachers who have left the teaching profession stated “lack of administrative support” as their primary reason for leaving. In order to keep those teachers who demonstrated a desire for teaching and encourage them to grow into master teachers, administrators should understand the kinds of administrative support they need. The results of this study demonstrate that teachers need emotional support from their principals followed by social, informational, and physical support in that order. This emotional support could be demonstrated through making a personal connection with teachers, taking the time to show kindness and encouragement so that they will have the strength and determination to endure the novice years and become the veteran teachers our students so desperately need.

Keywords: teachers, principals, administrative support, leadership

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Administrative support for teachers is a topic that is discussed and studied at length by researchers, administrators, and teachers; however, definitions of administrative support differ to the degree that the writers crafting the definition differ. All administrators and teachers approach administrative support and their expectations of such from their own perspectives. This study sought to investigate the perceptions of administrative support from three different perspectives and craft a definition upon which all can concur.

Statement of the Problem

The mission of American schools is to produce educated citizens for society; this mission is accomplished through the learning and achievement of students. The most important influences on student learning and achievement are first, excellent classroom instruction, and second, talented leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Schools need excellent teachers supported by talented administrators. Teachers spend 4-5 years and large amounts of money to earn teaching degrees, which makes becoming a teacher a very costly investment. Why then are so many new teachers leaving the profession? In Donovan's 2014 study of teacher retention, nearly 50% of new teachers left their positions before starting their sixth year. The National Education Association cites three main reasons teachers seek other employment: standardized testing, student discipline, and too little support (Kopkowski, 2008). The Gates Foundation surveyed 40,000 American teachers, and 70% of teachers stated that administrative support is "absolutely essential" as a factor in teacher retention (Scholastic & The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009, p. 93). The state of Maryland conducts a yearly survey of educators, and the results of the 2013 Teaching, Empowering,

Leading, and Learning (TELL) Maryland Survey implied that although a lack of beginning teacher support is not uncommon, this deficiency has created severe consequences in schools: loss of teachers and invested resources (New Teacher Center, 2013).

There exists a disparity between the support teachers believe they should be receiving and the support administrators are providing. If administrative support can be clearly defined by both parties, there is hope that both parties will be able to recognize and resolve, at least to the degree possible, the loss of potentially the single most important factor in student learning and achievement and the most important resource to an educated and sustained America: its public school teachers (New Teacher Center, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

Adding to the body of research that may help keep qualified teachers in the educational profession was the ultimate desired outcome of this study. The more immediate purpose was to define “administrative support” within the public school context through the perceptions of teachers and administrators. This phenomenological study explored those aspects of administrative support that current novice (years 1-5) teachers would like to experience and the aspects of such that former teachers would have liked to have experienced; the study also discovered the perceived role that administrators believe they should play in relation to the support of novice teachers. Although the study was essentially viewing behaviors from three different perspectives, determining the facts related to those behaviors was not the goal. Objective factual reality would not be as informative as participants’ subjective perceptions of those events and would not provide the needed perspective to accomplish the purpose of defining administrative support

(Patten, 2014).

Significance of the Study

Understanding what teachers expect to receive and what principals plan to provide in terms of administrative support broaches a topic not often discussed by the two parties. If teachers and principals can understand at the outset what possible and expected administrative support will entail, they might better understand each other's needs and constraints, allowing for them to work through issues that would otherwise cause teachers to perceive a deficiency in administrative support. It is hoped that the improved relationship will give teachers more confidence in the classroom, better working climates, and reasons to stay.

Conceptual Framework

The administrative support in question for this study was that which occurs within the context of the public school. The term specifically refers to actions and attitudes displayed by the school's pinnacle leader when interacting with individual members of the faculty for the purpose of supervision. Individuals have their own perceptions and beliefs of their needs and goals, personally and professionally. Maslow (1962) described a five-level hierarchy of needs that motivate a person's behavior, ranging from basic biological and psychological needs to the need for self-actualization. These needs motivate all people whether in personal or professional settings. Herzberg (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1967) applied the needs to the professional world and distinguished between needs that produce worker satisfaction and those that produce feelings of dissatisfaction in an employee. A worker who is most satisfied in employment according to Herzberg (Herzberg et al., 1967) is one who has reached self-actualization (Maslow, 1962). Bandura (1997) refers to this as self-efficacy, which increases a

worker's feelings of autonomy and achievement, two very motivating factors in individuals.

In order to keep an employee on the job, the supervisor needs to do what is necessary to increase job satisfaction and decrease job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1967) however, Dinham (Dinham & Scott, 2000) contends that every aspect of the teaching profession does not fall on either side of the satisfaction/dissatisfaction divide; there is a third domain, that of neither satisfying nor dissatisfying. In the study, "while dissatisfiers and satisfiers of those surveyed were found to be different, they were not found to be truly mutually exclusive or isolated" (Dinham & Scott, 2000, p. 390).

The actions and attitudes of support can manifest themselves in many different ways. House's (1981) Framework of Support divides supportive actions and attitudes into four areas: emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal. The framework demonstrates that "support" can take various forms, but only the recipient can determine whether or not the action or attitude is supportive in nature. In 2010, Mark Rumley completed a grounded theory study on administrative support and created a flowchart of the emergent categories of support and their interrelatedness. Rumley (2010) asserts that the four categories of support are Presence, Communication, Trust, and Integrity. The elements of support can be separated and categorized, framed up and theorized about, but the attitude or action expected to demonstrate support by the giver must be perceived as support by the receiver for "administrative support" to have actually taken place.

Research Design Overview

I conducted a phenomenological study to determine by survey what teachers perceive to be supportive actions and attitudes by their administrators in the context of the public school system (Patten, 2014). The study also sought through interviews to

determine administrators' perceptions of their role and resulting behaviors toward novice teachers. The surveys of former teachers and current novice teachers as well as the semi-structured interviews of administrators took place concurrently. I analyzed survey data and coded interviews to discover recurring concepts and emergent themes that could create a concrete context for the abstract concept of administrative support. The emergent themes from surveys and interviews were compared and contrasted in order to glean convergence and divergence of the perception of actions and attitudes of the role that principals play in the administrative support of novice teachers.

Research Question

Lack of administrative support is one of the most frequently cited causes of teacher attrition (Kopkowski, 2008; Littrell & Billingsley, 1994), and although many studies have asked teachers their perception of administrative support (Anderson, 2012; Blase & Blase, 2001; Bressler, 2012; Cross, 2011; Daugherty, 2012; Melvin, 2011; Rumley, 2010) and others have asked principals to speak to their role in supporting novice teachers (Brown & Wynn, 2009; McCollum, 2012), few have ever considered the positions of both teachers and administrators. Therefore, the overarching research question that drove this study is as follows: What is administrative support in the context of public school environments?

Assumptions

Qualitative research provides a means for exploring, understanding, and assigning meaning to human phenomena (Creswell, 2014). This study, defining administrative support within the public school context, needed to operate under the assumption that a relationship exists between the administrator and the teachers of a public school, and the context surrounding that relationship along with behaviors of persons involved in that

context will affect the relationship. Conversely, it was assumed that the nature of the relationship will affect the environment, the school culture, and the behavior of all concerned parties. It was also assumed that a positive relationship will have a positive effect on the environment, and a negative relationship will have a negative effect on the environment. Finally, it was the assumption of this study that if an administrator demonstrates actions and attitudes that are perceived to be supportive by a novice teacher, the relationship will be positive, the school climate will improve, and the teacher will more than likely remain in that teaching position.

Limitations

This study was limited to participants who volunteered for the study. Participating administrators were those who have been in the pinnacle leadership position in a public school at some time in the years 2010 through 2015. Participating former teachers were those who had taught during the same 2010 – 2015 time frame and chose to leave the profession to pursue other lines of work. Participating current novice teachers were those who discovered the survey through social media contacts, identified themselves as within the first five years of their teaching career, and chose to participate in the survey. This study was limited to experiences, memories, perceptions, and opinions of participants as they explored the phenomenon of administrative support.

Delimitations

The study's participating administrators were identified through reasonable proximity to me. Former teachers were identified through social media announcements, seeking those who had taught during 2010-2015 and left the profession. Current novice teachers identified themselves as such when they discovered the link to the survey on Facebook or Twitter and chose to access the survey on Survey Monkey. The significance

of the identification of participants is the fact that the study explored perceptions of administrative support with administrators, former teachers, and current novice teachers who will be remembering the same time period, the same school and community context, and the same experiences from three different perspectives.

Definitions

Administrator/Principal: The administrator or principal is the pinnacle leader within the school context.

Novice teacher: A novice teacher is a teacher who has completed five or fewer years of full-time teaching experience, age notwithstanding (i.e., new teacher).

Former teacher: A former teacher is a person who was once a full-time teacher but chose to leave the profession voluntarily.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One provides an introduction to the topic. Chapter Two summarizes a review of the significant literature for the theoretical framework, types of effective leadership styles, data on new teacher attrition and retention, and research studies on administrative support for teachers. Chapter Three outlines the research design for the study and includes a description of the participant sample, the survey and interview instruments, data collection and analysis techniques, and validity and reliability safeguards. Chapter Four provides an analysis of data and findings. Chapter Five provides a summary of learning and understanding of findings, which includes recommendations for practice and subsequent research.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

The future of America depends upon the present education of its children. Ensuring that every young person in America graduates from high school prepared for college and a successful career is the most significant way to insure a brighter tomorrow for the country (Haskins & Kemple, 2009; Obama, 2015). The current nationwide graduation rate is 80%, and the percentage of those high school graduates immediately enrolling in college has dropped from 70% in 2009 to 66% in 2013 (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). According to a 2004 study conducted by Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges, learning from an excellent teacher, even more than attending a top school, can have a significant effect on student achievement. Having a dedicated, talented, quality teacher in every classroom in America is the most important factor to student success and school improvement (Haynes, Maddock, & Goldrick, 2014; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011).

In order to retain teachers, the administration should know what is essential to teachers. According to the *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on America's Schools* Teacher Survey conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation in 2009, 77% of Maryland's teachers ranked "Supportive Leadership" as "absolutely essential" as a factor for retaining teachers as opposed to the other "absolutely essential" categories of "Time for teachers to collaborate" at 56%, "higher salaries" at 53%, "access to high-quality curriculum and teaching resources" at 53%, and "pay tied to teachers' performance" at 8% (p. 95). Maryland's neighboring state of Pennsylvania had similar results: 65% of Pennsylvania's teachers ranked "Supportive Leadership" as "absolutely essential" as a factor for retaining teachers as opposed to the other "absolutely essential" categories of "Time for teachers to collaborate" at 53%, "higher salaries" at 36%, "access to high-

quality curriculum and teaching resources” at 47%, and “pay tied to teachers’ performance” at 4% (Scholastic & The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009, p. 98). Another neighboring state, West Virginia also had similar results: 63% of West Virginia’s teachers ranked “Supportive Leadership” as “absolutely essential” as a factor for retaining teachers as opposed to the other “absolutely essential” categories of “Time for teachers to collaborate” at 51%, “higher salaries” at 59%, “access to high-quality curriculum and teaching resources” at 52%, and “pay tied to teachers’ performance” at 11% (Scholastic and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009, p. 99).

Unfortunately, teachers have been leaving the profession, and often within the first five years of their career (Ingersoll, 2012). The teacher attrition issue is not new. Ingersoll (2012) reported that by 2008, the most common teacher, was a beginning teacher and 25% of the nation’s teachers had five or fewer years of experience. Not only did his study discover an increase in new teachers, but he also discovered that beginners are less likely to stay in teaching (Ingersoll, 2012). Ingersoll (2012) refers to the teacher turnover as a “revolving door” through which teachers are leaving the profession rather than staying through retirement. Many studies have reported that teachers in the earliest stages of their careers are leaving in greater numbers than their more senior colleagues (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). In 2008, Tom Carroll, President of The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, explained the teacher shortage as a retention crisis and likened teacher recruitment to dumping sand into a bucket with holes in the bottom; new teachers are hired as others are leaving (Kopkowski, 2008). The new, young teachers do not view jobs with the permanence that those hired 20 or 30 years ago did; if they are not satisfied with the job, they will look for a job that suits them (Kopkowski, 2008). Stremmel (1991) and Karsh, Booske, and Sainfort (2005) studied the

relationship of job satisfaction and job commitment to the decision to leave a career and reported that both influenced the decision and were strong predictors of turnover intentions. A study carried out by Chingos (2014) revealed that schools are not only losing many teachers but also losing the best teachers. According to the study, fewer than 40 % of teachers who had the best effects on student achievement remained in the same school five years after starting there, and only a slight majority, 54 %, remained in the teaching profession (Chingos, 2014).

In order to retain teachers who are committed to the profession and success of their students, leaders of educational organizations need to make a commitment to improve job conditions and job satisfaction for America's teachers. Job dissatisfaction can cause teachers to have a higher rate of absenteeism, to give a minimal effort to the task of teaching, and to leave the profession entirely (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). Unlike improving compensation and benefits, which are out of the control of the principal, improving job satisfaction and commitment is well within the influence of the building administrator (Russell, Williams, & Gleason-Gomez, 2010).

Teacher Satisfaction

According to the U.S. Department of Education's 2005 examination of teacher departures from the profession, 30% of teachers left in 2003-04 because of retirement, but 56% left citing job dissatisfaction and a desire to find an entirely new career (Kopkowski, 2008). Thompson, McNamara, and Hoyle (1997) completed a meta-analysis of job satisfaction in educational organizations by reviewing articles related to job satisfaction in the first 26 volumes of *Educational Administration Quarterly* (as cited in Marston, 2010). Through the meta-analysis, the researchers discovered three prevalent frameworks for analysis of job satisfaction: Content Theories, which show job

satisfaction derived from the meeting of inherent needs, The Process of Discrepancy Theories, which show job satisfaction as the discrepancy between what individuals want and what individuals receive from the organization, and Situational Models, which suggest that job satisfaction is related to the combination of characteristics found in the job context.

Thompson, McNamara, and Hoyle (1997) divide the combination of characteristics of Situational Models into three categories: Characteristics of the job task – autonomy, salary, benefits, level and variety of challenge, monotony, and role tension; Characteristics of the organization – supervision, feedback, organizational culture; and Characteristics of the employee – level of education, gender, age, ability, and motivation (as cited in Marston, 2010).

Motivation Theory

Maslow. The internal and external motivational factors needed to become and remain a teacher can be explained using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1962). The philosophy behind Maslow's hierarchy states that people cannot reach the upper stages without first satisfying the stages below. The most basic needs that must be met are the physical needs followed by safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and then finally, the needs for self-actualization, in that order (Maslow, 1962).

To apply Maslow's hierarchy to teaching, one must begin with the physical needs of the teacher as a human being, which should not be taken for granted given the demands of the job. The teacher then must feel safe in the classroom; if safety is in fact an issue, restoring safety must be paramount. Teachers who have a level three need to belong will forge relationships with peers and supervisors; if peers or supervisors are unpredictable or inconsistent, the teacher may feel unwanted and uncomfortable,

threatening the teacher's confidence in the classroom (Marston, Courtney, & Brunetti, 2006). On the fourth level, teachers will be seeking achievement, reputation, responsibility, and status, which will be attained through success in the classroom as well as praise and accolades from peers and supervisors. In order to move to the self-actualization level five, teachers may seek out opportunities for leadership, for decision-making, and for increased autonomy in the classroom (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

In constructing the hierarchy, Maslow (1962) focused on physical needs in the first level alone; all others address the psychological needs that all humans need for motivation to do or to be, which ends in self-actualization, also characterized as self-efficacy.

Bandura. Teachers who have a high level of self-efficacy have the confidence to motivate and promote learning in their students (Capara et al. 2008). A teacher's sense of efficacy is based on a set of beliefs in the ability of that teacher to make a difference in student learning, including the ability to reach difficult or unmotivated students (Stronge et al. 2011). Perceived self-efficacy emanates from people's beliefs about the personal capacity to be able to exercise influence over events that affect their lives; self-efficacy beliefs determine how people think, feel, behave, and motivate themselves (Bandura, 1994). People who have a strong sense of self-efficacy have a high assurance in their own abilities and approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided (Bandura, 1997; Capara et al. 2008). People set for themselves certain standards of behavior and generate self-rewarding or self-punishing consequences, depending upon how their own behavior measures up to their own standards of behavior or self-prescribed demands (Bandura & Perloff, 1967). People with a high degree of self-efficacy generally have higher expectations for themselves and their work than their supervisors'

expectations. Those with a low degree of self-efficacy will typically deliver only the minimum of what is expected of them by supervisors or job demands (Bandura, 1994).

Teachers' beliefs in their own instructional efficacy and beliefs about the collective efficacy of their school can affect the self-efficacy judgments and achievement of students (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004). A principal can influence first the collective efficacy of the faculty, then the teacher's self-efficacy, and finally the student's own self-efficacy to achieve. Collective efficacy of a school can positively influence professional practice of teachers and their influence over instructionally important decisions, which can result in effective teaching. Bandura (1997) explains that all efficacy belief constructs, whether student, teacher, or collective, are future-oriented beliefs about capabilities to organize and accomplish the necessary tasks to produce an effect or attain a goal. Do I (or we) have what it takes to do what I (or we) need to do? Having this belief gives the faculty, teacher, or student the confidence to persevere to achieve chosen goals.

A teacher's personal sense of self-efficacy can affect how that teacher performs in the classroom every day; it is a significant predictor of productive teaching practices. Teachers who have strong perceptions of self-efficacy tend to use classroom strategies that are more organized, better planned (Allinder, 1994), and student centered (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Goddard states, "Teachers' efficacy judgments are also strongly related to trust, openness, and job satisfaction" (Goddard et al. 2004, p. 4). This study provides evidence for the positive connection between teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement because the confidence it promotes becomes very educationally productive (Goddard et al. 2004).

A principal can directly influence the perceived collective efficacy of the faculty of the school. Teachers have not only self-efficacy beliefs but also beliefs about the

ability of the school to achieve its goals, accomplish the tasks of its mission, and move in the direction of its vision. Perceived collective efficacy encompasses the beliefs of group members concerning the ability of the group to perform as a whole (Bandura, 1997). For schools, in particular, perceived collective efficacy refers to the belief that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students' sense of efficacy and student achievement (Goddard et al. 2004).

It is desirable for all employees, particularly teachers, to achieve self-efficacy in their work, which can encourage student achievement (Capara et al. 2008). Herzberg (Herzberg et al., 1967) determined that “the factors that lead to positive job attitudes do so because they satisfy the individual’s need for self-actualization in his work,” which is a person’s ultimate goal (p. 114).

Herzberg. According to Herzberg, “Work is one of the most absorbing things men can think and talk about. It fills the greater part of the waking day for most of us. For the fortunate it is the source of great satisfactions; for many others it is the cause of grief” (Herzberg et al., 1967, p. 3). In the late 1950s, Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Bloch Snyderman conducted a study of the factors that motivate people to work. After conducting and coding interviews with more than 200 people, they crafted the Herzberg Two-factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1967). They reported that attitudes toward the job are extremely important toward the way the job was completed; positive attitudes had a very positive effect, but negative attitudes did not seem to have a negative effect on job performance. On each side, morale seemed to affect those of higher educational achievement more than those of lower educational achievement. The explanation for this result seemed to focus on the fact that those workers who had more responsibility and greater skill requirements reacted to attitude and morale more than

those in more labor-intensive occupations.

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1967) divided the things that made a job more than satisfactory from the things that made a job less than satisfactory and called them motivation and hygiene. Factors of motivation such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, personal growth, and the work itself encourage a person to be satisfied with the job and encourage the worker to do excellent work. Factors of hygiene such as working conditions, co-worker relations, policies and rules, supervisor quality, and salary “act in a manner analogous to the principles to medical hygiene. Hygiene operates to remove health hazards from the environment of man. It is not a curative; it is, rather, a preventative” (Herzberg et al., 1967, p. 115). According to Herzberg, meeting hygiene needs does not encourage job satisfaction; it merely discourages job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors make a job tolerable, not motivating. For a job to be motivating, it must appeal to higher needs, such as being part of something worthwhile and succeeding because the employee is a vital part of that project. Hygiene factors are external and are not enough to motivate people (Herzberg et al., 1967).

Dinham. Teachers’ major sources of satisfaction are found in the intrinsic rewards of teaching centered on student and teacher achievement, while teachers’ sources of dissatisfaction are found in the extrinsic aspects of teaching, including business issues, societal factors, employer problems, and governmental control (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Dinham and Scott (2000) took Herzberg’s (Herzberg et al., 1967) Two-factor Theory of Motivation and added a third factor or domain. Through research, Dinham and Scott (2000) confirmed previous research by learning that teachers are most satisfied by matters intrinsic to the role of teaching, such as encouraging student achievement, helping student attitudes and behavior, developing positive relationships with students,

mastering professional skills, and feeling part of a collegial, supportive environment.

They also found that teachers became dissatisfied with the job of teaching due to external issues that are mostly out of the control of teachers, such as the societal views of teaching, governmental issues, and school board decisions, which confirm the Herzberg (Herzberg et al., 1967) two-factor theory. However, Dinham and Scott (2000) found a third domain between satisfaction and dissatisfaction: ambivalence concerning school-based factors that are neither satisfying nor dissatisfying. Dinham and Scott (2000) state the following concerning teacher satisfaction:

There is evidence from the study that there has been an erosion in overall teacher satisfaction levels over time, with more than half of those surveyed... experiencing a decline in satisfaction since beginning teaching – which is attributable at least in part to the increase in dissatisfiers outside the control of those surveyed, lack of control and empowerment being a key predictor of both dissatisfaction and stress (Dinham & Scott, 2000, p. 390).

Dinham and Scott (2000) asserted that for teachers, work conditions are largely school-based, but rather than being major sources of dissatisfaction, school based issues decrease the satisfaction of teaching rather than increase the dissatisfaction. Many factors of the work of education fall into the domain of school-based factors that are neither satisfying nor dissatisfying. The principal can greatly affect the domain of satisfaction of the teachers, of which demonstrating the actions and attitudes of administrative support is a significant part.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

People choose to become teachers because they have an innate desire to help others, to impart knowledge, and to grow productive members of society. Their work

with young people is a powerful source of satisfaction for them (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Teachers enjoy satisfaction by working with students and seeing students learn and grow. Teachers, especially high school teachers, have expressed that they even experience joy in teaching their subject matter to students (Marston, 2010).

Teachers experience increased job satisfaction through positive and encouraging school environment (New Teacher Center, 2013). Qualities of the school itself can influence a teacher's commitment to the classroom, the school, and the profession of teaching (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). School environment is often labeled either school culture or school climate, and both are very different aspects of the organization. School culture encompasses broad concepts that define the school's learning conditions for students; it is the values and beliefs within the organization's structure that provide context for the work. School climate refers to a narrower set of conditions of immediate attitudes and actions of teachers and students in school; it is temporary and reactionary to daily issues and events. Between culture and climate is school environment in which administrators, teachers, and students function on a daily basis, which influences perceptions and behaviors of all participants (Price, 2014).

Commitment to the place in which one works has become one characteristic of a successful organization (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). If the school environment is one in which teachers can thrive, teachers will increase their motivation and performance because there exists a strong connection between the teacher and the organization (Louis et al, 2010). Principals have the position and the organizational control to promote a positive school environment full of trust and support (Price, 2014) because their leadership can directly affect the instructional environment: the context in which instruction takes place (Louis et al. 2010). Too often principals are removed from a

school building before the school climate, environment, or, especially, culture can be changed; effective principals want to stay in their current schools until the “mission is accomplished” (Louis et al. 2010, p. 84). Positive teaching conditions are directly related to teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention (New Teacher Center, 2013).

Before they ever enter the profession, teachers understand that the compensation is low, but they do expect to be able to pay their rent and their bills and live a reasonable middle class life (Kopkowski, 2008). Job satisfaction for teachers is rarely connected to salary or benefits, and they learn very quickly that compensation is regulated and rigid (Marston, 2010). Fewer than half of teachers say higher salaries are absolutely essential for retaining good teachers, and only eight percent say pay for performance is absolutely essential (Donovan, 2014). Teachers are not motivated by money; in 2007 South Carolina offered an \$18,000 bonus for teachers who would teach in their struggling schools, but only 20% of the teachers who received the offer took the bonus and stayed. Those who did not claimed lack of administrative support, poor working conditions, and inadequate induction and mentoring as reasons for rejecting the bonus (Kopkowski, 2008). In the 1997 study by Thompson, McNamara, and Hoyle, they learned that the relationship between job satisfaction of teachers and their wage was minimal; the results showed only a small increase in the importance of compensation to job satisfaction as the teachers advanced in age and seniority (as cited in Marston, 2010).

Although compensation is not a priority for teachers, the best teachers still expect to be able to have materials needed to teach their classes even if they have to purchase supplies themselves. According to a 2003 National Education Association research study, the average teacher spends at least \$433 annually on classroom essentials and about 8% spend approximately \$1,000 every year. If they do not have tools needed to do their jobs

well, even the best teachers will have lower job satisfaction (Kopkowski, 2008). Having tools for the job directly affects work manageability and condition. About 51% of public school teachers who left the teaching profession in 2012-2013 stated that managing their work was better in their current position than it was in teaching, and 53% of leavers said that general work conditions were better in their new position than in teaching (Goldring et al. 2014).

Teachers would like adequate compensation, materials for the job, manageable work conditions, and respect. According to Kopkowski (2008), teachers expressed that they wanted a sense that they are making progress in their careers, that they could extend their knowledge and expertise beyond the walls of their own classroom, and that they were being valued. The job could be very demoralizing if teachers believed the world does not value their work (Kopkowski, 2008). Teachers need respect not only from society but also in their own workplace. Too often teachers are not sure where they belong in the leadership structure of the school. Cohen (1988) reported that correlations between teachers' overall job satisfaction and both role ambiguity and role conflict were strongly significant in influence. As teachers experience increases in role ambiguity or role conflict, they report decreases in overall job satisfaction and increases in job tension (Thompson & McNamara, 1997).

School Leadership

School leaders can provide direction for the organization by clarifying the roles of the teachers in their building to build security, trust, and job satisfaction. Providing direction is one core function of leadership; the other is exercising influence (Louis et al. 2010). By motivating teachers and aligning their teachers' work settings with current research about effective instructional practice, school leaders can have a positive

influence on classroom practice and student achievement (Louis et al. 2010). “Teachers and principals agreed that the most instructionally helpful leadership practices were: focusing the school on goals and expectations for student achievement; keeping track of teachers’ professional development needs; and creating structures and opportunities for teachers to collaborate” (Louis et al, 2010, p. 66).

Instructional leadership. Smith and Andrews (1989) identified four roles of an instructional leader:

- A resource provider who ensures that the teachers have all the resources needed to fulfill their jobs.
- An instructional resource by supporting, modeling, and participating in day-to-day instructional activities.
- A communicator by setting clear goals and articulating such to faculty and staff.
- A visible presence by being actively involved in classrooms and being highly accessible to staff, students, and community. (p. 9)

Instructional leaders need to interact with teachers; principal-teacher interactions transfer the principal’s vision, beliefs, and expectations for the school to the teacher personally (Price, 2014). If a principal is an instructional leader, he or she must have the knowledge, the time, and the communicative skills needed to provide teachers with relevant, valid, and useful advice to improve their instructional practices; it follows that instruction should improve if the instructional leaders provide detailed feedback to teachers including suggestions for change (Louis et al, 2010). Elementary school principals report more time in classrooms than their secondary counterparts. Secondary school principals delegate the instructional leadership to assistant principals and department heads; they claim to be instructional leaders even though they are one or two

steps away from the actual activity (Louis et al, 2010).

However, Rumley (2010) reported that department leaders and system mentors cannot replace an effective instructional leader in the principal's position. Rumley (2010) investigated whether mentoring by colleagues could constitute administrative support, and he cited a 2007 Duke University study whose findings "reaffirmed that young, inexperienced teachers' decisions to remain at their school sites and even in the one school district studied were most strongly associated with school climate and principal leadership" (p. 98). The Duke researchers recommended that every school have an effective mentoring program in place that includes principal leadership and highly trained master teachers to provide novice teachers with the instructional leadership and administrative support they need.

Transformational leadership. The term *transformational* implies that this kind of leadership needs to make an organizational change of some kind, but a compelling reason for this change must be apparent. Burns (2008) asserted that the transformational leader and the followers must "grasp the urgency of the need for the change, see its possibility, and envision its direction" (p. 310). Under a transformational leadership style, followers commit themselves to common purposes and are encouraged to challenge basic organizational assumptions (Eyal & Roth, 2011). To explain the motivational effect of transformational leadership, Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) maintained that such leaders foster intrinsic motivations related to the followers' self-concept. Their theory of leadership asserted that transformational leaders promote followers' intrinsic motivation to act beyond their job description by elevating their self-esteem, self-value, and social identification. By engaging with the teaching staff and creating a strong connection, transformational principals can raise the level of motivation of every teacher (Hauserman

& Stick, 2013). The transformational school leader will give individual consideration to each faculty and staff member, intellectually stimulate each teacher to think in new ways, inspire and communicate high expectations, and demonstrate personal character and accomplishments as a model for teachers (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Louis et al. 2010). A transformational leader emphasizes “communicating a compelling vision, conveying high performance expectations, projecting self-confidence, modeling appropriate roles, expressing confidence in followers’ ability to achieve goals, and emphasizing collective purpose” (Louis et al. 2010, p. 10).

Shared leadership. To increase job satisfaction of teaching staff, an instructional and transformational leader will decrease the isolation that teachers can feel by including them in focusing the organizational mission, vision, and day-to-day activities (Louis et al. 2010). Shared leadership begins with a shared vision, which is vital for an educational organization because it provides the focus and energy for teaching and learning (Senge, 2006). Having a shared vision does not negate the teacher’s freedom to express his or her own creativity in the classroom. A leader who can share leadership knows how to get the entire organization moving in the same direction without sacrificing the unique contributions of talented teachers, which will keep the entire organization from falling into stagnation (Gallos, 2008). Shared leadership denotes teachers’ participation in school-wide decisions with principals, and when teachers and principals share leadership, teachers’ working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher (Louis et al. 2010). According to Louis et al. (2010), “While principals and district leaders continue to exercise more influence than others in all schools, they do not lose influence as others gain it. Influence does not come in fixed quantities. Influential leaders wishing to retain their influence may share leadership confidently” (p. 283).

Administrative Support

A repeatedly reported significant contributing factor to teacher turnover has been characterized by the lack of administrative support, loosely described as helpful supervision, collaboration with administration, and creation of a sense of community (Russell et al. 2010), which can be accomplished by a principal who demonstrates the qualities of an instructional, transformational leader who shares that leadership with teachers. Unlike improving wages and job benefits, which may be beyond the control of principals, changing the level of support provided to teachers should be within the capabilities of skilled administrators (Russell et al, 2010). For instructional and shared leadership to have the most powerful effect, there needs to be a relationship of trust between principal and teacher (Louis et al. 2010). Teachers who experience trust from their principal report higher rates of satisfaction with their work, commitment to teaching, self-efficacy in the classroom, and the feeling of being supported by their administrator (Price, 2014).

Principal support. Principals who are actively engaged with teachers, providing them with instructional support that guides teaching and learning to enhance every teacher's practices become successful principals (Louis et al. 2010). In his study *The Motivation to Work*, Herzberg (Herzberg et al., 1967) reported that the supervisor was often made to be the villain in stories about times when morale was low, but almost never appeared as the reason for high morale. The supervisor was frequently the source for the recognition of successful work; it is likely that a successful supervisor was often instrumental in structuring the work so that his subordinates could realize their abilities for creative achievement. A successful leader will have to learn to recognize good work and to reward this good work appropriately. In addition, he will have to acquire skills in

the organization and distribution of work so that the possibility for successful achievement on the part of his subordinates is possible (Herzberg et al., 1967) In this way, the principal shares leadership and increases self-efficacy of teachers, which gives them freedom to succeed. Although lack of administrative support has been cited as the top reason teachers, especially new teachers, leave the profession, supportive administrators can offset the negative effects of other aspects of a teacher's workload (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013). Specific aspects of administrative support fall into four behavioral components identified in a study by James S. House, Ph. D. in 1981.

House's framework of support. House (1981) defined four broad classes or types of supportive behaviors or acts based upon his study and review of current literature on social support. Through that research, House (1981) learned that occupational stress has deleterious effects on a person's mental and physical health, and support can modify or counteract this effect in three ways. First, support can give a person a feeling of security or belonging, and positive effects of support can counteract negative effects of stress. Second, support from work colleagues and leaders can minimize interpersonal pressure or tension, and the experience of support can satisfy work-related need for approval, giving the worker a feeling of being satisfied. And third, social support can mitigate or buffer the impact of occupational stress. Positive support can have a powerful effect on negative circumstances (House, 1981).

One source House (1981) used extensively was Gottlieb's 1978 study of informal helping behavior, in which Gottlieb surveyed 40 single mothers receiving social assistance in Canada on their types of needs for social support. He qualified his framework of the types of support by stating that the relevance of the sources of support varies with the person and problem that requires support, just as the types of support

would vary by the provider, receiver, and situation requiring support. However, other researchers have used his four categories to frame studies of social support (Littrell & Billingsley, 1994). House's four categories are emotional support, instrumental support, informational (professional) support, and appraisal support (House, 1981).

Emotional support. Emotional support involves the provider of support giving the receiver cause to experience feelings of empathy, caring, love, or trust, and House (1981) asserts that this one category seems to be the most important. When someone thinks of being supportive, an emotional element is always present. This category subsumes the largest number of specific supportive acts reported by Gottlieb's respondents (House, 1981). When a person is asked to rate the amount of support received from others, the answer is the respondent's perceived support. Emotional support is only effective to the extent that the receiver perceives it. No matter how supportive the provider acts toward the receiver, there will be little effect unless the receiver perceives the provider as supportive (House, 1981). The giver and receiver of support will have different subjective perceptions of the same event. Teachers have a need for emotional support because teachers are vulnerable to others; teaching is a public, moral act and involves an ethical relationship with students. Therefore, teachers are vulnerable to the acts and feelings of others: students, parents, colleagues, and the principal (Kelchtermans, 2005).

Vulnerability is seen as a part of the structural condition of educational relationships (Kelchtermans, 2005). According to Mulholland and Wallace (2012), there are three major reasons for vulnerability in teaching:

- teachers cannot control many aspects of the context they work in;
- teachers need to make informed judgment in the classroom without any guarantee that these judgments will be absolutely correct;

- teachers cannot claim full credit for their pupils' successes and need to work through others for their own success (p. 230).

Because of the vulnerability of the position of the teacher, that teacher needs to experience an atmosphere of trust from others, especially the school leader, the principal. The results of a 2011-2012 study indicate that only 52 % of surveyed teachers stated they believe there is trust between the principal and teachers in their schools (Yager, Pedersen, Yager, & Noppe, 2011). A lack of trust creates suspicion of integrity, agenda, and capabilities and makes honest, effective communication very difficult (Covey, 1989). The TELL Maryland Survey 2013 reported 96.8 % of Maryland principals agreed with the statement, "There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school" while only 68.2 % of their teachers agreed to the same statement (New Teacher Center, 2013). Principals believe they are accessible to teachers and support the teachers' efforts in the classroom in a general way according to the *Learning from Leadership Project*; however, that same report stated that the best principals have the ability and interpersonal skills to empower teachers on an individual basis to learn and grow according to the vision the leader established for the school (Louis et al. 2010). Emotional support is perceived individually, not collectively (House, 1981).

Rumley's (2010) study participants clearly stated the emotional support they needed from their principals. The participants had mentors, but they wanted affirmation from their respective principals: "Mattie even revealed that she... felt 'disconnected' and 'devalued' because she 'did not have a relationship' with her principal" (Rumley, 2010, p. 99). Rumley (2010) supported the idea that principals need to provide emotional support by intentionally engaging with novice teachers, "learning first about them as people and then exploring their unique needs" (p. 102).

In his text *How to Get your School Moving and Improving*, Steve Dinham (2008) reported findings of the study conducted by An Exceptional Schooling Outcomes Project (AESOP) that examined 38 junior secondary schools in Australia to determine what school leaders can do to promote quality teaching and student achievement. Dinham (2008) reported that the best principals possess and demonstrate high-level interpersonal skills and are liked and respected by most of the faculty and staff. They call people by name and show a personal interest in each one. Dinham (2008) explained the phenomenon further:

These leaders were seen to possess and exhibit the characteristics they expect of others such as honesty, fairness, compassion, commitment, reliability, hard work, trustworthiness, and professionalism. They provide a good example.... They are good communicators and listeners and provide prompt feedback... and support for their staff. (p. 48-49)

Demonstrating qualities that one expects to see in staff members is a way to provide emotional support for all.

Instrumental support. Instrumental support is the most clearly separated from emotional support because it involves instrumental behaviors that directly help the person in need; individuals give others instrumental support when they help other people to be able to do their work, take care of them, or help them pay their bills (House, 1981). House (1981) makes the point that even though instrumental support is physical, the act can have positive or negative psychological effects; for example, a person may be happy to receive monetary support but may be embarrassed that others see that he or she needs financial help.

Administrators can provide instrumental support by helping teachers with work-

related tasks such as providing the necessary materials, space, and resources, ensuring adequate time for teaching and non-teaching duties, and assisting with managerial concerns (Littrell & Billingsley, 1994). However, administrators should understand that instrumental support must be provided differently for new as opposed to experienced teachers (Rozenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

Administrators recognize that providing instrumental support for experienced teachers includes continuously evaluating their roles and providing new opportunities to keep them from professional stagnation because teaching the same schedule of classes for many years can lead to boredom (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). They also provide for all teachers' instrumental needs by managing building issues such as heating and air conditioning concerns, crowded hallways or lunchrooms, and minimizing paperwork (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). The instrumental needs of new teachers are focused on the classroom itself, and their survival (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). New teachers tend to feel isolated as they endure the sink-or-swim experience of that first year (Kopkowski, 2008); therefore, they need physical assistance with discipline and classroom management. Ineffective classroom management can erode the teacher's desire to invest time and energy in lesson plans that he or she has trouble even delivering (Kopkowski, 2008).

Management of students' behavior assists the teacher in classroom control and increases school safety (Louis et al. 2010). On the 2013 TELL Maryland Survey, 99.2% of principals agreed to the statement, "School administration consistently enforce rules for student conduct" while only 65.3% of their teachers agreed to the same statement (New Teacher Center, 2013).

In Dinham's (2008) report of the AESOP study, the researchers found that

exceptional principals are aware of the importance of providing professional, pleasant, and clean facilities for the staff and students. The appearance, cleanliness, and usefulness of the facilities had a profound impact on the teachers, staff, students, and community: “These principals realized the importance of school pride, identification with the school and its reputation in the community. Students and staff responded to this and spoke in positive terms of the school” (Dinham, 2008, p. 52). Meeting the instrumental support also includes student behavior, and Dinham (2008) noted that schools in the study were not free of student discipline issues, but a common view of the students, staff, and community was that student behavior had improved over time: “The clear consensus was that ‘students cannot learn until their welfare needs have been met.’ Improved student behavior creates an environment where learning can occur” (Dinham, 2008, p. 56).

Informational Support. Informational support means providing a person with information that the person can use in coping with personal and environmental problems; in contrast to instrumental support, such information is not in and of itself helpful, but it helps people to help themselves (House, 1981). In the educational setting, informational support takes the form of professional development opportunities (Littrell & Billingsley, 1994). Lack of learning opportunities for professional growth can lead to dissatisfaction in teachers, high absenteeism, and attrition; but providing meaningful professional development can help teachers of all levels enhance their skills and increase their self-efficacy (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

Administrators should recognize that effective professional learning is an intentional, on-going, systematic process (Guskey, 2000) and that the one-size-fits-all, sit-and-get professional development sessions need to be a thing of the past (Molitor, Burkett, Cunningham, Dell, & Presta, 2014). A differentiated model of professional

learning fosters relationships and develops effective teachers and future school leaders (Molitor et al. 2014). Offering rich, collaborative professional opportunities will not only increase skills of the teacher but also help create and sustain positive relationships between teachers and administrators (Marston, 2010).

The 2013 TELL Maryland Survey reported that 94.8% of Maryland principals agreed to the statement, “Professional development deepens teachers’ content knowledge,” while only 65.9% of their teachers agreed to the same statement (New Teacher Center, 2013). Results from the 2011-2012 study by Yager, Pedersen, Yager, and Noppe indicated that only 23% of teachers surveyed stated that their principal played a supporting role in their professional development and participated alongside teachers during professional development sessions or workshops. The *Learning from Leadership Project* reported that although professional development experiences were designed and delivered at the district level, the most effective principals were involved in workshops offered outside of the school, as well as planning for, and sometimes providing, on-site professional development (Louis et al. 2010). Principals can learn to support teachers better when classes for professional development use new instructional methods, giving the administrators a first-hand understanding of their effectiveness, which could help principals to become familiar with current theory and practice (Pelika, 2000).

According to Dinham (2008), “Principals (and other leaders) were found to place a high value on teacher learning and funded staff development... They modeled professional learning, being prepared to learn from teachers, students, and others” (p. 54). Principals whom the AESOP study found to be exceptional took a lead role in professional development and supported teachers who wanted to learn by providing funds needed for the training, but then they expected teachers to share their knowledge with

their colleagues through in-service experiences to maximize the benefits of that training (Dinham, 2008). Giving teachers the ability to improve their craft not only creates excellent teachers but also increases the teachers' job satisfaction.

Appraisal Support. Appraisal support, like informational support, involves only transmissions of information, rather than the feelings involved with emotional support or physical help involved in instrumental support; however, the information involved in appraisal support is akin to self-evaluation (House, 1981). Administrators provide appraisal support by giving teachers meaningful feedback on their job performance (Littrell & Billingsley, 1994). Those who support teachers – mentors, coaches, supervisors, and so on – must be able to assess teachers accurately so teachers accept judgments as valid (Danielson, 2011). In the school building, the principal is expected to understand aspects of quality instruction and to have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to ensure that appropriate content is being delivered to all students. The principal needs to be capable of providing constructive feedback that can improve teaching. Research shows that consistent, well-informed support from principals makes a difference, and principals are facing increasing pressure to deliver better support for instruction (Louis et al. 2010). If there is no feedback or only negative feedback, there will be no positive, self-congratulatory moments that encourage teachers to keep building their skills and trying new things, which would increase their self-efficacy and lead them to feel more satisfied with their work (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

The AESOP study as reported by Dinham (2008) found that exceptional principals provided prompt feedback and appropriate recognition to teachers not only person to person but also on a community-wide basis. When given accolades for any school accomplishments, principals in the AESOP study deflected that praise to others,

and they themselves would take every opportunity to recognize achievements of their staff members and students in personal and public ways. Dinham (2008) found, “Such generosity of spirit and lack of professional jealousy is another aspect of moral or authentic leadership, and was seen to positively influence the climate and culture of the schools concerned” (p. 54).

Concrete support. House (1981) asked, “But what factors determine the supportiveness of supervisors? Little direct evidence is available about such factors” (p. 95). House (1981) asserted that there are two important questions that still need to be asked:

- What is it that supportive supervisors do that makes their subordinates perceive them as supportive?
- What causes them to act in a supportive manner? (p. 95)

In order to answer these questions, House (1981) referred to Likert’s (1961) research on the way supportive superiors are perceived by their subordinates:

He is supportive, friendly, and helpful rather than hostile... genuinely interested in the well-being of subordinates.... He sees that each subordinate is well-trained for his particular job. He endeavors to help subordinates be promoted...giving them relevant experience and coaching whenever the opportunity offers.... He coaches and assists employees whose performance is below standard. (House, 1981, p. 101)

Likert (1961) and Gottlieb (1978) provided concrete examples for House’s (1981) framework of support.

Rumley. Mark Rumley’s 2010 grounded theory study resulted in a construct of elements of administrative support and their interrelatedness as they affect teacher

retention/attrition. Through experiences of the study participants, four major categories or themes emerged for Rumley (2010): “Presence of, Communication with, Trust in, and Integrity of principals” (p. 108). Rumley reported that teachers related certain events that fell into these four categories, and usually in the order in which he placed them in his theory. He discovered a “progression of events that were interrelated but also predicated one upon another” and he presented his emergent theory within the context of the school culture (Rumley, 2010, p. 108). His theory is as follows:

If principals attend positively to matters related to presence and engage in effective communication with teachers over time, then teachers’ levels of trust increase, promoting a strong sense that their principals have significant integrity. It is from these categories that principal support or lack of support emanates. (Rumley, 2010, p. 172)

Summary

Much is expected of high school principals. When several were interviewed for the *Learning from Leadership Project*, they said that there was not enough time in the day to complete all of their responsibilities and that instructional leadership “gets placed on the back burner” (Louis et al. 2010, p.88). Principals need to have the capability and the time to form relationships. Therefore, it is important that principals stay in a school for a significant number of years to build effective relationships. Instability of leadership risks making poor use of principals’ strengths to build relationships that would truly turn a school around without a relapse to former operational habits. Price (2014) explains, since leadership is relational, principals need time and space to develop relationships in order to reap organizational rewards from them, especially since they are trying to develop trust among teachers:

Support of teachers is a latent belief that is expressed by administrators' normed practices toward teachers. To measure support of teachers, researchers commonly measure the degree to which administrators encourage teachers, consider teachers' suggestions and integrate them into school operations and improvements, consistently implement rules and policies, and genuinely recognize well-done work. These administrative expressions of support are associated with higher confidence in the classroom, higher cooperation with other teachers, higher commitment to teaching, and higher satisfaction with teaching. These outcomes are important because teachers with these characteristics are correlated with more effective classroom learning and higher student achievement. (p. 119)

When teachers entered the classroom for the first time years ago, they went into the classroom and worked it out on their own; current administrators were those teachers, so they might not realize that the teachers now entering the work force are more team-oriented and looking for a support system (Kopkowski, 2008). While research indicates that a lack of administrator support for beginning teachers is not uncommon, the consequences are severe, including the loss of teachers and invested resources (New Teacher Center, 2013). When asked about teacher retention, nearly all teachers say that non-monetary rewards like supportive leadership and collaborative work environments are the most important factors to retaining good teachers (Donovan, 2014). Teachers are also looking for a career with a future; the only way to advance is to go into administration or just leave altogether; either way, teachers are leaving (Kopkowski, 2008).

Teachers' motivation and work settings, which are subject to the influence of administrative leadership, have significant effects on student achievement (Louis et al. 2010). The social capital of education, the interactions between teachers and administrators focused on student learning, affects student achievement and school success (Haynes et al. 2014). Talented leadership and support for teachers have a direct impact on school improvement (Louis et al. 2010).

Studies of Administrative Support

Brown and Wynn (2007) conducted a study of 12 principals (8 elementary, 2 middle school, and 2 high school) in order to understand leadership styles of principals who lead schools that have low teacher attrition and transfer rates. Through semi-structured interviews Brown and Wynn (2007) sought to discover how these principals were keeping their teachers. One emergent theme stated that retaining teachers requires flexibility by the administrator and support from an effective learning community. They also learned that principals who retain teachers provide an umbrella of support and needed resources. According to a Brown and Wynn (2009) principal, "My role is to continue to inspire [teachers] so they can be thoughtful and reflective, and facilitate ways to challenge them" (p. 50). The researchers commented, "[The principal] has to be a factor that reduces stress [for the teacher] and not adds to it" (Brown & Wynn, 2009, p. 51).

McCollum (2012) also studied successful principals to determine if a correlation exists between the leadership of the principals honored as National Distinguished Principals (NDP) in 2008, 2009, and 2010 and that of effective leadership research. Using the Educational Leadership 360-degree survey instrument that provides feedback from principals as well as principals' schools and communities, McCollum (2012) learned that

principals tended to rank themselves and their leadership skills higher than did their supervisors and their subordinates:

The three leadership tasks of most need for the NDPs were safety and organizational management for learning, instructional leadership, and change.... Principals may be so overwhelmed with the demands of the job that they might be overlooking the three most important aspects of leadership. (p. 83)

M. A. Rumley (2010) interviewed nine novice teachers and collected 60 hours of data because “discovering some new insights and answering new questions may result in fresh understandings and bring about some novel retention efforts to reduce the number of educators leaving due to ‘lack of support’ from their administrators” (p. 33). The information Rumley (2010) gleaned from new teachers led him to craft a theory based upon the perceived needs of those teachers. “What is apparent through this work and the resulted grounded theory is that principals continue to hold the primary responsibility for creating conditions of support in their respective schools... and must embody and display... presence, communication, trust, and integrity” (p. 137).

Cross (2011) examined roles of principals in retention of new teachers by interviewing elementary and middle school teachers. The purpose of the study was to learn how to equip new teachers with adequate support from principals in order to lower the turnover rate. Cross (2011) also studied the effect of principal support on the self-efficacy of the teacher in the classroom. Some ideas emerging from interviews included that teachers often view their principals as too busy to interact with them, teachers desire more informal conversation and feedback from the principal, and teachers feel the role of the principal in teacher mentoring is unclear; but when teachers feel supported by the

principal, they are more confident in the classroom. According to Cross (2011), “Educators want supportive school leadership, enough time for planning and collaboration, an atmosphere of trust and respect, and an appropriate workload” (p. 23).

Melvin (2011) created and administered the Teachers’ Perception of Principal Leadership (TPPL) survey to 114 teachers in six Georgia public schools to discover general tendencies in teacher retention or attrition and their relationship to school leadership. The study’s key findings included ideas that leadership behaviors appear to be critical in influencing teacher morale and that a principal’s effectiveness as a leader is significantly associated with a teacher’s intent to return to that school or to teaching in general: “Inevitably, education leadership training and mentoring programs must change as school cultures change. School leadership preparation programs must create experiences that promote a supportive and encouraging school climate where teachers wish to remain” (Melvin, 2011, p. 70).

Anderson (2012) also studied administrative support for teachers, but this researcher focused on alternately certified teachers. Alternately certified teachers did not take the typical route to the classroom of completing a 4-year education program in college directly after graduating from high school. The 23 elementary, middle, and high school teachers who completed the Administrative Support Survey of 40 Likert scale questions and two open-ended questions were enrolled in the second year of an alternatively certified teaching program in Tennessee. The purpose of Anderson’s 2012 study was to examine the perceived administrative support needs of alternately certified teachers to determine their impact on teacher retention. The most significant finding of the survey was that when administrators fail to meet the two most important needs of teachers, emotional and informational support, it is 36% more likely that teachers will

leave the profession: “Administrators have the responsibility of providing instructional leadership, emotional support, and the opportunity for professional growth” (Anderson, 2012, p. 53).

Daugherty (2012) completed a case study to investigate teachers’ perceptions of administrative support and to identify specific leadership behaviors that influence job satisfaction and its impact on a teacher’s intent to leave or stay in teaching. The researcher interviewed 12 teachers from all stages of the profession (beginning, veteran, and retired) and from a variety of school contexts. A common emergent theme was that leadership was related to the visibility of the principal and that teachers valued frequent visits from the principal. Participants demonstrated the desire for individual feedback from consistent leadership. “School leadership needs to provide teachers support unique to their needs and create a school culture where all can learn” (Daugherty, 2012, p. 87). “Teachers perceive administrative support differently based upon their own individual needs” (Daugherty, 2012, p. 89). “Support isn’t always what the principal thinks it is” (Daugherty, 2012, p. 90).

Bressler (2012) surveyed 1,276 teachers in 34 Virginia high schools and analyzed that survey using the Professional Satisfaction Scale (PSS). To assist principals in supporting teachers in specific ways for the purpose of increasing teacher retention, the researcher assessed levels of dimensions of principal support and analyzed their relationship to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in teachers. Bressler’s (2012) study yielded no statistical significance between job satisfaction and principal support; the researcher attributed this to an alteration of the instrument and lack of validity for Herzberg et al.’s (1967) two-factor theory in this study. The significance of Bressler’s (2012) study demonstrates that support is individual rather than collective: “It may be

that teachers are influenced by their personal experience of principal support or lack of support as factors of job satisfaction, rather than whether the principal is generally regarded as supportive or unsupportive” (p. 67).

Gaps in the Literature

The previous studies indicated that administrative support needs to focus on emotional and informational needs of teachers, should be frequent and consistent, and must be unique to each individual teacher. Other studies recommend investigating the phenomenon of administrative support in the following ways:

- Content-specific professional learning, coaching, dialogue about effective instructional practices, professional resources, and collaborative support are all a part of the process of developing the skills of the new teachers (Molitor et al. 2014).
- TELL Maryland Survey 2013: “Teacher and principal differences in perceived conditions is not uncommon. However, the impact of these differences is important. For a staff to prioritize areas of need, there must first be a shared understanding of the most pressing concerns. Therefore acknowledging the consistent differences between teachers and principals is an important first step” (New Teacher Center, 2013).
- “The term administrative support has not been operationally defined and is, therefore, open to individual interpretation” (Russell et al. 2010, p. 196).
- “A future survey of administrative support should not be limited to a national sample. A local or state level survey can be utilized to identify local needs; and a future survey of administrative support could also be utilized to look at the differences between urban and rural school districts. Additionally, a survey of

administrators' views about the support they give teachers could help identify any disconnect between the specific elements of administrative support teacher profess to need and the perceptions of the success of administrators in meeting those needs" (Cancio et al. 2013).

- "Wide differences between educators in a school about teaching and learning conditions can sometimes be challenging to talk about. Efforts to set collaborative norms, agree on common definitions, focus topics, and approach the process transparently and objectively are important to promote open and safe discussion about teaching and learning conditions" (New Teacher Center, 2013, p. 10).
- "Identifying perceptions of the degree of respect and cooperation between teachers and the administration, the extent to which the administration gives teachers autonomy, teachers' participation in decision making, the degree of bureaucratic restrictions, and the presence of frequent and genuine praise. This may be particularly important for understanding novices' perceptions of the working conditions within the broader social context of the school (Pogodzinski, 2014, p. 485).

Chapter 3 – Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The literature presents a picture of the perceived needs of novice classroom teachers that appear to be connected to their decisions to leave the profession. More often than not, when novice teachers leave the teaching profession, they cite “lack of administrative support” as one of their primary reasons for making a career change (Chingos, 2014; Kopkowski, 2008; Marston, 2010; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). When principal Mark Robertson (2006) administered an exit survey to a first-year teacher who was leaving his school, “lack of administrative support” was the only reason that she gave with no comments or explanation. Each teacher has a perception of administrative support, and teachers in each school context – elementary, middle, or high – may have differing needs based on the context in which they practice their craft. The literature confirms that educators and researchers know generally that teachers leave because of a “lack of support,” but the specificity of that support remains vague (Russell et al. 2010). This study sought to compare the perceptions and beliefs former teachers held and current novice teachers hold about the supportive attitudes and actions of principals to the perceptions and beliefs of administrative support by principals themselves.

Research Design

Ingersoll (2012) noted that an alarming number of teachers are leaving the teaching profession and citing “lack of administrative support” for a reason to go, this study inquired of teachers who left the profession why they did so. Part of this study investigated and analyzed the former teachers’ perceptions of administrative support and the value they placed on specific supportive actions and attitudes. Another part of the study investigated current novice teachers and their perceptions of specific supportive

actions and attitudes of administrators. Gaining this information could inform the educational community, principals specifically, of the types of support that novice teachers believe they need to have in order to be successful in the classroom and remain in the profession.

Many studies cited in the literature have asked numerous teachers that very question: What is administrative support? (Anderson, 2012; Blase & Blase, 2001; Bressler, 2012; Cross, 2011; Daugherty, 2012; Melvin, 2011; Rumley, 2010) However, they have not asked principals what they considered their role to be in supporting novice teachers. Other studies have shed light on principals' beliefs about their leadership styles and what supportive actions they envision that might retain novice teachers (Brown & Wynn, 2009; McCollum, 2012), but researchers did not consider teachers' perceptions in those particular studies. Learning the administrator's actions and attitudes that teachers perceive as supportive and then comparing and contrasting those to administrators' actions toward novice teachers could add insight to the issue of new teacher attrition.

A qualitative approach seemed to be appropriate to delve into the perceptions of administrative support because the literature confirmed that the phenomenon exists (Ingersoll, 2012; Kopkowski, 2008; Louis et al. 2010; Russell et al. 2010). A qualitative approach explored actual definitions that teachers and their administrators assign to the term "administrative support." From the review of current literature, it is understood that attitudes and actions associated with administrative support need to be perceived personally and individually and cannot be generalized to all teachers equally (Bressler, 2012).

In order to understand the perceptions and beliefs held by novice teachers, former teachers, and administrators, this study included all three. Instead of looking at only one

side of the phenomenon, gathering perceptions and beliefs from all sides of the same issue gleaned valuable information to add to the literature on administrative support.

Setting

Data were collected from 10 principals, six of which work in the state of Maryland; the other four principals work in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Missouri. According to Scholastic and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2009), the four states represented had similar factors in retaining teachers. The percentage of teachers who perceived “supportive leadership” as absolutely essential for retaining teachers for each of the four states are as follows: Maryland-77%, Pennsylvania-65%, West Virginia-63%, and Missouri-69%.

Research Questions

The overarching research question investigated in this study is as follows: What is administrative support in the context of public school environments? The underlying questions that needed to be explored to begin to provide an answer to the question are as follows:

- What do novice teachers perceive as important actions and attitudes of administrative support?
- What do principals perceive as their role in supporting novice teachers and what does this look like in practice?
- What congruence exists between principals’ perceptions of their role in supporting novice teachers and novice teachers’ perceptions of principal support?
- What divergence exists between principals’ perceptions of their role in supporting novice teachers and novice teachers’ perceptions of principal support?

Research Method

The qualitative research method employed for this study was one that sought to find conscious thoughts about the phenomenon called “administrative support” within the context of a public school. The phenomenological method of research (Creswell, 2014) discovers how persons in a role experience the phenomenon being studied, in this case, the essence of administrative support as perceived by former novice teachers and their principals. Phenomenology seeks clarification and understanding of someone’s perceptions and experiences, especially the meanings they assign to actions, attitudes, concepts, and issues (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). When discussing the coding of qualitative research, Saldana (2013) states, “Those things that cannot literally be touched are conceptual, phenomenological, and processual, and represent forms of abstraction that most often suggest higher-level thinking” (p. 249). However, this phenomenological study was more deductive than inductive in nature. Rather than starting with specific attitudes and actions of support from which a general consensus will be formed, this study sought to identify those specific attitudes and actions identified under the vast umbrella that is “administrative support” (Brown & Wynn, 2009).

The collected information from former teachers focused on their lived experiences and their memories of administrative support or the lack thereof during their time as a teacher. The collected information from current novice teachers focused on their lived experiences in their recent teaching assignments. The focus of collected information from principals was on the lived experiences and their perception of their role in providing administrative support to novice teachers. The literature revealed that the lack of administrative support has been repeatedly cited as a primary reason that novice teachers leave the profession; this study sought to define the nature of administrative support and

how administrative support is given and received through the lenses of both teachers and principals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Research Instruments

A survey questionnaire was employed to determine perceptions that former teachers had and current novice teachers have concerning the value placed on the attitudes and actions of administrative support. The survey was an appropriate tool for this study because it could reach several respondents in a brief amount of time, and using the Internet to distribute the questionnaire facilitated efficient data collection (Creswell, 2014). Since I was not present during completion of the survey, this form of data collection also reduced interviewer bias (Drew, Hardman, & Hosp, 2008).

I developed the former teacher questionnaire items as a result of information gathered from the literature. Question 1: “How many years of teaching did you complete?” sought to confirm that the participant left the profession. Questions 2-5 sought to gather data from those participants who were employed full time in a non-teaching profession. Question 3: “...are you more satisfied in your new profession than you were in teaching?” was based upon the Herzberg (Herzberg et al., 1967) two-factor theory that the positive aspects of employment add to the satisfaction of a job more than the negative aspects of the employment environment adds to dissatisfaction. Question 4: “...what is the relationship between your current income and your teaching income?” sought to confirm or deny the literature that states that income does not affect the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the perception of a teacher’s job (Donovan, 2014; Kopkowski, 2008; Thompson & McNamara, 1997). Question 5: “...what is the relationship between your current job stress and your stress as a teacher?” was informed by House’s (1981) research on occupational stress. House (1981) asserted that

occupational stress can be deleterious to one's health, and support can counteract that stress and improve job satisfaction. One of the principals in Brown and Wynn's (2009) study stated that the role of a principal should be to reduce a teacher's stress rather than add to it.

The ranked items in survey Question 6 addressed the purpose of determining the kind of supportive attitudes and actions perceived to be the most valuable to teachers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The items were informed by House's (1981) framework of support, Dinham's (2000) three-part theory of satisfaction, and Rumley's (2010) grounded theory study of the effects of administrative support on teacher retention and attrition.

Questions 7 and 8 were open-ended questions that allowed participants to share personal thoughts and experiences to deepen each participant's contribution to the study.

Following the construction of the survey instrument, a pilot study of cognitive interviews (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004) with teachers who would not be a part of the study to ensure that the questions were reliable was conducted. A second pilot study of 10 in-service teachers helped to validate the survey instrument. After the pilot studies had ensured the reliability of survey questions and the validity of survey data, I distributed the survey via email to identified possible former teacher participants. The survey for former teachers (Appendix A) did not take more than 15 minutes to complete.

Former teachers completed the entire questionnaire. Current novice teachers completed only Questions 6, 7, and 8 through the on-line tool Survey Monkey.

I conducted a semi-structured, recorded interview of each principal in the study. A phenomenological study is particularly designed to understand the voice of the participant while exploring the meaning of an event, episode, or interaction (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010), which made the semi-structured interview an appropriate data collecting method for this study. I used two recording devices to ensure that at least one recorded each interview successfully. The interview protocol that I utilized in each administrator interview (Appendix B) was informed by the protocol design used by Rumley (2010) and questions from the interview protocol used by Brown and Wynn (2009). At the end of the interview, I asked each principal to answer the ranking question of the teacher survey (Question 6) in the manner in which he or she thought a novice teacher would respond.

I conducted the survey and interviews concurrently to ensure that the participants provided their own personal perceptions and beliefs of the actions and attitudes of administrative support without the knowledge of results of the other study element.

Sample Selection

I purposefully selected participants in the study who could best “help [me] understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell, 2014, p. 189). In this study, the most qualified participants to address the phenomenon of administrative support were former teachers, current novice teachers, and experienced, in-service principals. After identifying administrators who met the criteria, I contacted each one to identify at least six administrators who were willing to provide an interview for the study.

I then contacted former teachers in order to find willing participants. The process continued until the study had a minimum of five former teachers who met the study criterion and were willing to complete and return the survey.

In order to find current novice teachers who were willing to complete the survey, I created a link to the survey in Survey Monkey. I then publicized the request for novice teachers to complete the survey on Facebook and Twitter. My contacts in each social

media platform shared my request until I had a minimum of 25 survey participants.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data reflect an attempt to capture the perceptions of participants and are usually collected with words rather than numbers, as the researcher seeks to isolate themes and make conceptual comparisons; some research theorists consider qualitative data to be less about behavior and more about actions that carry implications about intentions, meaning, and consequences (Drew et al. 2008). According to Creswell (2014), “Phenomenological research uses the analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of... an essence description” (p. 196). The significant statements and meaning units from data contributed to the essence description of administrative support. Qualitative data of former teacher questionnaires, current novice teacher surveys, and principal interviews demonstrated what they value, believe, and think about the phenomenon of administrative support (Saldana, 2013).

I gathered and analyzed the participant-generated information on surveys using Themeing the Data. Saldana (2013) states, “Themeing the Data is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, and especially for phenomenology and those exploring a participant’s psychological world of beliefs, constructs, identity development, and emotional experiences” (p. 176). Themes emerged from the ways in which the former teachers and current novice teachers ranked the importance of and described incidents of administrative support or the lack thereof.

I recorded, transcribed, and coded principal interviews. Because the purpose of the interviews was to discover convergence and/or divergence between perceptions of administrative support from the teachers and administrators, I used In Vivo Coding to identify phrases that captured the actual and conceptual thoughts of administrative

actions and attitudes from all parties. In Vivo Coding frames participants' thoughts in terms that are used in their everyday experiences, rather than in terms derived from professional disciplines (Saldana, 2013).

Participant Confidentiality

Because I identified and selected the participants, anonymity was not possible for former teachers and principals. Teachers who completed the survey were anonymous unless they chose to identify themselves. To keep identities of all participants confidential, I assigned a letter to each principal, former teacher, and current novice teacher in order to be able to discuss memories, experiences, and perceptions and use quotations from participants throughout the study's results without revealing the identity of each participant.

Role of the Researcher

This qualitative researcher became immersed in the situation and the phenomenon being studied; it was vital to the study that a skilled person rather than an instrument collected the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I have spent 20 years as a high school teacher; therefore I was knowledgeable about the public school context, language, and situations discussed and described by participants.

I distributed surveys, collected completed surveys from participants, and compiled and coded data to discover recurring concepts and emergent themes. I conducted, recorded, transcribed, and coded interviews, compared and contrasted interview data to survey data, and then triangulated data with literature, which added to the validity of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Chapter 4 – Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to define the concept of administrative support for teachers within the public school context through the perceptions of teachers and administrators. To achieve that purpose, I collected data on perceptions of administrative support by interviewing 10 principals and surveying eight former teachers and 28 current novice teachers.

After conducting and recording interviews, I transcribed and coded each one. Using descriptive coding, I discovered several major themes within principal interviews; I then completed a second coding using In Vivo, seeking to clarify details within those themes (Saldana, 2013). At the end of each interview, principals completed the ranking question from the teachers' survey, as they perceived that teachers would have responded. I tallied survey responses from current novice teachers, former teachers, and principals, seeking similarities and differences in perceptions of supportive actions and attitudes.

Research SubQuestions

What is administrative support in the context of public school environments? In order to answer this question, I disseminated the overarching idea into five research questions:

- What do novice teachers perceive as important actions and attitudes of administrative support?
- What do former teachers perceive as important actions and attitudes of administrative support?
- What do principals perceive as their role in supporting novice teachers, and what

does this look like in practice?

- What congruence exists between principals' perceptions of their role in supporting novice teachers and novice teachers' perceptions of principal support?
- What divergence exists between principals' perceptions of their role in supporting novice teachers and novice teachers' perceptions of principal support?

The research questions were answered by three groups of participants: principals, former teachers, and current novice teachers.

Principals

Before beginning the official study, I interviewed two principals as part of the pilot study to validate interview protocol. Since the results from the two pilot interviews were consistent with the eight other interviews conducted during the study, I included data collected from the two pilot interviews in the results. A total of 10 principals were interviewed.

Principal demographics. Of the 10 principals interviewed, all were principals during the 2010-2015 target years. Three were exclusively elementary principals, two were exclusively middle school principals, and three were exclusively high school principals. One principal had been a middle school principal who was now in a high school, and one other principal had spent time leading elementary, middle, and high schools over his career. Of the 10 principals, three were women and seven were men. Nine worked in the mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia, and one worked in Missouri. Three of the interviews were conducted by phone; seven of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in each interviewee's office.

Overarching Themes to Immediate Responses to Question 1. *Generally speaking, what do you see as the principal's primary role relative to teachers? When*

answering this question, many principals expressed that their individual role is a complex one as each facilitates teachers' abilities to teach and meet needs of students; eight of the 10 principals immediately discussed their responsibilities to provide for the physical and organizational needs of teachers and students in the building. A good summary of their combined views would be that it is the principal's responsibility to be sure that all aspects of the building are in working order for the safety and comfort of those within, as well as providing the organization and the structure within which the administrators, teachers, and students can coexist in a positive culture conducive to teaching and learning.

Principal J addressed this culture:

There is an old quote or book title that says, "If you don't feed the teachers, they eat the students," and I think that there are so many roles a principal has to play, but I think you have to nourish the teachers in many different realms - and it has to be supportive – they need to be nurtured and given development where they need it...feeding the teachers in support, in comparative compensation, and in growth. (personal communication, January 19, 2016)

Overarching Themes to Immediate Responses to Question 2. *What do you find about your job, relative to working with teachers, as the most rewarding or satisfying?* Principals unanimously expressed that they receive the most satisfaction by perceiving that their teachers are happy in their work, whether that happiness is expressed in enthusiasm, growth, or success. Three principals described this satisfaction as seeing the teachers' enthusiasm and excitement about coming to work with a smile on their faces. Four other principals specifically mentioned the satisfaction they feel when teachers experience growth in their expertise and thriving in the classroom, and three expressed

satisfaction when their teachers have success with their students. Principal I stated, “I think when we create an environment that allows the teacher and the students to excel – you know, when the teacher feels like things are going well, their kids are learning, their lessons are working, they have the resources they need: the materials, the time, and all those things that they need to be successful, and the kids are responding” (personal communication, January 14, 2016).

Overarching Themes to Immediate Responses to Question 3. *What do you find about your job, relative to working with teachers, to be most challenging?* Eight out of 10 principals expressed that dealing with negativity is the most challenging part of working with teachers. This negativity is expressed in many ways; five principals specifically mentioned the stagnation of teachers who simply have a difficult time dealing with change: “The most challenging is when they don’t receive and embrace change well, so education is nothing but change – it’s full of it – and it is very difficult to get teachers to understand – part of human nature is that change happens – but they do not see that if we keep doing the same things, we are going to get the same results” (Principal E, personal communication, December 29, 2015).

Overarching Themes to Immediate Responses to Question 4. *What do you consider your primary role relative to a new teacher when one comes into your building?* Six of 10 principals mentioned finding that perfect mentor or seasoned teacher with which to pair the new teacher was primary. Principal A (personal communication, September 18, 2015) stated, “Well, right off the bat, my number one role is to ensure that I give them the best mentor that I can.” Although four principals began the discussion of welcoming a new teacher with other thoughts such as procedures, comfort, and goal setting, all 10 discussed the need for mentors for new teachers. These mentors come with

various titles: assistant principals, lead teachers, department leaders, volunteer colleagues, and county mentor teachers, but all principals saw the need for others to assist in the mentoring of new teachers.

Overarching Themes of Support. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewee freedom to discuss topics at hand as they come to mind. Creswell (2014) advocates for qualitative interviews with a few open-ended questions to allow participants to share views, opinions, and personal perspectives. Principals spent much time discussing the many ways that they provide support for their teachers. Using the In Vivo method of coding, I tallied key words and ideas mentioned by each principal. Results of coding can be seen in Table 1. As mentioned earlier, all 10 principals perceived ensuring that each teacher has appropriate mentors as an important part of administrative support.

Table 1

Principal Participants' Key Ideas

<u>Key Ideas</u>	<u>Principals</u>										Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
Trust	X	X	X			X		X			5
Kindness	X		X					X	X	X	5
Mentors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Culture	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Growth	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	9
Respect	X										1
Solving problems	X	X			X			X			4
Communication	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	9
Time	X		X		X	X					4
Feedback	X		X		X				X		4
Success/praise		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		8
Academics/achievement	X		X	X	X						4
Management/discipline	X	X		X		X	X		X		6
Professional development	X	X	X						X		4
Materials/supplies	X	X		X	X	X			X		6
Buffer with parents/students				X					X		2
Liason/filter to county				X					X		2

Note. The chart demonstrates the results of the In Vivo coding method of the key topics in the principal interviews.

Although only four principals mentioned the growth of a teacher as a first thought to Question 2, nine out of 10 mentioned a teacher's growth at least once throughout the

interview when discussing administrative support and beamed with pride when talking about teachers who grew under their leadership. “The observation/evaluation process gives [a principal] an opportunity to see growth within a teacher – a maturation within the teacher – really and truly when they come out of college they’re babies, and by the time you’re done with them after a year, hopefully they have blossomed into this young adult who has taken on responsibilities, and they have grown under your [leadership]...to me that is very rewarding” (Principal C, personal communication, December 23, 2015).

Nine of the 10 principals also concurred that communication is key to administrative support. The words tagged under communication were “see,” “face to face,” “walk-through,” so this is not electronic communication or phone calls to the classroom. The communication principals mentioned in interviews was person to person, a physical, personal interaction between the principal and the teacher. Principal A (personal communication, September 18, 2015) explains his communication plan: “Several times a week I’m popping by and seeing them. The first two weeks it’s probably every day. There is very little time that goes by before I am face to face with a teacher.” Principal C uses a similar communication style: “It’s management by walking around... you have to be visible – see them – you have to be out there and in the classrooms all the time even if it is just for a couple of seconds to say ‘Good morning’” (personal communication, December 23, 2015).

According to eight out of 10 of the principals, part of that communication needs to be providing ways for teachers to be successful and then praising them for specific successes they have. Principal B associates praise with continued success: “In a job as in life, if you feel success, you are inspired to keep doing what you are doing, but if you don’t feel successful at what you are doing, then you give up... When they do good work,

they want to be recognized for it – it needs to be not just hollow praise, but specific to what you just did and say that I recognize your success” (personal communication, October 16, 2015). Principal C associates praise with feedback: “You need to give [teachers] some feedback of where they are and how they are doing - how to improve – and praise them for the good things they are already doing” (personal communication, December 23, 2015).

Overarching Themes of Reasons Teachers Leave. Eight of the 10 principals expressed in no uncertain terms that teaching is a very difficult job with very high expectations and serious accountability. This simple acknowledgement demonstrates the respect that the interviewed principals have for the craft of teaching as well as the teachers themselves:

- “I’ve always said that teaching is the hardest job in the world to do well; it’s easy to do poorly” (Principal I, personal communication, January 14, 2016).
- “[Teaching] is a damn hard job, and if you don’t have a principled center for why you want to do this job, it’s even harder” (Principal H, personal communication, January 14, 2016).
- “I think the demands that we put on a young teacher or on any teacher for that matter are so intense that they just cannot withstand the pressure of teaching...I really think that the major factor in their leaving is the pressure and the amount of work that we are asking them to do” (Principal C, personal communication, December 23, 2015).

Seven out of 10 principals interviewed explained that they believe the new generation of teachers has a different outlook on employment than the new teachers of generations past, which leads young people to change jobs more readily now. One

principal shared something his adult son had said to him about young people today. “He said, ‘Dad, your generation and my generation are different. Your generation was grateful to get a job. My generation thinks you all should be grateful that I took the job.’ At first, I thought that’s the most horrible thing I’d ever heard, but then I thought, well, why not? What’s wrong with knowing your value and wanting to be treated as if you have value?” (Principal I, personal communication, January 14, 2016). Three other principals expressed concern at the outlook of young teachers today:

- “They are babies when they come out of college. Nine out of 10 of them when they come out of school at least in today’s day and age, I find that they have this entitlement, ‘you owe me’ mentality. ‘You owe me a job because I went to college’ I actually had one interviewee one time look at me and say, ‘What are you going to do for me when I come in here? What do I get out of this?’ I told them that you get gainfully employed – you get a paycheck. Yes, I’d like to say that you get the reward and satisfaction of doing a good job, but clearly for you, you’re getting a paycheck. Now, I’ve had other potential teachers come in and ask, ‘What kinds of professional development will you make available to me? How are you going to help me and mentor me in my job?’ That is completely different, and that is appropriate” (Principal C, personal communication, December 23, 2015).
- “I think it’s a different generation. It used to be that people saw this as a very coveted job... I think that mentality is gone. I think that it’s a millennial thing – everything is more temporary” (Principal H, personal communication, January 14, 2016).
- “From what I’m hearing, if young people are leaving the teaching profession, I’d

be curious to see if that's not proportional to other professions because that's what the young people do these days; they say most young people might have ten different jobs by the time they are out of their twenties. So it might just be the culture" (Principal A, personal communication, September 18, 2015).

The financial compensation of teaching was mentioned as a possible reason for losing teachers in six of the 10 principal interviews. Principal D shared an anecdote about a teacher having financial concerns as a teaching professional:

I have one teacher in my building who is in his fifth year, and he is really struggling with whether or not he can stay in this profession. He is seeing many of his college friends getting promotions and significant pay raises – pay raises that are really changing their style of living – and he's not getting – well, he's getting steps – and we've had a couple of years when we haven't had steps – and partial steps that have been offset by increases in insurance premiums. I think as a soon to be 30-year-old, he's really struggling with whether he can be satisfied with doing this for another 25-30 years – can I get enough joy out of this work to warrant the lifestyle that I will be forced to live? (personal communication, December 29, 2015)

Half of the interviewed principals discussed their opinion that not everyone who completes a college education program should be a teacher. They stated that good teachers are special, and that they want to keep the best teachers for their students. Principal I shared his thoughts on the matter:

I think it's unrealistic to think that 100% of those coming out of teacher preparation programs are going to make it. Is this job so easy that

everyone who tries it should be successful? Really? I don't think it's that easy. Some get weeded out because they should get weeded out. The ones I worry about are the ones who shouldn't get weeded out, the ones who show signs of potentially being a good teacher, but they're struggling. When that happens, then truly maybe we can blame that on not giving them enough support, but I am not of the mindset that all people who attempt this profession should succeed because it's just too hard. (personal communication, January 14, 2016)

Four other principals were in agreement that not everyone should be a teacher, and if someone is choosing to leave, maybe it is for the best.

Former Teachers

Through social media, I located eight former teachers who were willing to take the survey. Of those eight, four left within the first five years of teaching. Others chose to leave a few years later, but each chose to leave the teaching profession. They were not terminated or non-tenured. Six of eight (75%) are employed in another field; one went back to school; another is a homemaker. Of the six who are employed in another field, 100% stated that the stress level is lower, and five of six (83%) stated that the income is higher.

Survey Question 7 asked former teachers to state their reason or reasons for leaving the teaching profession. Six of eight (75%) mentioned the demands of the job, the workload and curriculum changes – the fact that teaching is a very difficult profession. Five of eight (62.5%) stated that lack of administrative support was instrumental in their decisions to leave. Former Teacher C expected her administrator to provide the promised support with a parent problem: “I knew I was done with teaching when a parent bullied

and harassed me daily. I did everything the administration told me to do about it. I was told that they would support me in my decisions. Instead they threw me under the bus and did what the parent wanted. I stayed another year to get my financial situation in order so that I could quit.”

In response to the question, “What, if anything, could your principal have done or could have done better to keep you on the faculty?” all eight stated the principal could have done nothing to keep that teacher on the faculty. Two teachers had positive comments about the particular principal, but other factors led them to leave. One teacher stated that if the principal had gone, that teacher would have stayed: “The principal could have left, that’s what he could have done. I just couldn’t stay in that toxic environment that he had created. He would badmouth some teachers to others and play favorites. I wasn’t one of the favorites. So, no, there was nothing that principal could have done to keep me” (Former Teacher H). Another former teacher shared a similar experience: “The principal’s unfriendly demeanor and closed-off nature made it difficult for me to approach her with any concerns. I particularly disliked how she would use intimidation to enforce group cohesion. Her actions generated considerable animosity, and the workplace became increasingly tense and unpleasant” (Former Teacher D).

Current Novice Teachers

Through social media, 28 current novice teachers volunteered to take the survey on Survey Monkey.com. Of those 28 teachers, three were in their first year of teaching, five were in their second year, 13 were in their third year, four were in their fourth year, and three were in their fifth year of teaching. They completed the survey, and then 16 chose to leave comments concerning their views of administrative support. Twelve of the 16 current novice teachers (75%) indicated dissatisfaction with what might be considered

the soft skills of leadership. Personal communication and attention bubbled to the top in the coding scheme as demonstrated by the following examples:

- “I currently am not enjoying my time. My principal runs a wonderful school, but his personal relationships leave much to be desired. His professionalism towards issues is lacking and leaves me with nobody to go to comfortably when there is trouble. I have desired to work at this school, but I am left disappointed” (Novice Teacher A).
- “It doesn’t seem that the principal at my school has much time for anyone” (Novice Teacher F).
- “I think that it is important for novice teachers to have a principal that creates a positive environment for growth” (Novice Teacher G).

The Ranking Question

The focus of each survey, questionnaire, and interview was the following question:

Please rank (1, 2, 3...10) the following kinds of administrative support that you may or may not have received when teaching according to your perceived value. In other words, rank the supportive action according to its value to you when you were a classroom teacher. Use each number only once.

1 = most valuable

10 = least valuable

- a. My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
- b. My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.
- c. My principal visits my classroom often and gives undivided attention when we have a conversation.
- d. My principal assists me with classroom management and discipline.

- e. My principal provides the materials I need for my classroom.
- f. My principal provides effective professional development for me.
- g. My principal gives helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise as a teacher.
- h. My principal provides constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.
- i. My principal praises my good work with specific, positive comments.
- j. My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.

Table 2 shows how each of the groups ranked the 10 supportive actions and attitudes for a comparison between what teachers want and what principals think they want. Table 2 demonstrates a divergence between the supportive actions and attitudes that teachers value highly and the actions and attitudes that principals perceive that they value.

Table 2

Participant Comparison Chart

Supportive Action or Attitude	Former Teachers	Current Novice Teachers	Principals
My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.	1	2	6
My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.	3	1	7
My principal visits my classroom often and gives undivided attention when we have a conversation.	7	3	10
My principal assists me with classroom management and discipline.	10	9	1
My principal provides the materials I need for my classroom.	9	8	5
My principal provides effective professional development for me.	6	10	2
My principal gives helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise as a teacher.	5	5	3
My principal provides constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.	4	4	8
My principal praises my good work with specific, positive comments.	8	6	9
My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.	2	7	4

Note. Comparison of ranked statements by the three groups.

Former Teachers. Each former teacher ranked the supportive actions and attitudes according to their perceived value when they were teachers. Five of eight former

teachers chose either "... trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom" or "... demonstrates personal and professional integrity" as the most important supportive action of a principal. At the other end of the spectrum, five of eight former teachers ranked "... assists me with classroom management and discipline," "...provides effective professional development for me," and "...provides the materials I need for my classroom" as the least valuable supportive actions of a principal. Former teachers demonstrated that the personal relationship between the teacher and principal is more valuable than the materials, training, and discipline the principal can provide. As a group, former teachers ranked the 10 supportive actions and attitudes of a principal in the following order from most valuable (1) to least valuable (10):

1. My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
2. My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.
3. My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.
4. My principal provides constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.
5. My principal gives helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise as a teacher.
6. My principal provides effective professional development for me.
7. My principal visits my classroom often and gives undivided attention when we have a conversation.
8. My principal praises my good work with specific, positive comments.
9. My principal provides the materials I need for my classroom.
10. My principal assists me with classroom management and discipline.

Current Novice Teachers. Each current novice teacher ranked the supportive

actions and attitudes according to their perceived values in their current situations. The comments novice teachers provided indicated that they valued a positive relationship with the building principal, and their rankings supported their comments. Of 28 current novice teachers, 19 (68%) ranked “My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way” in their top three supportive actions and attitudes. Of the 28 current novice teachers, 17 (61%) ranked “My principal provides effective professional development for me” in their bottom three supportive actions and attitudes. As a group, current novice teachers ranked the 10 supportive actions and attitudes of a principal in the following order from most valuable (1) to least valuable (10):

1. My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.
2. My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
3. My principal visits my classroom often and gives undivided attention when we have a conversation.
4. My principal provides constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.
5. My principal gives helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise as a teacher.
6. My principal praises my good work with specific, positive comments.
7. My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.
8. My principal provides the materials I need for my classroom.
9. My principal assists me with classroom management and discipline.
10. My principal provides effective professional development for me.

Principals. At the end of each principal interview, I explained that teachers were asked to rank the supportive actions and attitudes according to their perceived values. I then asked principal to rank them the way they perceived teachers would rank them. In

other words, principals demonstrated their opinions of how teachers responded to this question. Although principals spoke about praise, communication, and growth in their interviews, 70% of principals thought teachers ranked “My principal assists me with classroom management and discipline” in their top four making it the principals’ number one. As a group, principals thought teachers would rank the supportive actions and attitudes in the following order from most valuable (1) to least valuable (10):

1. My principal assists me with classroom management and discipline.
2. My principal provides effective professional development for me.
3. My principal gives helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise as a teacher.
4. My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.
5. My principal provides the materials I need for my classroom.
6. My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
7. My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.
8. My principal provides constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.
9. My principal praises my good work with specific, positive comments.
10. My principal visits m classroom often and gives undivided attention when we have a conversation.

Summary of Principal Views

The surveyed teachers value a positive relationship with their principals and view a supportive principal as one who will take the time to build that relationship. The interviewed principals have similar values and respect the overwhelmingly difficult job that teachers have. Each principal shared his or her thoughts about teaching, teachers, and the responsibility each one feels in hiring and keeping the best teachers for students:

- “The old adage, ‘Those who can do; those who can’t teach’ has got to go out the window at this point because if you can’t do, there is no way you can teach. The amount of comprehension that goes into understanding the curriculum and then assimilating that curriculum into viable lessons and learning experiences for kids is extremely difficult” (Principal C, personal communication, December 23, 2015).
- “Teaching is the hardest thing in the world to do well, and maybe some [new teachers] have unrealistic expectations of help – you can only help new teachers so much – you can’t teach their classes for them, you can’t make kids respect them and their authority – and when the daily support of student teaching is gone, you find out if you can really stand on your own two feet – and it’s a mistake to think that everyone who tries will succeed” (Principal I, personal communication, January 14, 2016).
- “Bottom line it comes down to is it’s hard. [The teachers] are not always supported, and there are building level administrators who don’t see the bigger picture” (Principal H, personal communication, January 14, 2016).
- “I believe that the more experienced a teacher is, the more likely he or she will tend to be able to weather a less than stellar administration. I think our younger teachers are not equipped to weather a less than stellar administration, and I think the principal needs to be a key agent in helping turn that around. I think principals have a tremendous responsibility to work with all types of new teachers” (Principal D, personal communication, December 29, 2015).
- “When I hire a new teacher, I look for passion. I can teach a teacher how to teach, but you can’t teach passion for this profession” (Principal E, personal

communication, December 29, 2015).

- “We need to make teachers feel loved and important; I feel once the teachers feel that they are a part of the family, the other things will come. They need to feel that what they are doing here will make a difference” (Principal A, personal communication, September 18, 2015).
- “As the leader of the organization, I need to build the compass, the focus, I need to know what’s going on, and then I need to get down to the root of everything – building their capacity – making them better teachers” (Principal H, personal communication, January 14, 2016).

Conclusion

Data suggest that teachers and principals have different perceptions of the value of supportive actions and attitudes. This divergence appears to be significant enough to warrant a conversation about what teachers perceive as valuable administrative support and what principals think they perceive as valuable.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

The study described in Chapter 4 included interviews of 10 principals and surveys of eight former teachers and 28 current novice teachers seeking to determine their personal perceptions of actions and attitudes of administrative support for teachers. Surveys and interviews sought not only to discuss supportive actions and attitudes that principals demonstrate for teachers but also to determine the perceived value of those actions and attitudes by all parties. The purpose in conducting the research ultimately was to define administrative support for teachers.

Many external motivational factors are needed for a person to choose to become a teacher. It is a profession that provides income for the livelihood of the teacher; however, as many of the principals stated, in order to remain a teacher, one must also have internal motivation, a calling. “We are giving teachers so much to do and putting so much pressure on them, and the buck is stopping with them so much that if they don’t have a principled compass, a reason to want to teach, the job is even harder” (Principal H, personal communication, January 14, 2016). If a person has that calling, that passion, to contribute to the betterment of society by educating its youth, according to Michael Fullan (2014), that teacher should have at least four core qualities: commitment to the education of all students, strong instructional practice, desire for collaborative work, and the persistence for continuous learning: “Even if some of these qualities are wanting at the outset, it is the principal’s job to foster them once [a teacher] is hired” (p. 74). That job is often referred to as administrative support.

Physical Support

According to the literature, for an employee to choose to remain in a job, that

employee must have job satisfaction, which implies that the needs of the employee are met, and Maslow (1962) states that the first needs that must be met are physical. Principals addressed the fact that the financial compensation for teaching is relatively low in comparison to other professions for which comparable education and training is required; however, teachers know this going in and are not expecting to make six figures as long as they can pay their bills (Kopkowski, 2008). Interviewed principals all stated that from their perspective, their primary role relative to teachers is to ensure a safe working environment in which all teachers have the materials, resources, and structure needed to do their jobs. “[A principal’s] main role is to serve whatever [the teachers] need in order to serve the students because the teacher’s main role is to meet the needs of the students, so I need to facilitate that and provide for them whatever they need whether it is discipline support or classroom supplies” (Principal B, personal communication, October 16, 2015).

Herzberg et al. (1967) puts the physical needs of a job into the realm of hygiene, the basic needs one has in order to function. In his study he revealed that the presence of hygiene factors, those physical needs, make a job tolerable, not motivating. Herzberg et al.’s (1967) theory supports data collected from both former and current teachers. Within the ranking question were two items that specifically addressed the physical needs of a teacher: “classroom management and discipline” and “materials I need for my classroom.” Former teachers ranked those tenth and ninth respectively, and current novice teachers ranked them ninth and eighth. When commenting on administrative support, not one teacher in the study mentioned physical needs as something needed from current or former administrations. This could be because principals had adequately taken care of these needs, so they were not lacking. Interviewed principals ranked “materials I

need for my classroom” as fifth. Teachers readily provided items for their classroom and their students from their personal funds (Kopkowski, 2008), so teachers and principals agreed that a lack of materials is not their most pressing need. It is interesting, though, that principals ranked “classroom management and discipline” as what teachers want most of all by way of support.

Physical needs are not only the easiest needs to meet but also the easiest requests to make. Physical needs are concrete: for example, a teacher may need 30 student desks but has only 28. Placing the request for two student desks is clear and concrete. If a teacher needs assistance with a student who has issues with obedience, the teacher is able to write a clear referral based upon that student’s behavior. It is paperwork. Principals receive these requests often and, therefore, would naturally perceive assistance with classroom management and discipline as a need of high value to teachers, particularly novice teachers. Materials for the classroom and following through on discipline referrals are those things in a teacher’s job that are expected. They are on the bottom of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1968) and on the hygiene side of Herzberg et al.’s (1967) theory of job satisfaction; they are the expected lowest common denominator of support teachers perceive that they need.

Instructional Support

Part of the role of the principal of a school is to be the instructional leader with the knowledge and skills to interact with teachers while providing relevant, valid, and useful advice to improve teachers’ instructional practices (Louis et al. 2010). All 10 principals interviewed in this study discussed at length their use of mentors to work with novice teachers; this is a common practice and can be very effective in improving instructional practice, but according to a 2010 study by Rumley, mentors cannot replace a

principal as instructional leader. An effective principal personally “participates in shaping the culture of learning” (Fullan, 2014, p. 75).

House’s framework of support (1981) places professional development and feedback on instructional strategies under the category of informational support.

According to the literature, effective instructional leaders providing informational support not only provided workshops for their teachers but also participated in them to be able to provide that instructional support for new strategies and initiatives (Dinham, 2008; Louis et al, 2010; Pelika, 2000).

Three items in the ranking question directly addressed informational support: “effective professional development,” “helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise,” and “constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.” Former teachers ranked these three #6, #5, and #4 respectively; current novice teachers ranked them #10, #5, and #4. The anomaly here seems to be the fact that current novice teachers as a whole perceived professional development to have the least value of all administrative support. We can infer that current novice teachers, fresh from college, place more value on practical classroom experience rather than professional development sessions on instructional strategies that they may have recently experienced in college, or since they are novice teachers, they have not yet seen the value of professional development.

Principals as a group ranked “constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation” as eighth in importance, which would concur with Marc Tucker, the head of the National Center for Education and the Economy, who in his study found no evidence that the use of a teacher evaluation system produces improvements in teacher performance or student learning (Fullan, 2014). Principals did demonstrate the perception

of value in “professional development” and “informal feedback” ranking them second and third. Fullan (2014) reported, “The historical problem is that teachers actually receive very little feedback about their work – a problem that is still predominant today” (p. 76). According to the literature, for professional development and feedback on instructional practices and strategies to make a difference in teacher performance, both need to be individual and on-going.

Formal teacher appraisal by itself can never produce the intended results of improved teacher performance; only working alongside colleagues in a collaborative culture can do that (Fullan, 2014). Principal H stated, “An important part of my job is building the capacity of the staff, making them better – lateral capacity building – if [the teacher] and I are both colleagues, I can do more to help [the teacher] than [I can in the role of principal], but my position as principal sets up the opportunity” (personal communication, January 14, 2016). In order for principals to see the desired growth in teachers that they expressed in the interviews, they should consider Michael Fullan’s (2014) advice on the matter: “Ensure that professional development and learning are fundamental, ongoing features of the entire [appraisal] process and realize that by far the most effective and telling feedback that teachers will receive is that which is built into the purposeful interaction between and among teachers and the principal” (p. 78).

Social Support

Mark Rumley’s 2010 grounded theory study yielded four major themes concerning administrative support for teachers, two of which are the presence of and communication with principals. These two support characteristics and qualities found in House’s (1981) appraisal support. In their interviews, principals discussed the importance of spending time with teachers, seeing them as often as possible, and getting to know

them personally. Current novice teachers also expressed the desire to get to know their principals: “My first principal was not very helpful and did not get to know new teachers; however, the new principal in our building is very open and gets to know all of the new teachers each year. I appreciate the effort, and I think it makes people more receptive to feedback even if it’s negative” (Current Novice Teacher L).

In the ranking question, two items addressed social support directly: “My principal visits my classroom often and gives undivided attention when we have a conversation” and “My principal praises my good work with specific, positive comments.” Both of these supportive actions resulted in much higher perceived value by the current novice teachers than the former teachers or the principals as demonstrated by Table 3. Former teachers demonstrated that the social aspect of principal/teacher interaction was not paramount in their collective perception of administrative support by ranking these items seventh and eighth. Current novice teachers ranked praise sixth, but as a group selected “visits my classroom often” as third. Placing such a high value on visits by the principal could suggest that new teachers have a desire for the principal to build a personal relationship with them.

Table 3

Participant Rankings of Social Support

Social Support	Former Teachers	Current Novice Teachers	Principals
My principal visits my classroom often and gives undivided attention when we have a conversation.	7	3	10
My principal praises my good work with specific, positive comments.	8	6	9

Note. Data collected from ranking question items 3 and 9.

Two principals actually commented that they thought teachers would be annoyed or nervous if the principal visited the room too often. When reading through items and stopping at “visits my classroom often,” Principal G stated, “Thinking from a new teacher’s perspective, I don’t think they would want me in there all the time. I guess if the teacher was being successful they would want me to see that, but if not, I don’t think they would want me around. I think that would be a lot of pressure. I don’t know if that would be a positive thing, but of course if you see issues, you are going to be there much more often” (personal communication, January 12, 2016) By this statement, Principal G seems to imply that he would make visiting the classroom of a struggling teacher more of a priority than visiting those who are doing fine. As a group, principals ranked that item as least valuable, in the tenth place.

As principals struggled to find a place for the item demonstrating the supportive action of praise, they commented that they did not think teachers were dependent upon their praise to do a good job; they perceived other supportive actions as more important to teachers and ranked praise ninth. The principals’ perceptions that new teachers would be intimidated by frequent visits may appear to be in error, as those teachers expressed a desire to see the principal more often. If the principal visits on a regular basis, his or her presence in the classroom could become more comfortable and commonplace for the teacher and students, and as a result, the principal could get a more accurate picture of the teaching and learning happening in the classroom, which could yield more effective informal feedback.

Emotional Support

The other two emergent themes from Rumley’s 2010 study of administrative support for teachers are trust in and respect for principals. According to the literature,

effective principals are leaders, instructional and transformational leaders, who employ shared leadership in their organizations. Principal J explained that one of the rewards of being a principal is “seeing the results of building a team – having individuals come together to accomplish a common goal,” but the principal needs to be the leader of that team (personal communication, January 19, 2016). When principals share leadership, those they lead have more trust in and respect for that leader.

I try very hard to create a distributive model, not a patriarchal model in which I am at the top, and I just dictate. We do whatever we can to get as many people around the table as possible. So, I see the principal’s primary job as compass setting... I think you can call it chief visionary or chief mission setter.... They understand that they give me input, but I still need to make the final decision, and I have to live with that. They understand that sometimes I’m taking a risk, which encourages them to take risks, so we are trying some things that other schools don’t. (Principal H, personal communication, January 14, 2016)

The ranked items that directly address emotional support are the following:

- “My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom”
- “My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way,” and
- “My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.”

Principals demonstrated that as a group they perceive that the teachers do not value their kindness, positivity, and integrity as having high value. They ranked those three items in this order:

- Sixth - My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
- Seventh - My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.

- Fourth - My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.

Putting these supportive actions and attitudes in the middle of the list of importance could imply that the principal just does not understand how important she or he is to the teacher in the classroom. It may have to do with some humility on the part of the principal, but a principal sets the culture of the school and can be more than the chief visionary. He or she can be the chief encourager of the teachers in what the participant principals referred to as a most difficult and complex job.

Former teachers and current novice teachers demonstrated their perceived value in this aspect of administrative support as a group. Former teachers ranked those three in the following positions:

- First - My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
- Third - My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.
- Second - My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.

Most former teachers expressed that a negative relationship with the principal encouraged their decisions to leave; however, one who left to go into Christian ministry expressed a positive relationship with the principal, which made the decision to leave more difficult: “Common Core was looming large and meant lots of changes to my job, so it was a good time for me to leave the education profession, but I felt totally supported by my principal. She had invested so much in me, and I didn’t want to disappoint her. God just called me to the ministry” (Former Teacher B).

Current novice teachers expressed their perceptions of the value of emotional support through ranking the three items this way:

- Second - My principal trusts me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
- First - My principal speaks to me in a kind and positive way.

- Seventh - My principal demonstrates personal and professional integrity.

As principals and the literature showed, these new teachers could “get a different job and make as much if not more money and put up with less crap” (Principal J, personal communication, January 19, 2016). Young teachers commented that they want a good relationship with a positive leader who provides that emotional support: “I think it’s important for novice teachers to have a principal who creates a positive environment for growth. It takes time for teachers to come into their own” (Current Novice Teacher G); “Positive and encouraging words are imperative to the success and confidence of a first year teacher. For me it was knowing that they hired me for a reason. Slowly having that discussion over the last three years has given me confidence inside and outside my classroom” (Current Novice Teacher I).

Unlike materials and assistance with classroom management, teachers do not have a way to demonstrate to a principal that this kind of support is important to them. They do not enter a school and check a box on a form that tells the principal that they need a focused, positive leader with integrity whom they can trust and who demonstrates trust in them. Even if there were such a form, and the teacher had the opportunity to state that he or she would like to see the principal once a week and would appreciate a kind word during that visit, and the principal complied with the request, it would still not meet that need. If the kindness or praise is requested or expected, it would appear disingenuous - complying with a request rather than building a relationship. The relationship between the principal and the teacher is very important to the teacher. According to the literature, supportive actions and attitudes are only supportive if they are perceived to be as such by the recipient of that support, so teachers are the ones who need to define what administrative support is and what it looks like in practice (House, 1981).

Teacher Retention

Interviewed principals expressed that they desire to retain and grow successful teachers in their schools. Teachers expressed that they want to work for a principal who creates a positive culture and encourages them in their work. In his 2014 book, *The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact*, Michael Fullen addresses teacher retention and administrative support:

Teachers can become... decisional experts where judgment is required... or not depending largely on whether they are in a collaborative school; teachers, including potentially good teachers, can also exit the profession early when they are stifled by individualistic cultures. And whether they become decisional has a great deal to do with the quality of leadership they experience... “Think of reasons why a teacher would stay in teaching.... The factor that explains the decision to stay or not – by a long way – relates to the nature of leadership.... It is leaders’... identifying and articulating high expectations for all, consulting with teachers before making decisions that affect teachers, fostering communication, allocating resources, developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning, and regularly collecting and reviewing with teachers data on student learning. Learning leadership is the most powerful incentive to stay in teaching.” (p. 84)

Administrative Support

The goal of this study was to define administrative support in the context of the public school. Based upon review of literature and findings of the study, the following is a plausible definition:

Administrative support for teachers in the context of the public school consists of meeting the emotional, social, instructional, and physical needs of the classroom teacher by a principal of integrity who ascribes to a shared leadership construct for the organization while creating a positive culture of growth.

Topics for Future Studies

The literature stated that teachers are leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 2012); however, there could be a difference between the rate at which teachers are leaving urban schools as opposed to rural or suburban schools. A similar study could be conducted in order to flesh out reasons teachers leave urban vs. suburban schools and possibly whether administrative support needs to be altered, depending upon the school's community context.

When teachers choose to leave the profession, where do they go? A further study could focus on the kinds of professions teachers are choosing to pursue. What does that new profession provide for them that teaching did not? What support is in place to assist teachers in making a transition to a new position? What skills did the teacher possess that were helpful in a different professional context?

This study suggests that teachers need emotional support and that the emotional support they seek needs to be provided by the principal of the school in which they teach. A further study could hone in on specific characteristics that a principal should display and the actions the principal should put into practice in order to meet emotional needs of teachers. Meeting emotional needs may not come naturally to all administrators, and having an idea of the specific actions and attitudes they could put into practice that could support their teachers could be very helpful to principals.

A helpful tool that could be developed is one that a principal could use in his or her own school to investigate what teachers need. Ranking items could be used in a survey separately with a Likert scale to allow teachers to express to the principal what his or her needs are in an objective way. A tool such as this could be the start to communication and a good relationship between the principal and the individual teachers.

Conclusion

Every participant in the study, whether teacher, former teacher, or principal, agrees that teaching is an extremely difficult job with pressure coming from all sides. I was scrolling Facebook recently and noticed a shared meme that said, “Welcome to teaching... where the pay is low and everything is your fault.” Unfortunately, that is how teachers often feel: they get no credit but all of the blame. Conversely, many very successful people in society can often point to a teacher who encouraged them to pursue dreams or stay on positive paths in life. Society needs teachers, good ones; and good teachers need support.

This study’s results showed that the relationship between the teacher and his or her principal is very important to the teacher; and it *is* a relationship. In his interview, Principal H suggested that the society and the government want to make education like a business, focusing on data and outcome and holding teachers accountable for test scores students produce (personal communication, January 14, 2016). By focusing on the numbers, principals ignore the fact that many students need to have a relationship with the teacher. That relationship is emotional; whether positive, energizing emotions or negative, enervating emotions, it is emotional. Teachers who are being put on emotional roller-coasters by their students all day need

emotional support from their leaders. Participants in this study clearly stated that for a teacher to be able perform all of the many expected aspects of the profession with excellence, that teacher needs to feel a calling to the profession and come to the classroom with a passion that cannot be quenched. According to Covey (1989) this falls under Habit 7: Sharpening the Saw. A teacher's emotional bank account can be emptied on a daily basis by students; he or she needs emotional support to fill the account in order to keep going back with renewed passion and vigor.

Teachers in the study expressed things they really wanted from their principals. They needed a leader of integrity who trusts them to make decisions in their classrooms. This leader can trust teachers because he or she has visited the classroom enough to believe that this teacher is capable and has made that clear in the many kind and encouraging conversations they have enjoyed. People usually cannot verbally make a request for what they really need; and even if they could, when those needs are met by obligation, the supportive action will seem cold and lack authenticity.

Principals need excellent teachers; teachers need excellent principals. Several studies referenced by Steve Dinham in his 2008 text, *How to Get Your School Moving and Improving: An Evidence Based Approach*, identified qualities of principals who led excellent schools:

Principals at the outstanding sites were found to possess and utilize high-level interpersonal skills and are liked and respected, often, but not always, by all. Their motives and actions are trusted by others. They use people's names when out and about in the school and show interest in what others are doing. They demonstrate empathy and compassion and are

available at short notice when needed. They are seen to work for the school rather than for themselves and model 'do as I do,' rather than 'do as I say.' They epitomize the notion of the servant leader, while being unmistakably in control. (Dinham, 2008, p. 47)

Principals were not mainly responsible for the exceptional educational outcomes observed, but their leadership was found to be a crucial factor in creating and sustaining an environment in which teachers can teach, students can learn, and exceptional outcomes can occur. (Dinham, 2008, p. 58)

It is my hope that one result of this study will be a more open relationship between teachers and principals as each realizes the importance of the relationship and how communication and emotional support can enhance the relationship. When the relationship is positive, the teacher can thrive and survive those early years, becoming the seasoned, effective teacher students need.

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Appendix A - Former Teacher Survey

Participants: former teachers who left the teaching profession

1. How many years of teaching did you complete?

A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4 E. 5

2. Are you currently employed full time in a profession other than education?

a. Yes b. No

3. If yes, are you more satisfied in your new profession than you were in teaching?

a. Yes b. No c. Not applicable

If yes, what is the relationship between your current income and your teaching income?

b. Lower than teaching

c. Higher than teaching

d. About the same

e. Not applicable

4. If yes, what is the relationship between your current job stress and your stress as a teacher?

a. Lower than teaching

b. Higher than teaching

c. About the same

d. Not applicable

5. Please rank the following kinds of administrative support that you may or may not have received when teaching according to your perceived value. In other words, rank the supportive action according to its value to you when you were a classroom teacher. 1 = most valuable 10 = least valuable

- a. My principal trusted me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
 - b. My principal spoke to me in a kind and positive way.
 - c. My principal visited my classroom often and gave me undivided attention when we had a conversation.
 - d. My principal assisted me with classroom management and discipline.
 - e. My principal provided the materials I need for my classroom.
 - f. My principal provided effective professional development for me.
 - g. My principal gave helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise as a teacher.
 - h. My principal provided constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.
 - i. My principal praised my good work with specific, positive comments.
 - j. My principal demonstrated personal and professional integrity.
6. Please briefly explain your reason(s) for leaving the teaching profession.
7. What, if anything, could your principal have done or could have done better to keep you on the faculty?

Appendix B - Principal Interview Protocol

Introductory Information

- Revisit purpose for the study and questions
- Risks and benefits – informal “informed consent”
- Explain safeguards for information and confidentiality
- Permission for recording
- Collection of signed consent form

Establishing Comfort and Creating a Profile

- a. How long have you been in education?
- b. How long were you a teacher before becoming an administrator?

Interview Questions

1. Generally speaking, what do you see as the principal’s primary role relative to teachers?
2. What do you find about your job, relative to working with teachers, as the most rewarding or satisfying?
3. What do you find about your job, relative to working with teachers, to be most challenging?
4. What do you consider your primary role relative to a new teacher when one comes into your building?
5. How do you fill that role? What does that look like throughout a year’s time?
6. What, if anything, is different about the role of a principal working with a teacher with less than five years of experience as opposed to teachers with tenure and more than five years of experience?
7. As you think about it, what are the reasons you believe some teachers leave the

profession before year five?

8. What specific actions might you take with young teachers in your building to assist them in becoming very successful teachers?
9. What other thoughts might have crossed your mind during this interview that you believe pertinent to the topic of “teachers leaving the profession before completing five years of service?”
10. Would you please consider the following question that I asked the teachers, and answer it as you believe a novice teacher would.

Please rank the following kinds of administrative support that you may or may not have received when teaching according to your perceived value. In other words, rank the supportive action according to its value to you when you were a

classroom teacher. 1 = most valuable 10 = least valuable

- a. My principal trusted me to be able to make decisions in my classroom.
- b. My principal spoke to me in a kind and positive way.
- c. My principal visited my classroom often and gave me undivided attention when we had a conversation.
- d. My principal assisted me with classroom management and discipline.
- e. My principal provided the materials I need for my classroom.
- f. My principal provided effective professional development for me.
- g. My principal gave helpful suggestions and informal feedback to increase my expertise as a teacher.
- h. My principal provided constructive and meaningful feedback after an observation.
- i. My principal praised my good work with specific, positive comments.

- j. My principal demonstrated personal and professional integrity.

Closing

- Thank the administrator for his/her time and valuable contribution to the study.