

Factors that Influence an Administrator's Decision to Seek Dismissal of  
Tenured Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify factors important in teacher termination decisions and to create and to test that model using survey responses for Missouri public administrators. The independent variables chosen were broken into five (5) scales: time commitment; teacher experience; structural support and policies; building climate; and, union support for the teacher. Multiple regression correlation was used to analyze the data and determine if any of the five factors were statistically significant predictors in an administrator's decision to dismiss poor tenured teachers.

The study found two weak factors that influenced an administrator's decision to seek dismissal of a tenured teacher. Teacher experience and building climate were found to be related to the administrator's decision to seek dismissal. The overall model accounted for about four percent of the total variance.

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## CHAPTER 1

### *INTRODUCTION*

Since the “A Nation at Risk” report describing the subpar state of public education in the United States was released in 1983, state departments of education and public school administrators have faced ever growing political and public pressure to improve the quality of U.S. public schools. “A Nation at Risk”, even though widely criticized as inaccurate (Berliner & Biddle, 1995), served as the stimulus for many federal and state initiatives focusing on the improvement of public education. Federal initiatives, such as Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and state mandates in assessment like the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skill (TAKS) and the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) have changed the basis on which building and school district leaders make decisions about how to best improve public schools.

Although the majority of public school initiatives like NCLB focus on student achievement as indicators of a quality school, in recent years researchers have also focused on the quality of the classroom teacher to determine the effectiveness of public schools. Following simple logic that asserts the teacher is the most important factor in a the quality of a school, administrators have begun to focus on increasing the skill and knowledge level of the individual classroom teacher as the most efficient and quick change to address the raised political and public expectations on schools.



## *STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM*

One way to address classroom performance issues is to increase staff development opportunities for teachers to improve their skills. Another way to increase student performance is to remove poor teachers from the classroom. However, current research indicates that relatively few teachers are being dismissed for poor performance. Nationally, in 1991, the average annual proportion of teachers dismissed or persuaded to resign was 0.64 percent (Bobbitt, 1991) with most of those teachers being probationary. For example, Michael Ward (1995) reported that the dismissal rate for probationary teachers in Pennsylvania was 2.7 percent, while the rate for tenured teachers was 0.15 percent, or 1 out of every 670 tenured teachers. While probationary teachers made up 21 percent of the total teacher population in Ward's study, they accounted for 81 percent of the dismissals. Conversely, tenured teachers, who made up 79 percent of the total teacher population, accounted for only 19 percent of the dismissals (1995). According to Ward, the actual rate of dismissals for tenured teachers (0.15 percent) was significantly lower than the proportion of such teachers that superintendents believe should be dismissed for poor performance (4.1 percent). Administrators are only removing roughly 1 of every 27 tenured teachers they believe should be dismissed (Ward, 1995). According to information from the Illinois State Board of Education dating back to 1987, ninety-three (93) percent of Illinois school districts have never attempted to fire anyone with tenure. Indeed, data collected, since 1998, from each of Illinois' 876 school districts demonstrates that 83 percent of the state's school districts have not given any tenured teacher an unsatisfactory job evaluation (Reeder, 2005). Also according to Reeder's evaluation of Illinois school districts (2005):

- Out of 95,500 tenured teachers in Illinois an average of only two are fired each year for poor performance.

- More than 2.5 million administrative hours have been devoted to evaluating Illinois teachers and only 1 out of 930 evaluations of tenured teachers resulted in an unsatisfactory rating.

Illinois is apparently not atypical. The Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) survey in 2003-2004 indicated that 30 tenured teachers were non-renewed by 18 separate boards of education. Five teachers requested hearings, and all were eventually held. However, most of these teachers were dismissed due to the difficult economic times experienced by the state of Kansas. Most of the non-renewals of tenured teachers occurred because of enrollment declines or financial constraints faced by individual districts.

The KASB and Illinois information demonstrate that school districts around the United States have poor performing tenured teachers; however, it appears that most schools/administrators are not addressing this obvious issue. The purpose of this study is to identify why some administrators are willing or not willing to go through the process of dismissing a tenured teacher.

## CHAPTER 2

### *REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE*

#### Tenure

Tenure is usually interpreted as affording teachers due process rights during continuing contracts. It is intended for teachers who have successfully completed a probationary period and is designed to protect competent teachers from arbitrary non-renewal of contracts for reasons unrelated to the educational process (Scott, 1986). Tenure laws were created to protect teachers from capricious or arbitrary dismissals that administrators or boards of education may employ and to remove the teacher from patronage politics and appointments. These laws require lengthy documentation with clear criteria for teachers' evaluations and often some specific remedial help to indicate sincere desire on the part of the administrator to assist in the correction of a teacher's incompetency. Seniority-based pay scales, strict working conditions, regulations, and similar restrictions are a central part of the nation's public school systems, designed to protect teachers from the whims of their superiors and from political influence (Hess & Maranto, 2000). In most school systems, after receiving tenure, teachers are, within certain parameters and exceptions (reduction in force and financial hardship), largely assured of lifetime employment (Hess & Maranto, 2000).

Although many teachers believe that once they are granted tenure they have been given permanent right or in simpler terms they have been guaranteed a job permanently, that is simply not true. Vacca and O'Brien (1970) conclude that tenure, once attained, does not give the teacher a legal right to his or her teaching position; however, the attainment of the tenure status does guarantee the teacher certain legal procedures associated with due process rights. However,

tenure does not stipulate continuing the employment of an incompetent or inefficient teacher (Kirp & Yudof, 1974).

Even though state tenure statues have provided protection for teachers in their careers by preventing the arbitrary dismissal of competent tenure teachers, tenure has come under criticism. Critics claim tenure protects incompetent teachers, and many educators, politicians, and parents are questioning the necessity of tenure. One of the biggest criticisms about public education has been, and continues to be, the number of incompetent teachers in classrooms (Simpson, 1996). According to McGrath, incompetent teachers comprise approximately ten (10) percent of the teacher workforce. This ten (10) percent tends to have the same effect as the proverbial “one bad apple” (McGrath, 2000).

#### Tenure Debate

Less than one-third of administrators say they have enough freedom to remove ineffective teachers; in fact, relaxing tenure regulations is at the top of a list of 11 different ideas judged “very effective” for improving schools (Johnson, 2002). About 70% of school leaders say that “making it much easier for principals to remove bad teachers” is a “very effective” way to improve teaching in the nations’ schools (Johnson, 2002). Also according to Johnson (2002), research suggests that teachers are not wholly dismissive of problems associated with tenure. Many teachers agree that “the tenure system” should be changed to make it far easier to remove bad teachers. Critics of the teachers’ statutory protections complain that it has become virtually impossible to fire bad public school teachers (Mitchell, 2004). The perception that it is impossible to dismiss a tenured teacher is often the cause of administrators’ allowing poor or even harmful teachers to remain in classrooms. Scott states, however, it is not impossible to terminate a tenured teacher, but the process is a difficult and cumbersome one (1996).

There is also a widespread perception that tenured teachers are not subject to sufficiently critical evaluations. The New York State Board Association's study of teacher tenure found that because of the "great fear" administrators have about the difficulty of dismissing teachers for incompetency, they typically only seek terminations in cases of criminal conduct and gross negligence (Newman-Caro, 1998).

#### Difficulty and Reluctance to Dismiss a Tenured Teacher

It is important to understand the realities that surround the discharge of a teacher, for embarking upon this path promises to be painful for everyone involved. Teachers who challenge allegations that they are personally or professionally unworthy of continuing to teach in their districts, or perhaps to continue to teach at all, understandably experience extraordinary trauma and anxiety (Mitchell, 2004)

The process of terminating problem teachers, especially those with tenure, can be so arduous and expensive such that many school districts do not bother attempting to terminate the teacher. Coakley (1991) reported that some dismissal cases could literally consume as much as half the administrator's time, last over two years, and cost nearly \$100,000. In 1994, school districts across New York State spent on average nearly \$200,000 and 476 days on each teacher dismissal hearings (Vander-Weele, 1994). Grossmont District near San Diego, California, spent eight years and more than \$300,000 to fire Julie Ellery, a teacher described by her superintendent as the worst teacher he has ever seen, who along with other shortcomings refused to answer students' questions in class (Billingsley, 2001). Because of the cost and time factors, in 1992 Illinois public schools dismissed only seven (7) out of 26,000 tenured Chicago public school teachers, and just forty-four (44) of 100,000 tenured teachers in the entire state of Illinois were dismissed between 1991 and 1997 (Goldstein, 1998). According to a study by the Consortium on

Chicago School Research, in Illinois, far more tenured teachers should have been fired during that period. The Consortium reported that an astounding number of administrators (more than 2/3) said they would fire six (6) to twenty (20) percent of their teachers if they did not have to take the time to prepare the volumes of information needed to be successful in the teacher dismissal hearings (Vander-Weele, 1994). In California, the Pacific Research institute found that between 1990 and 1999 only 227 tenured teachers out of 300,000 went through the dismissal process from start to finish. In the Los Angeles District alone, only one (1) teacher went through the process. Los Angeles had 35,000 teachers during that time period, and only 13 dismissal cases reached the hearing stage with only the one (1) teacher terminated (Billingsley, 2000). Most of the tenured teachers who left California schools involuntarily did so through contract buyouts or resignations (Downey, 2003).

The ordeal of dismissing an inadequate teacher has been shown to be so wearing that those who have been through it often feel they will never do it again. Nonetheless, in the past few years, states have streamlined their dismissal procedures, and some have reformed their tenure procedures to address the difficulties of dismissing a tenured teacher (Chase, Deslatte, & Schelzig, 2010)<sup>1,2</sup>. New Hampshire, Virginia, North Carolina, Texas, Colorado, Georgia<sup>3</sup>, and South Dakota have seen legislative threats to teachers' professional security in recent years. Legislators have affirmed school administrators' beliefs that it is too difficult to dismiss poor teachers, and these legislators have introduced bills in hopes of correcting this problem. Although legislators have begun to give school districts increased power to dismiss poor tenured teachers, districts that ultimately fail to prove the case for discharge will continue to face

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<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin does not grant teachers tenure, but leaves it up to the discretion of the local school districts [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/pdf/teacher\\_tenure.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/pdf/teacher_tenure.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Mississippi has no statutory protections providing a due process hearing.

<sup>3</sup> Georgia eliminated tenure in 2000 for all new teachers, but reinstated tenure in 2004 and now tenured teachers can only be dismissed by the state. <http://www.ciclt.net/page/legal/faq.html>

significant financial liability and may even be forced to reinstate teachers who have been found to be deficient (Mitchell, 2004). Jones (1997) quoted one superintendent as saying that the dismissal of a tenured teacher was not just a process for the administrator-- it was a career. Jones (1997) cited an example of one principal who lost the use of his arm due to the stress involved in pursuing a dismissal that resulted in litigation. Administrators literally have to decide whether or not it is worth the trouble and realize that ultimately they may end up being the ones on trial. In most dismissal cases, the administrator is not in an enviable position. The administrator takes the time to document and find cause for the recommended dismissal of the tenured teacher and then because of legal reasons the administrator cannot disclose those reasons. The students and parents of the school community never learn the real reasons a teacher is dismissed. Common practice by most school administrators is to keep teacher evaluations confidential in order to prevent potential defamation and libel charges by the teacher, but if the teacher decides to make the reasons public then the administrator can reveal his/her reasons.

Even though administrators cited dismissing tenured teachers as a “very large time commitment” and they were still very concerned over the many obstacles and large amount of effort involved in dismissing an incompetent teacher, many were still willing to do so (Kvenvold, 1989). Whittaker (1999) acknowledged that dismissing a teacher might seem like an extremely traumatic and emotional event for a school; however, he pointed out that those emotions generally exist only during the duration of the process. Whittaker also states that an ineffective teacher seldom leaves a legacy at a school; however, any legacy that is left by the teacher can be imprinted on the psyche of the administrator. Mitchell (2004) disagrees with Whittaker somewhat, as he says that the administrator’s efforts often divide schools and communities because teachers, students, and parents are called to testify for and against a teacher.

## *STATUTORY REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF TENURED TEACHERS*

Grounds and procedures for dismissing tenured teachers are set forth in state statutes. Although states differ in the specific terms, dismissals are likely to include broad and expansive reasons such as the following (Egley & Permuth, 2002).

### Incompetence

The broad term incompetence speaks to the mental and physical capability of the tenured teacher to carry out his or her duties (Permuth, Mawdsley, & Janssen, 2000). William Valente (1997) notes in *Law in the Schools*, cases that involve the dismissal of tenured teachers on incompetence grounds have focused on conditions that include physical or mental capacity; lack of knowledge or ability to impart knowledge; violations of school rules; lack of cooperation with supervisors or coworkers; persistent negligence; failure to maintain discipline; and personal misconduct, in or out of school. The manner of offering evidence in incompetency cases is generally through testimony. Both the quantity and quality of evidence are important. The courts have liberally allowed opinions of principals, curriculum supervisors and other supervisory personnel to stand as expert testimony. Other testimony by students and parents may be important, and actual observations for what transpired in the classroom are significant (Alexander & Alexander, 2001). Granting tenure to the faculty member provides presupposition to the court of the teacher's competence. It becomes the burden of the school to show that such competence can no longer be presumed (Permuth & Egley, 2002).

### Insubordination

The second most commonly used grounds for dismissal of a tenured teacher is insubordination. Insubordination is the willful disregard by a teacher of the explicit or implicit directions of an administrator, assuming that the administrator has the right and the responsibility



to provide those directions. This disregard can manifest itself as ongoing refusal to listen to the administrator or unwillingness to perform reasonable duties or as a single occurrence that is of such magnitude that the school has cause to seek the teacher's termination. For example, a Minnesota teacher was dismissed on grounds of failing to improve communication with parents, failing to adopt the school's curriculum, and using school time inappropriately (Permuth & Egley, 2002). In general, courts look at acts that were willful and show continual and persistent disregard for authority or at an incident that establishes clear and convincing proof that the teacher intentionally violated school directives. Courts will, however, always examine whether the problem was a result of a simple mistake of communication or a disobedient response to the authority (Permuth & Egley, 2002).

#### Immorality

Immorality is a rationale for dismissal of tenured teachers in a number of state statutes. Although a charge of immorality can be construed as somewhat vague, it has been upheld by the courts, particularly in cases in which a clear connection can be established between the teacher's behavior and his or her inability to continue working in a satisfactory manner in the given academic environment. Examples of immorality held valid in the dismissal of tenured teacher include sexual involvement with students, homosexuality, stealing money or materials, and growing or smoking marijuana (Permuth & Egley, 2002).

#### Moral Turpitude

Moral Turpitude, a base, vile or depraved act, has a clear overlap with immorality as grounds for dismissal. In many cases of moral turpitude, there is associated criminal activity, such as fraud, drug use, and dealing or growing marijuana, sexual deviancy and theft. Turpitude

is not only immoral, but also clearly detestable as defined by community mores and values (Permuth & Egley, 2002).

### Neglect of Duty

Neglect of duty in general means that an individual has a legal duty to perform in a certain way and failed to do so. For a public school teacher, neglect of duty normally means that the teacher did not follow the rules or failed to supervise the students in his or her charge. The charge of neglect of duty does not mean that a teacher failed to hand in a lesson plan or failed to appear for a meeting; it is serious. Neglect of duty issues range from drinking beer and sharing marijuana with students to failing to supervise and protect students on field trips (Permuth, Mawdsley, & Janssen, 2000).

### Good and Just Cause

Good and just cause – a number of states have in force a zipper clause – a term that recognizes that no matter how many descriptors are used (e.g., incompetent, insubordination), there may be need to dismiss a faculty member without specifying the exact word or words for dismissal. A zipper clause is a clause in an employment agreement in which both parties waive the right to demand bargaining on any matter not dealt with in the contract, regardless of whether that matter was contemplated when the contract was negotiated or signed. For example, the phrase “includes, but is not limited to” is the zipper clause in Florida State statute (Permuth & Egley, 2002). In essence, the zipper clause is a broad safety net used when school districts do not have a specific descriptor when charging a tenured teacher with a deficiency.

### Provisions in Missouri

In Missouri, no Board of Education can lawfully terminate a tenured teacher’s contract until after serving the teacher with written charges specifying with particularity the grounds

alleged to exist for termination of such contract, a notice of hearing on charges and a hearing by the BOE of charges if requested by the teacher (The educators guide to handling hot school issues, 2001).

Termination by BOE, Notice, Charges (Missouri Revised Statutes, 168.116). At least thirty (30) days before service of notice of charges of incompetency, inefficiency, or insubordination in line of duty, the teacher should be given by the school board or the superintendent of schools warning in writing, stating specifically the causes which, if not corrected, may result in charges for dismissal. After the thirty (30) day notice has been received by the teacher, the superintendent (or his designated representative) and the teacher should meet and conference in an effort to resolve the charges issued in the thirty (30) day letter.

After the teacher has been sent the thirty (30) day letter and the conference between the superintendent and the teacher has taken place, administrators must evaluate the teacher and determine if said teacher has corrected the listed issues. If the administration determines that the teacher has not corrected the listed issues, then a notice of hearing, together with a copy of the charges will be served on the tenured teacher at least twenty (20) days before to the date of the hearing. Either the teacher or the board can request a hearing, but the hearing must take place between twenty (20) and thirty (30) days of the request. Upon the filing of charges, the BOE may suspend the teacher from active performance of duty until a decision is rendered by the BOE, but the teacher's suspension is with pay until a decision has been reached by the BOE (Mo 168.116).

Appeal by Teacher Missouri Revised Statutes 168.120. The teacher has the right to appeal the decision of the BOE to the circuit court of the county where the employing school district is located. The appeal must be taken within fifteen (15) days after service of a copy of

the decision of the BOE upon the teacher, and if an appeal is not taken within the time, then the decision of the BOE becomes final.

If the circuit court hears the appeal, the issue is handled in the same manner as a civil action. In all appeals from the BOE or circuit court the costs of the hearing are assigned to the losing party. If the circuit court finds for the teacher, the teacher is then restored to permanent teacher status and is to be paid compensation for the period of time during which the teacher was suspended from work (Mo 168.120).

#### *REASONS FOR ACTION*

In order to understand why tenured teachers and experienced administrators react in the manners they do when faced with dismissal, it is useful to first understand human motivation. In 1943, Abraham Maslow wrote his famous paper on the “Theory of Human Needs,” and from that came Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Human Needs.” Maslow hypothesized that people are motivated by a hierarchy of needs – the hierarchy he described can be drawn in the following manner:

Table 1

*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

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Maslow's hierarchy of needs is depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels: the four lower levels are grouped together as deficiency needs associated with physiological needs, while the top level is termed growth needs associated with psychological needs. While deficiency needs must be met, growth needs are continually shaping behavior. The basic concept is that the higher needs in this hierarchy only come into focus once all the needs that are lower down in the pyramid are mainly or entirely satisfied. Growth forces create upward movement in the hierarchy, whereas regressive forces push greater needs further down the hierarchy (Herrington, 2004).

Within Maslow's deficiency needs, each lower need must be met before moving to the next higher level. Once each of these needs has been satisfied, if at some future time a

deficiency is detected, the individual will act to remove the deficiency. The first four levels listed in the pyramid are:

- Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc.,
- Safety/security: out of danger,
- Belongingness and Love: wanting to affiliate with others, wanting to be accepted,
- Esteem: to achieve, be competent, wanting to gain approval and recognition.

Also, according to Maslow, an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs if and only if the deficiency needs are met. Maslow's initial conceptualization included only one growth need – self-actualization (Huitt, 2001). Self-actualized people are characterized by these traits or attributes:

- Being problem-focused,
- Incorporating an ongoing freshness of appreciation of life,
- Feeling a concern about personal growth,
- Having the ability to have peak experiences.

Maslow later differentiated the growth need of self-actualization, specifically naming two lower-level growth needs prior to general level of self-actualization—enter those “two lower-level growth needs” right here-- and beyond that level they are:

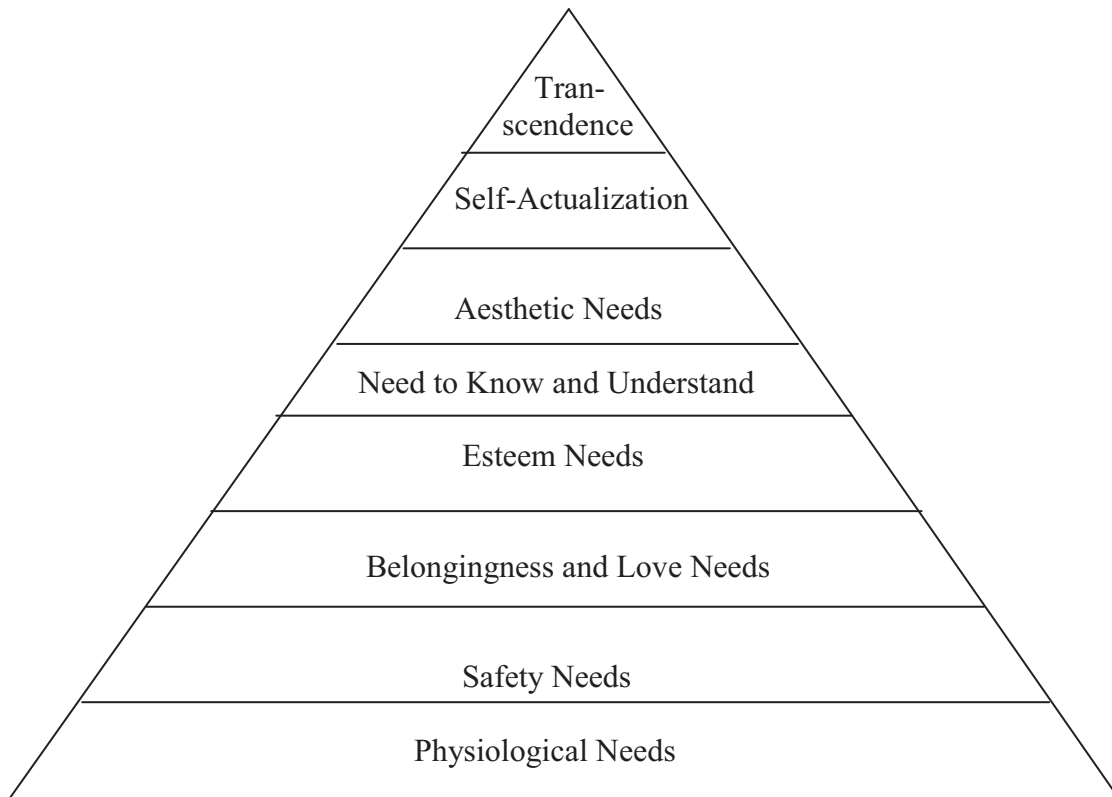
- Cognitive: to know, to understand, and explore,
- Aesthetic: to appreciate symmetry, order, and beauty,
- Self-actualization: to find self-fulfillment and realize one's potential,
- Self-transcendence: to connect to something beyond the ego or to help others find self-fulfillment and realize their potential.

A second, revised, version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is depicted below:

Table 2

*Maslow's revised Hierarchy of Needs*

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Maslow's basic position is that as one becomes more self-actualized and self-transcendent, one develops wisdom and automatically knows what to do in a wide variety of situations (Huitt, 2001). Daniels (2001) suggests that Maslow's ultimate conclusion that the highest levels of self-actualization are transcendent in their nature may be one of his most important contributions to the study of human behavior and motivation.

Norwood (1999) proposes that Maslow's hierarchy can be used to describe the kinds of information individuals seek at different levels. For example, individuals at the lowest level seek coping information in order to meet their basic needs. Information that is not directly connected

to helping a person meet his or her needs in a very short time span is simply left unattended. Individuals at the safety level need helping information. They seek to be assisted in achieving safety and security. Enlightening information is sought by individuals seeking to meet their belongingness needs. Empowering information is sought by people at the esteem level. They are looking for information on how their ego can be developed. Finally, people in the growth levels of cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization seek edifying information.

Maslow's theories of human needs can provide understanding into the emotional responses teachers have when their jobs are placed in jeopardy. Tenured teacher's most likely feel personally attacked when an administrator begins to question their ability. Administrators also feel conflicted and unsure about whether they are taking the correct approach in deciding to attempt to dismiss a tenured teacher. As the administrator goes through the process of observing, conferencing with, and documenting tenured teachers' deficiencies, the tenured teachers begin to feel unsafe. Teachers begin to question their belonging to the organization and most definitely do not feel loved. At the same time Administrators also continue to question themselves about whether the process will be worthwhile. As the process continues, teachers' self-esteem and belief in themselves drops as does the administrator's. Billikopf (2003) states that a person's self-esteem is more fragile than most care to admit, and conflict often threatens whatever self-esteem a person may possess. When tenured teachers are at the point where their self-esteem is threatened, the tenured teachers are at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and only the basic physical needs are being met.

#### *PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN CONFLICT*

As a tenured teacher faces job insecurity, what happens when that teacher only has his/her basic needs addressed and what happens with the administrator's well-being as he/she continues



through the process of the teacher's dismissal? According to Hoban (2006) safety and belonging needs are essential to a person's well-being and conflict arises when these needs are not met.

Hoban (2006) describes conflict as a natural disagreement resulting from individuals that differ in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs. He also emphasizes that conflict can arise from personality differences. Weeks (1992) defines conflict as a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Within this simple definition by Weeks (1992) there are several important understandings that emerge:

- 1. Disagreement** - Generally, we are aware there is some level of difference in the position of the two (or more) parties involved in the conflict. But the true disagreement versus the perceived disagreement may be quite different from one another. In fact, conflict tends to be accompanied by significant levels of misunderstanding that exaggerate the perceived disagreement considerably. If we can understand the true areas of disagreement, this will help us solve the right problems and manage the true needs of the parties.
- 2. Parties involved** - There are often disparities in our sense of who is involved in the conflict. Sometimes, people are surprised to learn they are a party to the conflict, while other times we are shocked to learn we are not included in the disagreement. On many occasions, people who are seen as part of the social system (e.g., work team, family, company) are influenced to participate in the dispute, whether they would personally define the situation in that way or not. In the above example, people very readily "take sides" based upon current perceptions of the issues, past issues and relationships, roles within the organization, and other factors. The parties involved can become an elusive concept to define.
- 3. Perceived threat** - People respond to the perceived threat, rather than the true threat, facing them. Thus, while perception doesn't become reality per se, people's behaviors, feelings and

ongoing responses become modified by that evolving sense of the threat they confront. If we can work to understand the true threat (issues) and develop strategies (solutions) that manage it (agreement), we are acting constructively to manage the conflict.

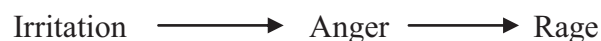
- 4. Needs, interests or concerns** - There is a tendency to narrowly define "the problem" as one of substance, task, and near-term viability. However, workplace conflicts tend to be far more complex than that, for they involve ongoing relationships with complex, emotional components. Simply stated, there are always procedural needs and psychological needs to be addressed within the conflict, in addition to the substantive needs that are generally presented. And the durability of the interests and concerns of the parties transcends the immediate presenting situation. Any efforts to resolve conflicts effectively must take these points into account.

People often interpret reality differently; they perceive differences in the severity, causes and consequences of problems. Misperceptions or differing perceptions may come from self-perceptions, others' perceptions, differing perceptions of a situation and/or perceptions of threat. Billikopf (2003) says that conflict occurs when disharmony is felt by a person, so when an administrator admonishes a tenured teacher, that teacher feels disharmony and feels threatened, thus conflict arises. Contention that leads to conflict occurs when a tenured teacher disagrees with an administrator's evaluation of the teacher's abilities. Contention creates a sense of psychological distance between people, such as feelings of dislike, bitter antagonism, competition, alienation, and disregard (Billikopf, 2003). Johnson, Ford, and Kaufman (2000) maintain that in organizational life there is nothing more pervasive than conflict and contention. People often struggle over many issues, one of which is performance reviews, and these struggles typically generate substantial emotion, which may range from excitement to anger to

resentment – and a person’s reaction can take the form of smiles, swearing, sarcasm, crying, or even thinly veiled insults (Bartunek, Kolb, & Lewicki, 1992). One should not be surprised on those occasions when a tenured teacher would become emotional when confronted with the possibility of losing his/her job and the administrator would become emotional to the action/reaction of the tenured teacher. The question is: which emotion will manifest from the teacher as he/she is confronted with the possibility of losing his/her job and which emotion will manifest from the administrator as he/she reacts to the tenured teacher?

Emotion refers to the actual experience of feeling in a situation; for example, feeling angry, depressed, excited, resentful, or satisfied (Bartunek, Kolb, & Lesicki, 1994). People may feel unfairly treated when the results they receive are not what they expected or fall short of what they felt they deserved (Johnson, Ford, & Kaufman, 2000). Homans (1974) argues that people experience anger when they are unjustly under-rewarded and in many cases with a tenured teacher, the teacher perceives that he/she are being unjustly or unfairly treated.

What is anger and why do people become angry? Anger is an emotional response triggered by an interpretation that a threat is or may be present (Peurifor, 1999). Tenured teachers whose jobs are in jeopardy perceive the administrator as a threatening person and become angry. Anger can exist at any one of a wide range of intensities that can be illustrated as follows:



Anger can be expressed in many different forms and a variety of different actions, including:

- Violent, destructive actions,
- Hurtful or critical remarks (sarcasm),
- Sulking/pouting,
- Passive-aggressive behavior,
- Suppression (a person is angry but does not want anyone to know).

Both the tenured teacher and the administrator are likely to become angry at some point during the process of the performance evaluation/review or the dismissal hearings. How each handles the anger varies from person to person. The administrator will most likely attempt to suppress his/her anger and try to remain a professional, but when anger is involved he/she may not be able to contain his/her anger. The teacher may also attempt to remain professional, but he/she may not feel that remaining professional is necessary. No one is sure exactly how the motivation generated by anger is produced since the way in which the mind works is still mostly a mystery. However, there are different aspects of the motivation generated by anger which the tenured teacher and the administrator could fall under (Peurifor 1999).

The first is an increased focus on an individual's needs or wants: - meaning as a person becomes angry, the pain and needs of others become increasingly less important, and all that matters is the pain that individual is feeling. Second is a greater sense of confidence – meaning that the angrier an individual becomes the more that person believes that he can do whatever is necessary to eliminate the perceived threat or to meet his needs. Third is a sense of righteousness – the anger produces a sense that what the person is doing is morally justified. And fourth is a reduced awareness of all other emotions – all other emotions are swallowed up in the overwhelming psychological and physical sense generated by anger. Both the teacher and the administrator no doubt feel all of the above listed motivations during this process. Without question their responses deal with their emotions and perception of fairness. The administrators' attempt to remain objective, but it is a near impossibility for the teacher to remain objective or for the administrator to expect the teacher to remain objective. The teacher will very likely have the irrational response that the administrator's decision is not fair and react in an irrational manner.

## *SELF-EFFICACY*

Bandura's Self-efficacy theory is defined as people's beliefs about their own capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave (Bandura, 1994). People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided (Bandura, 1994). People with a sense of strong self-efficacy set challenging goals, maintain a strong commitment to those goals, and they increase their efforts when the thought of failure occurs. In addition, people with high self-efficacy recover quickly after failure and they attribute their failure to their insufficient effort or the lack of knowledge or skills required to achieve their highly set goals. They approach threatening situations with the assurance that they can exercise control over the situation and this outlook readily produces accomplishment and lowers stress. In contrast, people with low self-efficacy do not attempt difficult tasks and they have low aspirations and weak commitments to the goals they do pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, people with low self-efficacy blame their personal deficiencies, blame the problems they encounter, and identify all the poor outcomes that may occur instead of focusing on how to be successful. People with low self-efficacy give up easily in the face of difficulties and are slow to recover following a failure. Bandura's (1994) research asserts that self-efficacy comes from four major sources of influence.

1. **Mastery Experiences** – mastery experience is based on the notion that success found through hard work and perseverance breeds success and a sense of strong self-efficacy. Conversely, people who experience easily-achieved and quick success tend to expect it to always be that way and are easily frustrated and discouraged when failure does occur.

People with a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to use their failures and setbacks as lessons on how to overcome adversity while people with low self-efficacy give up and quit during difficult times.

2. **Social Models** – people with strong self-efficacy tend to imitate people similar to them and believe that if a person similar to them is capable of succeeding in a specific endeavor, then they are capable as well. People with low self-efficacy believe that when others who are similar to them fail, then, they must not be capable of succeeding either.
3. **Social Persuasion** – people with a sense of strong self-efficacy believe others' comments about their abilities to achieve a specific goal and are more prone to greater effort and longer focus when seeking the goal because of the other people's belief in them. Those same people who have a sense of strong self-efficacy will dismiss or take it as a challenge to be defeated when others verbally challenge their ability to be successful. People with a low sense of self-efficacy do not tend to believe others when told they can be successful and tend to follow those who say they lack the abilities to be successful. People with low self-efficacy, from fear of failure, tend to avoid any challenging activities where a successful outcome might help them gain a higher sense of efficacy.
4. **Emotional State** – people who have a high sense of self-efficacy are likely to view emotions and stresses as challenges to overcome on the road to success, whereas people with lower self-efficacy use emotions and stresses as excuses and reasons as to why they are unsuccessful.

Pajares (2002) explains Bandura's model in this way: "People's behavior can be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their capabilities than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing, for these self-efficacy perceptions help determine what individuals do with the

knowledge and skills they have.” Howard Ebmeier, Professor at the University of Kansas, uses Bandura’s theory of Self-efficacy to explain why school administrators refrain from dismissing incompetent teachers. Ebmeier (2004) states that in many cases administrators do not believe they have the Personal Efficacy (skills, attitudes, or will) to execute dismissal proceedings against tenured teachers. Secondly, people need to feel that an action is only worth the effort if the outcome is worthwhile. Ebmeier further states that most administrators who have not been personally involved with a dismissal case have not been properly trained in the process of tenured teacher dismissal, nor have they observed other administrators in the process of dismissing a tenured teacher. What this means is that many administrators are reluctant to seek the dismissal of a tenured teacher because they lack either the belief they have the skills necessary (Self-efficacy), or they believe the desired outcome (a successful dismissal of the tenured teacher) is not possible given the conditions of the case. In most cases, it is likely a combination of the lack of self-efficacy and perception that a desired outcome is not possible constitute the main reasons administrators do not attempt to dismiss tenured teachers. Frank Panjares (2002) echos Ebmeier’s beliefs as he says that self-efficacy beliefs help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity (e.g., an administrator seeking dismissal of a tenured teacher), how long will they persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations. Bandura (1986) also explains the major disjoint between self-efficacy and a person’s action. He states that reasonably accurate appraisal of a person’s own capabilities defines success and a large misjudgment in personal efficacy in either direction has major consequences. According to Bandura’s theory, an adult’s coping capabilities, motivation, emotional state, and thought process all lead to their success in the professional setting and they rely more on their psychosocial skills to have success rather than their training

and technical skills. With this understanding of Bandura's self-efficacy theory and the writings of Panjares and Ebmeier, we can hypothesize that any administrator who grossly overestimates their capabilities and attempts to dismiss a tenured teacher without the required ability can suffer failure and severe discomfort. These failures and difficulties undermine administrators' credibility and produce serious, hard-to-remedy harm to their self-belief. If a failure like this occurs, administrators with a high sense of self-efficacy will use their ability to cope with the failure and will most likely learn from the process and correct the mistakes before attempting it again. Administrators with a low sense of self-efficacy, who have not developed the necessary coping ability, may be hesitant to attempt to dismiss another tenured teacher. In contrast to an administrator that overestimates his/her ability, an administrator who underestimates his/her capability also has costs. If an administrator has created self-limiting beliefs of his/her capabilities, he or she can prevent himself/herself from even making the attempt to dismiss the poor tenured teacher – the self doubt of these administrators artificially creates internal obstacles that affect performance.

Why are some administrators willing to seek dismissal of a tenured teacher and some not? According to Bandura's theory (1994), the administrator who is willing to undertake the challenging process of dismissing a tenured teacher has a strong sense of self-efficacy. This administrator is willing and has the ability to remain task oriented in the face of the pressing situational demands, failures, and setbacks that occur in the process of the dismissal. They are able to manage the difficult environmental demands under the taxing circumstances and they maintain a resilient sense of efficacy throughout the entire process. They believe they have the capabilities and the wherewithal to complete the task. The administrator that is unwilling to undertake the process of dismissing a tenured teacher most likely has a low sense of self-



efficacy. They do not believe they have the ability and will choose to lay blame on external factors that prevent the process rather than even beginning the attempt to dismiss the teacher.

### *FACTORS INFLUENCING TENURED TEACHER DISMISSAL ACTION*

Figure 3 displays the different efficacy factors that will be measured in this study. The model displays four principal efficacy factors (General External Support, Internal Efficacy, Specific Contextual Factors, and Internal Values) that identify and measure the administrator's belief in both himself/herself and belief that there are sufficient supports in place to allow the administrator to complete the task of bringing disciplinary action resulting in dismissal of a tenured teacher. In each case the principal efficacy factors are more narrowly defined by specific factors that constitute the framework and relationship of the principal factors in the overall model.

1. **General External Support** is all the external factors that may affect the administrator's decision to seek disciplinary action. The administrator must be aware of the tenured teacher's *community relationships*, the *climate of the school building*, the *Board of Education's* support for seeking dismissal of the tenured teacher, the *Political Climate* of the school building and district, the *Union Support for the tenured teacher*, and finally if the administrators has any *collegially support* in seeking dismissal of the tenured teacher.
2. **Specific Contextual Factors** are all the specific factors that an administrator may take into account before he/she decides to seek disciplinary action against a tenured teacher. The teacher's *years of experience*, the potential monetary *cost to the district*, the administrator's *time available* to complete the task, and if there are any *structural support policies* in place to assist the administrator in seeking

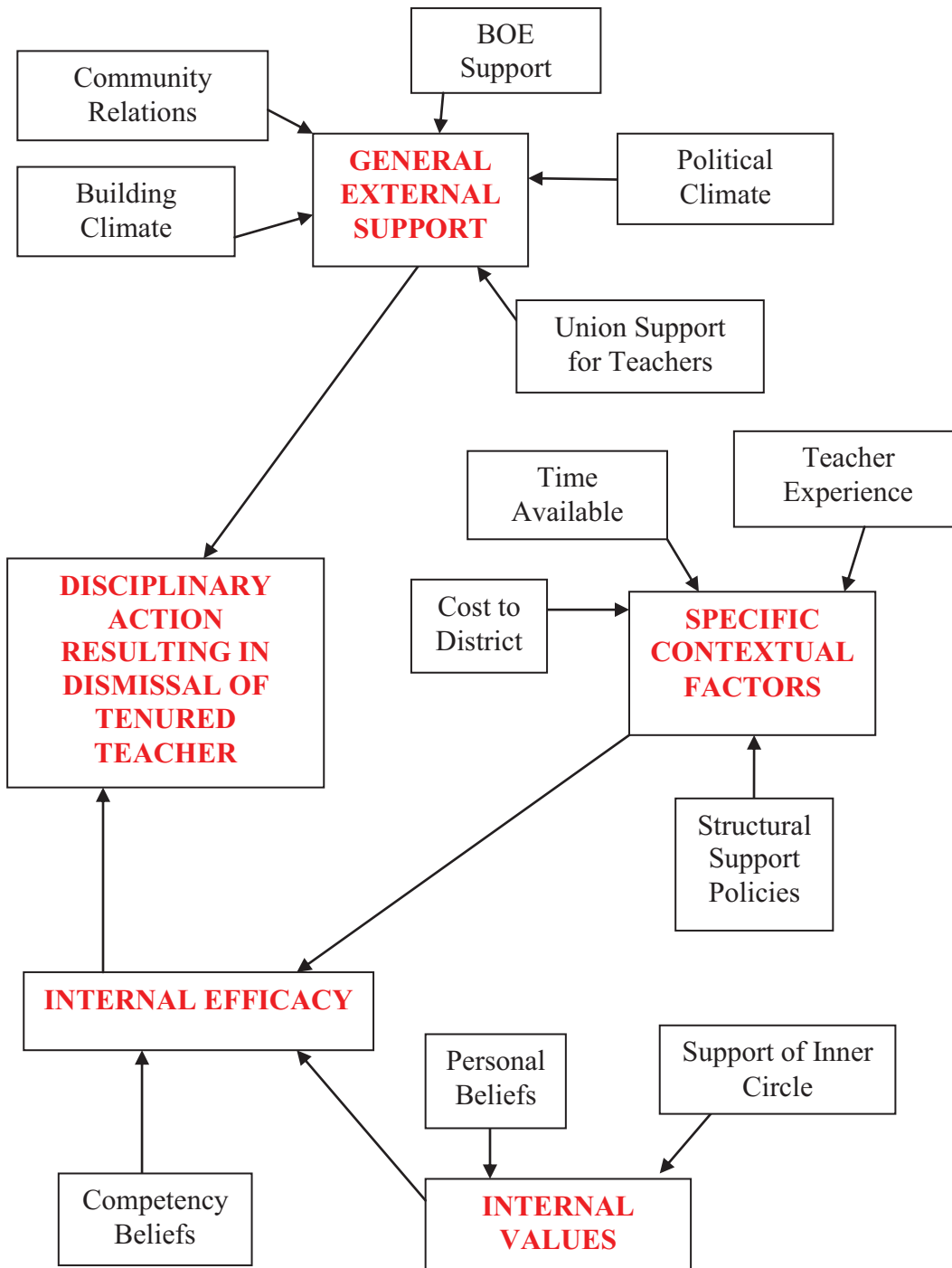
the dismissal of the tenured teacher are all important factors in the administrator's decision.

3. **Internal Values** are the administrator's personal values. The administrator's *personal beliefs* as to what attributes a good quality teacher possesses and demonstrates and the administrator's *support of his/her inner circle* are important factors that lead to he/she seeking dismissal of a tenured teacher.
4. **Internal Efficacy** or the beliefs that an administrator has in his/her own competency to complete the task is another principal factor in the decision to seek dismissal. Please note that in the model below, both the administrator's Internal Values and the Specific Contextual Factors point the internal efficacy principal factor.

If you follow the interactions lines on the model you will notice that each principal factor (narrowly defined by the specific factors) lead to the outcome of seeking disciplinary action resulting in dismissal of a tenured teacher.

Table 3

*Factors Influencing Tenured Teacher Dismissal Action*



## CHAPTER 3

### *INTRODUCTION*

This chapter describes the research method used in conducting the current study. It includes the description of the current study and information about the research design and rationale, population, sample, data collection, and data analysis and management.

### *METHODOLOGY*

The purpose of this study was to create a predictive statistical model that would explain/predict when an administrator would take action to dismiss a tenured teacher. This study surveyed administrators in the state of Missouri to gather information about their internal values, internal efficacy, external support, and also collected specific contextual factors that might influence the administrator's decision to seek dismissal of a tenured teacher.

The study used a five point Likert scale questionnaire designed to measure the attitudes of administrators toward the dismissal of tenured teachers as described above. The participants were solicited from a pool of respondents throughout the state of Missouri who answered the on-line survey indicating that they had or had not dealt with the issue of dismissing a tenured teacher. The survey asked participants to answer the questions using the following scale – Critically Important (5), Important but not Critical (4), Of Some Importance (3), Of Little Importance (2), and Of no Importance (1). The survey questions each participant was asked to answer using the above scale are listed below in Table 4 with the specific domains the questions were constructed to answer. Questions 1-75 on the survey are all related to the administrator's self-efficacy beliefs, thus ensuring the 10 domains in the predictive model are related to Bandura's self-efficacy model.

Table 4

*Survey Questions Identified by Specific Domains*

<p>Domains Measured by Survey Questions</p>	<p>Survey Questions Listed by Specific Domains. The participants were asked to identify the factors that would influence his/her decision to seek dismissal of a tenured teacher.</p> <p>Stem Question: Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1-5 with (1) being of no importance, (2) of little importance, (3) of some importance, (4) important but not critical, and (5) critically important.</p>
<p>Community Relations Factor questions:</p>	<p>44. The extent of community connections of the poor teacher            49. The possible negative publicity for the school or school district            63. The connections between the poor teacher and school board members            72. Community pressure not to dismiss a given teacher</p>
<p>Board of Education factor questions:</p>	<p>26. The principal does not have support from the school board office            56. Principal's fear of lack of school board support            57. School board members' distaste for making difficult personnel decisions            58. School board members' fear of being sued</p>
<p>Building Climate factor questions:</p>	<p>3. Principal's attempts to avoid confrontation with the poor teacher            5. Principal's concern that the rest of the staff will not support his or her decision or action            6. Principal's concern that the rest of the staff will support the poor teacher            7. Principal's concern that he or she will be ostracized by the rest of the staff once the dismissal process begins            12. The dilemma faced when the teacher is poor in the classroom but is a strong extra-curricular coach or sponsor            19. If the principal removed one teacher it might cause them to remove other equally-bad teachers            20. Removal of a teacher might cause tensions within the building            23. The fact that the poor teacher has only had troubles in the current building            27. The principal is fearful of staff displeasure or rebellion if action is taken to dismiss a teacher            30. The principal only has disagreements with the one (poor) teacher            32. The removal process might be viewed as just a personality conflict between the principal and the teacher</p>
<p>Political Climate factor questions:</p>	<p>47. The political strength of the poor teacher</p>
<p>Union Support for Teacher</p>	<p>18. A poor teacher's good recommendations from past administrators</p>

factor questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>43. The extensive laws protecting ineffective teachers</li> <li>45. The fear of potential litigation against the principal should something go wrong in the dismissal case</li> <li>53. Fear of financial repercussions of dismissal</li> <li>54. Fear of union retaliation on the principal</li> <li>59. State labor laws protecting teachers from dismissal</li> <li>60. Strong union in the building or district</li> <li>64. The district's success in past attempts to dismiss poor teachers</li> <li>65. The strong defense likely by the teacher's union</li> <li>66. The support from the teacher union</li> </ul>
Teacher Experience factor questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>34. How many years the teacher has left before retirement</li> <li>35. How much experience the teacher has</li> <li>36. How much seniority the teacher has</li> <li>46. The number of years the teacher has been employed in the building</li> </ul>
Cost to District factor questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. The actual decision to terminate would cause a potential problem in filling the position</li> <li>39. Loss of building or district funds to pay for possible monetary damages</li> <li>42. The cost of a lawsuit</li> </ul>
Time Available factor questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. The amount of time required for the principal to work with the teacher</li> <li>9. The amount of time consumed affording the poor teacher "due process" rights</li> <li>10. The amount of time needed for adequate documentation of poor performance</li> <li>11. The bureaucratic necessity of following detained guidelines necessary for dismissal</li> <li>13. The drain of a principal's time attempting to remediate a poor teacher prior to dismissal</li> <li>14. The principal's fear of not being able to meet deadlines in the remediation process</li> <li>15. The time involved following due process guidelines</li> <li>16. The time involved in designing remediation program for the poor teacher</li> <li>17. The time involved in extra classroom visitations</li> <li>22. The decision to remove a teacher would cause too much involvement on the principal's part</li> <li>24. The paperwork takes too long</li> <li>29. The principal is unwilling to take the time needed for documentation</li> <li>31. The process of termination might hinder the principal's ability to fulfill his or her own job obligations</li> <li>71. The amount of time required for documentation of ineffectiveness</li> </ul>
Structural Support and Policies factor questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Potential errors the principal might make in documenting the case</li> <li>28. The principal is unfamiliar with the dismissal process</li> <li>37. Lack of certain support from other administrators</li> <li>38. Lack of certain support from the superintendent</li> <li>50. The principal's fear of court proceedings and the need to</li> </ul>

	testify 51. Absence of district guidelines for dismissal 52. The quality of the School Board's dismissal policies 61. The quality of the district's guidelines for dealing with poor teachers 73. The reliability of the district's written policies for handling dismissals 74. The detailed teacher-board contract
Competency Belief factor questions:	33. The teacher is perceived by the staff as having a different educational view than the principal 41. The chance of a principal being embarrassed at a due process hearing 68. The principal's lack of conviction that removal of a poor teacher is best for kids 69. The principal's belief that he or she can be successful in the termination process 70. The principal's belief in his or her own abilities to carry out the dismissal process 75. The principal does not believe he or she has a clear concept of what makes a good teacher 1. A principal's personal feelings toward the teacher

Question #76 (How likely are you to aggressively attempt to remove a poor tenured teacher from the classroom for incompetence) was the dependent variable – measured by a 4 point Likert scale of Very Likely (4), Would Consider in Some Cases (3), Would be Hesitant Unless Under Unusual Circumstances (2), The Likelihood is Small (1). The responses were then factor analyzed and combined to form stable scales. These scales were then correlated using a multiple regression model that created a predictive model.

#### *POPULATION AND SAMPLE*

Both administrators who had the experience of making the decision to bring about the dismissal of tenured teachers and those who have not dismissed a tenured teacher participated in this study. In order to make the sampled population reasonable (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996), only administrators in the state of Missouri were considered. Using the SURVEYMONKEY internet survey mechanism, 500 administrator listed on the Missouri Superintendent’s list-serv were

contacted. Administrators who chose to participate in the study selected a URL address located on the e-mail they received and that address took them directly to the survey where details about the study were explained. Once the participant had completed the survey, the data was transmitted to the SURVEYMONKEY website where it was stored. Of the Administrators completing the survey (n=329) {in some cases the respondents did not answer all questions resulting in some of the factors reporting different response rates} – 66.9% were building administrators while 33.1% were district administrators. 57.6% were male and 42.4% were female.



## CHAPTER 4

### *DATA ANALYSIS*

#### Introduction

The data analysis and results of the study are presented in this chapter which is organized in two sections: 1) assessments of validity and reliability of the survey instrument, and 2) testing of the predictive model.

#### Assessment of Validity and Reliability

To analyze the data gathered by the survey, the results were coded and entered into the SPSS version 17 software. Principal component factor analysis using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method was conducted. The Varimax rotation was used with the goal of producing meaningful item reduction. After examining the factor loadings, five factors achieved a minimum level .7 on all included questions and as a result, the construct exhibits a high degree of discriminant validity.

After the loading of the factor analysis, the Cronbach's alpha statistic of each factor was calculated in order to assess the reliability of each scale discovered through factor analysis. Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency of the items in the factor. The lower limit for an acceptable Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 (Hair et al., 1998) though 0.6 may be acceptable for newly defined scales. The results of the Cronbach's alpha for each scale and the specific factor loading for each question are displayed in Tables 5-9:

Table 5

*Reliability Statistics – Time Commitment*

Variable	N of Items	N of Cases	$\alpha$
Scale 1 (Time Commitment)	5	329	.931
Time Commitment Factor Questions:			Factor Loading ( $\alpha$ )
9. The amount of time consumed affording the poor teacher "due process" rights			.812
10. The amount of time needed for adequate documentation of poor performance			.846
15. The time involved following due process guidelines			.851
16. The time involved in designing remediation program for the poor teacher			.865
17. The time involved in extra classroom visitation			.860

Table 6

*Reliability Statistics – Teacher Experience*

Variable	N of Items	N of Cases	$\alpha$
Scale 2 (Teacher Experience)	3	323	.824
Teacher Experience Factor Questions:			Factor Loading ( $\alpha$ )
34. How many years the teacher has left before retirement			.758
35. How much experience the teacher has			.799
36. How much seniority the teacher has			.772

Table 7

*Reliability Statistics – Structural Support*

Variable	N of Items	N of Cases	$\alpha$
Scale 3 (Structural Support)	3	311	.874
Structural Support and Policies Factor Questions:			Factor Loading ( $\alpha$ )
51. Absence of district guidelines for dismissal			.797
52. The quality of the School Board's dismissal policies			.808
73. The reliability of the district's written policies for handling dismissals			.852

Table 8

*Reliability Statistics – Building Climate*

Variable	N of Items	N of Cases	$\alpha$
Scale 4 (Building Climate)	4	328	.865
Building Climate Factor Questions:			Factor Loading ( $\alpha$ )
5. Principal's concern that the rest of the staff will not support his or her decision or action			.794
6. Principal's concern that the rest of the staff will support the poor teacher			.793
7. Principal's concern that he or she will be ostracized by the rest of the staff once the dismissal process begins			.714
20. Removal of a teacher might cause tensions within the building			.709

Table 9

*Reliability Statistics – Union Support for Teachers*

Variable	N of Items	N of Cases	$\alpha$
Scale 5 (Union Support)	4	312	.932
Union Support for Teacher Factor Questions:			Factor Loading ( $\alpha$ )
54. Fear of union retaliation on the principal			.708
60. Strong union in the building or district			.802
65. The strong defense likely by the teacher's union			.778
66. The support from the teacher union			.797

## Testing of the Predictive Model

Multiple regression analysis was used to test whether scales one through five significantly predicted the administrator's decision to attempt dismissal of a poor tenured teacher. The results of the regression indicated the five combined predictors explained 4.3% of the variance ( $R^2 = .043$ ,  $F(5,274) = .034$ ,  $p < .01$ ) with each variable contributing as indicated in Table 10. Table 11 presents the descriptive data for the 5 scales tested in the survey.

Table 10

*Predicting Dismissal of Tenured Teacher*

Predictor	$\beta$	$t$	p
Scale 1 (time commitment)	-.036	-.588	.557
Scale 2 (teacher experience)	-.118	-1.694	.091
Scale 3 (structural support)	.011	.170	.865
Scale 4 (building climate)	-.096	-1.403	.162
Scale 5(union support)	-.030	-.421	.674

Table 11

*Measurement Properties of the Survey*

	N	$\alpha$	Mean	SD
Scale 1 (time commitment)	5	.931	2.31	1.26
Scale 2 (teacher experience)	3	.834	3.27	1.07
Scale 3 (structural support)	3	.874	2.21	1.13
Scale 4 (building climate)	4	.865	3.29	.992
Scale 5 (union support)	4	.932	2.40	1.22

## Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings for the data collected on this study of the factors that influence an administrator's decision to seek the dismissal of a tenured teacher. The survey was submitted to factor analysis and useful, meaningful, and viable subscales were identified with acceptable internal consistency and reliability. The findings were not statistically significant. Chapter 5 contains a review of the findings and relates the findings of the study to previous literature as well as addressing implications for practice and future research. The averages and individual survey question distributions are located in Appendix B.

## CHAPTER 5

### *OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS*

#### Overview

This chapter contains information about the major findings of the study, including a discussion of possible explanations for such findings, overall implications of the study, and ideas for future research.

#### Discussion

The key findings of the study demonstrated that none of the five areas measured or a combination of these measures was statistically significant in the decision of an administrator to seek discipline or seek dismissal of a tenured teacher. However, although the first identified factor of time may not have been statistically significant, the data demonstrated that just under 50% of the administrators surveyed did find time was a factor (factor one) in their decision to seek dismissal of a tenured teacher. The survey questions defined time related to the need to document, remediate, and evaluate the teacher was indeed worth the effort on the part of the administrator. The findings of the time factor are interesting in that about half the administrators were willing to undertake the process even with having to spend many hours in the classroom of the teacher. Previous studies (Painter, 2000) have identified that administrators see time as a barrier to seeking dismissal of a tenured teacher. Painter noted that a large number of the principals surveyed saw time as a factor in their unwillingness to seek dismissal of a teacher (2000). Just fewer than 50% of the over 300 administrators in Missouri surveyed in this study were willing to spend the time necessary to seek dismissal of a tenured teacher. It could be that in the ten years since Painter's study the educational community has begun to reassess its belief about the amount of time needed to dismiss a tenured teacher. The public pressure to have high

quality teachers and the raised level of accountability could be the reasons administrators have begun to change their thoughts on time being a barrier.

The number of years a teacher has been teaching (factor two) was again not statistically significant, but was an interesting finding of the study. Administrators surveyed acknowledged that they were reluctant to attempt to dismiss teachers in the last few years of their careers. These findings are disappointing, but not unexpected. Poor teachers allowed to remain in the classroom can be very detrimental to the education and growth of our school age children. In a study conducted in Tennessee, Sanders, Saxon, and Horn (1996) found that teacher effectiveness as measured by student achievement was both additive and cumulative and was observable in as little as three years. Having the knowledge that poor teachers hurt children should be incentive enough to undertake the process to dismiss even a long time tenured teacher, but, as the findings of the study demonstrate, most administrators do not want to take this action for a teacher who is in the last few years of his/her career. As stated above, these findings are discouraging but not unexpected. According to the data collected in this study, 91% of administrators surveyed did not see the value in going through the process to attempt to dismiss a long time poor tenured teacher. If a teacher has only three years until retirement and it will take the administrator two years to document the teacher's deficiencies – why put themselves through all the troubles of the process? Lack of internal efficacy may shed some conjectural light on why administrators do not pursue dismissal of a tenured teacher in this situation. As Ebmeier (2004) states in his research – a person's lack of will or belief that the outcome is worth the effort (self-efficacy) is a determining factor in a person's decision process. Presumably, the belief that the outcome is not worth the effort is the driving force behind the administrators' desire to not seek dismissal of these near-retirement teachers.

The assumed change of the building climate (factor four) was the third specific substantial factor identified in the study; however, again the data were not statistically significant. The survey questions were designed to identify whether administrators were concerned with negative repercussions coming from the dismissal of the tenured teacher. According to the data collected in this study in this external factor, 84% of the administrators surveyed were not overly concerned with any potential negative effects on the building climate that could arise from the dismissal of the poor tenured teacher. These are encouraging findings as they confirm that administrators are willing to seek dismissal of poor tenured teachers without the concern of the building climate. Other teachers in the building may be vocally supportive of the poor teacher, but many will most likely be thinking: It's about time the administrator did something about that person. Whitaker (1993) states that if an administrator can remove a negative teacher then the entire culture of the school will improve. Good teachers know who the poor teachers are and wonder why they are allowed to stay. Good teachers work very hard and are upset and resent that poor teachers are allowed to stay and bring the overall achievement of students and the school down. Although the good teachers may seem supportive of their colleague, they are very happy to see them go.

There have been countless studies conducted concerning the obstacles that administrators face when dismissing a public school teacher<sup>4</sup>. Most studies include data pertaining to the

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<sup>4</sup> Bridges, Edwin M., with Barry Groves. *Managing the incompetent teacher*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management and Stanford, CA: Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, 1984.

<sup>4</sup>Erickson, Ralph. "How Firm Are Teacher Tenure Laws?" *Kappa Delta Pi Record* 17 (April 1981):114-116.

<sup>5</sup>Frels, Kelly, and Timothy T. Cooper. *A documentation system for teacher improvement or termination: practical concise guide for legal consideration in teacher evaluation*. NOLPE Mini-Monograph. Topeka, KS: National Organization on Legal Problems of Education, 1982. ED 228 725.

<sup>6</sup>Larson, David H. "Dismissing Incompetent Staff." *School Administrator* 40 (February 1983):28, 35, 37.



number of probationary and tenured teachers who are dismissed and the reasons cited for the dismissals<sup>5,6,7</sup>. Other studies include data that explain how tenure and the burden of proof necessary to dismiss a tenured teacher is seen as an obstacle (Ward, 1995). Even more studies are geared toward the impact of incompetent teachers on classroom achievement and how tenure allows these teachers to stay employed<sup>7</sup> (Bonnett, J. 2010). This study differs from other recent studies in that it assumes Superintendents and Principals understand, believe, and accept that highly skilled teachers are the key to high student achievement.

### Conclusions

This study attempted to identify and create a model that would predict why administrators would or would not attempt to dismiss a poor tenured teacher. The study identified three specific factors that were not statistically significant, but could be seen as influential predictors in an administrator's decision process in deciding to attempt the dismissal of a poor tenured teacher. The number of years a teacher has been working and has until retirement was an influential predictor in that administrators use this knowledge to decide whether it is worth the effort to dismiss the teacher. The second influential predictor, the potential negative building climate change, did not negatively influence the administrator in his/her decision in attempting the dismissal of a tenured teacher. The third factor that could be seen as a positive change is the shift from previous studies in the area of administrators willing to spend the time necessary in seeking dismissal of a tenured teacher. Even though the study included ten specific factors that could influence an administrator's decision to pursue dismissal

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<sup>7</sup>MacNaughton, Robert, and Victor J. Ross. "With Preparation, You Can Clear the Teacher Termination Hurdles." *American School Boards Journal* 169 (April 1982):32-34.

of a poor tenured teacher, only three could be identified as influential in the decision making process.

The researcher had hoped the study findings would create a model that could predict clear and statistically significant factors in the decision making process of administrators when they seek the dismissal of a tenured teacher. Although the statistical findings were not significant, the study did provide some insight into areas where further research and study could be conducted.

#### Future Research

The subsequent recommendations for future research are based on the results of this study. In a related study a researcher could develop and use a self-efficacy scale to determine the level of self-efficacy in beginning administrators and compare the level of self-efficacy with veteran administrators. Using the results of the self-efficacy scale the researchers could compare the willingness of a beginning administrator and a veteran administrator to see if their respective levels of self-efficacy are a factor in seeking dismissal of a tenured teacher.

Further study into if and why current public school administrators are changing their thoughts in the area of taking the time necessary to pursue dismissal of a tenured teacher could be very interesting and informative.

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## Appendix A. Introductory E-mail

Dear Missouri School Administrator:

The purpose of this e-mail is to request your assistance in a research project that I am conducting as part of my doctoral work at the University of Kansas. For my dissertation, I will be examining the factors that influence a Missouri school administrator's decision to dismiss or not dismiss a tenured teacher.

The survey consists of 16 questions and should take you about twenty (20) minutes to complete. Please click on the following link or cut and paste it into your browser and begin.  
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=X5fyKcmeqK\\_2bhtAn4dEHP1g\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=X5fyKcmeqK_2bhtAn4dEHP1g_3d_3d).

Directions for completing the survey: Read each statement carefully and then indicate the relative importance of the statement in terms of why you think poor tenured teacher are not often relieved of their teaching duties.

Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are at least age eighteen. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, or email [mdenning@ku.edu](mailto:mdenning@ku.edu).

Thank you for your help and if you need to contact me please feel free.

[rmitchell@lamar.k12.mo.us](mailto:rmitchell@lamar.k12.mo.us) or 471-682-5571.

Sincerely,

Ron Mitchell



Appendix B. Survey Questions with Response Rate

<b>Question 1: How likely are you to aggressively attempt to remove a poor tenured teacher from the classroom for incompetence?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Very Likely	56.0%	181
Would consider in some cases	37.5%	121
Would be hesitant unless under unusual circumstances	5.3%	17
The likelihood is small	1.2%	4

<b>Question 2: Potential errors the administrator might make in documenting the case</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	55.9%	195
Important but not Critical	18.3%	64
Of Some Importance	18.1%	63
Of Little Importance	5.2%	18
Of No Importance	2.9%	10

<b>Question 3: Administrator's attempts to avoid confrontation with the poor tenured teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	20.7%	72
Important but not Critical	22.8%	79
Of Some Importance	23.9%	83
Of Little Importance	22.2%	77
Of No Importance	10.7%	37

<b>Question 4: Administrator's concern about negative publicity</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	9.3%	32
Important but not Critical	22.3%	77
Of Some Importance	32.2%	111
Of Little Importance	27.5%	95
Of No Importance	9.0%	31

<b>Question 5: Administrator's concern that the rest of the staff will not support his or her decision or action</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	3.8%	13
Important but not Critical	19.5%	67
Of Some Importance	37.3%	128
Of Little Importance	30.3%	104
Of No Importance	9.3%	32

<b>Question 6: Administrator's concern that the rest of the staff will support the poor tenured teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	3.2%	11
Important but not Critical	19.1%	66
Of Some Importance	33.6%	116
Of Little Importance	34.8%	120
Of No Importance	9.6%	33

<b>Question 7: Administrator's concern that her or she will be ostracized by the rest of the staff once the dismissal process begins</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	2.9%	10
Important but not Critical	11.5%	40
Of Some Importance	26.8%	93
Of Little Importance	40.3%	140
Of No Importance	18.7%	65

<b>Question 8: The amount of time required for the administrator to work with the teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	39.1%	135
Important but not Critical	25.2%	87
Of Some Importance	17.1%	59
Of Little Importance	11.9%	41
Of No Importance	7.0%	24

<b>Question 9: The amount of time consumed affording the poor tenured teacher &amp; due process rights</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	33.9%	117
Important but not Critical	27.8%	96
Of Some Importance	17.1%	59
Of Little Importance	14.5%	50
Of No Importance	7.0%	24

<b>Question 10: The amount of time needed for adequate documentation of poor performance</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	47.4%	165
Important but not Critical	23.6%	82
Of Some Importance	13.2%	46
Of Little Importance	11.2%	39
Of No Importance	4.9%	17

<b>Question 11: The bureaucratic necessity of following detailed guidelines necessary for dismissal</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	48.6%	160
Important but not Critical	24.9%	82
Of Some Importance	17.0%	56
Of Little Importance	6.1%	20
Of No Importance	3.3%	11

<b>Question 12: The dilemma faced when the tenured teacher is poor in the classroom but is a strong extra-curricular coach or sponsor</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	9.0%	30
Important but not Critical	30.9%	103
Of Some Importance	20.7%	69
Of Little Importance	26.4%	88
Of No Importance	12.9%	43

<b>Question 13: The drain of an administrator's time attempting to remediate a poor tenured teacher prior to dismissal</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	23.0%	76
Important but not Critical	34.7%	115
Of Some Importance	23.9%	79
Of Little Importance	12.7%	42
Of No Importance	5.7%	19

<b>Question 14: The administrator's fear of not being able to meet deadlines in the remediation process</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	16.2%	54
Important but not Critical	27.6%	92
Of Some Importance	27.3%	91
Of Little Importance	20.1%	67
Of No Importance	8.7%	29

<b>Question 15: The time involved following due process guidelines</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	33.1%	110
Important but not Critical	27.7%	92
Of Some Importance	20.8%	69
Of Little Importance	12.3%	41
Of No Importance	6.0%	20

<b>Question 16: The time involved in designing remediation program for the poor tenured teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	27.6%	91
Important but not Critical	28.2%	93
Of Some Importance	23.9%	79
Of Little Importance	13.9%	46
Of No Importance	6.4%	21

<b>Question 17: The time involved in extra classroom visitations</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	28.9%	96
Important but not Critical	26.8%	89
Of Some Importance	19.9%	66
Of Little Importance	17.2%	57
Of No Importance	7.2%	24

<b>Question 18: A poor teacher's good recommendations from past administrators</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	25.8%	85
Important but not Critical	26.7%	88
Of Some Importance	25.8%	85
Of Little Importance	14.9%	49
Of No Importance	6.7%	22

<b>Question 19: If the administrator removed one teacher it might cause them to remove other equally-bad teachers</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	8.5%	28
Important but not Critical	19.4%	64
Of Some Importance	20.9%	69
Of Little Importance	33.3%	110
Of No Importance	17.9%	59

<b>Question 20: Removal of a teacher might cause tensions within the building</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	5.1%	17
Important but not Critical	21.6%	72
Of Some Importance	39.6%	132
Of Little Importance	26.7%	89
Of No Importance	6.9%	23

<b>Question 21: The actual decision to terminate would cause a potential problem filling the position.</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	1.6%	5
Important but not Critical	15.0%	48
Of Some Importance	23.4%	75
Of Little Importance	32.5%	104
Of No Importance	27.5%	88

<b>Question 22: The decision to remove the teacher would cause too much involment on the administrator's part</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	3.1%	10
Important but not Critical	9.4%	30
Of Some Importance	10.1%	32
Of Little Importance	45.6%	145
Of No Importance	31.8%	101

<b>Question 23: The fact that the poor teacher has only had troubles in the current building</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	8.4%	27
Important but not Critical	16.1%	52
Of Some Importance	43.5%	140
Of Little Importance	23.0%	74
Of No Importance	9.0%	29
<i>answered question</i>		<b>322</b>

<b>Question 24: The paperwork is takes too long</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	5.9%	19
Important but not Critical	15.9%	51
Of Some Importance	17.5%	56
Of Little Importance	33.8%	108
Of No Importance	26.9%	86

<b>Question 25: The quality of written procedural manuals available for administrators to follow</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	19.5%	64
Important but not Critical	23.5%	77
Of Some Importance	30.8%	101
Of Little Importance	19.2%	63
Of No Importance	7.0%	23

<b>Question 26: The administrator does not have support from the school board office</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	73.4%	240
Important but not Critical	13.1%	43
Of Some Importance	8.9%	29
Of Little Importance	3.1%	10
Of No Importance	1.5%	5

<b>Question 27: The administrator is fearful of staff displeasure or rebellion if action is taken to dismiss a teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	3.0%	10
Important but not Critical	19.5%	64
Of Some Importance	33.5%	110
Of Little Importance	34.8%	114
Of No Importance	9.1%	30

<b>Question 28: The administrator is unfamiliar with the dismissal process</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	52.0%	170
Important but not Critical	19.0%	62
Of Some Importance	17.1%	56
Of Little Importance	7.6%	25
Of No Importance	4.3%	14

<b>Question 29: The administrator is unwilling to take the time needed for documentation</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	57.5%	188
Important but not Critical	11.3%	37
Of Some Importance	13.5%	44
Of Little Importance	10.4%	34
Of No Importance	7.3%	24

<b>Question 30: The administrator only has disagreements with the one (poor) teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	7.1%	23
Important but not Critical	15.3%	50
Of Some Importance	29.1%	95
Of Little Importance	33.4%	109
Of No Importance	15.0%	49

<b>Question 31: The process of termination might hinder the administrator's ability to fulfill his or her own job obligations</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	11.6%	38
Important but not Critical	25.7%	84
Of Some Importance	29.7%	97
Of Little Importance	25.7%	84
Of No Importance	7.3%	24

<b>Question 32: The removal process might be view as just a personality conflict between the administrator and the teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	5.8%	19
Important but not Critical	22.3%	73
Of Some Importance	32.9%	108
Of Little Importance	29.0%	95
Of No Importance	10.1%	33



<b>Question 33: The teacher is perceived by the staff as having a different educational view than the administrator</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	2.4%	8
Important but not Critical	16.4%	54
Of Some Importance	35.3%	116
Of Little Importance	36.5%	120
Of No Importance	9.4%	31

<b>Question 34: How many years the teacher has left before retirement</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	6.7%	22
Important but not Critical	23.2%	76
Of Some Importance	29.0%	95
Of Little Importance	26.2%	86
Of No Importance	14.9%	49

<b>Question 35: How much experience the teacher has</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	4.9%	16
Important but not Critical	19.7%	64
Of Some Importance	38.2%	124
Of Little Importance	26.2%	85
Of No Importance	11.4%	37

<b>Question 36: How much seniority the teacher has</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	3.4%	11
Important but not Critical	18.3%	59
Of Some Importance	26.1%	84
Of Little Importance	34.2%	110
Of No Importance	18.3%	59

<b>Question 37: Lack of certain support from other administrators</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	18.0%	58
Important but not Critical	34.4%	111
Of Some Importance	31.9%	103
Of Little Importance	12.4%	40
Of No Importance	3.7%	12

<b>Question 38: Loss of building or district funds to pay for possible monetary damages</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	10.5%	34
Important but not Critical	22.8%	74
Of Some Importance	29.8%	97
Of Little Importance	25.5%	83
Of No Importance	11.7%	38

<b>Question 39: Personal relationships between the poor tenured teacher and administrator may prevent dismissal action on the part of the administrator</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	17.7%	57
Important but not Critical	21.7%	70
Of Some Importance	28.0%	90
Of Little Importance	21.1%	68
Of No Importance	11.8%	38

<b>Question 40: The chance of an administrator being embarrassed at a due process hearing</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	7.1%	23
Important but not Critical	15.1%	49
Of Some Importance	22.8%	74
Of Little Importance	37.0%	120
Of No Importance	18.2%	59

<b>Question 41: The cost of a lawsuit</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	18.9%	61
Important but not Critical	27.9%	90
Of Some Importance	27.9%	90
Of Little Importance	17.0%	55
Of No Importance	8.7%	28

<b>Question 42: The extensive laws protecting ineffective teachers</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	33.8%	110
Important but not Critical	30.5%	99
Of Some Importance	20.6%	67
Of Little Importance	11.4%	37
Of No Importance	4.0%	13

<b>Question 43: The extent of community connections of the poor tenured teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	16.1%	52
Important but not Critical	31.9%	103
Of Some Importance	31.6%	102
Of Little Importance	14.9%	48
Of No Importance	5.9%	19

<b>Question 44: The fear of potential litigation against the administrator should something go wrong in the dismissal case</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	17.0%	55
Important but not Critical	26.3%	85
Of Some Importance	33.7%	109
Of Little Importance	17.3%	56
Of No Importance	5.6%	18

<b>Question 45: The number of years the teacher has been employed in the building</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	4.3%	14
Important but not Critical	23.2%	75
Of Some Importance	30.3%	98
Of Little Importance	30.7%	99
Of No Importance	11.8%	38

<b>Question 46: The political strength of the poor tenured teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	13.9%	45
Important but not Critical	23.2%	75
Of Some Importance	31.6%	102
Of Little Importance	22.0%	71
Of No Importance	9.6%	31

<b>Question 47: The poor tenured teacher might be friendly and helpful outside the classroom</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	2.2%	7
Important but not Critical	14.6%	47
Of Some Importance	33.5%	108
Of Little Importance	39.1%	126
Of No Importance	10.9%	35

<b>Question 48: The possible negative publicity for the school or school district</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	6.2%	20
Important but not Critical	25.7%	83
Of Some Importance	41.8%	135
Of Little Importance	20.1%	65
Of No Importance	6.5%	21

<b>Question 49: The administrator's fear of court proceedings and the need to testify</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	7.7%	25
Important but not Critical	19.5%	63
Of Some Importance	22.3%	72
Of Little Importance	33.4%	108
Of No Importance	17.3%	56

<b>Question 50: Absence of district guidelines for dismissal</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	56.4%	181
Important but not Critical	22.1%	71
Of Some Importance	11.8%	38
Of Little Importance	5.9%	19
Of No Importance	4.0%	13

<b>Question 51: The quality of the School Board's dismissal policies</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	57.6%	185
Important but not Critical	23.1%	74
Of Some Importance	13.7%	44
Of Little Importance	4.0%	13
Of No Importance	1.9%	6

<b>Question 52: Fear of financial repercussions of dismissal</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	14.4%	45
Important but not Critical	21.7%	68
Of Some Importance	32.6%	102
Of Little Importance	21.4%	67
Of No Importance	10.2%	32

<b>Question 53: Fear of union retaliation on the administrator</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	7.6%	24
Important but not Critical	17.0%	54
Of Some Importance	22.1%	70
Of Little Importance	30.6%	97
Of No Importance	23.0%	73

<b>Question 54: Lack of definition of poor teaching</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	37.7%	119
Important but not Critical	26.6%	84
Of Some Importance	18.4%	58
Of Little Importance	11.7%	37
Of No Importance	6.0%	19

<b>Question 55: Administrator's fear of lack of school board support</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	54.8%	176
Important but not Critical	22.4%	72
Of Some Importance	16.5%	53
Of Little Importance	4.4%	14
Of No Importance	2.2%	7

<b>Question 56: School board members' distaste for making difficult personnel decisions</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	42.3%	135
Important but not Critical	28.8%	92
Of Some Importance	17.2%	55
Of Little Importance	7.5%	24
Of No Importance	4.4%	14

<b>Question 57: School board members' fear of being sued</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	24.5%	79
Important but not Critical	28.5%	92
Of Some Importance	25.4%	82
Of Little Importance	15.2%	49
Of No Importance	6.8%	22

<b>Question 58: State labor laws protecting tenured teachers from dismissal</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	36.3%	115
Important but not Critical	29.7%	94
Of Some Importance	20.5%	65
Of Little Importance	8.8%	28
Of No Importance	5.0%	16

<b>Question 59: Strong union in the building or district</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	14.9%	47
Important but not Critical	25.6%	81
Of Some Importance	24.7%	78
Of Little Importance	20.3%	64
Of No Importance	14.9%	47

<b>Question 60: The quality of the district's guidelines for dealing with poor tenured teachers</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	47.4%	152
Important but not Critical	28.3%	91
Of Some Importance	15.6%	50
Of Little Importance	5.9%	19
Of No Importance	3.1%	10

<b>Question 61: The amount of time taken away from the professional development of other teachers who are good</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	13.8%	44
Important but not Critical	28.6%	91
Of Some Importance	33.3%	106
Of Little Importance	17.6%	56
Of No Importance	6.9%	22

<b>Question 62: The connection between the poor tenured teacher and school board members</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	22.4%	72
Important but not Critical	31.5%	101
Of Some Importance	24.6%	79
Of Little Importance	15.3%	49
Of No Importance	6.5%	21

<b>Question 63: The district's success in past attempts to dismiss poor tenured teachers</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	21.0%	68
Important but not Critical	35.5%	115
Of Some Importance	24.7%	80
Of Little Importance	11.7%	38
Of No Importance	7.4%	24

<b>Question 64: The strong defense likely by the teacher's union</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	10.2%	32
Important but not Critical	24.1%	76
Of Some Importance	27.6%	87
Of Little Importance	22.9%	72
Of No Importance	15.6%	49



<b>Question 65: The support from the teacher union</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	8.5%	27
Important but not Critical	23.1%	73
Of Some Importance	28.8%	91
Of Little Importance	24.1%	76
Of No Importance	15.8%	50

<b>Question 66: The uncertainty over what constitutes poor teaching</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	33.1%	106
Important but not Critical	27.8%	89
Of Some Importance	20.3%	65
Of Little Importance	12.5%	40
Of No Importance	6.6%	21

<b>Question 67: The administrator's belief that he or she can be successful in the termination process</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	52.3%	168
Important but not Critical	28.0%	90
Of Some Importance	15.3%	49
Of Little Importance	2.2%	7
Of No Importance	2.5%	8

<b>Question 68: The administrator's lack of conviction that removal of a poor tenured teacher is best for kids</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	60.0%	192
Important but not Critical	18.4%	59
Of Some Importance	9.4%	30
Of Little Importance	5.3%	17
Of No Importance	7.2%	23

<b>Question 69: The administrator's belief in his or her own abilities to carry out the dismissal process</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	53.6%	172
Important but not Critical	26.8%	86
Of Some Importance	12.8%	41
Of Little Importance	4.7%	15
Of No Importance	2.5%	8

<b>Question 70: The amount of time required for documentation of ineffectiveness</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	33.2%	107
Important but not Critical	24.5%	79
Of Some Importance	23.3%	75
Of Little Importance	12.1%	39
Of No Importance	7.1%	23

<b>Question 71: Community pressure not to dismiss a given teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	9.3%	29
Important but not Critical	33.9%	106
Of Some Importance	31.3%	98
Of Little Importance	19.5%	61
Of No Importance	6.4%	20

<b>Question 72: The reliability of the district's written policy for handling dismissals</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	51.9%	163
Important but not Critical	26.1%	82
Of Some Importance	14.6%	46
Of Little Importance	5.7%	18
Of No Importance	1.9%	6

<b>Question 73: The detailed teacher-board contract</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	43.5%	136
Important but not Critical	27.8%	87
Of Some Importance	16.6%	52
Of Little Importance	8.3%	26
Of No Importance	4.2%	13

<b>Question 74: The administrator does not believe he or she has a clear concept of what makes a good teacher</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Critically Important	52.2%	166
Important but not Critical	20.1%	64
Of Some Importance	14.5%	46
Of Little Importance	8.5%	27
Of No Importance	5.0%	16

<b>Question 75: How likely are you to aggressively attempt to remove a poor tenured teacher from the classroom for incompetence?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Very Likely	56.0%	181
Would consider in some cases	37.5%	121
Would be hesitant unless under unusual circumstances	5.3%	17
The likelihood is small	1.2%	4

<b>Question 76: What is your current position?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Principal	66.9%	216
Superintendent	33.1%	107

<b>Question 77: What is your gender?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Female	42.4%	136
Male	57.6%	185