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Call for Manuscripts

The editorial staff of *School Leadership Review* seeks high-quality, original manuscripts in consideration for the upcoming publication of the journal. The School Leadership Review is an internationally refereed journal sponsored and published by the Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration and is designed to offer a publishing opportunity to professors of educational leadership across the country on topics related to school administration. We encourage submissions from new professors as well as those with years of valuable experience. Manuscript guidelines are as follows:

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❖ Limit the use of tables, figures, and appendices, as they are difficult to import into the journal text layout.

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❖ Manuscripts may be submitted at any time for consideration through the journal's blind review process.

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School Boards, Superintendents, and Students: Making Large Impacts

As we look to the many stakeholders in education and a variety of roles, this edition takes a look at school boards, superintendents, teachers' evaluations as a major role of administrators. Additionally, one article showcases the factors that affect students' decisions in an educational leadership doctoral program as they access a terminal degree in our field.

In the article, *Ima Hogg, The Houston School Board and a Collaborative Model of School Leadership, 1943-1949*, **Linda Black** provides a narrative on how important leadership is from a woman's point of view. During Ima Hogg's first school board term she was placed on two committees and her leadership skills were amplified. She used a collaborative model in obtaining information from the community. Ima Hogg described the collaborative nature of schools as, "...all the personnel and departments in the schools cooperate in helping the child use what the school has to offer..." In sum, Ima demonstrated her leadership skills in re-vitalizing the Visiting Teacher Program; in organizing resources and people to support the programs, and in using a collaborative model in working with those in the field with those affected by the program. The work includes dedication to school boards in our past.

The next article, *Superintendent and School Board Relations: Impacting Achievement through Collaborative Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities*, **Greg Weiss, Nate Templeton, Ray Thompson**, and **Joshua Tremont** share emergent research to inform practitioners regarding practices that lead to effective school board – superintendent relations. Implications for the professional practice are *first*, the role of the superintendent is changing with a growing influence at a macro level; *second*, school board-superintendent discord occurs when there is misuse of position; *third*, the impact the community has on the superintendent-school board working relationship is dynamic and fluid; and *fourth*, the school board and superintendent have the enormous task of providing a quality education to the students in the community.

Following this, **Andy Nixon, Abbot Packard**, and **Margaret Dam** provide a study on *Teacher Contract Non-renewal in the Rocky Mountains*. The Rocky Mountain States are classified as Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Utah. The study answered four research questions: 1) What is the priority of reasons that school principals would recommend non-renewal of a teacher's contract? 2) Which behaviors do principals observe most frequently from ineffective teachers? 3) Which complications obscure school principals' ability to deal with ineffective teachers? 4) Are principals' responses unique based on demographic differences in principal years of experience, type of school, or location of school? Ethical violations and inappropriate conduct were identified as the most likely reasons principals would initiate a contract non-renewal. Principals reported that lack of instructional skills is observed most frequently from ineffective teachers. In answering the third question, time is reported as a primary barrier.

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In the article, *Superintendents and Professional Development: Voices from the Field,* **Juan Niño, Mike Boone, Israel Aguilar,** and **Dessynie Edwards** focus on understanding the role of the school leadership and superintendents, in providing quality professional development to improve instruction for all students. Professional development of a comprehensive school district change effort is described. This qualitative work examines the leadership behavior of the superintendent in providing quality professional development to improve student achievement in the school district. Participants were five districts in Texas of various sizes. It was found that superintendents who demonstrate leadership in professional development establish policies and organizational structures that support continuous learning for all staff members. They ensure that resources of time, money, and personnel needed for professional development are provided and match district-wide goals.

In the article, *Factors Affecting Doctoral Program Selection,* **Lesley F. Leach, Pam Winn, Susan Erwin, and Liza Benedict** endeavor to answer the following questions: What factors influenced doctoral-level students' decisions to attend particular Educational Leadership programs? Did the factors differ by students' age, ethnicity, and gender? The participant responses were analyzed descriptively in aggregate as well as disaggregated by gender and age. The participants were asked to identify factors that influenced their choice to attend their current Educational Leadership doctoral program from a prepopulated list. The top three factors were convenience, delivery of coursework, and tuition cost. The implications for practice would be how best to market the Educational Leadership doctoral program so you can recruit an adequate amount of quality students. Finally, it was found that students are concerned about the delivery of coursework. The majority of students desire a mixture of online and face-to-face learning.

The article, *Impacts of Teacher Evaluations: The importance of Building Capacity Through Excellence in The Application of the Teacher Evaluation Process,* **Susan Nix** and **Gary Bigham** state the purpose of this study was a concern for the interaction between a system of appraisal and the impact of the social system of a school on the outcome or results of a formal teacher evaluation. The content analysis utilized historical data. Then the information was compiled into a comparative analysis table whereby the PDAS could be examined in comparison. Most all teachers are being reported as excellent, but the lack of student success to the same degree indicated this impossibility. If the connection between teaching effectiveness and student success is accepted, then something is not working. PDAS encourages the multiple methods of assessment in addition to the 45 minute formal observation. Decisions made for contract continuation should be based on consistent data collected over time with support and intervention to remedy the situation.

Pauline M. Sampson, Ph.D.   Kerry L. Roberts, Ph.D.

Editor   *Associate Editor*

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A Legacy of Collaborative School Leadership: Ima Hogg and The Houston School Board, 1943-1949

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School boards are very powerful entities whose decisions have a significant impact on millions of students in the United States. Since the formation of the first local school boards in Massachusetts in the late 1700s, these groups of local officials have directed public education in their communities (Land, 2000). Throughout the nineteenth century, unpaid members of school boards managed both the daily operations of local schools districts and created policy. In the first half of the twentieth century, however, the increasing school population meant increased responsibilities for school board members as they oversaw increasingly larger and more complex institutions. The management of district infrastructure including facilities, transportation, food, etc. as well as responding to state legislation such as compulsory attendance laws slowly changed the model of school board governance. At first, professional managers (superintendents) were hired to oversee and manage the district's operations and school board members still participated in daily operations through committee oversight. In the latter half of the twentieth century, as both districts and responsibilities grew, increasing numbers of full-time personnel were hired to carry out the daily business of school districts (Gates, 2013; Halik, 2012; Sell, 2005).

In Texas, the 1876 Constitution decreed that any incorporated city could, by a majority vote of the property taxpayers, create and assume exclusive control of an independent public school within its limit (Eby, 1918). By August 1884, sixty-five Texas towns and cities managed school districts (Eby, 1918). However, as the Texas population significantly increased between 1870 and 1920, urban citizens voted to separate school management from municipal control, thereby creating independent school districts. For example, the Houston Independent School District was formed in 1923 and included a Board of Education which was composed of seven members elected from nonpartisan citywide elections, a common practice across the country at that time. For the next two decades, the Houston School Board was responsible for managing the daily operations of the district as well as those of the University of Houston and its affiliated College for Negroes.

Within the context of the Texas educational landscape, this article focuses on one particular local school board member in the mid-twentieth century who, not only played a significant role in the history of the Houston Independent School District,

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but left a legacy of school leadership marked by an emphasis on a collaborative model that is much more representative of twenty-first century school board governance. Ima Hogg (1882-1975), a community leader in Houston, Texas, for five decades, helped establish major cultural institutions such as The Museum of Fine Arts in 1900 and The Houston Symphony in 1913, serving as President of the Symphony Society from 1917-1921, and again from 1946-1956. In 1929, she started the Houston Child Guidance Center to provide mental health services for children and families and was involved in the leadership of this organization for over two decades. In 1940, she established the Hogg Foundation for Mental Hygiene (later Mental Health) at The University of Texas, which continues to provide information, scholarships, community resources, and training for mental health professionals throughout the state. From 1943 to 1949, Ima Hogg served as a member of the Houston School Board and it is that particular experience that is the focus of this article. Qualitative methods of historical analysis were used to examine primary and secondary sources in Texas libraries and archives, particularly the Museum of Fine Arts Archives in Houston and The Center for American History at The University of Texas in Austin which houses the Ima Hogg Papers (IHP).

In 1943, when Ima Hogg ran for the Houston School Board, she was already recognized as "a civic leader who could identify community problems, develop innovative solutions for them, and marshal widespread support in the private sector" (Kirkland, 1998, p. 462). Her strong support for education was evident while working on educational projects as diverse as mental health, music, and the arts. In a speech to the Woman's Club of Houston during her campaign for the Houston School Board in March of 1943, Ima Hogg explained her philosophy of education.

> The process of education in the individual is made up through experiences as well as through teaching. Therefore, with the roots of influence beginning in the home, it becomes a many-sided community responsibility in addition to being a school problem. This, I think we cannot overlook when considering a program for the development and education of our youth as future citizens. These are my beliefs, well grounded in me through heritage, training, and an abiding interest in my fellow man. (Box 4W237, Folder 3, IHP)

In a time when women held few elected positions, including on local school boards, Ima Hogg explained her reasons for running for the school board.

> My reasons for running for a place on the Houston school board are very simple. First of all, I believe the citizens of Houston are entitled to have two women representatives out of seven on the board of education. The women's point of view on problems of education and policies affecting schools would obviously not be amiss. I do not think the voters of Houston should overlook the justice of this claim. (Box 4W237, Folder 3, Ima Hogg Papers)

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She further explained another reason for running for office by describing her belief in public service, particularly during a time of war, when the focus of most citizens was not on education.

> The sacrifices which our men and women on the battlefront are making are a challenge to every man, woman, and child on the home front which can be met only through a willingness to serve wherever needed to the utmost of one's capacity, without thought of self. (4W237, Folder 3, IHP)

Public service on the Houston School Board provided Ima Hogg the opportunity to demonstrate a style of collaborative leadership perhaps more characteristic of today's school board members than those of the 1940s. The leadership positions that she held while serving on the Houston School Board included Assistant Secretary from 1944 to 1946, Secretary from September 1946 to May 1947, and Vice-President from 1947 to 1949.

However, after winning election in 1943, Ima Hogg's initial actions were unique for the time period. Although well versed in leading various community organizations, she decided that she lacked the needed information to adequately address the many educational issues facing the Houston School Board and, as she had done in the past, decided to obtain both knowledge and experience by contacting experts in the field and visiting classrooms first hand. Just like her modern counterparts, she lacked a professional background in education as well as in areas of expertise that board members had to address, such as school budgets. While a majority of board members in the twenty-first century report that they have received some training in many of the board operations, board members in the 1940s had not (Hess, 2002). In fact, what is now known from recent studies is that "there is actually a learning curve once a member is elected, takes the oath of office, and is seated on the board" (Halik, 2012, p. 5). The National School Boards Association estimates that without some preservice or orientation program, it is estimated that it will take at least two years of school board service before board members gain the background and confidence to perform effectively and confidently" (2007, p. 24). That is why there is a consensus among school board experts that school board members should obtain training and development to improve board effectiveness (Land, 2002; Roberts & Sampson, 2011).

While current research suggests that many school board members lack the knowledge of their individual role as school board members (Brenner, et al., 2002; Campbell and Green, 1994; gates, 2013), Ima Hogg was well aware of her inexperience when she was elected. Before she took office or ever attended her first meeting, Ima Hogg addressed this issue through a month-long program of self-directed study and training for her role on the Houston School Board, something

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that was not the norm for school board members in that period. During this period she gathered information, contacted experts in the field, visited schools, and read extensively on the subject of school governance by school boards (Kirkland, 1998, p. 475). For example, a letter to the Superintendent of Documents in Washington, D.C., dated April 20, 1943, requested several "directories and bulletins about the duties of school personnel and financial matters" (Kirkland, 1998, p.475), including *Know Your School Board, Know your Superintendent, Know Your School Principal*, and *How Schools are Financed* (4W237, Folder 4, IHP). In a letter setting up a meeting with Dr. Frank O'Brien, Associate Superintendent of Education for the Handicapped of New York Schools, Ima Hogg wrote, "It is going to be very interesting, but I am not unaware of the complex problems which the situation here presents" (4W237, Folder 4, IHP). After visiting classrooms in New York City and meeting Dr. O'Brien, she wrote to him when she returned home. "It was nice to have had the talk with you in New York and I feel you helped me clarify a good many things in my own mind" (4W237, Folder 4, IHP).

During her first year on the board, Ima Hogg was placed on two of the four standing committees, the New School Properties and Future Construction Committee and the Lunch Room Committee, which oversaw all of the operations of all school lunchrooms. While modern scholars decry the policy of micro-managing the daily business of school districts (Blumsak & McCabe, 2014), Ima Hogg, as chair of the Lunch Room Committee, supervised business operations for one hundred cafeterias throughout the district. Kirkland (1998) described the scope of her duties.

> The lunchrooms, which provided forty thousand meals each day, received no tax revenues and were expected to support their operations from meal sales. No detail escaped Hogg's attention: the cost of milk or ice cream, the contract with the meat dealer, absent employees caring for sick children, the cost of gas, health regulations, truck purchases, [and] desirable types of dishwashing machines. (p. 481)

Her success in this endeavor was demonstrated by the fact that the lunchroom department operated with a surplus for the first time which Ima Hogg then used to upgrade equipment and increase salaries for employees and still provide low-cost, healthy meals for students (Kirkland, 1998, p. 481). She also pushed for equal salaries for staff members, including African American workers.

Perhaps Ima Hogg's main accomplishment during her tenure as a board member was her role in helping to re-establish a visiting teacher program for troubled youth. Visiting teachers were what today would be called school social workers. It was her role in this endeavor that, more than any other accomplishment as a board member, marked her skill in collaboration. She demonstrated leadership skills in organizing and networking with both educational professionals and community members, and exemplified what contemporary scholars refer to as the collaborative model.

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In examining research about effective school governance, studies by Shannon and Bylsma (2004), Blumsack & McCabe (2014), and Land (2002), as well as recommendations by the National School Boards Association (2014) conclude that effective schools boards are marked by effective communication and collaborative relationships between members, between members and administration, and with various members of the community Furthermore, in a research brief that examined several studies of school board effectiveness posted by the Center for Public Education in 2011, school boards in high-achieving districts demonstrated that: "Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals" (Center for Public Education, 2011). Ima Hogg, in helping to re-establish and then guide the formation of a visiting Teacher Program in the Houston school district in the mid to late 1940s, did just that.

First, after being appointed to the Visiting Teacher Committee by the Houston School Board in October 1944, Ima Hogg began networking to research and gather the most up-to-date information, this time, not for her own self-directed learning, but to persuade the board to re-establish the visiting teacher program as a regular part of the school program. She sent out letters to districts all over the country and obtained information about visiting programs in cities such as Rochester, New York, Kansas City, El Paso, and New Orleans She also researched information from the American Association of Visiting Teachers bulletin, *Visiting Teacher Services Today*; the U.S. Office of Education Bulletin 1939, *Clinical Organization for Child Guidance Within the Schools* and from questionnaires sent to various cities by the Houston Council of Social Agencies (4W237, Folder 1, IHP).

Second, she brought the director of the New Orleans school district visiting teacher program, Carmelita Janvier, to Houston, and worked collaboratively with her in making recommendations in her final report to the school board. Kirkland (1998) wrote of Ima's collaborative 'use' of Janvier in the community.

> [Ima] arranged meetings and dinners for this expert [Janvier] to share her knowledge of visiting teacher programs with public school staff and representatives from community agencies, with the Board of Education, and with the "Principals to discuss their needs and problems." Significantly, Hogg made sure that all constituencies were exposed to the   expert's eloquence. (487)

Next, Ima Hogg used a collaborative model in obtaining information from community resources as well as keeping different constituencies in the school district and in the community informed of the progress of her committee. Kirkland (1998) wrote "she interviewed school administrators and representatives of community agencies to see how a program could be implemented in Houston and

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met frequently with the superintendent to formulate recommendations" (487). Sometime late in October or early November 1944, Ima addressed the Houston Teachers Association, a group whose support would be vital in making the visiting Teacher Program a success. In her speech, she covered a range of topics pertaining to a Visiting Teachers Program.

> What is a Visiting Teacher? She is an expertly trained psychiatric social worker, or school visitor, or counselor, or social case worker. She has a B.A. degree in social work in the field of psychiatric social work or social case work. So you see she has the point of view of the teacher as educator, and the social case worker with a community perspective. (4W237, Folder 1, IHP)

Next, she described the duties of the Visiting Teacher in relation to the classroom teacher.

> She does not teach in the classroom, nor advise teachers concerning techniques of teaching subject matter, but she should have had classroom teaching experience. She is attached to the school, and it is her business to assist the teacher and principal in solving any problems which interfere with the child's progress in any way. Her work is to aid and supplement that of the teacher, or any member of the school personnel who asks for her assistance. (4W237, Folder 1, IHP)

She continued her detailed analysis of a visiting teacher program, listing ten services and duties of visiting teachers and the kinds of problem children that might be referred to a visiting teacher. Next, she explained the process that would happen when a child was referred and the issue of possible salaries for visiting teachers as well as a brief overview of the history of visiting teacher programs in the United States citing information she had received from districts all over the country. She finished the presentation by asking the following three questions. "How many of you are troubled with problems in your schoolroom? Do you feel the need for advice or assistance in adjusting your problems? How many of you have worked in school systems which have Visiting Teachers?" (4W237, Folder 1, IHP).

In the presentation to the Teacher Association, Ima Hogg employed the idea of a collaborative professional relationship between school and community working together, with the visiting teacher as an integral part. In describing the responsibility of schools, she stated "Education is focused on salvaging as much human material as possible, and mobilizing every resource in the community to that end" (4W237, Folder 1, IHP). Later, she described the collaborative nature of schools, "She [the visiting teacher] is only part of a program in which all the personnel and departments in the schools cooperate in helping the individual child use what the school has to offer" (4W237, Folder 1, IHP). Finally, when discussing the services and duties of the visiting teacher she stated that the visiting teacher

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would "cooperate with all individuals or agencies concerned with the welfare of children, so that proper recognition is given to the function of other agencies in the community outside the school jurisdiction" (4W237, Folder 1, IHP). As Kirkland (1998) wrote, "After studying curricula from all over the country, Hogg concluded that such programs succeeded only when staff and teachers worked together" (487).

The final report of Ima Hogg and the Committee on Recommendations for a Visiting Teacher Program was entitled "Visiting Teacher Service: An Analysis of Theory and Practice," and was presented to the Houston School Board at the November 27, 1944, board meeting. Sections of the report included: Functions of the Visiting Teacher, Administrative Relationships, Work Load and Salary, Training and Qualifications, Setting up the Program, two tables of information about visiting teacher programs in twenty-three cities across the country, and Ima Hogg's four-page report of her activities and her recommendation as chair of the committee. She summarized the need for visiting teachers in the last two paragraphs of the report.

> The teacher finds her efforts constantly being impaired by emotional and behavior problems in the classroom, which have a direct bearing upon the individual child's scholastic achievement. The teacher knows that often the sources of the child's difficulties lie in the home, or in the community, or perhaps within the child himself; but that the cooperation of a trained social worker, or Visiting Teacher, who has both time and skill, is needed to discover and alleviate the cause of his trouble. (4W237, Folder 1, IHP)

At the same board meeting, the Houston School Board accepted the report and approved a motion to hire a director to set up a visiting teacher program (Kirkland 1998).

During the remainder of her time on the board, Ima Hogg oversaw the work of the Visiting Teacher Program, reviewing applications for director of the program and for each visiting teacher, developing a long-term plan for the program, and, when the program was implemented, reviewing the monthly reports of services provided and the cases of each visiting teacher (4W237, Folder 1, IHP). In 1949, she introduced the idea of hiring a psychologist for the Department of Testing and Special Classes in identifying troubled children (Kirkland 1998). She continued to support the visiting teacher program in Houston ISD even after she was no longer a board member. In an editorial letter to the *Houston Post* in June 1957, she wrote of her concern when she found out that the Houston district was cutting back on the visiting teacher program, describing the impact, she felt, that this would make on the children with behavior problems, "We pay in the long-run, either with our police courts, hospitals, reform schools, or prisons" (Box 3B168, Folder 2, IHP).

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Conclusion

From a leadership standpoint, in looking at the role of Ima Hogg as a member of the Houston School Board from 1943 to 1949, her actions exemplified three of the characteristics of effective school boards and school board members as identified by organizations such as the National School Boards Association and the Texas School Board Association: engaging in effective school governance professional development, professional collaboration with educational professionals and community members, and effective communication among these same groups. The process Ima Hogg used is summarized by Kirkland (1998).

> In championing the visiting teacher program, Hogg demonstrated an approach to solving problems that had worked in the private sector: study the issue and marshal the facts, seek expert advice, work with other agencies, be sensitive to the natural fears a new project can cause, and make sure the public is supportive. (p. 488)

While contemporary school board members are certainly faced with a multitude of different issues in the first decades of the twenty-first century- increasing accountability based on high-stakes standardized tests, global issue such as educating immigrant students and English language learners, the impact of technology, and global economic forces- using history as a lens to examine the achievements of a former school board member can enrich our knowledge of the process of school governance as well as help remind us of the importance of this educational entity and the role it continues to play in our educational system.

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Superintendent and School Board Relations: Impacting Achievement through Collaborative Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities

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Introduction

One of the most important and influential persons in the governance structure of the local school district is the Superintendent of Schools. Functioning as the CEO of the district, the superintendent is responsible for a myriad of functions. Examples include daily operations inclusive of transportation and finance, curriculum and policy implementation, media relations, and empowering leaders. However, as Meador (2014) contends, a crucial role is that of board liaison. The Superintendent is responsible for keeping the board informed, making recommendations regarding district operations, and setting the board agenda. It is interesting to note that the superintendent does participate in board meetings, but in an advisory capacity. Finally, the superintendent is responsible for enacting all mandates approved by the school board.

The Texas Education Code charges school boards, as governing bodies, with overseeing the management of local school districts. While the school board's primary function is to hire and evaluate the district CEO and approving the hiring of professional personnel, ancillary responsibilities involve broad powers of oversight, such as: goal setting, setting a local tax rate, the hearing of grievances, and approving and monitoring budget expenditures.

Effective school districts are those whose school board and superintendent work together collaboratively in the best interests of stakeholders. Intentional boards network, mentor, and are servant leaders. Given the character of human nature, however, conflict is bound to occur. Therefore, to ensure that the roles of each are respected, the Texas Education

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Agency (TEA) describes the role of the school board as governance, while the superintendent of schools is charged with the day-to-day management of resources and personnel. Specifically, the school board and superintendent form a partnership that works together as one unit for the good of students (LeMonte, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

School transformation as reflected in the roles of the school board and of superintendent is a relevant aspect of reform (Starrat, 2001). The author further asserted that due to societal changes and cultural implications regarding academic environment, the relationship between the school board and superintendent cannot be static but rather reforming and transforming. According to Givens (2008), transformational leaders help subordinates imagine appealing future outcomes related to the organization and thereby, collaboratively affect organizational outcomes. Givens further notes that transformational leadership serves to build human capacity within an organization. The task of the educational leaders, then, is to question and critically examine leadership practices if school transformation is to be realized.

Educational Leader Transformation

Tucker (2004) noted that transformation leadership seeks to develop an emotional bond with subordinates, which serves as a source for authentic dialogue and a stimulus for productivity. This bond is achieved through empowerment of all stakeholders by attempting to influence behavior by converging moral values and higher ideals of justice and equality. Transformational leadership is more than creating a dialogue between leaders and stakeholders; it serves as motivation for all to achieve more for the expected good.

Modernism

A study of modernism revealed that it embraced the industrial management model. Codd (1989) described this era of perception as one in which the industrial model, characterized by an emphasis on efficiency, treated educators as workers rather than professionals. This model supported oppressive education that treated people as adaptable, manageable beings. Schools are not factories. Educational leadership is more than management strategies. Educational leadership must be characterized by a commitment to a set of values and principles for practice that affects change between the superintendent and the school board.

Postmodernism

Muth (2002) reported that postmodernism represents a shift of thought, in which learning is viewed as an active process of constructing knowledge rather than just an acquisition of knowledge. This shift, as Muth (2002) noted, from the assembly line to learner-centered instruction, emphasizes "interaction, collaboration, problem solving, and critical

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thinking" (p. 73). As relates to the transformation if school leadership, postmodern thought presents the school board and superintendent with a dilemma: how does one function in the midst of such shifts of thought? The challenge for educators, including the school board and superintendent, is to apply scholarship in the transformation of their own practice. In a postmodern, post-formal setting, the school board and superintendent must "grapple with purpose, devoting attention to issues of human dignity, freedom, authority, and social responsibility" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1999, p. 57). Such a perspective affords a profound influence on the thoughts and actions of school leadership (Beck, 2002).

Transformational Leadership as a Foundation

Transformational leadership serves as a proven model for affecting change in the educational setting. The transformational leader brings a powerful, confident, dynamic presence that encourages change and invigorates followers to greater accomplishments (Morano, et.al., 2005). Likewise, Steward (2006) supported transformational leadership as a means of empowerment, shared leadership and organizational learning. Given the implications of accountability policy, the engagement of transformational leadership theory allows school boards and superintendents the means to understand their respective roles in a climate of change. Essentially, mutually agreed upon goals, trust, and respect are the cornerstones for effective working relationships. Therefore, the purpose of this action research was to influence systemic reform by informing practitioners regarding approaches that lead to effective school board – superintendent relations. The discussion of literature focuses on three themes emerging from an exhaustive review of peer-reviewed scholarly journals: the changing role of today's superintendent, factors contributing to successful school-board superintendent relations, and the causes of school board-superintendent discord.

The Changing Role of Today's Superintendent

The superintendent of the twenty-first century is faced with greater challenges as compared to the expectations of the past (Houston, 2001). "While most education reform focuses on accountability, test scores, and standards, the superintendent's job is actually shaped by issues on a much more macro level" (Houston 2001, p. 430). Kowalski (2013) concurred that the demands of the superintendency have become increasingly complex. Kowalski (2013) asserted that the position of superintendent has evolved into a leadership position of (a) teacher-scholar, (b) business manager, (c) democratic leader, (d) social scientist, and e) effective communicator. Houston (2001) explained that today's superintendent must completely change their approach to the job from what was once considered a managerial position. "Superintendents of today must be prepared to master the art of connection, communication, collaboration, community building, child advocacy, and curricular choices" (Houston 2001. p. 430). Houston (2001) further suggested that superintendents of the 21st century must

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- serve as a broker of services and as an ensurer of equity;
- find a way to share power and engage members of the organization and the community;
- focus on creating learning for children that is individualized and connected to personal interests; and
- Understand that learning is no longer about place, but it is now about process (pp. 420-431).

Factors Contributing to Successful School Board-Superintendent Relations

Hatrick (2010) postulated that the process for recruiting a new superintendent is one of the greatest responsibilities for a school district. Hatrick (2010) noted that school boards put a great deal of time and effort into developing a profile for the school district, listening to what the public is looking for in a school superintendent, interviewing promising candidates and selecting a candidate that they feel will be the most effective leader for their district's students, schools and community. According to Hatrick (2010), regardless if all board members agree on the selection of the superintendent, it does not guarantee a successful long-term relationship. He adds that "personalities and interpersonal relationships play a large role in the success of superintendents and school boards, especially when board members and the superintendent have differences of opinion and cannot reach consensus about the goals and direction of the school district" (Hatrick, 2010, p. 42).

Likewise, Kruse and Richard (2008) claimed that superintendents who possess leadership qualities that promote positive relationships throughout the school and community are most desired by school boards. According to Adamson (2012), "when superintendents and school boards are aligned in common values and purpose, and are engaged in strategic efforts to realize the desirable future of their districts, it leaves minimal opportunities for boardroom friction and community misunderstanding" (p. 10). Adamson (2012) further noted that it is always more difficult to challenge decisions and recommendations that are aligned with a district's values, purpose or vision for the future. "Stressing the importance of professional development ultimately can remove part of the burden from [the superintendent's] shoulders regarding [the] board's generic understanding of education issues" (Adamson 2012, p. 10).

In a related opinion, the research of Kruse and Richards (2008) agreed that continuous education is important for every member of the governance team and that professional development has always played an important role for superintendents. While administrators and staff are encouraged to attend professional development, school board members need to recognize the importance of their own need for professional development, as well (Adamson, 2010). According to McAdams (2009), school superintendents can help prevent trouble when school board turnover takes place. "Board-savvy superintendents should provide new board members with orientation and

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training and help sitting board members fold them into the governance team" (McAdams, 2009, p. 6).

Research by Thompson (2007) also concluded that the relationship between school board presidents and superintendents is always changing but, professional development and board training can help build meaningful relationships and trust; thus allowing school boards and superintendents to collectively be more productive and effective. Freely and Seinfeild's (2012) study of four retired superintendents revealed the critical importance of inspiring and building trust with each of their Boards of Education. The data from the study further revealed that they considered themselves as "teachers" to their Boards and that one aspect of this teaching was establishing guidelines for decision making and consensus building so that there were no surprises.

Moreover, Kruse and Richards (2008) explained how the experience levels of both superintendent and school board members has the potential to impact the perceptions of school board members in regards to superintendents' leadership behaviors.

> "It is not uncommon to find that the relationship between superintendents and school boards is genuinely collegial and represents a professional partnership between the operation and oversight of a school district. However, the relationship must be nurtured, not to artificially manipulate an outcome or to placate the partnership, but rather because the task of oversight and operation exceeds the individual capabilities of one or the other" (Adamson, 2012, p.10).

Furthermore, an analysis of the dynamics between school board presidents and superintendents revealed valuable insights on how to move schools forward and improve student achievement outcomes. Several key areas undergird the relationship between school leaders and the governing bodies elected to oversee the management and operations (Thompson, 2007). Considerations include history, current trends and issues, community relations and strategic planning. Eadie (2008a) noted that strong board president-superintendent partnerships have been supported by superintendents who:

- bring a positive attitude to their working relationship with the board president;
- take the trouble to get to know the board president;
- reach agreement on the basic division of labor with the board president,
- make sure the president succeeds as chair of the board; and
- helps the board president achieve his or her professional objectives (p. 52).

"Board-savvy superintendents pay close attention to learning about the board president's passionate professional interests and the important imprint the president wants to leave, and what matters ego-wise" (Eadie, 2008a, p. 53).

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Finally, Eadie (2008b) emphasized that the process by which the superintendent is evaluated is critical in building and establishing a long-term stable relationship. Eadie (2008) noted that "the most important step is implementing a well-designed and executed process for evaluating superintendent performance (p. 41)." Eadie (2008b) identified characteristics of a highly effective evaluation processes that various school boards throughout the country have implemented. Some of those characteristics included the following: (a) board members conducting an evaluation as a whole team outside of the regular board meeting time, (b) the board setting criteria for evaluating district performance and specific leadership targets, (c) having face-to-face dialogue with superintendent, and (d) going beyond the appraisal process and developing detailed plans and steps to be taken during the coming year.

Causes of School Board-Superintendent Discord

Mountford (2004) explained that when school board members misuse their position to assert control and power, it creates turmoil and conflict that hinders the district's ability to function efficiently and effectively. She also cited "a school board member's motivation for membership and the way the school board defines *power* as key components that can lead to "strained relationships" between school board members and superintendents" (Mountford, 2004, p. 706). Mountford (2004) went on to cite other reasons for dissent between the two school entities such as "questionable motives for school board membership and power struggles..." (p. 706).

A study by Moody (2008) surveyed all K-12 public schools superintendents in Nebraska to determine which competencies public school superintendents and school board presidents perceived most desirable for successful employment. The competencies included: "(1) public relations, (2) school finance, (3) personnel management, 4) curriculum development, (5) policy formation, (6) school construction, (7) accomplishment of school goals set by the board, 8) superintendent-board relations, and collective bargaining specific professional competencies" (p. 91). Additionally, school board presidents were asked to indicate if they had been involved in a specific incident that led to contract non-renewal, a request for the resignation of the superintendent, or to the superintendent leaving under duress. Of the 126 school board presidents that responded, 30.16% indicated that they had been involved in a situation in which the superintendent had his or her contract non-renewed, had been asked to resign, or had left the district under duress. Of the total 214 superintendents that responded, 10.75% indicated that they had been in a situation in which they had left the school district superintendency under less amicable circumstances. Out of the nine competencies, the survey revealed that 76.32 % of board presidents and 82.61% school superintendent cited superintendent-board relations most frequently as the cause for the superintendent leaving the district (Moody, 2008).

Mountford (2004) described the relationship that often exists between the superintendent and the school board as one of tension and conflict. Likewise, Kowalski (2013) asserted

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that when a serious issue or problem arises, philosophical differences between the superintendent and school board surface creating an uncomfortable experience that can damage their working relationship. Interestingly, Fusarelli (2006) stated when superintendents fail to see the importance of evaluating and monitoring the culture of the organization and community, it severely impedes their ability to lead and build relationships with stakeholders. Likewise, Kruse and Richards (2008) explained that governance functions of school boards include protecting the public's interest through selecting a superintendent, setting policies that ensure a quality education, evaluating district performance goals and fiscal responsibility. Findings in this same study concluded, "Inexperienced board members often mistake governance for close supervision and end up meddling in administrative affairs" (p. 14). In Parker's study (1996), almost 20% of superintendents who left their positions opted for jobs other than those of superintendents. In that same study, "overall, respondents ranked 'dissension of the board' third out of 22 items in order of strong importance for not continuing as superintendent in that district" (p. 72). According to Danzberger (1994), "the blurring roles of the role of the superintendent and board made it difficult to define locus of accountability for policy and administration and intensified the pressures that constituents exert on members of the board to become little more than purveyors of constituent services" (p. 75).

Research by Dawson and Quinn (2000) explained how the relationship between school boards and the superintendents they choose to employ could deteriorate rapidly. Moreover, the problem that created bad relationships between school boards and superintendents is explained to be something other than what most people perceive them to be. The issue is a governance process that causes dis-clarity (Dawson & Quinn, 2000). Specifically, role confusion in the governance process created a level of dysfunction that prevented the board and superintendent from being able to properly make the decisions necessary for moving the school forward.

Implications for Professional Practice

The findings of this action research study provide meaningful implications for superintendents and members of school boards. To embrace the concept of partnership between the superintendent and the board, a solid working relationship is most critical (Larsin & Radar, 2006). Three implications of this study emerge that are noteworthy.

First, the role of the superintendent is changing with a growing influence at a macro level (Houston, 2001). Kowalski (2013) noted that the complexity of the superintendent's duties results in diverse leadership skills that required a mastery of communication, collaboration, and consensus building. Consequently, Houston (2001) stated a school board must be cognizant of a superintendent's ability to be a teacher-scholar, business manager, democratic leader, social and cultural scientist, and technologically adept and skillful.

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Second, school board-superintendent discord occurs when there is misuse of position. When board members assert control and power, an atmosphere of turmoil and conflict may occur, impeding the efficiency and effectiveness of the superintendent (Larson & Radar, 2006). Additionally, board misuse of power is a key component that leads to strained relationships (Mountford, 2004). Namit (2008) advanced the notion that a school board that conducts annual self-assessment helps to build a stronger team and relationship with the superintendent.

The solution for a tense and strained relationship suggests the need for professional development. Research underscores the necessity of professional development for the superintendent and continuous education of the board as a means to enhance the governance team (Namit, 2008). A fruitful product of this endeavor is the establishment of a long-term stable relationship (Eadie, 2008). Otherwise, role confusion in the governance process creates a level of dysfunction.

Third, the impact that the community has on the superintendent-school board working relationship is dynamic and fluid. As school districts experience rapid population growth with diverse populations, the challenge for the superintendent is to provide instructional leadership focused on student success, especially in the accountability systems. Kruse and Richard (2008) asserted that a superintendent and board are to promote positive relationships throughout the school and community. A strong board-superintendent relationship values and promotes community history and multiculturalism, while advancing educational trends and issues in a learning environment (LaMonte, 2009).

Additionally, providing policies and practices that would encourage community involvement and input at the school board level of operation would help to eliminate areas of confusion, undue pressures, and stress. The pressures and stress reflect themselves in personal agendas. The elimination of the confusion and lack of information can be achieved through training seminars and workshops specifically tailored toward communication and involvement among the school board-superintendent team and the community (Adamson, 2012).

Fourth, the school board, along with the superintendent, has the enormous task of providing a quality education for our children. Student achievement outcomes have become a priority for the school board and superintendent (Eadie, 2008). Namit (2008) advanced the view that embracing an integrated board self-assessment and superintendent evaluation process ensured that student achievement remained a priority. Two essential components of this concept included improving governance and the defining and achievement of mutually agreed upon goals.

While the relationship between the school board and superintendent is sometimes described as strained and tumultuous, this critical relationship can be the driving force of a school district. An effective school board and superintendent relationship is accomplished through continuous training, involvement of community stakeholders, a

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commitment to self-assessment of goals and standards, and a strong focus on student learning.

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Teacher Contract Non-Renewal in the Rocky Mountains

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Success for students in the 21st century increasingly relies on competencies and proficiencies typically available only through formal educational processes. Researchers have noted the paramount importance of quality teaching as the important criterion for student success (Haycock, 1998; Marzano, 2003). Recent reforms have increased the expectation that school principals energetically address teacher evaluations and subsequently remove ineffective teachers. These recent reforms tend to have common priorities, including emphasizing high quality teaching, evaluating teachers for merit pay purposes, and linking evaluation to student performance with an emphasis on the removal of ineffective teachers from the classroom.

In 2009, the Race to the Top (RTTT) legislation offered large federal financial grants to states that were willing to pursue aggressive school reforms that included teacher evaluation (RTTT, 2009). The legislation calls for "recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals"... and "improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance..." (RTTT, 2009, pp. 2, 4). The legislation defines an effective teacher as one "whose students achieve acceptable rates (e.g., as least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth...teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth" (RTTT, 2009, p. 12).

Similarly, in 2011, the U.S. Department of Education created a flexibility program that offered states waivers from sanctions from No Child Left Behind (Popham & DeSander, 2014). In return for the waivers, states often promised to pursue new school reforms which included tougher teacher evaluation systems. Many of the recent reforms of teacher evaluation processes have included value-added modeling, which requires a substantial element of the teacher's evaluation be based on student performance scores (Paige, 2012). Because the value-added modeling is relatively new to most teachers and principals, and has unproven reliability, an

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already complex and difficult task for school principals to determine methods for teacher contract non-renewals has become more cumbersome (Paige, 2012).

School principals confront pressure from state and federal accountability legislation and reforms to produce evidence of student learning on standardized assessments. In this high-stakes environment, principals' decisions play an important part in determining whether or not teachers are offered contracts, and school principals face prominent challenges that predictably work against recommending contract non-renewal for teachers. Some of the commonly identified challenges include time, teacher unions, and laws protecting teachers (Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2011a; Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2011b; Painter, 2000). Learning more about the criteria that principals apply to teacher contract non-renewal decisions affords an opportunity to improve the teacher preparation process and in-service teacher professional development. This line of inquiry also assists the identification of themes for principal development. Further, identifying barriers that hinder principals from addressing ineffective teachers serves to improve the prospect of learning for students. It is unclear if principals have all the tools that they need to work toward having an effective teacher in every classroom, and recent reforms to teacher evaluation processes make it more dubious.

This quantitative study investigated reasons for the contract non-renewal of probationary teachers and the obstacles that school principals face in dealing with ineffective teachers. School principals in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Utah provided demographic information and reasons they would be likely to recommend contract non-renewal for probationary teachers. Findings from these four states, representing the Rocky Mountain region are addressed in this paper.

Summary of the Literature

Legal Issues

Teacher contract non-renewals are legal procedures that are defined in courts, by hearing examiners, through state statutes, and by means of master contracts and local policies and procedures. All states uniquely define the requirements for ending the employment of teachers, depending on the teachers' tenure status. Non-tenured, or probationary teachers, are considered at-will employees and are not typically afforded the same due process rights as tenured teachers. Generally, their contracts may be non-renewed without cause, at the option of the employer upon proper notice of the intent not to renew, by the employing school board at the end of any contract year. Most recent versions of school reform, however, have led to conditions where it is becoming easier to dismiss teachers who are ineffective (Darden, 2013; Zirkel, 2013). Zirkel (2013) found that in published court rulings since 1982, the school district won the dismissal conclusively 81% of the time.

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Even though probationary teachers may have their contracts non-renewed without cause, emblematic reasons exist for both tenured and probationary teachers. The most common legal reasons are defined in state statutes and often include incompetency, insubordination, immorality, reduction in force, contract violations, and good and just cause. The legal reasons manifest themselves in behaviors such as excessive absenteeism and tardiness, neglect of duty, abusive language, administering corporal punishment, unethical conduct, sexual misconduct, abuse of a controlled substance, theft or fraud, misuse of a school computer, criminal misconduct outside the work setting, and conduct unbecoming a teacher, among others. (Lawrence, Vashon, Leake, & Leake, 2005).

The impetus of relatively recent educational reforms and the fresh elements of teacher evaluation criteria, which include merit pay and value-added modeling, require new elements of analysis for current and future courts and principals who make these decisions. New legal issues and complications are sure to arise; however the trend has been to defer more to school districts and principals in removing teachers (Darden, 2013; Paige, 2012; Popham & DeSander, 2014; Zirkel, 2013). The outcomes of teacher contract non-renewal may be shifting slightly, brought about by the pressures of RTTT and subsequent changes made by state legislatures. It is not clear if school principals are equipped to take advantage of the shifting status.

Rocky Mountain States

Four Rocky Mountain States are highlighted in this study (Colorado, Idaho, Montana, & Utah). Both Colorado and Idaho have recently implemented significant changes in teacher tenure and evaluation procedures. Only Colorado received RTTT funds, as Idaho, Montana, and Utah were not awarded funds.

Colorado teachers "may be dismissed for physical or mental disability, incompetency, neglect of duty, immorality, unsatisfactory performance, insubordination, the conviction of a felony or the acceptance of a guilty plea, a plea of nolo contendere, or a deferred sentence for a felony, or other good and just cause" (Colorado Code 22-63-301). Colorado teachers are considered probationary teachers for their first three years. The state's recent changes to teacher tenure (in May, 2010) now require teachers to be evaluated annually with at least half of the rating based on student academic progress. Beginning teachers have to show that they have boosted student performance for three straight years before earning tenure (Colorado Code 22-9-105.5). Collective bargaining by teachers is permitted in Colorado, as the law neither requires nor forbids collective bargaining.

Idaho eliminated continuing teacher contracts in 2011. In the same year, Idaho reduced teacher collective bargaining privileges, permitting collective bargaining only for pay and benefits. The grounds for contract non-renewal include a "material

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violation of any lawful rules or regulations of the board of education, or for any conduct which could constitute grounds for revocation of a teaching certificate" (Idaho Code 33-513). These include "gross neglect of duty, incompetency, breach of the teaching contract, making any material statement of fact in the application for a certificate that the applicant knows to be false..." (Idaho Code 33-1208).

In Montana, teachers earn tenure after three years of service (Montana Code 20-4-203). Public employees are allowed to bargain collectively (Montana Code 20-4-207). In Montana, the ground for dismissal of teachers includes the general statement that "the employment of the teacher may be terminated for good cause" (Montana Code 20-4-203).

In Utah, teachers earn tenure after three years. Teachers are permitted to join unions but the state has no collective bargaining law. District school boards decide whether they desire to engage in collective bargaining. Under Utah's Orderly Termination Act (Utah Code 53A-8-104), teachers cannot be dismissed without due process. According to Utah code 53A-8-103, local school boards may establish dismissal procedures. Specifically, "a local school board shall, by contract with its employees or their associations, or by resolution of the board, establish procedures for dismissal of employees in an orderly manner without discrimination..." (Utah Code 53A-8-104).

Complications for Principals in Dealing with Ineffective Teachers

Principals calculate whether the inevitable conflict and unpleasantness of a contract non-renewal are worth the emotional toll and also whether the superintendents or boards of education will ultimately support the recommendations to non-renew. The principal walks a fine line between predictable claims that there is "too little documentation" or "not enough help" being given to the teacher along with assertions that the principal has developed so much documentation that the effect is "harassment" of the teacher.

Principals identify lack of time as one of the largest barriers to their opportunity to adequately address ineffective teachers (Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2011a; Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2011b; Painter, 2000). Other identified hurdles include inadequate support from the superintendent and board, limited financial support for all phases of the process, personality characteristics of the evaluator, laws protecting teachers, reluctance to pursue a dismissal without a good chance of prevailing, and the high costs of litigation (Bridges, 1992; Schweizer, 1998).

Contrary to common perceptions, Zirkel (2010; 2013) pointed out that in legal disputes, defendant school districts prevail over plaintiff teachers by a better than four-to-one ratio. With recent reforms to state laws, this percentage may increase. This raises the question as to whether the non-renewal issue is one of principal competence, will, and commitment rather than the improbability of success. Lack of time, emotion, and other stresses carry large weight in limiting principals' efforts at initiating teacher contract non-renewals. New teacher evaluation reforms and

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criteria, which call for value-added modeling and merit pay, are relatively new and contain potentially untried metrics that are possibly confusing and unclear to school principals. Principal competence in using these newly developed and often untried evaluation models may be suspect (Page, 2012).

The study answered four research questions:
> 1) What is the priority of reasons that school principals would recommend non-renewal of a teacher's contract?
> 2) Which behaviors do principals observe most frequently from ineffective teachers?
> 3) Which complications obscure school principals' ability to deal with ineffective teachers?
> 4) Are principals' responses unique based on demographic differences in principal years of experience, type of school, or location of school?

Research Methods

Research Questions

We answered research question one using responses from two survey questions. We requested Rocky Mountain principals to "Rank order the following possible reasons that might lead you to recommend non-renewal of a non-tenured teacher. Select: most likely (7) for one of the reasons for termination; second most likely (6) for another one; very likely (5) for another one; and so on." The eight answer choices provided included

- "absenteeism/tardiness,
- classroom management,
- ethical violations and inappropriate conduct,
- incompetence,
- professional demeanor,
- insubordination,
- lack of student achievement, and
- other (please specify)."

We requested principals to "rank order the importance of the following criteria in deciding whether to recommend non-renewal of a non-tenured teacher. Select (3) for most important, (2) for important, and (1) for least important." The three answer choices included
- "subject content knowledge,
- instructional skills, and
- disposition."

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We answered research question two by posing the question: "Which behaviors do you observe most frequently from ineffective teachers?" The three answer choices included "lack of subject content knowledge, lack of instructional skills, and unacceptable disposition."

Research question three was answered from a question that we requested principals' respond to "Which of the following reasons complicate your ability to deal with ineffective teachers?" We provided principals ten answer choices, including "time, teacher union, inadequate support from the superintendent, inadequate support from the board of education, high costs of litigation, desire to avoid conflict and confrontation, laws protecting teachers, collective bargaining agreement, and other (please specify)." Respondents were given a four point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

We addressed the fourth research question using a three step process: a Kruskal-Wallis analysis compared the responses among the three demographic variables, while the Mann Whitney U tested the differences between the members of the categories. In the third step, we applied a Bonferroni Correction to each paired variable to determine any significance between each pair and to reduce chance of Type I error.

Instrumentation

We created survey questions and answer choices after extensive review of the literature on teacher contract non-renewals and built upon six previous studies (Nixon, Dam, & Packard, 2010; Nixon et al., 2011a; Nixon et al., 2011b; Nixon et al., 2012; Nixon et. al., 2013; Nixon, Packard, & Douvanis, 2010). We piloted the original survey questions with 60 principals in the Southeastern United States. Because there is minimal literature regarding demographic and regional differences in teacher contract non-renewals, we asked principals to provide demographic information regarding their years of experience as a principal, the size and type of schools, state information, and whether their schools were rural, urban, or suburban. We decided to use an emailed survey after considering both emailed and stamped mail surveys, because a web survey can achieve a comparable response rate (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000; Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004).

Participants

We accessed principals' email addresses in the four Rocky Mountain states using state department of education data bases. We surveyed the Rocky Mountain states in fall and winter of 2011 and 2012. We followed the original email with a second participation invitation. Three hundred fifty principals submitted the emailed survey. Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the participants.

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Table 1

Participants by State and Demographic Group

Response		Colorado	Idaho	Montana	Utah	Total
Location	Urban	33 (22.0%)	5 (7.2%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (6.7%)	44 (12.3%)
	Suburban	48 (32.0%)	13 (18.8%)	2 (4.4%)	48 (55.8%)	116 (32.3%)
	Rural	69 (46.0%)	51 (73.9%)	43 (95.6%)	32 (37.2%)	199 (55.4%)
Principal Years' Experience	Less than 10	99 (66.0%)	30 (43.5%)	23 (51.1%)	49 (55.1%)	204 (56.8%)
	Between 10-20	42 (28.0%)	34 (49.3%)	16 (35.6%)	25 (29.1%)	121 (33.7%)
	More than 20	9 (6.0%)	5 (7.2%)	6 (13.3%)	12 (14.0%)	34 (9.5%)
Grades	Pre K/Elementary school	78 (52.0%)	29 (42.0%)	16 (35.6%)	49 (57.0%	177 (49.3%)
	Middle school	15 (10.0%)	11 (15.9%)	5 (11.1%)	15 (17.4%)	47 (13.1%)
	High school	33 (22.0%)	10 (14.5%)	9 (20.0%)	17 (19.8%)	71 (19.8%)
	Other configuration	24 (16.0%)	19 (27.5%)	15 (33.3%)	5 (5.8%)	65 (17.8%)
	Total by state	150 (42.8%)	69 (19.7%)	45 (12.7%)	86 (24.8%)	350 (100%)

Data Collection

We sent 4,204 emails to the Rocky Mountain principals. The data bases are not updated frequently, leaving out recently appointed principals. Additionally, school district filters and spam controls prevented some principals from receiving the email. We did not seek permission from specific school districts to survey principals, consequently many principals were forbidden by district policies to respond to the

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survey. Some of the email addresses were inaccurate or had changed as 629 were undelivered, due perhaps to lengthy intervals between database updates.

Analysis Procedures

Survey responses were analyzed to answer the four research questions. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the reasons, observations, and barriers that made up the respondent answers regarding teacher contract non-renewal and complications in dealing with ineffective teachers. Because the collected data were ordinal, determination of response differences by demographic variables was decided using nonparametric analysis.

The responses were explored using a Kruskal-Wallis test to determine if differences occurred within the three levels of categories. Then, findings of significance were analyzed using a Mann-Whitney U to determine where the differences could be found among the three categories. Significances were determined by using a Bonferroni Correction to reduce the possible of Type I error by creating a more robust the level of significance. The Bonferroni Correction suggests that the level of significance be divided by the number of categories, which in this case was three and changed the alpha level from .05 to .0167, .01 to .003, and .001 to .0003.

Results

Overview

Information presented in the tables represents either descriptive data or the results from the Krukal-Wallis statistical analysis. Narrative commentary includes both the Mann-Whitney U and the Bonferroni Correction results, if significant.

Priority Reasons for Contract Non-Renewal

Principals ranked a series of possible reasons for contract non-renewal of teachers. Results are available in Table 2. "Ethical violations and inappropriate conduct" were identified as the "most likely" reasons principals might initiate a contract non-renewal. "Incompetence" was the "second most likely" reason.

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Table 2
Priority of Reasons That Lead to Contract Non-Renewal

Response	N	Most unlikely	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely	Second most likely	Most likely
Absenteeism/ tardiness	323	131 (40.6%)	82 (25.4%)	51 (15.8%)	41 (12.7%)	10 (3.1%)	5 (1.5%)	3 (0.9%)
Classroom management	320	17 (5.3%)	48 (15.0%)	72 (22.5%)	73 (22.8%)	67 (20.9%)	28 (8.8%)	15 (4.7%)
Ethical violations and inappropriate conduct	337	6 (1.8%)	4 (1.2%)	4 (1.2%)	15 (4.5%)	30 (8.9%)	48 (14.2%)	230 (68.2%)
Incompetence	333	0 (0.0%)	8 (2.4%)	17 (5.1%)	24 (7.2%)	64 (19.2%)	152 (45.6%)	68 (20.4%)
Professional demeanor	308	73 (23.7%)	91 (29.5)	52 (16.9%)	47 (15.3%)	28 (9.1%)	16 (5.2%)	1 (0.3%)
Insubordination	336	25 (7.4%)	36 (10.7%)	60 (17.9%)	63 (18.8%)	79 (23.5%)	58 (17.3%)	15 (4.5%)
Lack of student achievement	339	51 (15.0%)	44 (13.0%)	65 (19.2%)	75 (22.1%)	62 (18.3%)	31 (9.1%)	11 (3.2%)

Table 3 contains the results from the Kruskal-Wallis testing by school location. "Ethical violations and inappropriate conduct" and "insubordination" were found

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statistically significant. When tested further with the Mann-Whitney U and using a Bonferroni Correction, no significant differences were determined.

Table 3

Priority of Reasons That Lead to Contract Non-Renewal (School Location)

Response	N	Location	N	Mean Rank	H	df	sig.
Absenteeism/Tardiness	323	Urban	37	144.53	2.369	2	.306
		Suburban	103	170.40			
		Rural	183	160.81			
Classroom management	320	Urban	37	170.45	2.942	2	.230
		Suburban	102	170.43			
		Rural	181	152.87			
Ethical violations and inappropriate conduct	337	Urban	42	140.26	6.155	2	.046*
		Suburban	108	173.35			
		Rural	187	172.94			
Incompetence	333	Urban	42	183.54	1.734	2	.420
		Suburban	106	167.23			
		Rural	185	163.11			
Professional demeanor	308	Urban	36	161.07	1.165	2	.558
		Suburban	100	146.96			
		Rural	172	157.51			
Insubordination	336	Urban	41	160.99	7.691	2	.021*
		Suburban	105	149.18			
		Rural	190	180.80			
Lack of student achievement	339	Urban	44	181.98	2.699	2	.259

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Suburban	108	178.46
Rural	187	162.30

*p< .05

Table 4 displays the Kruskal-Wallis results by principal years of experience. "Incompetence" and "professional demeanor" were significant. Using the Mann-Whitney U testing, incompetence was reported significantly different (z=2.424, p = .015, η= .20) between principals with 10 to 20 years of experience (MR = 65.40) and principals with more than 20 years of experience (MR = 84.25).

Table 4

Priority of Reasons That Lead to Contract Non-Renewal (Principal Years of Experience)

Response	N	Principal Years of Experience	N	Mean Rank	H	df	sig.
Absenteeism/Tardiness	323	< 10 yrs.	187	157.60	5.564	2	.062
		10 to 20 yrs.	108	176.29			
		> 20 yrs.	28	136.27			
Classroom management	320	< 10 yrs.	184	157.66	.562	2	.755
		10 to 20 yrs.	105	165.92			
		> 20 yrs.	31	159.00			
Ethical violations	337	< 10 yrs.	196	169.20	.837	2	.658
		10 to 20 yrs.	111	171.93			
		> 20 yrs.	30	156.85			
Incompetence	333	< 10 yrs.	195	170.66	6.886	2	.032*
		10 to 20 yrs.	108	151.77			
		> 20 yrs.	30	198.03			
Professional demeanor	308	< 10 yrs.	184	148.20	6.648	2	.036*
		10 to 20 yrs.	97	172.33			
		> 20 yrs.	27	133.39			
Insubordination	336	< 10 yrs.	198	160.99	3.279	2	.194
		10 to 20 yrs.	109	181.58			
		> 20 yrs.	29	170.59			
Lack of student achievement	339	< 10 yrs.	195	178.36	4.582	2	.101
		10 to 20 yrs.	114	154.28			
		> 20 yrs.	30	175.40			

*p<.05

As far as significance and type of school, Table 5 includes the Kruskal-Wallis results. Only "lack of student achievement" was determined to be significant. Analyzing

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further using the Mann-Whitney U, elementary principals (MR=110.82) placed more importance (z=2.740, p = .006, η= .19) than middle school principals (MR=83.16).

Table 5

Priority of Reasons That Lead to Contract Non-Renewal (Type of School)

Response	N	Type of School	N	Mean Rank	H	df	sig.
Absenteeism/Tardiness	265	PreK and/or Elementary	159	136.30	1.136	2	.567
		Middle Grade	42	123.06			
		High School	64	131.34			
Classroom management	264	PreK and/or Elementary	159	131.87	1.685	2	.431
		Middle Grade	44	144.53			
		High School	61	125.46			
Ethical violations	276	PreK and/or Elementary	164	133.40	2.489	2	.288
		Middle Grade	44	144.39			
		High School	68	147.00			
Incompetence	273	PreK and/or Elementary	161	136.53	1.029	2	.598
		Middle Grade	45	146.32			
		High School	67	131.87			
Professional demeanor	252	PreK and/or Elementary	147	128.39	3.971	2	.137
		Middle Grade	42	140.21			
		High School	63	112.94			
Insubordination	275	PreK and/or Elementary	166	133.12	2.793	2	.247
		Middle Grade	43	135.38			
		High School	66	151.97			
Lack of student achievement	278	PreK and/or Elementary	165	148.31	7.602	2	.022*
		Middle Grade	44	111.68			
		High School	69	136.17			

*p<.05

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Table 6 includes the responses to the question "rank order the importance of the following criteria in deciding whether to recommend non-renewal of a non-tenured teacher." The instructions directed respondents to "select (3) for most important, (2) for important, and (1) for least important." The three answer choices included "subject content knowledge, instructional skills, and disposition." Principals selected "instructional skills" as most important. None of the responses to this question were significant using the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U.

Table 6

Priaritized Criteria for Teacher Contract Non-Renewal

Response	Least important	Important	Most important	Mean (Std.)	Median
Subject content knowledge	139	183	24	1.67	2.00
	40.2%	52.9%	6.9%	.601	
Instructional skills	8	67	273	2.761	3.00
	2.3%	19.3%	78.4%	.477	
Disposition	198	97	52	1.58	1.00
	57.1%	28.0%	15.0%	.738	

Behaviors Observed from Ineffective Teachers

Another research question addressed behaviors that principals observe from ineffective teachers. Results are included in Table 7. Principals reported that "lack of instructional skills" is observed most frequently from ineffective teachers. Demographic variables were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney U. None of the results were significant.

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Table 7
Behaviors Observed from Ineffective Teachers

Response	Observed least frequently	Observed second most frequently	Observed most frequently	Mean Std.	Median
Lack of subject content knowledge	198	141	10	1.46	1.00
	56.7%	40.4%	2.9%	.554	
Lack of instructional skills	4	69	273	2.78	3.00
	1.2%	19.9%	78.9%	.444	
Unacceptable disposition	144	137	63	1.76	2.00
	41.9%	39.8%	18.3%	.740	

Complications to Dealing with Ineffective Teachers

With the third research question, we asked principals to identify reasons that complicate their opportunities to deal with ineffective teachers. A four point Likert scale was provided for principals to respond. Results are included in Table 8. "Time" was identified most frequently as a complication to dealing with ineffective teachers. "Teacher union," "collective bargaining agreement," and "laws protecting teachers" were also selected as strong challenges to dealing with ineffective teachers.

Table 9 includes the results from the Kruskal-Wallis analysis by school location. Significant barriers included "teacher union," "inadequate support from the superintendent," "inadequate support from the school board," "desire to avoid conflict and confrontation," and "collective bargaining agreement." Applying the Mann-Whitney analysis and using a Bonferroni correction, there was a significant difference ($z = 2.713$, p=.007, η= .16) between the suburban principals (MR= 170.40) and the rural principals (MR = 143.05) as far as the "teacher union" criterion. Another significant difference occurred in the variable "inadequate support from the superintendent," which was statistically significant ($z =3.730$, p = .000, η= .21) with suburban principals (MR=175.99) believing this to be a larger barrier than their counterparts from rural schools (MR=139.85). Rural principals (MR=125.69) were also more concerned about the "desire to avoid conflict and confrontation" ($z=3.355$, p = .001, η= .22) than urban principals (MR=89.66). Urban principals (MR=60.80) were also significantly different ($z=3.183$, p = .001, η= .25) than their suburban counterparts (MR=84.82) in the "desire to avoid conflict and confrontation" criterion.

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Table 8
Barriers That Complicate Dealing with Ineffective Teachers

Response	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean (Std)	Median
Time	19	79	119	130	3.04	3.00
	5.5%	22.8%	34.3%	37.5%	.907	
Teacher union	46	99	113	89	2.71	3.00
	13.3%	28.5%	32.6%	25.6%	.994	
Inadequate support from the superintendent	151	138	47	13	1.78	2.00
	43.3%	39.5%	13.5%	3.7%	.817	
Inadequate support from the board of education	123	163	48	14	1.86	2.00
	35.3%	46.8%	13.8%	4.0%	.797	
High cost of litigation	63	159	89	35	2.28	2.00
	18.2%	46.0%	25.7%	10.1%	.877	
Desire to avoid conflict and confrontation	110	141	85	12	2.00	2.00
	31.6%	40.5%	24.4%	3.4%	.837	
Laws protecting teachers	38	120	133	55	2.59	3.00
	11.0%	34.7%	38.4%	15.9%	.884	
Collective bargaining agreement	56	126	103	61	2.49	2.00
	16.2%	36.4%	29.8%	17.6%	.964	

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Table 9

Barriers That Complicate Dealing with Ineffective Teachers (School Location)

Response	N	School Location	N	Mean Rank	H	df	sig.
Time	347	Urban	44	170.15	.084	2	.959
		Suburban	111	174.36			
		Rural	192	174.67			
Teacher union	347	Urban	42	195.71	9.692	2	.008*
		Suburban	111	190.68			
		Rural	194	159.76			
Inadequate support from the superintendent	349	Urban	44	183.59	14.409	2	.001*
		Suburban	111	200.16			
		Rural	194	158.65			
Inadequate support from the board of education	348	Urban	43	191.07	6.181	2	.045*
		Suburban	111	187.25			
		Rural	194	163.53			
High costs of litigation	346	Urban	44	173.25	2.283	2	.319
		Suburban	109	162.69			
		Rural	193	179.66			
Desire to avoid conflict and confrontation	348	Urban	44	127.95	12.255	2	.002*
		Suburban	111	183.54			
		Rural	193	179.91			
Laws protecting teachers	346	Urban	43	175.55	2.651	2	.266
		Suburban	110	184.89			
		Rural	193	166.55			
Collective bargaining agreement	346	Urban	43	194.14	7.636	2	.022*
		Suburban	111	187.30			
		Rural	192	160.90			

*p<.05

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Table 10

Complications to Dealing with Ineffective Teachers (Principal Years of Experience)

Response	N	Principal Years of Experience	N	Mean Rank	H	df	sig.
Time	347	Less than 10 yrs.	200	172.78	.501	2	.778
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	115	178.34			
		More than 20 yrs.	32	166.00			
Teacher union	347	Less than 10 yrs.	200	177.75	3.923	2	.141
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	115	161.39			
		More than 20 yrs.	32	195.91			
Inadequate support from superintendent	349	Less than 10 yrs.	201	172.13	.992	2	.609
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	116	181.87			
		More than 20 yrs.	32	168.16			
Inadequate support from board of educat.	348	Less than 10 yrs.	201	177.15	.578	2	.749
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	115	172.63			
		More than 20 yrs.	32	164.56			
High costs of litigation	346	Less than 10 yrs.	197	180.79	6.510	2	.039*
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	117	171.63			
		More than 20 yrs.	32	135.44			
Desire to avoid conflict	348	Less than 10 yrs.	201	172.83	2.812	2	.245
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	115	170.06			
		More than 20 yrs.	32	200.97			
Laws protecting teachers	346	Less than 10 yrs.	199	171.64	.744	2	.689
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	116	179.05			
		More than 20 yrs.	31	164.68			
Collective bargaining agreement	346	Less than 10 yrs.	199	174.05	.540	2	.763
		Between 10 and 20 yrs.	115	169.73			
		More than 20 yrs.	32	183.59			

*p<.05

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Discussion

Priority Reasons for Contract Non-Renewal

Rocky Mountain principals' demographic groups identified the importance of ethical violations and inappropriate conduct in teacher contract non-renewals. Rural principals, perhaps most concerned about community standards and expectations, placed more importance on this criterion. In a community where individuals tend to be more familiar with one another, it is not surprising that rural principals elevated the importance of ethical violations and inappropriate conduct and insubordination. We presume that principals are thinking of situations that may be criminal in nature and potentially embarrassing to the community. Understanding the importance of ethical behavior by teachers, we are left wondering the optimal way to emphasize this construct with both pre and in-service teachers. Perhaps by implementing case study methods, ethical teacher behavior may be emphasized, reinforced, and modeled for both pre-service and in-service teachers during development sessions.

Elementary principals reported the importance of student achievement to teacher contract non-renewals more than middle school principals. While somewhat stereotypical, apparently student achievement is a higher priority for elementary principals. We are left to presume that the typically larger size and inherent managerial responsibilities that come from leading a secondary school may get in the way of consistently prioritizing student academic achievement. With the recent reforms in teacher evaluation, this criterion should increase in importance across all types and levels of schools in those states that have participated in the reforms.

In all demographic groups, Rocky Mountain principals selected the importance of instructional skills (pedagogical knowledge and skills) over subject content knowledge and dispositions as criteria for teacher contract non-renewal. Universities which educate pre-service teachers should consider the implications of this important finding. While various constituencies may want to push universities to require more subject content knowledge or to require more effort in teacher candidate disposition measurement, our finding strikingly elevates pedagogical knowledge over other constructs. As one considers value-added teacher evaluation, one must question whether principals will continue to stress the importance of instructional skills. More research to further refine the nature of the pedagogical knowledge principals are referring to is justified. Also, principals should be asked to describe the relationship between the value added component of teacher performance and instructional skills.

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Behaviors Observed from Ineffective Teachers

It is important to learn what Rocky Mountain principals identified as the teaching behaviors that they observed from ineffective teachers who they considered for contract non-renewal. In all demographic groups, teachers' lack of instructional skills appears to be the most glaring concern. This may be at odds with teacher certification renewals and legal provisions for "highly qualified" teachers to take more course-work in subject content areas. This finding also raises questions regarding the appropriate balance or blending of pedagogy and content for both pre-service and in-service teacher development. How much emphasis should be placed on one over the other? As noted in the previous section, these findings suggest the need for additional attention to pedagogy and its relationship to student learning.

Complications to Dealing with Ineffective Teachers

Time to adequately address ineffective teachers is a major impediment for Rocky Mountain principals. Amongst all demographic groups, time is consistently reported as a primary barrier. While this finding highlights the complex nature of the principalship, it also suggests that the contract renewal process may be, or perceived to be, too cumbersome for principals to reasonably navigate. While these data were collected before the RTTT initiatives had reached full impact, it may be reasonable to investigate whether using quantitative data from value-added evaluation actually simplifies the principal's task. Over time, these reforms may help to make the contract non-renewal process more routine. Just as likely, however, is that the reforms have created another level of complication to an already over-burdened principal.

Differences in responses to this question emerge along regional lines. Principals who hail from collective bargaining states, such as the Rocky Mountains, have consistently elevated the importance of teacher unions, collective bargaining agreements, and laws protecting teachers as significant complications to r dealing with ineffective teachers. The challenges of a school principal may indeed differ based on the geographic location. Interestingly, suburban Rocky Mountain principals seemed to have a heightened sense of concern regarding the level of support they received from their superintendents, but they also expressed a concern to avoid conflict and confrontation. Perhaps they are often situated in positions whereby their communities have established high expectations for their suburban schools; consequently principals are keenly aware of the public and political pressures that they face.

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Conclusions

We have surveyed nearly 2,000 principals in the United States in 13 states, and the responses from the Rocky Mountain principals are characteristic of principals in other geographic locations. While there is evidence that principals are willing to address ineffective teaching, there are substantial burdens and barriers that add complexity to the non-renewal process. Additionally, the aforementioned complexity decreases the likelihood that principals will initiate this unpleasant process. Principals clearly prefer to initiate a contract non-renewal for problems that are obvious and overt, such as a criminal act, as compared to an issue of teacher competence. As we continue to study these important issues, it will be important to determine whether the RTTT and other reforms actually assist principals to remove ineffective teachers. According to the US Department of Education (2014), as of March, 2014, RTTT funds were available to states serving almost 50% of America's K-12 students. Even in states that did not receive RTTT funds, state legislatures are frequently addressing teacher evaluation procedures. If the emphasis on value-added evaluations continues, we conclude that there will be an increased number of teacher contract non-renewals for different reasons than is historically the case. If school principals are prepared and equipped to initiate these new types of contract non-renewals, this can be a positive outcome.

The responses from principals in collective bargaining states strongly suggest that they face a higher challenge to navigate procedural issues when dealing with ineffective teaching. It is reasonable to conclude that principal jobs may be more complex and difficult to navigate in collective bargaining and RTTT states, such as the Rocky Mountains, at least with respect to teacher contract non-renewal issues. This causes us concern, to the extent that this may increase the likelihood that principals are unable or unwilling to initiate a contract non-renewal for an ineffective teacher. Principals need support from their superintendent, Human Resources office, and board of school trustees to navigate this process. Additionally, professional development needs of principals should be considered in light of this important issue, such as the newness of concepts like merit pay and value-added evaluation.

Very little in education is more important than the presence of an effective teacher in the classroom. While the statutes, processes, and timelines are intricate, principals are capable of learning how to apply the legal procedures on behalf of removing ineffective teachers from the classroom. Rocky Mountain principals need additional tools and support to address their ineffective teachers. We urge continued research and consideration of specific tools that will best support principals through the challenging contract non-renewal experiences. Asking Rocky Mountain principals what they need is a good starting point.

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Superintendents and Professional Development: Voices from the Field

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The primary task of the educational leader is to assure high quality learning environments for all students. Research (Gordon, 2004; Sparks, 2007) supports the proposition that effective professional development contributes to instructional improvement by building educator capacity. Much of the research on professional development focuses in principal leadership in improving instruction (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). But district level administrators, especially the superintendent of schools, also have a role to play in school improvement. Standards for the preparation of school leaders specify competencies for superintendents that include the design and implementation of professional development programs based on sound research, best practices, district-and school-level data, and other contextual information (National Policy Board, 2002). The National Staff Development Council's Standards (2001) also describe a comprehensive set of activities to improve student learning that apply to both campus and district level personnel. But while the research on the instructional leadership role of principals is extensive, comparatively little is said about how superintendents meet their own responsibilities in this area (Dufour, 2000; Hirsch, 2009; Firestone, Manquin, & Martinez, 2005).

This paper focuses on understanding the role of school district leadership, in particular that of the superintendent, in providing quality professional development to improve instruction for all students. We examined superintendent behaviors in six areas: demonstrating leadership for professional development; providing adequate resources for professional development activities; using data to determine professional development priorities; using research to make decisions about the

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content, design, and delivery of professional development; establishing professional learning communities for all adult learners that are aligned with district goals; and enhancing equity for all students through professional development. These themes were developed using the NSDC's Standards for Professional Development (2001).

Conceptual Framework

District Level Leadership

Much of the existing literature on professional development has focused on the centrality of campus-based educators, especially principals, to the learning of students. As Hord (1993) notes, " The leadership of the principal has been consistently cited as the most significant factor in the success of campus change efforts" (p. 16). The instructional responsibilities of the superintendent have traditionally been conceived as fundamentally different in nature from those of the principal, although the instructional leadership responsibilities of the superintendent are expanding (Bjork, 1993; Kowalski, 2013). For example, Herman (1990) identified five instructional roles for the superintendent of schools. These included the appropriate allocation of instructional personnel, organization of the instructional program, support of the instructional program, the development of instructional personnel, and planning for the instructional program. Bredeson (1996) assigned four instructional roles to the superintendent. These included instructional visionary, instructional collaborator, instructional supporter, and instructional delegator. Finally, Petersen (1999) suggests that district leaders contribute to instructional leadership as articulators of an instructional vision, as creators of organizational structures that support instruction, as assessor and evaluator of personnel and instructional programs, and as organizational adapters. Thus superintendents and other district leaders are cast in important, but fundamentally supportive roles, to principals and teachers working to improve instruction for all students.

While the idea that superintendents and other school district-level administrators have little direct impact on student achievement was once generally accepted (Bennett, Finn, & Crib, 1999; Walker, 2007), more recent work by Marzano and Waters (2009), Hightower, Knapp, Marsh, and McLaughlin (2002), and McLaughlin and Talbert (2002) support an active role for district leadership in raising student achievement. Marzano and Waters (2009) set out to answer two questions about district level leadership and student achievement: what is the strength of that relationship; and what specific district-level leadership behaviors are linked to student achievement? Their meta-analysis of existing research discovered a statistically positive relationship between district leadership and student achievement and isolated five district leadership responsibilities that are positively correlated to student achievement. These district leadership responsibilities

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include: ensuring collaborative goal setting that includes all relevant stakeholders, especially principals, teachers, parents, and board members; establishing non-negotiable goals in the areas of student achievement and instruction for which all staff members are held responsible; creating board alignment with and support of district achievement and instructional goals to ensure that these goals remain the district's top priority; monitoring achievement and instructional goals to be certain that the goals remain the driving force behind district actions; and allocating necessary resources of time, money, personnel, and materials to support achievement and instruction goals. Marzano and Waters caution that exercising district level leadership responsibilities does not mean:

> that the district establishes a single instructional model that all teachers must employ....[I]t does mean that the district adopts a broad but common framework for classroom instructional design and planning that guarantees the consistent use of research-based instructional strategies in each school (7).

Implementing these district leadership responsibilities creates a system of *defined autonomy*, which means that the superintendent expects principals and all district leaders to lead "within the boundaries defined by the district goals" (Marzano & Waters, 2009, 8).

McLaughlin and Talbert (2002) working with school districts in the San Francisco Bay area and the San Diego City School District discovered a strong connection between the behaviors of district level leaders and changes in school level culture that lead to improved student achievement. McLaughlin and Talbert (2002) refer to the districts where district level leadership was able to impact student achievement as "Reforming Districts."

The success of reforming districts demonstrates that school district leadership has an active role to play in school improvement. McLaughlin and Talbert (2002) note that school districts in which district level leaders were successful in raising student achievement shared several distinctive characteristics. These include:

- Identifying themselves as the focus of change and in possession of a clear theory of change for the district.
- Establishing clear expectations for central office-school relations and taking a leadership role in establishing norms of reform across the district.
- Engaging people from all levels of the district to create reform goals and outcomes, to share knowledge of successful practice, and to design change strategies.
- Cultivating strong norms of inquiry among central office staff.
- Maintaining a clear, unitary focus on teaching and learning.
- Responding affirmatively to campus identified student needs.

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While not all districts share these specific characteristics, reforming districts do. "Reforming districts invest heavily in school reform, and do so more successfully than most districts, by leading, supporting, and leveraging reform in the central office" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002, p. 184). While all district-level leaders may potentially impact student achievement, it is the superintendent of schools who is in the position to exercise the most direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the district. One of the ways superintendents exercise leadership to improve learning is by enhancing the capacities of teachers to deliver the best in instruction for all students through high quality professional development.

Professional Development

Professional development is a critical component of a comprehensive school district change effort. But to be effective professional development must be delivered in a coherent manner (Hawley & Valli, 1999). Coherent professional development is characterized by a consistency of focus, devotion of sufficient time to relevant content areas, and modeling the instructional approaches that teachers are expected to utilize with students. Childress et al. (2007) underscore the need for coherence in professional development. Uncoordinated and fragmented professional development efforts disconnect from district instructional goals and ultimately become irrelevant to the work that teachers do daily with students. As a consequence, teachers divorce themselves from district reform strategies and retreat to the security of their classrooms, where they revert to working in isolation. The potential impact of the district reform effort is lost and the knowledge and skills teachers might contribute to the correction of performance problems are wasted. District level leaders are responsible for organizing and monitoring professional development in ways that support teachers as they acquire new instructional skills and avoid the fragmentation that often proves fatal to district wide improvement efforts.

Although there are a variety of definitions of "high quality" professional development and the ways in which it differs from conventional, less effective programs (Knapp, 2003), many scholars conclude that professional development that builds teacher capacity to deliver powerful instruction should:

- Concentrate on classroom teaching that emphasizes rigorous learning standards and evidence of student learning to standard
- Focus on developing teacher's pedagogical content knowledge
- Model preferred instructional practices both in classrooms and in adult learning situations
- Locate professional learning in collaborative. collegial, and school-based learning environments

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- Offer rigorous and cumulative opportunities for professional learning over time
- Align with district reform initiatives (Knapp, 2003, pp. 119-120).

Institutional Coherence

Institutional coherence refers to the ways in which all parts of an organization work together to achieve organizational goals (Childress et. al., p. 2007). Within the context of school reform, institutional coherence describes how school districts organize themselves to maximize teaching and learning for all students. Faced with the need to improve teaching and learning, the district's role is to become "an architect of improvement" (Childress et. al., 2007, 11) that develops the overall improvement strategy and then manages the entire school organization is a manner that strengthens and supports the overall reform strategy. When districts fail to act coherently, reform efforts fail.

Unfortunately, district leadership does not always act in a coherent manner. District leaders may be capable of recognizing learning problems when they arise but conceptualize them as separate issues to be dealt with individually rather than addressed systemically. Instead of a fragmented approach to problems of student achievement, district leaders must "manage their organizations as integrated systems in which challenges are independent parts of a whole that is directly related to the work of teachers and students in classrooms" (Childress et. al., 2007, p. 12).

A coherent approach to professional development would address fewer areas, but in more depth and with appropriate follow up (Firestone, Mangin, Martinez, & Polovsky, 2005). A coherent professional development approach consists of three elements. These are: consistency of focus that supports an in-depth knowledge of new content and pedagogical learning; a distribution of learning time that introduces teachers to new materials and permits sufficient opportunities for teachers to try out new ideas and practices and refine them; and incorporating learning activities that model the new approaches teachers are expected to use. This level of coherence in professional development is often recommended but rarely implemented (Firestone et. al., 2005; Hawley & Valli, 1999).

The Study

This qualitative work examines the leadership behavior of the superintendent in providing quality professional development to improve student achievement in the school district. Research (Marzano & Waters, 2009; Childress et. al., 2007; Firestone, et.al., 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002) has established that superintendents have specific tasks to perform as instructional leaders and initiators of school reform. According to McLaughin & Talbert (2002), these tasks include keeping a clear focus

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on teaching and learning across the district, lending instructional support to schools and teachers as they work to improve student achievement, and utilizing data based accountability measures for all stakeholders. As such, high quality professional development is an important pathway to accomplishing these tasks, and the superintendent is at the helm of such practice. Therefore, for this study a team of four researchers employed purposeful sampling to elicit the perspective of five Central Texas superintendents who demonstrated a level of degree in professional development.

Participants

Participants in the study were the superintendents of five public school districts in Central Texas. These districts included a small rural school district enrolling fewer than 1,000 students, a small city school district, a medium-sized school district located in a university community, and two suburban school districts enrolling more than 25,000 students each. The districts selected were typical of the size and demographic composition of school districts in central Texas. All participants held a terminal degree with more than 5 years of experience in the superintendency.

Data sources

Data for the study were gathered though interviews with the superintendents of each district. The participants consisted of three males and two females. Two of those interviewed were Hispanic. The interviews explored the areas of focus for the study (demonstrating leadership, providing adequate resources, using data to establish priorities, using research to make decisions, collaborating with others, and ensuring equity for all students).

The location of all interviews was the office of the superintendent. During the interview, which was very structured, the team only asked questions that solicited facts. We listened carefully and observed the participant's body language while taking notes. By taking notes, we were able to capture significant aspects of the superintendent's life and career that are important to the topic of this study. Additionally, we asked participants to clarify and give examples of their data responses.

After we completed all interviews, which were audio-taped, we transcribed the interviews verbatim. For member checking purposes, interview transcripts were emailed to participants, who then verified that the information was correct. Transcripts were analyzed by the researchers with the goal of identifying patterns, themes, and concepts. Notes were made of the themes that were relevant to answering the research questions and supported the arguments with powerful quotations and examples from the data. We also looked for how participants'

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description of her/his experiences illustrated and extended broader theories, as well as how their descriptions of their experiences extend previous research.

Through qualitative inquiry, we entered the world of our participants to get to know them and earn their trust. Aside from "in-depth interviewing" with the participant, we kept a record of what we heard and observed.

Archival data from each district was also examined. These included each district's annual budget, the district mission statement, district goals and objectives, district improvement plans, and other documents relevant to professional development such as professional development activity schedules. Together the interviews and document helped to construct an understanding of how each superintendent performed his or her role as a leader of professional development for the school district.

Analysis

Before analyzing and interpreting the data, the researchers logged essential information and demographic characteristics for all participants to facilitate the management process, for Saldana (2009) suggests that "good qualitative data management provides essential participant information and contexts for analysis and interpretation" (p.56). For each superintendent's reference, we included a pseudonym, age, gender, ethnicity, health, time frame of interactions, and district name.

Once demographics were coded and after we collected sufficient data during the initial stage, the researchers immediately started to do preliminary coding to determine if the techniques were guiding the study in the correct direction. Then we used the transcript and field notes to create a three column spreadsheet. In this file, the researchers filled the first column with raw data or excerpts from the transcript and field notes. In the second column, we developed a set of preliminary codes that highlighted some ideas from the raw data. In the third column, the researchers developed the final codes to support a strong overarching idea prevalent in the raw data. After coding data from interviews, observations, and district artifacts, the researchers created categories aligned with the purpose of the study.

Results

The research team examined the transcripts of interviews with five superintendents of public school districts in central Texas for the presence of six themes associated with leadership in professional development. These themes were: demonstrating leadership, providing adequate resources, using data to determine priorities, using research to make decisions about instruction, collaborating with others, and

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ensuring equity for all students. A discussion of the results of the study begins below.

Demonstrating leadership

Superintendents who demonstrate leadership in professional development establish policies and organizational structures that support continuous learning for all staff members. They ensure that resources of time, money, and personnel needed for professional development are provided and match district-wide goals for improving teaching and learning. They continuously evaluate professional development's effectiveness in achieving student learning goals and then make sure that employees' annual and daily work schedules provide adequate time for professional learning at the campus and district levels.

The superintendent of a medium sized district described her leadership role this way:

> The big focus is building the team, the overall team that looks for the good of the entire district not just their campus. Sometimes I think of myself as an orchestra conductor. You know you have a lot of people with a lot of skills, I don't know how to play this instrument, but my job is to bring it all together so its gets to where it needs to go.

The superintendent of a heavily minority suburban school district addressed the need for leaders to be courageous in confronting issues of student achievement:

> You have to be to a courageous leader, you have to make tough decisions and you have to always put students first. It takes a courageous leader to put students first. Being a courageous leader, you are always thinking about what you are doing to enhance the kids' learning throughout your school or throughout your classroom

Providing adequate resources

District resources committed to professional development should be considered as a long-term investment in professional learning for teachers that will pay off in improved student learning in the future. As an investment, resources for professional development should be as protected as possible from the vagaries of district financial circumstances. District resources may be utilized for several professional learning purposes, which include, funding trainers, providing full-and part-time coaches for teachers and principals, supporting external consultants and facilitators who assist school staff in planning and evaluating professional development needs, providing stipends for teacher leaders who serve as mentors to other staff, and funding substitutes for teachers while they participate in professional learning opportunities.

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Resources need to be allocated according to student needs, but are frequently inadequate. One superintendent described the importance of matching resources with validated student needs:

> We try to put enough funding in our staff development to meet the needs of the kids. That's one area that we try not to cut out. But we try to be real selective in determining staff development; we don't want [just] any staff development. We try to be very prescriptive in our staff development and...we put sufficient funds and provide outside resources. So we let our staff development drive our budget not our budget drive our staff development.

Districts also recognize that resources involve more than dollars. Time is an important resource. The superintendent of a small rural school district remarked that her district provided extra days at the beginning of the year for professional learning and awarded teachers compensatory time for participating in professional development. The NSDC recommends that at least 10% of district budgets and 25% of teacher time be devoted to professional development (National Staff Development Standards, 2001) but none of the districts studied could match those expectations.

Using data to set priorities

Effective professional development derives from a careful analysis of student learning data from a variety of sources to determine priorities in professional learning. Important sources of data on professional learning needs include, among other things, standard and criterion referenced tests, teacher-made tests, student work samples, and classroom assignments. Other useful sources include grade-level retention rates, high school completion rates, enrollment trends, and changing demographic patterns. Finally, data from classroom observations and annual teacher appraisals can provide important information in making decisions about adult learning needs. Schools exist in a data-rich environment that provides critical information on professional development needs.

Superintendents rely on data to design professional learning activities that meet documented student needs. One superintendent responded:

> I am always looking at data. Everything we do has got to be data driven. It can't be what I think, what someone else thinks or my opinion or someone else's opinion; it has got to be what the data dictates; and that drives what our decisions are everyday.

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Sources of data for priority setting include results of state accountability examinations, district benchmark tests, and campus and district improvement plans. Several of the districts in the study utilized data management systems such as Eduphoria and INOVA to extract additional details from existing data sets to assist them in setting priorities for professional development.

Using research to make decisions about instruction

It is important that educators become knowledgeable about the wealth of research on student learning and use it appropriately in designing professional development activities. That can be a challenging task because the available research work may vary widely in the rigor of the research methodology employed, the validity of the results obtained, and relevancy to practitioners (Fusarelli, 2008; Schaps, 2008). Unfortunately, the uneven nature of the available research makes administrators and teachers cautious about their reliance on it when undertaking a school improvement initiative. A more productive approach is for educators to equip themselves to make informed judgment about the rigor of research methods when undertaking school reform, utilizing only those practices and programs whose claims are based on sound research methodology and are relevant to district needs. This is a time consuming and painstaking process. But the impact on student learning of solid research-based practices more than justify the effort.

None of the districts in the study appeared to rely on published research from outside sources to make decisions about instruction. Rather, districts tended to rely on in-district resources or curriculum development programs provided by external sources such as a regional educational service center, university faculty, or independent consultants. One of the superintendents reflected this reliance on known sources:

> We feel like we have sufficient resources in our district plus our staff membersare beginning to read more books and do more research on different things toenhance their learning and skills in this district.

Familiar sources, no matter how limited, are preferred to design and deliver professional development activities. Why educational research plays so limited a role in decision-making about instruction is worth further exploration.

Collaborating with others

Some of the most important professional learning in school districts and schools occurs within the context of a collaborative group. Collaborative work arrangements can provide the interactions that deepen learning and contribute to the creative solution of seemingly intractable problems of teaching and learning. But the

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knowledge and skills required to work effectively in a group setting tend to be undervalued and are not often featured in professional preparation programs. Equipping educators with the knowledge and skills needed to work collaboratively is an important aim of professional development. Collaboration among educators at all levels is also a key component in designing professional development activities. Collaborative analysis of student work and other sources of achievement-oriented data is an important consideration in determining the content and structure of school-based professional development.

Some level of collaboration on setting professional development priorities occurs in the districts examined. In the smaller districts, collaboration usually involved the superintendent, principals, and instructional support staff. The superintendent of the smallest district in the study reported "I [meet] with the three principals and our elementary assistant principal who is also a half-time curriculum coordinator" to assess district professional development needs. A further level of collaboration occurs between principals and teachers on individual campuses. "The real work...is done [by] the principal and teachers." In this instance, district size facilitates the ease of communication between superintendent, principals, and school staff. Superintendents do value collaboration with others. One superintendent summarized the importance of collaboration this way: "...the best ideas don't come from my brain. They come from other people I work with and I need to be listening to folks to know what is happening out there." Collaboration with others in determining professional development goals and activities was a constant across all five school districts.

Ensuring equity for all students

Equity is a multifaceted concept. It includes an understanding and appreciation for all students; the provision of a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment for all students; and holding high expectations for the academic performance of all students. Equity is an important goal for the professional learning of educators. It is particularly important for educators who are engaged with student from different backgrounds than their own, or who work with students of color or from families of poverty. High quality staff development prepares educators to vary instruction based on individual differences and to understand their own attitudes toward racial, class, cultural, and linguistic differences.

While the superintendents in the study expressed concerns about issues of equity, most addressed that concern in terms of eliminating test score gaps between groups of students. One superintendent noted that in her small district "we have closed a lot of gaps." The enrollment of this particular district is two-thirds Hispanic and nearly seventy percent economically disadvantaged. Another superintendent noted that striving for equity was often controversial: "You might have to spend more time

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with [some students] to get them where other students are. That is hard for some parent to understand, why are you spending all your efforts with that child instead of my child?" Teachers also find this situation hard to understand, a situation that can be addressed through professional learning.

Discussion

The information gathered in this study suggests that when it comes providing professional development to enhance teacher capacity to improve learning for all students, superintendents with whom we spoke are far from remote figures with only indirect ability to influence learning outcomes. Although active in different ways, the superintendents demonstrated leadership for professional development through collaboration with others, through use of data based decision making, and through the allocation of resources for instructional improvement. Superintendents in this study were active proponents of professional development to improve instruction in their own districts. This work underscores the importance of the superintendent as an influential actor in the school improvement process who has the authority to deploy the resources needed to move schools forward and who uses professional development to build instructional capacity in teachers and principals. Superintendents can and do act to bring about significant change in instruction and learning

Implications

Based on a literature review on the role of the superintendent, there is an exhaustive listing of responsibilities, behaviors, and traits superintendents should possess. The data from this study suggests that school superintendents are not removed figureheads even though they are indirectly involved in the allocation of resources. Instead, the superintendents in this study demonstrated to be active proponents of school improvement by building collaboration amongst professionals and their district. They all used collective leadership to build collaboration, used data to plan instructional programs, and valued good communication to foster relationships that influences school improvement. As such, superintendent leadership is essential to support instructional programs that will properly serve all students equitably.

For aspiring superintendents, we believe the results of this study suggest that superintendents *can* promote school improvement in their districts *if* he/she supports a leadership style of collaboration, communication, and use of data to determine instructional programs as a form of professional development. Further, this study has implications for practice as it indicates that a superintendent does not need to explicitly state she/he is about facilitating school improvement, nor have even a department for school improvement to have an impact. These are promising and important findings with

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implications for superintendents who seek to facilitate school improvement in a time of high stakes testing and accountability.

Furthermore, this study has merit and relevancy that helps contribute to the literature on the superintendency. People understand superintendent's interactions that facilitate school improvement. According to Schmoker (2006), the superintendent must be active in working with building administrators in improving instruction. Data from this study helps support the notion that the superintendent should focus district efforts on team based instructional improvement (Schlechty, 2002), since the single most important task is to become the instructional leader of the school district (Kowalski, 2013) where he models and exemplifies the mission and vision of the schools s/he serves.

Conclusion

This qualitative study serves as a way to better understand the role of the superintendents as a professional developer in Texas school districts. The data presented offers a new perspective on how superintendents' interactions have in creating and sustaining school improvement. As schools and communities are held more accountable, superintendents' interactions will continue to be under scrutiny; however, this research highlights the collaborative culture of five Texas superintendents that is worth learning about.

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Factors Affecting Doctoral Educational Leadership Program Selection

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Although recruitment has always been vital to sustained university admissions, it is true perhaps now more than ever as traditional public university programs face fierce competition for students from digitally-delivered and for-profit programs. Competition is fierce at every level of higher education, including the doctoral level. As competition has increased, so have the number of universities offering doctoral degrees (U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2013). In 2011, Texas ranked fourth behind California, Florida, and North Carolina in the number of doctoral degrees granted in the United States. Furthermore, the number of doctoral degrees conferred in Texas grew from 8,959 in 2008 to 9,705 in 2011(DOE, 2013) – a similar trend to most states across the nation that year. Of those, Texas has 26 public and private institutions – not including online universities – granting doctoral degrees in Educational Leadership (DOE, 2013). With the increase in traditional, online, and for-profit doctoral programs in Texas, existing programs may need to reevaluate efforts to stay competitive to survive in the current climate.

Doctoral Program Design: A Marketing Factor

The doctoral degree serves as the apex of the educational system. Recruiting components and factors vary with this degree. Just as institutions transform to meet learner needs, program planning and recruitment can be designed based on students' preferences (Stevens-Huffman, 2006) and possibly improve recruiting efforts as a result. A multitude of factors drive program selection including personal factors relative to the balance of family, work, and study; logistical factors of cost, financial aid, location, admission requirements, learning environment; and program design factors like focus, length, and

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delivery (Kanyi, 2009). Nevertheless, research has found the major factor contributing to program selection to be the reason a student chose to pursue a doctorate. Studies have found the reasons students pursue the doctorate to include a key life goal, a tool for career advancement, or a natural step in students' intellectual and educational journey. Interestingly, education professionals have been more likely than other professionals to view the doctorate as an opportunity to expand their career beyond their current profession.

Another factor that has been found to drive program selection is program design and quality. The National Research Council (NRC, 2009) attributed program quality to the scholarly activity of doctoral faculty. On the other hand, the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS, n.d.) found that PhD students and alumni associated graduate program quality with program dimensions such as time-to-degree. One program design feature found to decrease to time-to-degree included a cohort design. When surveyed, Texas public school administrators indicated that cohort-based programs had shorter time-to-degrees than traditional doctoral program designs (Tierce, 2008). Other factors that have been shown to impact time-to-degree are degree type and dissertation research format. Qualitative research formats have resulted in shorter time-to-degree for EdD students but not for PhD students, while the opposite was true for quantitative research formats (Tierce, 2008). Other studies have shown a decrease in time-to-degree when some of the challenges faced by doctoral students are alleviated (West, Gokalp, Edlyn, Fischer, & Gupton, 2011; Boyle Single, 2010). Mullen & Fish (2010) noted mentoring as a possible tool to foster relationships between faculty and students, to increase engagement in scholarship and research, and to facilitate peer support. The mentorship can be extended at the peer level partnering new doctoral students with veteran students to create Personal Learning Network (PLN), which could also increase the quality of doctoral program design (Crosslin, Wakefield, Bennette, & Black, 2013).

Cited studies have investigated influential factors for doctoral programs in particular fields or generally across fields. The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that had the greatest influence on students' selections of Educational Leadership doctoral programs in particular. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions: What factors influenced doctoral-level students' decisions to attend particular Educational Leadership programs? And, did the factors differ by students' age, ethnicity, and gender?

Method

Participants

A convenience sample of current doctoral-level students from Educational Leadership programs at three public regional universities in the southwest United States were recruited for participation in the study (N=41, M_{age}=39.34, SD_{age}=8.70, age range:

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26-54 years, 68% female); participants volunteered to participate or not. Participants self-identified with the following ethnicities: Hispanic/Latino/Chicano (2%), Native American/Pacific Islander (2%), African American/Black (24%), Asian (2%), and Caucasian/White (68%).

Procedure

Study recruits were provided information about the study - including the potential risks and benefits of participating - before being asked to complete an online survey. By completing the survey, the recruits indicated their informed consent to participate in the study. In the survey, participants were asked to retrospectively identify factors that influenced their decision to attend their current Educational Leadership doctoral program. The online survey used branching logic to seek additional information from participants concerning factors that they identified as impactful of their program choice. For the sake of brevity, we did not include a copy of the survey in this article, but a copy is available from the authors upon request.

Analyses

Participants' responses were analyzed descriptively in aggregate as well as disaggregated by gender and age. Because the sample was largely comprised of Caucasian respondents, there was not enough variability to disaggregate the results by ethnicity. Data from the open-ended responses were analyzed thematically.

Results

Participants were asked to identify factors that influenced their choice to attend their current Educational Leadership doctoral program from a prepopulated list. The list also included an open-ended comments box for the participant to indicate a factor(s) that was not included in the prepopulated list, if needed. Figure 1 presents the factors that were identified by participants (N=41). The top three factors were convenience, delivery of coursework, and tuition cost. Convenience was cited by the greatest number of participants (72%) as influential of their program selection. Delivery of coursework and tuition cost ranked a close second with 63% of participants selecting each. Interestingly, while tuition cost was identified by almost two-thirds of the participants as influential, the availability of financial aid and scholarships was identified by only 14% of participants as influential, pointing to the notion that students may want to pay less overall but perhaps not by seeking financial aid or scholarships.

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Figure 1. Factors identified by participants as influential in the selection of their current Educational Leadership doctoral program (*N*=41). Note that participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will add to greater than 100%.
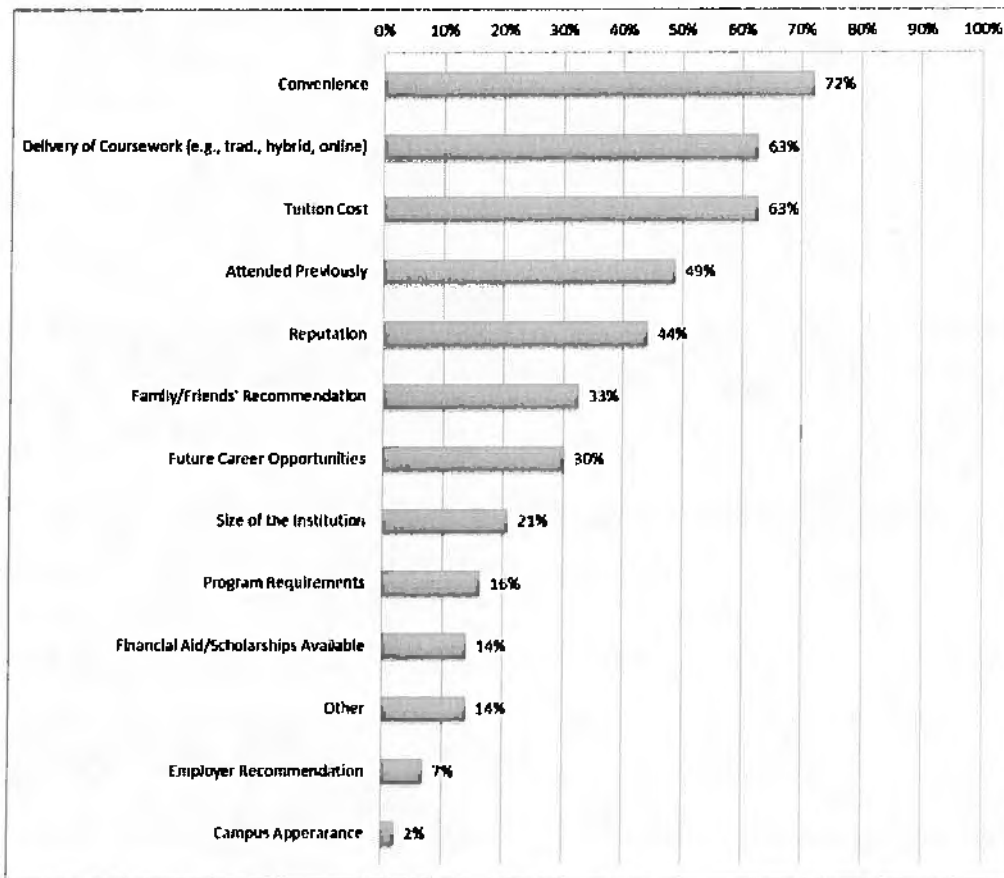

Figure 2 presents the factors that participants identified as influential of their program choice by gender. Note that there were approximately twice as many female respondents as male respondents, which could bias the results. Percentages for females were calculated as the number of female respondents who selected a particular factor divided by the total number of female respondents; percentages for males were calculated using the same method, but for the male respondents. The results are interesting regardless, but perhaps limited in their generalizability because of the lack of diversity of the sample. Top factors for females were convenience (86%), delivery of coursework (75%), and tuition cost (68%). In contrast, just 46% and 38% of males identified convenience and delivery of coursework as influential factors, respectively. Males' selections tended to be more disparate than females'. For example, the top two factors identified by male respondents were tuition cost and reputation, but they were each identified by only approximately half of male respondents (54% each). Fifty-four percent of females also ranked tuition cost as influential, but only 39% ranked reputation as an influential factor. Ranking third and fourth for males were convenience and the fact that they had attended

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the university previously (46% for each). Many females (86%) were likewise influenced by the convenience of a program, and 46% of females also identified previous attendance as an influential factor. The results indicate that males tended to be more varied in the factors that influenced their decision to attend a particular Educational Leadership doctoral program while females were more congruent on particular factors. Furthermore, the results suggest that females and males were influenced by different factors, with the exception of convenience, tuition cost, and previous attendance that were shared as top factors among females and males.

The top factors shared by females and males – convenience, tuition cost, and previous attendance – will be further explored in the following sections. Because delivery of coursework was identified by 63% of respondents as influential, the majority of those being female, it too will be explored further.

Figure 2. Factors identified by participants as influential in the selection of their current Educational Leadership doctoral program by gender (*N*=41). Note that participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will add to greater than 100%.
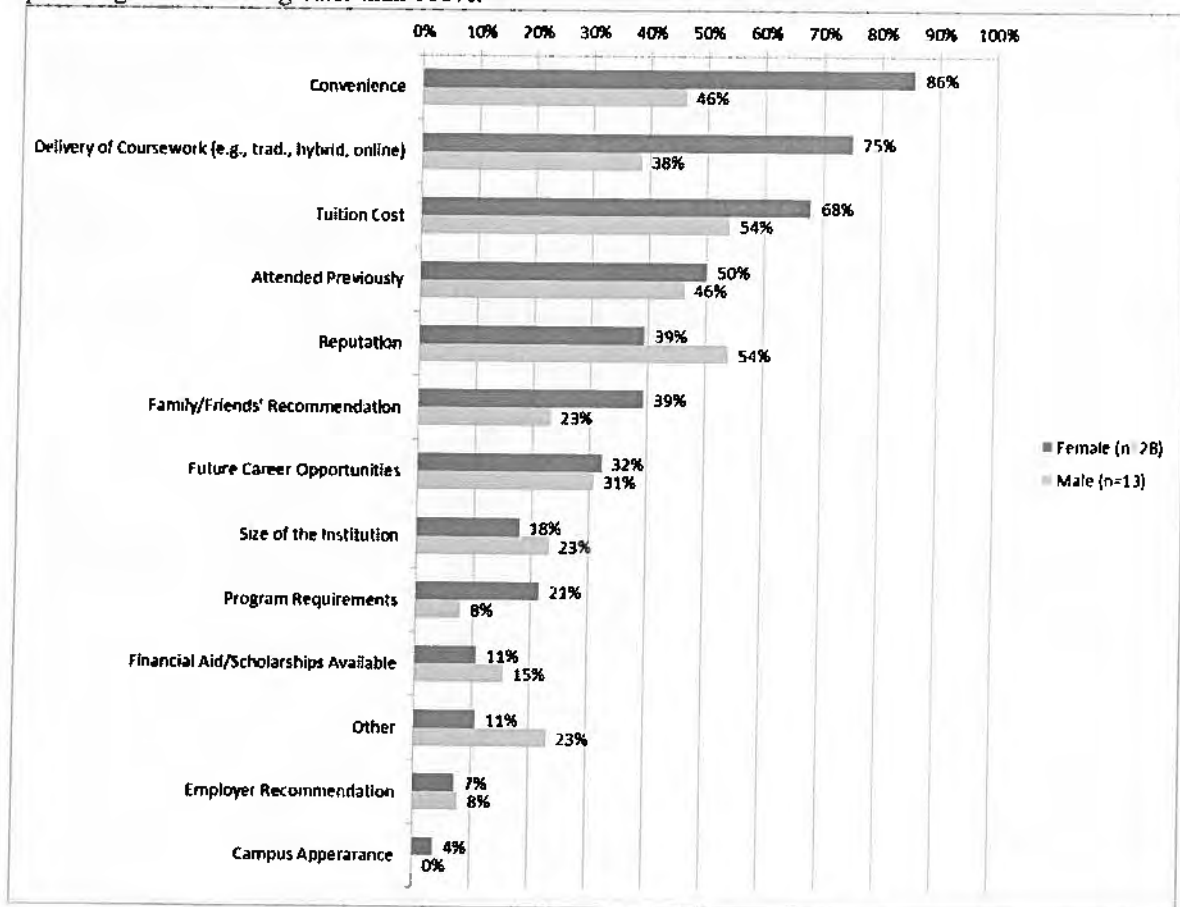
Convenience

Respondents who selected convenience as a factor were asked to further explicate what aspects of convenience affected their decision to attend their current Educational Leadership doctoral program. Figure 3 presents the results. The majority of respondents cited proximity to work and home as influential in their decision to attend (53% and 74%, respectively). Forty-four percent of respondents indicated that the convenience of course scheduling was influential in their decision to attend a particular program.

Figure 3. Aspects of convenience that participants (*n*=31) identified as affecting their decision to attend their current program. Participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will sum to greater than 100%.
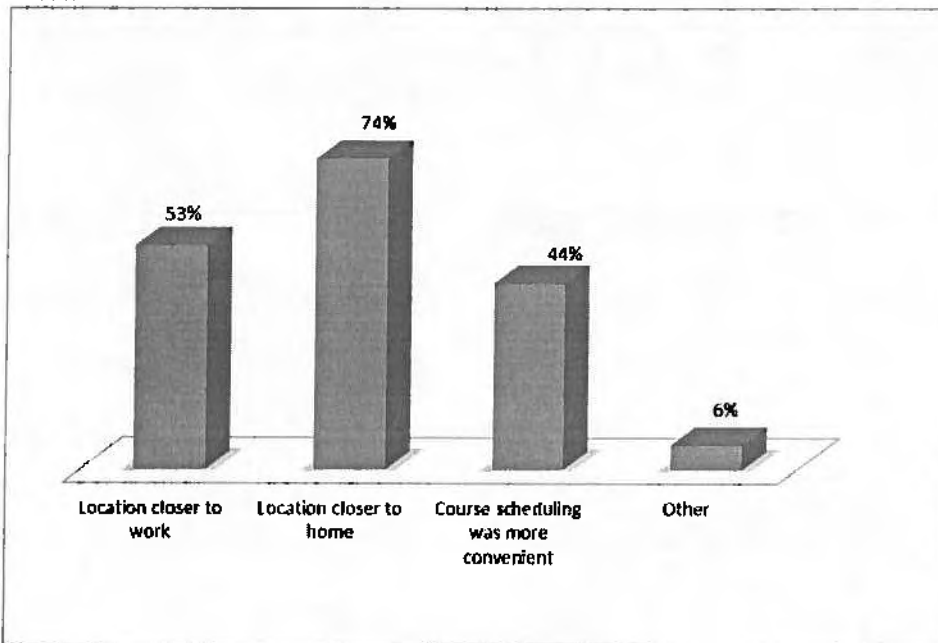
When disaggregated by gender (see Figure 4 for results), results indicated that females and males differed in the particular type of convenience that was influential in their choice of program. The majority of females indicated that proximity to work and/or home were important factors (50% and 68%, respectively). In contrast, only 31 % and 38% of males, respectively, cited physical proximity to work and/or home as influential. The convenience of course scheduling was identified by 43% of females as influential, but by only 23% of males. Overall, more females appeared to be influenced by the convenience offered by a particular program whether based on physical proximity or course scheduling, which is not surprising given the fact that 86% of females initially identified convenience as influential.

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Figure 4. Aspects of convenience that participants identified as affecting their decision to attend their current program by gender. Percentages for females were calculated as the number of female respondents who selected a particular aspect of convenience divided by the total number of female respondents; percentages for males were calculated using the same method, but for the male respondents. Note that participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will sum to greater than 100%.
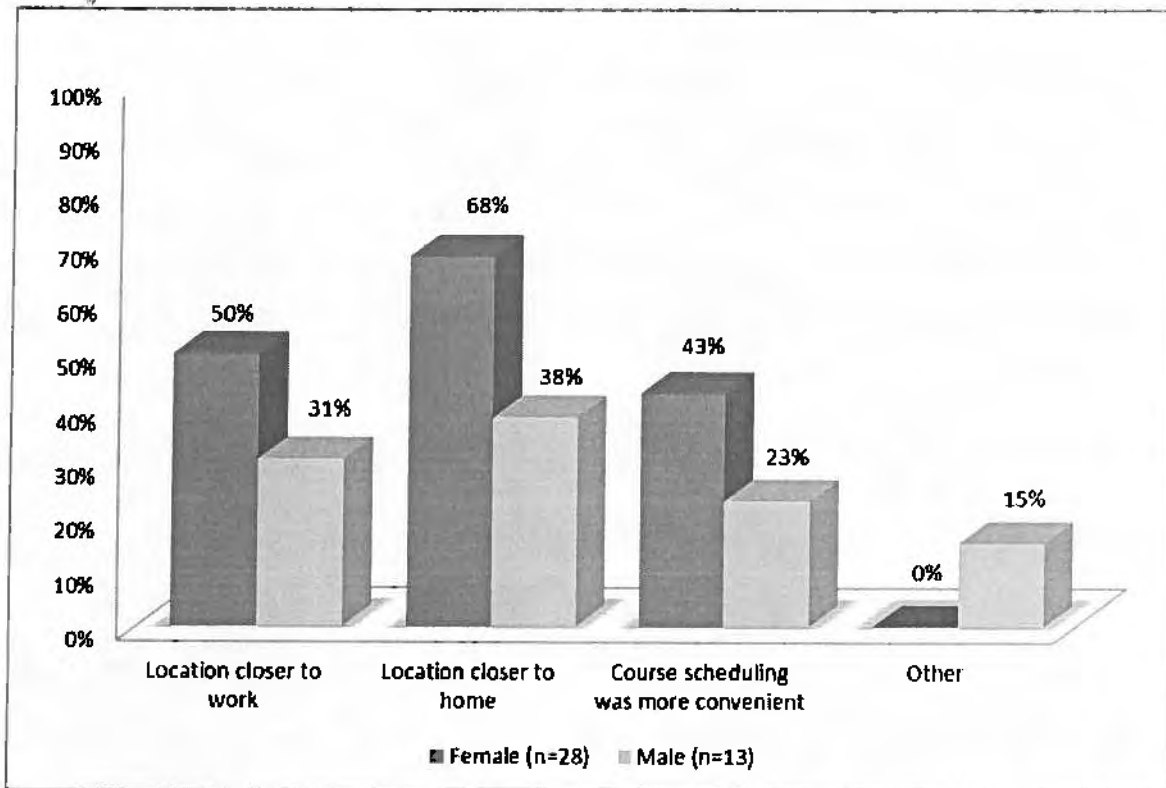
Majorities of respondents in the 20-29 age range indicated that the physical proximity to work and home (67% and 67%, respectively) was influential in their choice of program. In fact, the physical proximity to work and home influenced a larger percentage of 20-29 year olds' choices than it did for any of the other age groups (age 30-39: 47% and 47%, respectively; age 40-49: 40% and 60%, respectively; age 50-59: 29% and 57%, respectively). For those aged 40-49 and 50-59, physical proximity to home (60% and 57%, respectively) was influential to a higher percentage of respondents than physical proximity to work (40% and 29%, respectively).

Fewer (50%) respondents in the 20-29 age group indicated that the convenience of course scheduling was impactful of their program choice. As with the physical proximity, even fewer respondents in the 30-39, 40-49, and 50-59 age groups indicated that the convenience related to course scheduling was impactful of their decision to attend their current program (33%, 20%, and 29%, respectively). Overall, the physical proximity to home overshadowed the convenience of course scheduling in the percentage of respondents that it impacted for all age groups.

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Figure 5. Aspects of convenience that participants identified as affecting their decision to attend their current program by age category. Percentages for each age group were calculated as the number of respondents in the age group who selected a particular aspect of convenience divided by the total number of respondents in that age group. Note that participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will sum to greater than 100%.
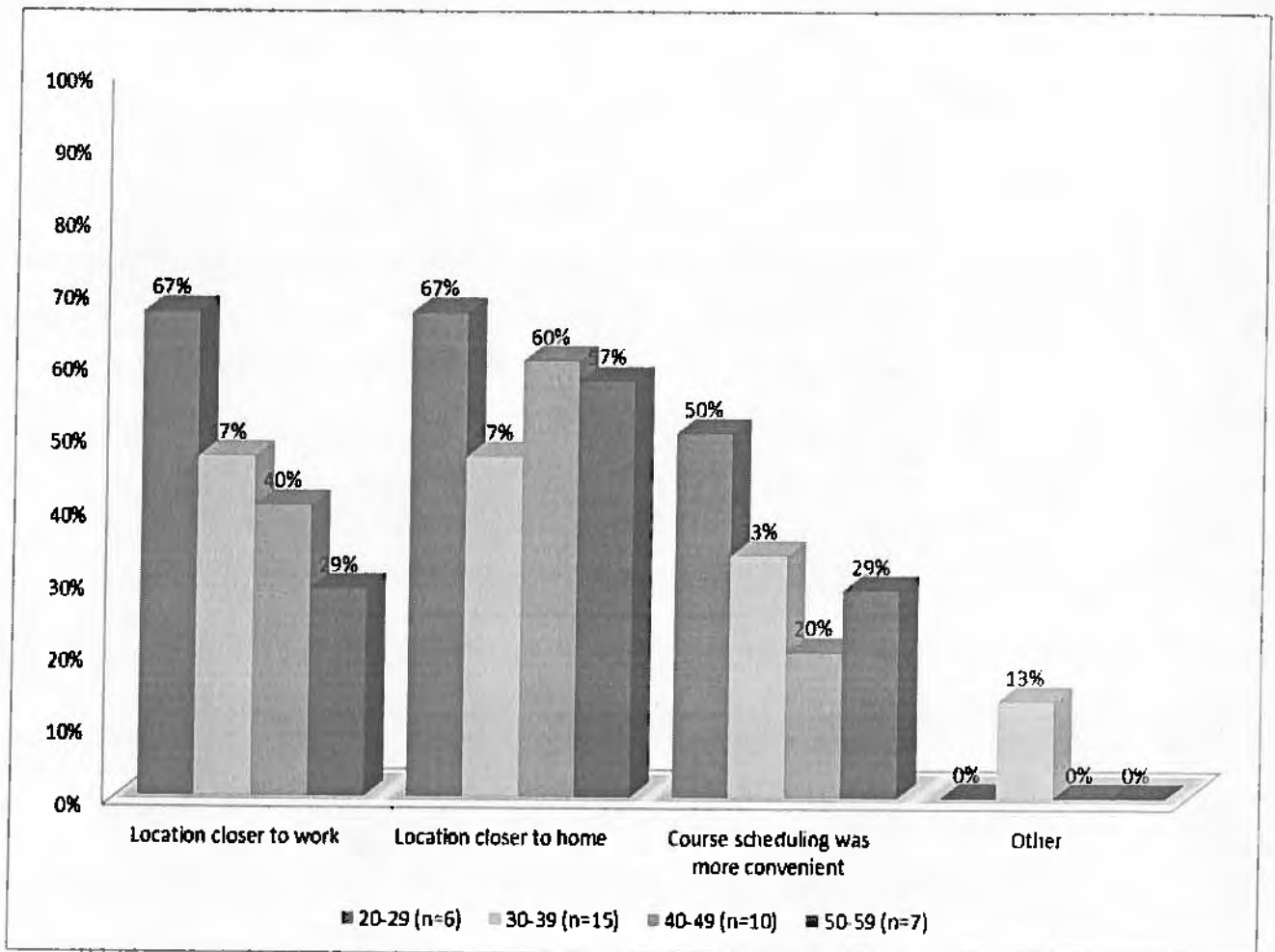
Tuition Cost

Participants who selected tuition cost as a factor were asked to explain further the aspects of tuition cost that affected their decision to attend their particular Educational Leadership program via open-ended responses. Of the 25 total open-ended responses, 19 (76%) explicitly mentioned that the program they chose was more affordable, several (16%) citing their program as having the same credibility and quality as programs with higher tuition costs. Note that simply by choosing tuition cost as a factor, however, participants likely were intimating that they desired a more affordable program rather than more costly. Of the 25 respondents, one (4%) respondent indicated that he or she

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had received a full scholarship that influenced his or her decision to attend a particular program. The variability of responses was not great enough to warrant disaggregation by gender or age.

Previous Attendance

Participants who indicated that their previous attendance influenced their decision to attend a particular program were asked to indicate the institutional unit that they had attended previously (university, college, or department) and what degree they had completed. Responses were not varied enough to warrant disaggregation by gender or age. Of the 20 participants who indicated which unit he or she had attended previously, just six participants (30%) had attended the same department within the same university; the remaining 70% had previously attended a different department within the university.

The majority of participants (75% of $n=21$) who perceived previous attendance as influential of their doctoral program choice indicated that they had completed their Master's degree in their previous attendance. Forty-three percent had completed a certification, and only 10% had attended the university previously to complete a Bachelor's degree. Some participants completed multiple certifications or degrees at the same institution.

Delivery of Coursework

Participants who selected delivery of coursework as influential in their program selection ($n=27$) were asked to identify specific aspects of course delivery that were influential. Figure 6 presents the results. Over half of the participants (56%) who selected delivery of coursework as influential said that they wanted a mixture of online and face-to-face coursework. Fewer (37%) said that they wanted more face-to-face coursework, but that percentage was still greater than the percentage that wanted more online coursework (15%). From the results, it appears that, in general, more doctoral students leaned toward wanting a mixture of face-to-face and online course delivery rather than just additional online coursework.

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Figure 6. Aspects of delivery of coursework that participants (*n*=27) identified as influential in their decision to attend a particular doctoral program in Educational Leadership. Note that participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will sum to greater than 100%.
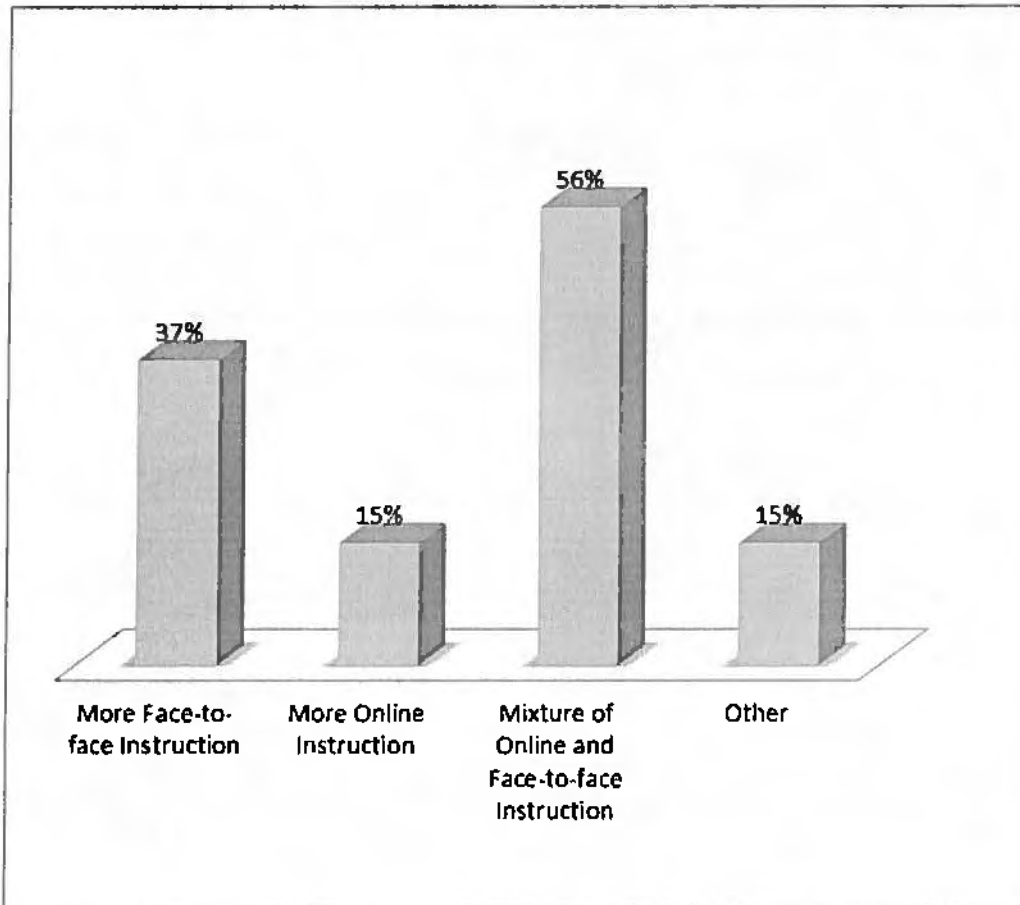
The data were also analyzed by gender; Figure 7 presents the results. The majority of males selected more face-to-face instruction as desirable (83%), with fewer selecting a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction (33%) and even fewer selecting completely online instruction (17%). The majority of females (67%), on the other hand, chose a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction as desirable, with more face-to-face instruction noted by much fewer female participants (29%). While the majorities of males and females selected different course delivery types as desirable, participants of both genders seemed to agree that more online instruction was not as desirable as either a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction or simply more face-to-face, as low percentages of both genders selected more online instruction (14% of females, 17% of males).

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Figure 7. Aspects of delivery of coursework that participants (*n*=27) identified as influential in their decision to attend a particular doctoral program in Educational Leadership by gender. Percentages for females were calculated as the number of female respondents who selected a particular aspect of convenience divided by the total number of female respondents; percentages for males were calculated using the same method, but for the male respondents. Note that participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will sum to greater than 100%.
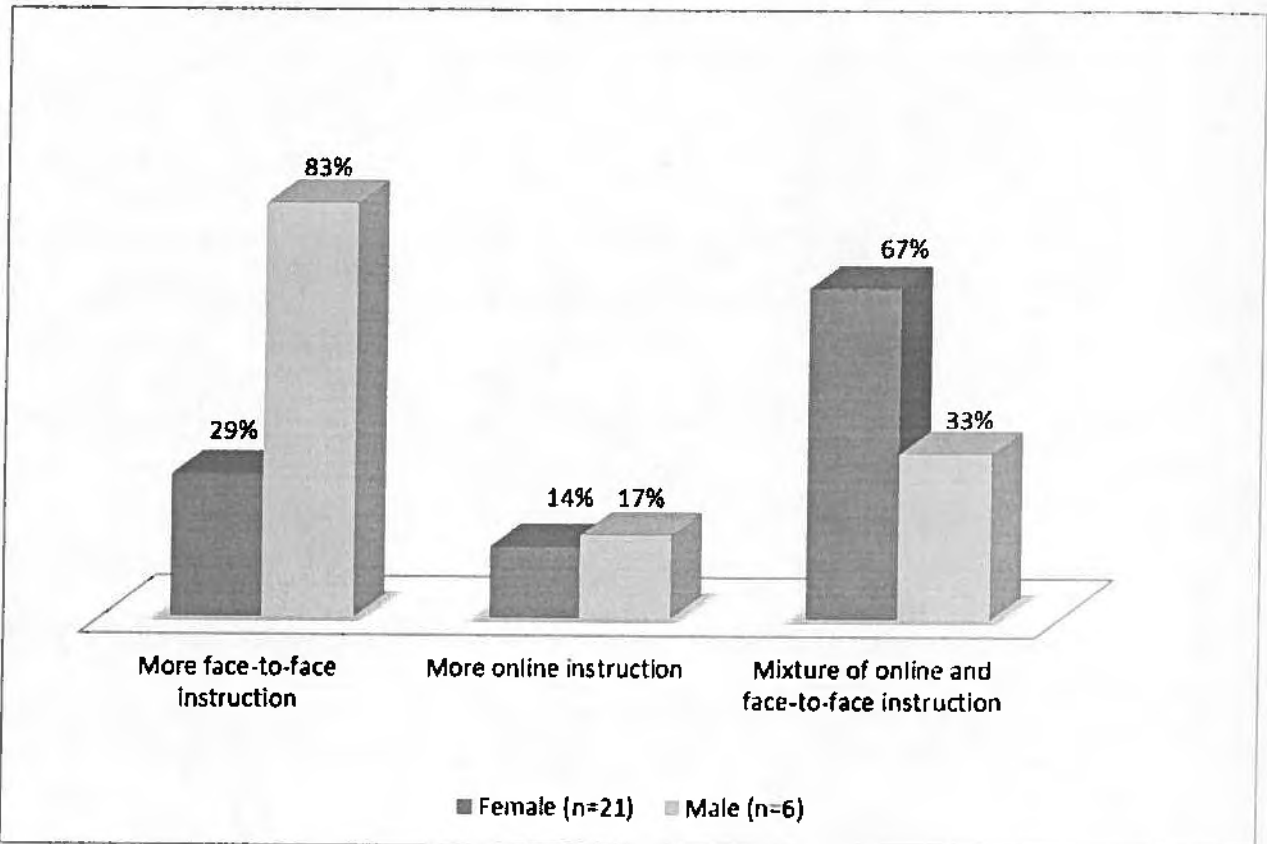

The course delivery data were disaggregated by age; Figure 8 presents the results. The majority of participants in the 20-29 age category (83%) selected a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction as desirable followed second by more online instruction (50%), and fewer noting more face-to-face instruction (33%) as desirable. Roughly similar percentages of participants in the 30-39 category selected each type – more face-to-face instruction (56%), more online instruction (44%), and mixture of online and face-to-face instruction (44%). Interestingly, no participants in the 30-39 category selected more online instruction as desirable; the same was true for participants in the 40-49 and 50-59 age groups. Fifty percent of participants in the 40-49 age group chose more face-to-face instruction, and 50% chose a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction. The majority of participants in the 50-59 age group chose a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction (67%) as desirable followed by more face-to-face instruction (33%). Overall, across the age groups, most participants seemed to desire at least some face-to-face

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instruction, with a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction as a desirable option in most cases. Participants in the 20-29 age group proved to be the only exception, with most indicating the desire for more online instruction.

Discussion

Doctoral students are particular when it comes to choosing an academic program in Educational Leadership. The results of the current study suggest that the majority of students weigh the following factors above others when choosing a doctoral program: (a) convenience, (b) tuition cost, (c) whether they attended previously, and (d) delivery of coursework although the results varied somewhat when disaggregated by age and gender.

Figure 8. Aspects of delivery of coursework that participants (*n*=27) identified as influential in their decision to attend a particular doctoral program in Educational Leadership by age. Percentages for each age category were calculated as the number in the particular category who selected a particular aspect of convenience divided by the total number of female respondents; percentages for males were calculated using the same method, but for the male respondents. Note that participants could choose multiple factors, so percentages will sum to greater than 100%.
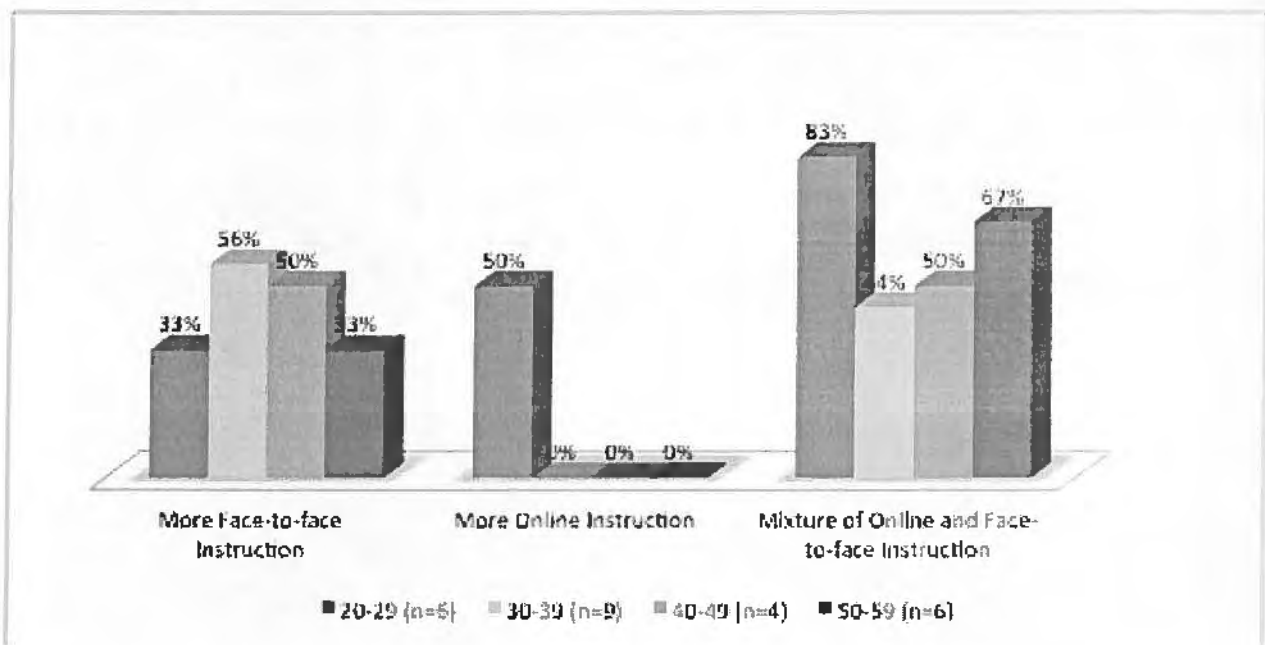
Convenience

The majority of doctoral students indicated that they chose Educational Leadership programs that were close to their homes, with some looking for programs that were close to their places of work. The majority of females were particularly concerned about the location of their doctoral program being closer to home. Physical proximity to work was important to some students, but was still second to proximity of the program to home.

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The convenience of course scheduling was less of a concern for all gender and age groups.

Tuition Cost

As might be expected, many students looked for a more affordable doctoral program that maintained strong credibility and reputation. Few reported that they had earned a scholarship to cover their expenses, leading to the conclusion that most Educational Leadership doctoral students likely covered the costs of their doctoral education out of pocket or via financial aid opportunities other than scholarships.

Previous Attendance

Previous attendance at a university appeared to influence the choices of some doctoral students. Most that indicated that they had previously attended a university had received their Master's degree or completed a certification. From the results, it appears as if, in many cases, students' familiarity with particular universities factored into their decisions to return for their doctoral degree.

Delivery of Coursework

The results indicated that most students desired a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction with an emphasis on more face-to-face instruction rather than more online. The one exception fell with the 20-29 year old participants; the majority indicated a desire for more online coursework. Because doctoral programs typically target students with work and life experiences, the targeted students are more likely to be older in age. When the results of the 30+ year-old participants were considered, the overwhelming choice was a mixture of online and face-to-face instruction.

Implications for Practice

Results of this study may be used by Educational Leadership program faculty and administrative staff to determine how best to market their programs and recruit students. Program coordinators would be wise to recruit students within close proximity to the university area as the convenience of physical proximity appears to matter to Educational Leadership doctoral students. While many programs lack direct control over tuition costs, administrators at the university or college-level would also be wise to consider the costs of program tuition. Students indicated that they are looking for strong, credible programs, but ones that are affordable as well.

Given the results, it appears that students who have previously attended a university may be apt to return given the right circumstances. If they are so inclined, doctoral-level coordinators should act on that knowledge and seek strong students that previously completed Master's degrees or certifications at their university.

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Finally, the results suggest that students are concerned about the delivery of coursework. The majority of students over the age of 30 desire a mixture of online and face-to-face learning opportunities. This is an interesting point given the fact that many doctoral programs – and programs in general – have moved coursework entirely online. Results of this study indicated that doctoral students may instead want an experience with more face-to-face coursework. It should be noted, however, that participants in this study were all current doctoral students in programs for which coursework was not delivered entirely online. The results could be somewhat biased as a result. Coordinators should take that fact into consideration when making decisions regarding the delivery of coursework in Educational Leadership doctoral programs.

As always, doctoral program coordinators and faculty admissions committees must carefully balance the need to recruit students with standards for retaining quality students. If effective marketing and recruiting strategies are put into place, a more qualified pool of applicants may result from which a stronger set of doctoral students can be selected for admission. In the process, more effective recruiting practices could either grow the enrollments of programs and/or strengthen their reputations by increasing the quality of doctoral candidates that are admitted.

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Impacts on Teacher Evaluations: The Importance of Building Capacity through Excellence in the Application of the Teacher Evaluation Process

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Introduction

Significant student learning and school improvement are dependent upon the teacher being the centerpiece (Tucker, Stronge, Gareis, & Beers, 2003; National Council of Teacher Quality, 2011). In maintaining the high standards associated with teaching responsibilities, educators are held accountable through performance evaluations. In the United States, teacher evaluations have long been a standard of practice largely determined by individual states and school districts. Additionally, teacher effectiveness has been guided by at least three pieces of national legislation, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, 2009), also referred to as the Stimulus or Recovery Act. With the expectation that the nation's universities produce higher quality teachers and school districts hire "highly qualified" teachers, the profession finds itself under constant, critical scrutiny, most recently concerning the evaluation of teachers.

Additionally, since education is a function of the states pursuant to the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, teacher evaluation is primarily considered a state responsibility. Consequently, to accomplish the objectives of this study, a single state's teacher evaluation process was selected for purposes of analysis in relation to current national teacher evaluation criticisms. Because the home state of this study's researchers is Texas, and due to the researchers' familiarity with the state's system, the Texas teacher evaluation system, called the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS), was selected for examination.

Purpose of this Study and Research Question

In 2012, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) created "the Teacher Effectiveness Workgroup (TEW) to combine the expertise of TEA, the Texas Comprehensive Center, Educate Texas, and the Region 13 Education Service Center (ESC) to guide the

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development of a new [teacher evaluation] model" (TASB, 2012). The purpose of this study was to research the criticisms of PDAS and associated reasons for the upcoming changes to the teacher evaluation system. All criticisms of the Texas system of teacher appraisals included in this study are of the PDAS system. These researchers wanted to know why the changes were being considered to a system they had used as practicing school administrators and had considered sound and effective. To answer this question, the PDAS must be examined within the context of the changes considered across the nation.

Assuming the importance of teacher evaluation both to the school system, primarily to the impact on student learning, and to the individual teacher, if teachers do not teach effectively, they potentially impact the futures of decades of young people in the state and across the nation. The catalyst for this research was a concern for the interaction between a system of appraisal and the impact of the social system of a school on the outcome or result of a formal teacher evaluation.

Theoretical Framework

The focal point of social theories includes group behavior and cultural institutions (Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p. xviii). "The school is a system of social interaction: it is an organized whole comprising interacting personalities bound together in an organic relationship." (Waller,1932 as cited in Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p.22). When considering the teacher evaluation component of the social system found in a school, Getzels' and Guba's (1957) Social Systems Theory serves as an excellent theoretical framework, whereby the observed behavior is inclusive of the multi-faceted and year-long evaluation process in Texas.

The Getzels and Guba model describes nomothetic (institutional) and idiographic (personal) dimensions of an organization and provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of the social system. Furthermore, the model assists in understanding observed behaviors within the organization. The nomothetic dimension describes the institution, the roles defined by the institution, and the expectations created as a result of the roles, thus culminating in the degree of effectiveness of the organization in terms of observed behavior. The idiographic dimension describes the individual, the personality of the individual, and the needs-disposition of the individual as a result of his/her personality, thus demonstrating the efficiency of that person in terms of observed behavior. The model also provides a framework for studying institution/individual conflict, role/personality conflict, and expectation/needs disposition conflict. To be both effective and efficient, the nomothetic and idiographic dimensions of the model must be at optimal levels (Webb, Greer, Montello, & Norton, 1987).

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Literature Review

Under the Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS), teachers have been evaluated four times a year; twice a semester). This changed in 1997 when the state adopted the PDAS (ESC, 2013), which is comprised of eight Domains with 52 critical attributes based on the proficiencies for teachers as outlined in the *Learner-Centered Schools for Texas: A Vision of Texas Educators* (SBEC, 1997). This document was collaboratively written by Texas teachers, administrators and college professors who trained educators. As it was written, it contained five proficiencies and an idealistic expectation of teacher perfection.

The PDAS originally required two teacher evaluations a year, but since 2010 that has changed to an annual evaluation with an additional provision allowing teachers to opt out of the yearly formal evaluation once they have demonstrated teaching proficiency with no deficiencies (19 TAC §150.1003). When reading the proficiencies expected of Texas educators (see Table 1), the source of the foundation upon which the PDAS system was built becomes obvious. The two columns in the table represent the five *Proficiencies for the Learner-Centered Schools* that evolved into the eight PDAS Domains encompassing student learning and teacher knowledge and behaviors.

At the time PDAS was mandated as the state teacher appraisal system, 19 TAC § 150 required districts to adopt the PDAS unless a locally created system was developed as a replacement. As a result, most districts adopted the state system and the statewide system of twenty education service centers trained teachers and administrators in the process of conducting appraisals according to the design of the PDAS. This continues today, which is how a variety of persons were trained as PDAS trainers of teacher appraisers. Consulting with service centers was one way an individual could train aspiring school administrators. Others used their PDAS trainer certification to conduct training from the university level.

Since September, 2010, the Region XIII Education Service Center in Austin, Texas, has been collecting and analyzing teacher appraisal data from school districts across the state, including how many are using the PDAS or their own locally developed system (TEA, 2010). These data of teacher evaluations have been reported to the state legislature.

An expanded examination of the history of teacher appraisals across the nation includes the most recent impact of federal statutes. The increased scrutiny of teachers' evaluations stems from federal policy encouraged by two United States Presidents: George W. Bush and Barack Obama. States have been motivated by the Teacher Incentive Fund (Bush) and Race to the Top funds of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Obama), to make changes to teacher evaluation systems that reward identified teachers for their impact on student success without "imposing a uniform evaluation system" (Glazerman, Goldhaber, Loeb, Raudenbush, Staiger, & Whitehurst, 2011, p.2) on school districts. In other words, the federal government wished to reward school teachers financially for demonstrating their excellence based on student success, a value-added criteria.

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Table 1
Comparison of Proficiencies to Domains

Proficiencies for Teachers Learner-Centered Schools	*Domains for the Professional Development Appraisal System*
Proficiency I: Learner-centered knowledge	Domain I: Active, successful student participation in the learning process
Proficiency II: Learner-centered instruction	Domain II: Learner-centered instruction
Proficiency III: Equity in excellence for all learners	Domain III: Evaluation and feedback on student progress
	Domain IV: Management of student discipline, instructional strategies, time and materials
Proficiency IV: Learner-centered communication	Domain V: Professional communication
Proficiency V: Learner-centered professional development	Domain VI: Professional development
	Domain VII: Compliance with policies, operating procedures and requirements
	Domain VIII: Improvement of academic performance of all students on campus

Central to the incentive-based system, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), altered education primarily by requiring students to be tested in grades 3 through 8 and 10 in reading and math and by increasing teacher certification expectations. Outcomes of NCLB were intended to positively impact student success at national and local levels by requiring a system of standardized testing holding schools accountable for student learning in a demonstrably objective manner. All school districts were required to hire the most highly qualified candidates for openings, but depending on the size of the school districts, this had the adverse effect of decreasing the applicant pool. Teacher applicants could not be considered for a position if they did not meet the criteria for categorization as "highly qualified," meaning that teachers had to be certified in the academic discipline for which they were being considered. Typically, if a teacher has a minimum number of university hours in a content area, and a state level certification test has been passed, that

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teacher has the prerequisite content knowledge and is considered highly qualified for the corresponding position. Once hired, evaluations must be conducted to monitor teaching effectiveness. Accountability testing in all states of multiple grade levels made it possible to use student progress data as an additional indicator of teacher effectiveness; the value-added component.

A study conducted by the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution (Glazerman et.al., 2011) explained that across the nation, teachers were being evaluated and all of them were receiving the same "uniformly high ratings" (p.1). Numerous other research reports found this same situation and included the connection between teacher effectiveness and student learning (Doyle & Han, 2012; Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2011; Osborne, 2012; Springer, Podgursky, Lewis, Guthrie, Ehlert, Springer, Lopez, Patterson, Gardner, & Taylor, 2007). With the documented lack of differentiation, teacher evaluation results become useless in distinguishing categories of teachers and even more importantly, student gains in learning. The Brookings Brown Center Task Group on Teacher Quality (Glazerman et.al., 2011) introduced the concept of "value-added" as an option to identify the impact of individual educators directly on the academic success of students. "Future teacher abilities to raise student scores" (p.1) are said to be statistically and reliably enhanced by the value-added dimension of evaluations. The Brookings Task Group (Glazerman, et al., 2011) found that if all teachers were considered excellent, dispersing funds to all teachers would be difficult because of the lack of meaningful differentiation. Data from various states demonstrated multiple methods currently used to evaluate teachers, including: classroom observations, student ratings of teachers, direct assessments of teacher knowledge, student state assessment gains, community involvement, and even teacher absences and late arrivals (Glazerman, et al., 2011).

The Brookings group (Glazerman, et al., 2011) further identified several problems with changing teacher evaluation systems, beginning with teacher buy-in to a system that monetarily compensates and rewards only a percentage of teachers meeting identified criteria. The group identified "teacher performance measures" (pp.7-8) to evaluate teacher performance using past performance as a predictor of future effectiveness because of the belief that effective teachers are stable over time. These measures included direct teacher observation, measures of student learning, student evaluation of teachers, and parent evaluation of teachers. A state is also required to differentiate effectiveness between teachers to demonstrate the reliability of an evaluation system. Additionally, this group proposed a complicated formulaic process to identify those teachers that would be categorized as truly exceptional resulting in eligibility for reward.

Simultaneously, the National Council for Teacher Quality reported grades in five areas (see Table 2). The report explained the five year history of tracking teacher policies in the United States, specifically; teacher preparation, licensure, evaluation, career advancement, tenure, compensation, pensions, and dismissal. Table 2 compares the grading of teacher policy scores from the corresponding years listed in Texas.

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Table 2
Texas NCTQ Ranking

Area Grades (Overall Grade)	2009 (C-)	2011 (C-)
Area 1: Delivering Well Prepared Teachers	C	C+
Area 2: Expanding the Teaching Pool	B-	C+
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	D	D-
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	C-	C
Area 5: Exiting Ineffective Teachers	D	C-
	Overall Progress	
	Progress ranking among states: 36th	
	Amount of progress compared to other states: Low	

Policy strengths and weaknesses are identified for each area listed in the table and in this report. Of interest to this study is the topic of evaluation. No policy strengths are listed for teacher's evaluations in Texas. However, six policy weaknesses were identified: (a) no capacity of the state data system to "provide evidence of teacher effectiveness, (b) lack of use of objective evidence of student learning as the preponderant criterion of teacher evaluations, (c) annual evaluations for all teachers not required, (d) tenure decisions not connected to evidence of teacher effectiveness, (e) licensure advancement and renewal not based on teacher effectiveness, (f) and lack of school-level data to support equitable distribution of teacher talent.

Further examination of this report revealed that these six criteria were rated on a scale (see Table 3) using best practice (as the highest indicator), fully meets, nearly meets, partially meets, only meets a small part, and does not meet (as the lowest indicator). The criteria measured and reported included: A-state data systems, B-evaluation of effectiveness, C-frequency of evaluations, D-tenure, E-licensure agreement, and F-equitable distribution. Of these criteria, Texas failed to meet C, D or E; Texas only met a small part of B and F; and partially met criterion A. The NCTQ 2011 yearbook stressed the importance of policies to "maximize teacher effectiveness" (p. 5) and noted that the critical relationship between teacher quality and student achievement is well established (p. 17). The reporting of the state's results by comparing the state with itself in a previous year is intentional to provide a context for more meaningful measurement of progress within Texas. The NCTQ provided suggestions for improvement in alignment with the identified criteria and published a response from ESC 13 for each of the findings and suggestions.

Of particular interest to this study were the analyses and suggestions for Area 3-B: in particular, to require the use of a common evaluation instrument that identifies student learning as the most significant criterion; to require "classroom observations" focusing on the effectiveness of instruction; the inclusion of objective evidence of student learning,

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such as "standardized test scores" and "classroom-based artifacts" and finally, a system that differentiates the "various levels of teacher performance" (p.83).

Table 3
NCTQ Suggestions for Improvement

Area 3-A: State Data Systems	The state should have a data system that contributes some of the evidence needed to assess teacher effectiveness.
Area 3-B: Evaluation of Effectiveness	The state should require instructional effectiveness to be the preponderant criterion of any teacher evaluation.
Area 3-C: Frequency of Evaluations	The state should require annual evaluations of teachers.
Area 3-D: Tenure	The state should require that tenure decisions are based on evidence of teacher effectiveness.
Area 3-E: Licensure Advancement	The state should base licensure advancement on evidence of teacher effectiveness.
Area 3-F: Equitable Distribution	The state should publicly report districts' distribution of teacher talent among schools to identify inequities in schools serving disadvantaged children.

Further research conducted in 2010 and 2011 by the National Center for Education Evaluation (Osborn, 2012) and the Regional Assistance Institute of Education Sciences (Shakman, Riordan, Sanchez, Cook, Fournier, & Brett, 2012) examined performance-based teacher evaluation systems of five states in the northeastern United States, in particular, information gleaned from all state agency websites and public documents. Measurement criteria focused on a teacher evaluation system that: (a) was required for practicing general educators; (b) was operational on a statewide basis in 2010/2011 school year; (c) included multiple rating categories; (d) used multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, such as observations, self-assessments, and professional growth plans (p.iii). Only five states met these criteria, one of which was Texas. Additionally, Texas met all ten standards falling under the four teaching domains examined by this study: (a) the learner and learning; (b) content knowledge; (c) instructional practice, and (d) professional responsibility.

Donaldson and Papay's (2012) study acknowledged the trend in the United States for continued scrutiny of the teacher evaluation systems impacted by "Race to the Top, Teacher Incentive Fund grants, and the No Child Left Behind Act" (p.1). Their case study of a collaborative approach to the development of a teacher evaluation system in one school district identified four observations (pp.2-3): (a) economic, political, and policy

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factors have facilitated the teacher evaluation program's development and acceptance; (b) collaboration has been at the heart of the teacher evaluation program's creation and development; (c) the teacher evaluation program represents both a process and a product; and (d) the teacher evaluation program's progress reflects strong leadership coupled with broad input. Notably, this school district's administrators worked with teachers and union leaders in this endeavor.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2013) published a report based on three years of work by the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project in partnership with academics, teachers, and education organizations (p.2). This report began with the idea that teachers needed support to teach and when asked, did not feel they had that necessary support to accomplish more effective teaching. The traditional means of evaluations were felt inadequate because not enough information was given to guide the growth process. As a result, a framework was created (See Figure 1). This collaboratively crafted framework included three key principles: (a) Measure Effective Teaching; (b) Ensure High-Quality Data; and (c) Invest in Improvement, arranged cyclically, demonstrating the dynamic movement between the three principles. The report explains the three additional areas under each principle that provide the foundation of support for teachers in the evaluation process. This system accomplished the differentiation quested for in other studies and the support for teaching improvement, which ultimately, results in student academic success. Additionally, the entire MET project ultimately validated the idea that "Teachers previously identified as more effective caused students to learn more. Groups of teachers who had been identified as less effective caused students to learn less" (Gates, 2013, p.6) in their publication of the culminating findings of the project.
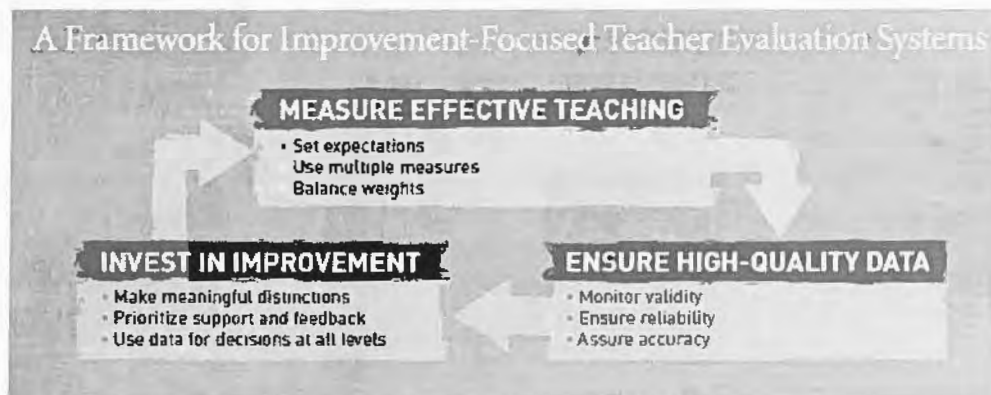

Figure 1: A Framework for Improvement-Focused Teacher Evaluation Systems
(Gates, 2013)

During this time the consensus was for a need to improve teacher evaluations, at least in part to differentiate teacher performance in order to positively impact student performance and to make it possible to reward those highly successful teachers, based on a preponderance of evidence of student success.

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Methods

Considering the historical nature of the evolving teacher evaluation process in Texas public schools and across the nation, the historic research methodology was employed. Gall, Gall, Gall & Borg (2003, p.514) define historical research as "a process of systematically searching for data to answer questions about a past phenomenon for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of present institutions, practices, trends and issues in education." More specifically, qualitative content analysis was used to organize the historical data into categories enabling a clear understanding of criticisms of the PDAS in relation to that data.

The content analysis utilized historical data obtained from state and national governmental studies and reports, private foundation studies and reports, state-level statute and administrative law, teacher evaluation literature, PDAS documents, materials, and associated literature, and teacher evaluation-related information as posted on national, state, and regional ESC websites. The information gleaned from this process was organized in a concise, logically flowing manner in the discussion section, primarily by major report reviewed. Then, the information was compiled into a comparative analysis table whereby the PDAS could be examined in comparison with the criteria of effective teacher evaluation systems as described by multiple studies and associated reports.

Discussion and Limitations

A limitation to the study may be that both researchers have implemented the PDAS when serving as school administrators prior to becoming faculty in higher education, calling into question a certain bias. However, we prefer to think of it as a strength because of the familiarity with the PDAS instrument, which we think allowed us to consider all criticisms more thoroughly. That said, this fact needed to be acknowledged.

Analysis of the actual PDAS used to evaluate most teachers in Texas provides the connection between what is happening across the nation to teacher evaluation in Texas. The Getzels-Guba Social Systems Theory was instrumental since this theoretical framework facilitates an understanding of the interaction between teachers, their evaluations and the school district, as well as the state. Since education is a state function in the United States with school districts serving as extensions of the states, the nomothetic dimension may be viewed from either a state or a school perspective. Likewise, regardless of the nomothetic perspective, in the case of teacher evaluations, the teacher is at the heart of the idiographic dimension. The universal goal of education from either the state or school perspective is maximization of student learning. With student learning so dependent on effective teaching, the teacher must remain the centerpiece. So in the teacher evaluation process, on the nomothetic dimension of the model, the institution (defined as either the state or the individual school, or some combination thereof), must define the roles and expectations of teachers, as assessed via the teacher

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evaluation process, to maximize student learning. On the idiographic dimension, the teachers, as individuals, are critical components of the educational process, each of whom comes to the table with individual personalities and sets of needs. When reciprocity is optimized between (a) the institution and individual, (b) the organizationally defined roles and individual personalities, and (c) system expectations and personal need-dispositions, the end result, or observed behavior should be enhanced student learning. For these reasons, major emphasis should always be placed on the teacher evaluation process as it is the only measurable way of maintaining high accountability standards in the pedagogical process of student learning.

The literature clearly articulates the impact of federal legislature on the drive for changing teacher evaluations (ESEA, 1965; NCLB, 2001; ARRA, 2009; Commissioners Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal, 2009). Using money as the incentive, once a system is configured which differentiates teacher effectiveness so that all teachers are no longer excellent based on the results of their evaluations, monetary rewards can be provided. Simultaneously, research supported the positive connection between teacher effectiveness and student learning (The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013; NCTQ, 2011). It should also be noted that the articulated studies in this research examining the Texas teacher appraisal system were all conducted when the PDAS was the primary system of teacher evaluation, therefore, the criticisms of these studies, reports, etc., are of the PDAS.

The National Council for Teacher Quality (2010 & 2011) specifically analyzed all the states' teacher evaluation systems from particular areas stated as goals, graded the states, and published the findings. One area was evaluation of effectiveness, with the suggestion that the state should require instructional effectiveness as the preponderant criterion of any teacher evaluation. The Brookings Institute researchers (Glazerman, et al, 2011) suggested that a value-added component was needed, particularly, that of student progress in learning as recorded by standardized testing. The Donaldson and Papay (2012) study was not included in Table 4 because it reported the process of development versus the requirements of the teacher evaluation system created by a variety of stakeholders, however, they did acknowledge the impact of federal legislation on the teacher evaluation changes collaborated upon by stakeholders.

Table 4 illustrates the results of the comparative analysis between the PDAS and the other studies examined, which resulted in 24 Points of Emphasis made by the various researchers presented in the literature review. When the various studies or researchers shared the same points, a pattern emerged based on the dots placed on the table. Shading was used to indicate when at least three of the six sources shared similar points. Seven Points of Emphasis are shared by at least three or more entities: (a) multiple assessment methods; (b) differentiated teacher evaluations; (c) annual evaluations required; (d) teacher self-assessment; (e) professional growth emphasis; (f) impact of federal legislation, and (g) connection between teacher effectiveness and student learning.

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Table 4

Comparative Analysis between PDAS and the Literature Review

Points of Emphasis	PDAS	Brookings Institute	NCTQ	NCEE	Regional Assistance Institute...	Gates Foundation
1. Multiple assessment methods	•	•	•	•	•	
2. Student and parent ratings of teacher		•			•	
3. Evidence of teacher/community involvement		•				
4. Teacher punctuality/attendance	•	•				
5. Differentiated teacher evaluations		•	•	•		•
6. Evidence of teacher effectiveness	•		•			•
7. Inclusion of preponderance of evidence in successful student learning			•			
8. Annual evaluations required	•		•		•	
9. Use of evaluations for contract renewal	•		•			
10. Tenure connected to teacher effectiveness			•			
11. Lack of equitable distribution of teacher talent			•			
12. Use of common evaluation instrument			•			
13. Evaluations required of all teachers				•		
14. Teacher Self-Assessment	•			•	•	
15. Four Teacher domains	+			•		
16. Ensure high data quality	•					•
17. Invest in teacher improvement through professional growth	•				•	•
18. Consists of 8 Domains with 52 Critical Attributes	•					
19. Districts can create own evaluation system	•					
20. Consistently good evaluations results in no evaluations	•					
21. Evaluations used statewide	•				•	
22. Past performance used as a predictor of future effectiveness		•				
23. Connection between teacher effectiveness and student learning	•		•	•		
24. Identified impact of federal laws on education	•	•	•			

The PDAS consists of eight domains containing 52 critical attributes and are scored after the formal evaluation process of a typical 45 minute evaluation. Each spring district school boards recommend contracts based on cumulative teacher evaluations. This final reviewed document is called the Summative Annual Appraisal. Teachers understand that data can be collected about them and recorded on the PDAS instrument for the length of their annual teaching contract. Not only is there a 45 minute formal evaluation (in most

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cases) but there are other methods of data collection; walk-through observations, parent conversations, lesson plans, behavior on campus (verbal and non-verbal) and multiple other sources of data collection. Based on the information displayed in Table 4, multiple methods of evaluation are a preferred component of teacher evaluation specifically stated by five of the six studies. Trainers of the PDAS purposely include the various ways teachers are continually assessed in the appraiser training and teachers are also informed of the multiple strategies used to evaluate them over the course of a contract year in their PDAS training.

Differentiated teacher evaluation is another idea preferred by multiple studies. The PDAS instrument has four ratings categories in each of the eight domains: Exceeds Expectations, Proficient, Below Expectations and Unsatisfactory. Reflective scoring based on collected data from multiple sources should differentiate between the individual teachers. Additionally, the PDAS is scored based on quality and quantity indicators provided to teachers and to administrators. For example; if a teacher demonstrates a particular behavior 90-100% of the contract year, that could result in a score of Exceeds Expectations. Trainers point out that maintaining all the critical attributes to that degree would be impossible. Certain professional behaviors are dominant to teaching styles. Some teachers may pace their instruction every day in every class as a natural part of their personality. Those teachers should expect a mark of Exceeds Expectations if that is the case. By this definition, when scoring is marked correctly, there should be a differentiation between teacher's ratings. Also important to note is that there is no overall score for the PDAS. Each of the eight domains is a separate, stand-alone score. Again, this should have the outcome of score differentiation between teachers.

Annual evaluations are important to three of the five research entities. Texas state law (19 TAC §150.1003) requires teacher evaluations except in the following situation:

> A teacher may be appraised less frequently if the teacher agrees in writing and the teacher's most recent appraisal rated the teacher as at least proficient, or the equivalent, and did not identify any area of deficiency. A teacher who is appraised less frequently than annually must be appraised at least once during each period of five school years. (TEA, 2010)

The teacher categorized in this way may be exempt from the 45 minute formal observation, but other information is collected upon which the administrator can make a continuing contract recommendation to the school board. Typically, a principal new to a campus would evaluate all teachers, experienced and otherwise regardless of this status in order to have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of teachers under his/her supervision. There are multiple benefits in this situation. Not having to evaluate all teachers every year partially relieves the school supervisor of one aspect of the job; and not having to be evaluated each year could be viewed by the teacher as a reward for work well done.

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Teacher self-assessment is reported as important to three of five research entities in Table 4. The PDAS includes an additional document required of all teachers. The Teacher Self-Report (TSR) form contains three parts: Part I is due to the school administrator within the first three weeks of school and indicates the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) or, school curriculum, for which each teacher is responsible for teaching; Parts II and III are due to the school administrator at least two weeks prior to the annual summative conference. Part II contains four sections requiring the teacher to reflect over instructional practices and report them for use on the final annual evaluation document. Part III asks the teacher to list professional development participated in for the year and the impact of that training on student learning. Additionally, this section requires the teacher to set three goals for continued professional growth for the following year. This is an extensive, multi-level self-assessment completed annually and used for the completion of the teacher evaluation process.

Professional growth is emphasized by three of the five research entities. The PDAS requires each teacher to relate professional development on the TSR. Also, Domain VI on the PDAS Observation Summary is labeled Professional Development and contains four critical attributes, all of which are required for teachers and are directly connected to student performance.

Connections between teacher effectiveness and student learning must occur according to three of the research studies examined. The PDAS includes an entire domain to that end. Domain VIII is entitled: Improvement of Academic Performance of all Students on the Campus. This domain includes 10 critical attributes. The tenth includes the actual Campus Performance Rating based on state assessment scores and the Annual Yearly Performance (AYP) rating. Initially, when this rating was shown to teachers they reacted with some trepidation based on the population of students with whom they worked. However, this document was created by a large group of educators from across the state who believed this was a necessary criterion for the PDAS instrument. Student attendance, at-risk students, and modifications for students are all included in the final domain. And, since scores do not arrive before the school year is over, Domain VIII includes the previous year's assessment results. Clearly, the PDAS connects teacher effectiveness to student learning.

The impact of federal legislation is reported specifically by two of the five research entities. Politics and the federal government have demonstrated a somewhat heavy hand in an effort to equalize education opportunities for all children in the United States of school age. The state of Texas legislators evaluated the NCLB and interpreted what they thought it meant at the time. Since its implementation, teacher certification has been impacted in an effort to make sure that graduates from education programs are highly qualified.

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Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to research the criticisms of the PDAS, the Texas teacher appraisal instrument, primarily because it has become known that the Texas teacher evaluation system is in a process of major change. As professors in educational leadership preparing aspiring administrators to assume positions of leadership in school districts, we felt the need for a full understanding of the situation. Based on our findings using qualitative research methods and the Getzels-Guba Social Systems Theory as a theoretical framework, the literature review facilitated the comparative analysis of teacher evaluation research to the components of the Texas teacher evaluation system, PDAS. Additionally, it would seem that nationwide, teacher evaluations are not showing enough differentiation between the effective teachers and the less effective teachers as was indicated by the desire for adding a preponderance of evidence of student success-a sought after value-added dynamic to the process of evaluation. Most all teachers are being reported as excellent, but the lack of student success to the same degree indicated this impossibility. If the connection between teaching effectiveness and student success is accepted, then something is not working. Simultaneously, coupled with this finding comes the incentivization of education provided by two United States Presidents and at least three laws aimed at improving education across the nation, in part by changing teacher evaluation processes.

Multiple assessments are favored predominantly as evidenced by this literature review. The PDAS encourages the multiple methods of assessment in addition to the 45 minute formal observation. We agree with the merit of multiple assessments. Teachers, like anyone, can make mistakes or have an "off" day and should not be held hostage for a small incident observed in isolation. Rather, decisions made for contract continuation should be based on consistent data collected over time with support and intervention to remedy the situation.

Research often results in the occurrence of more questions. We know what has driven the changes in the teacher evaluation systems, but we still do not know why so many teachers' evaluation scores result in a lack of differentiation between teachers. Is the reason more social or psychological in nature? Is it that difficult to evaluate a teacher and reflect effectiveness levels? Or, could the evaluation process be more political in nature? The Texas PDAS requires an annual appraisal of most teachers and allows for a differentiation in the way that principals are instructed to score the document. Certified appraiser trainers of PDAS explain the parameters clearly based on the scoring criteria guide provided to all school administrators receiving this training, so does this mean that school principals using PDAS across the state are not using the evaluation system appropriately for some reason? Further research is needed even if the teacher evaluation system in Texas changes as is expected. There are no guarantees that the next iteration of teacher evaluation will not follow this same change process without an understanding of the reason for its failure. We conclude, based on our findings, that further research is needed to uncover the real reasons for the perceived failure of a teacher evaluation

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system. As professors of educational leadership we owe this to our students in order to prepare them for the teacher evaluation process as school administrators, particularly because of the repeatedly stated impact of teaching effectiveness on student success (Doyle & Han, 2012; Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2011; Osborne, 2012; Springer, Podgursky, Lewis, Guthrie, Ehlert, Springer, Lopez, Patterson, Gardner, & Taylor, 2007). Additionally, professors in higher education across the nation who are directly involved in training aspiring administrators need to be more directly involved in this analysis of the upcoming changes to teacher evaluation instruments. The implications for this could be that change is being made for the wrong reasons, causing additional demands on administrators and teachers unnecessarily, possibly impacting student learning negatively. This would not be an acceptable outcome of an evaluation system.

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