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Principal Support: Its Impact On Job Satisfaction And Early Career Teachers' Decisions To Remain In Teaching

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PRINCIPAL SUPPORT:

ITS IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION AND

EARLY CAREER TEACHERS' DECISIONS TO REMAIN IN TEACHING

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Try K. Diggs

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the dissertation was successfully defended on _____ .
                                                   (Date)

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Dedication

This labor of love is dedicated to my dearest daughter, Brooklyn, my mother, Carolyn, my soulmate, Terry, my father, Harold, my brother, Jai, my sister, Kai, my grandmother, Alice, my aunt, Mary, my uncle, Jesse, unspecified loved ones, friends, and colleagues. Without your unwavering love, support, and encouragement, today would be impossible. To that end, I am eternally grateful for each of you now and forever.

To Uncle Sunny, Momma Caroline, Granny, Auntie Annabelle, Mama, and Don, your memories will forever remain etched in my mind and your sweet spirits will forever live. Thank you for being pillars of support and sources of inspiration. To Miami-Dade County Public Schools, thank you for the opportunity to serve and grow as an educator and as a leader. Finally, I would like to extend sincere appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Michael F. DiPaola, Dr. Margaret E. Constantino, and the Fabulous Four, John, Michael, Tom, and Tracey. Your direction, guidance, and insight throughout this journey have been priceless.

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Abstract

This dissertation explored a growing concern—the lack of retention of early career teachers (ECTs). We investigated the perceptions of a large sample of ECTs regarding how principal support and job satisfaction affects their decisions to remain in or leave the field of education. We employed an exploratory mixed approach based on a framework derived from DiPaola's (2012) work on principal support. Three surveys collected ECTs' perceptions of principal support, job satisfaction, and their intention to remain in teaching. A series of semi-structured focus group interviews were also used to collect data from ECTs across four school-level configurations in both high and low socioeconomic school settings. Findings revealed ECTs' preferences of different kinds of support from their principals. Although preferences for support did not vary among ECT in different grade level school configurations, there were significant differences in preferences of the kinds of support between teachers in schools with high socioeconomic characteristics versus those in low socioeconomic schools. Strong positive correlations were found between ECT's perceptions of support and their job satisfaction. High levels of ECT's job satisfaction were found to be significant indicators of their intention to remain in the teaching profession. Additionally, principal perceptions of how they support their ECT were compared to the actual perceptions of ECTs. Findings indicate that school socioeconomic factors have the greatest impact on perceptions, teachers value different types of support based on school configuration, and principals and teachers have similar perceptions. The study recommends a differentiated approach to principal support based on socioeconomic factors and, to a limited degree, school performance.

PRINCIPAL SUPPORT:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Schools across the nation are confronting a crisis. This crisis is threatening the productivity, quality, and even the viability of public education in our nation. The dilemma we face crosses school district and state boundaries, and it has devastating effects on our most fragile schools. Although labeled differently in various studies, the crisis we are facing is one of teacher retention (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Much recent research confirms that both a stable and quality teacher workforce is critical to increased student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Newton, & Wei, 2013; Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Winters & Cowen, 2013).

Despite monumental local efforts and massive governmental initiatives— including professional development, opportunities for advancement, increased salaries, alternative certification pathways, and incentives of all kinds—entire states and school districts are failing to make the grade and meet the growing needs of increasingly diverse communities by recruiting and retaining quality early career teachers ([ECTs] (Hirsch, Koppich, & Knapp, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010; Ingersoll et al., 2012). Teacher attrition and turnover come at an excessive cost to students, teachers, school cultures, communities, and most importantly, students' achievement (Buchanan, 2009, 2010; Connell, 2007; Korthagen, 2004; Rinke, 2008; Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, & Russell, 2012). The inability of attracting and retaining qualified teachers

adversely affects the core goals of public education, placing the entire educational enterprise at risk.

Background

Nationally, approximately 13% of teachers (500,000), are in some form of job transition (Haynes, 2014). Job transition for teachers, or teacher turnover, includes teachers who leave a particular school, district, state, or teachers who decide to leave the field of teaching altogether. This high level of instability has adverse effects on schools in several ways. Research reveals that teacher turnover has a negative impact on both student learning and teacher effectiveness (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Of the nearly half million teachers in some form of job transition, only 18% and 14% respectively are accounted for by retirement and involuntary turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The remaining 68% of teachers in job transition represent teachers who are voluntarily moving between schools or leaving the profession early and, consequently, must be replaced with a new crop of instructors annually (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017) (See Figure 1).

14%

18%

30%

38%

■ Involuntary Turnover ■ Retirement
■ Voluntary Turnover, Early Leavers ■ Vountary Turnover, Movers
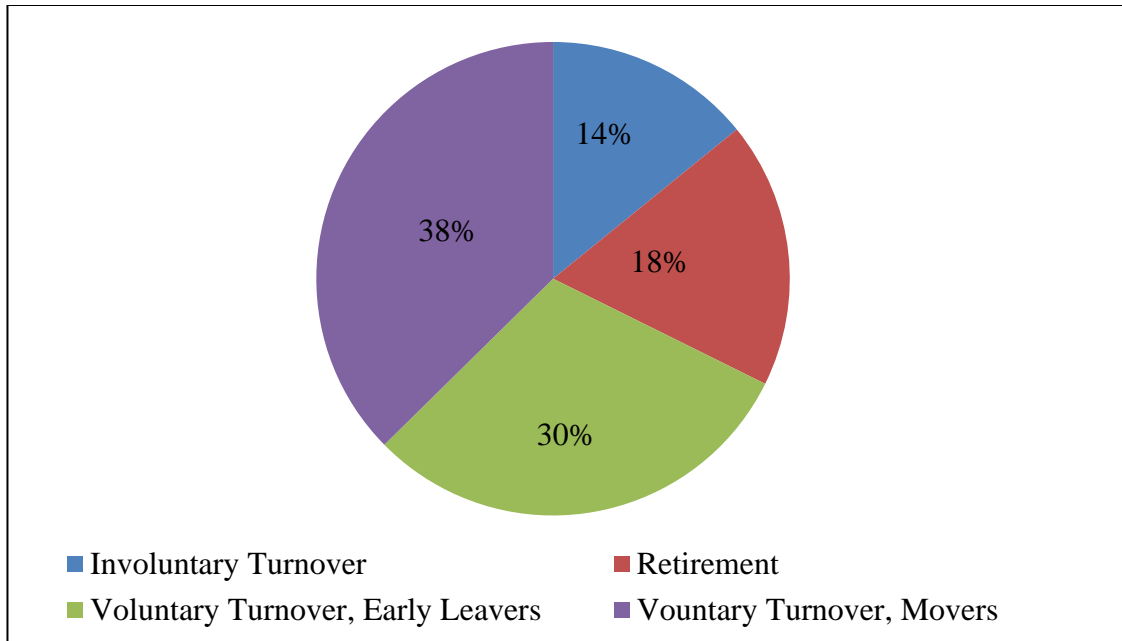
Figure 1. Reasons for teacher turnover and attrition. Adapted from *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it* by D. Carver-Thomas, & L. Darling-Hammond, 2017, Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Data also reveal a related trend of concern—the decline in the number of teachers entering the teaching profession or interested in entering education as a career. One study found fewer high school students interested in entering the teaching profession, a decline from 15,595 students in 2010 to 10,678 students in 2014 along with the number of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs having decreased from 720,000 students in 2009 to 465,000 students in 2013 (Aragon, 2016). This downward trend reduces the overall pool of available qualified teachers, exacerbating current teacher shortages that result from high levels of attrition of teachers within the first few years in the profession.

A case in point of this concern is that ECTs are exiting schoolhouse doors absent the desire to remain in teaching or without regret for leaving the profession. Attrition due to ineffective teaching is necessary and encouraged; however, consistent and ongoing

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teacher turnover of qualified, effective teachers results in unacceptably high costs in terms of both dollars and lower teacher quality (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Haynes (2014) and Greenlee and Brown (2009) reported that billions of dollars invested by states and local districts are lost due to teacher attrition, recurring recruitment campaigns, and retention efforts. In addition to the exorbitant financial impact, this steady decline in teacher retention rates manifests itself in less effective and lower teacher quality and instruction, anemic school cultures, understaffed schools, constant teacher vacancies, and unsatisfactory or unrealized academic achievement (Boyd et al., 2011; Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

In fact, these barriers and teacher shortage concerns are more alarming and more pronounced in urban school districts and communities. Consequently, the nation's most academically fragile sector—the urban core—tends to grapple even more with adequately and equitably staffed schools and struggle to develop teachers and improve learning, all byproducts of teacher attrition and teacher turnover (Boyd et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Based on a longitudinal study conducted for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012, annual teacher attrition rates "increased cumulatively from 10% to 17%, demonstrating a growth of 7% over a five-year span from year one to year five (10%, 2008-2009; 12%, 2009-2010; 15% 2010-2011; and 17%, 2011-2012)" (Gray & Taie, 2015, p. 3). Research indicates teachers primarily choose to leave the field of education for five critical reasons: a lack of respect for teacher voice, a lack of professional autonomy, a lack of administrative support, disruptive student behaviors, inadequate compensation, and poor working conditions

(Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Torres & Oluwole, 2015). In a study by Ingersoll and Smith (2003), ECTs who permanently left the profession after their first year listed four primary reasons for their premature departure: school staffing action, 18.9%; family or personal matters, 42%; pursuit of other jobs, 38.8%; and dissatisfaction, 28.9%.

Dissatisfaction was inclusive of and defined as one of four specific working conditions: student discipline, a lack of administrative support, student apathy, and a lack of influence over district and classroom decisions (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Similarly, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found that 25% of voluntary teacher leavers said testing and accountability measures drove them from teaching, while 21% cited unhappiness with school administrators, 21% noted a lack of satisfaction with the teaching profession, and 13% chose to leave teaching for financial reasons.

Although the range and specificity of reasons and rationales given by researchers regarding teacher turnover vary, the importance of principal support is a constant, common, and critical thread that is clearly evident and nearly ubiquitous throughout the studies. The literature on teacher turnover is rife with examples of the principal's capacity to influence many of the factors driving teachers out of education. The potential of the principals' leadership as a positive force for the reduction of teacher turnover is even more critical given the political untenability of employing monetary incentives at scale, compared to the possible impact of increased principal support for ECTs at the local level in the context of the individual school (Grissom, 2011; Kraft & Papay, 2014). Thus, principal support is essential as one vital element to addressing the teacher retention crisis (Bozonelos, 2008; Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994).

Given the importance of the principal's role, it is critical to examine the elements of support a principal may provide that can positively influence the decisions of ECTs as they make decisions on whether to remain in the field of education. We must first consider what important factors principals influence daily and cumulatively. As the primary leader of schools, principals are instrumental in defining and shaping the school's climate, culture, and environment (Bozonelos, 2008; Littrell et al., 1994). In an effort to improve working conditions for teachers and, consequently, influence their decisions regarding leaving or staying, principals must design and develop internal and external support structures that will encourage and convince teachers to remain in the classroom.

Conceptual Framework

House's (1981) social support framework defined social support as the "support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups, and the larger community" (p. 15). House's theory also defined four broad dimensions of social support: emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal. These broad support categories were designed to answer the critical conceptual question, "Who gives what to whom regarding what problems?" (House, 1981, p. 22). Littrell et al. (1994) bridged House's framework of social support into the field of education. Referencing the body of research that provides evidence of the power of school working conditions, they refined the definitions of House's four dimensions of support as applied to the actions and behaviors of principals.

Emotional support includes how principals show teachers that they are esteemed and trusted professionals, whose interests and ideas are worthy of consideration.

Principals demonstrate appreciation and openly communicate with teachers. Principals give professional support when they provide critical information teachers can use to improve classroom practice and increase student learning. Instrumental support is when principals directly assist teachers with work-related tasks by providing materials, space, and adequate resources such as time. Finally, in appraisal support principals provide frequent, constructive feedback, and information about the quality of instruction and instructional environments (Littrell et al., 1994).

The definition and measure of principal support were further refined in the creation and validation of the Principal Support Scale (DiPaola, 2012). Littrell et al. (1994) were specifically interested in how special education teachers perceived support. Based on House's (1981) established framework and Littrell et al.'s (1994) operational definitions of principal support, DiPaola's work broadened the concept of support for all teachers. In developing and testing the Principal Support Survey (PSS) measure, not only did four factors mirroring House's original framework emerge, but they collapsed into two more general categories.

DiPaola (2012) renamed one of House's (1981) original categories of support to better fit the school context. House's informational support, which involved behaviors that directly help the person accomplish the task, DiPaola (2012) termed professional support. He posited that emotional support and professional support build stronger relationships. As such, DiPaola grouped these two types of support and labeled them expressive support. Instrumental and appraisal support were grouped into the dimension of instrumental support, as they were found to have minimal affective impact. In doing

so, the four dimensions of social support provided by the principal were captured in two broader categories: expressive and instrumental support (DiPaola, 2012).

Using this adapted framework and the operationalized definitions, DiPaola (2012) created and tested a new principal support measurement tool, the Principal Support Survey (PSS). The PSS had the dual benefit of stronger psychometric properties as well as being significantly shorter—16 compared to 40 items. His survey, along with measures of teacher job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) and intention to leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) were used to explore the impact of principal support on those variables (see Figure 2).

Emotional Support

Professional Support

Instrumental Support

Appraisal Support

Expressive Support

Job Satisfaction & Job Intention to Leave

Teacher Retention

Instrumental Support
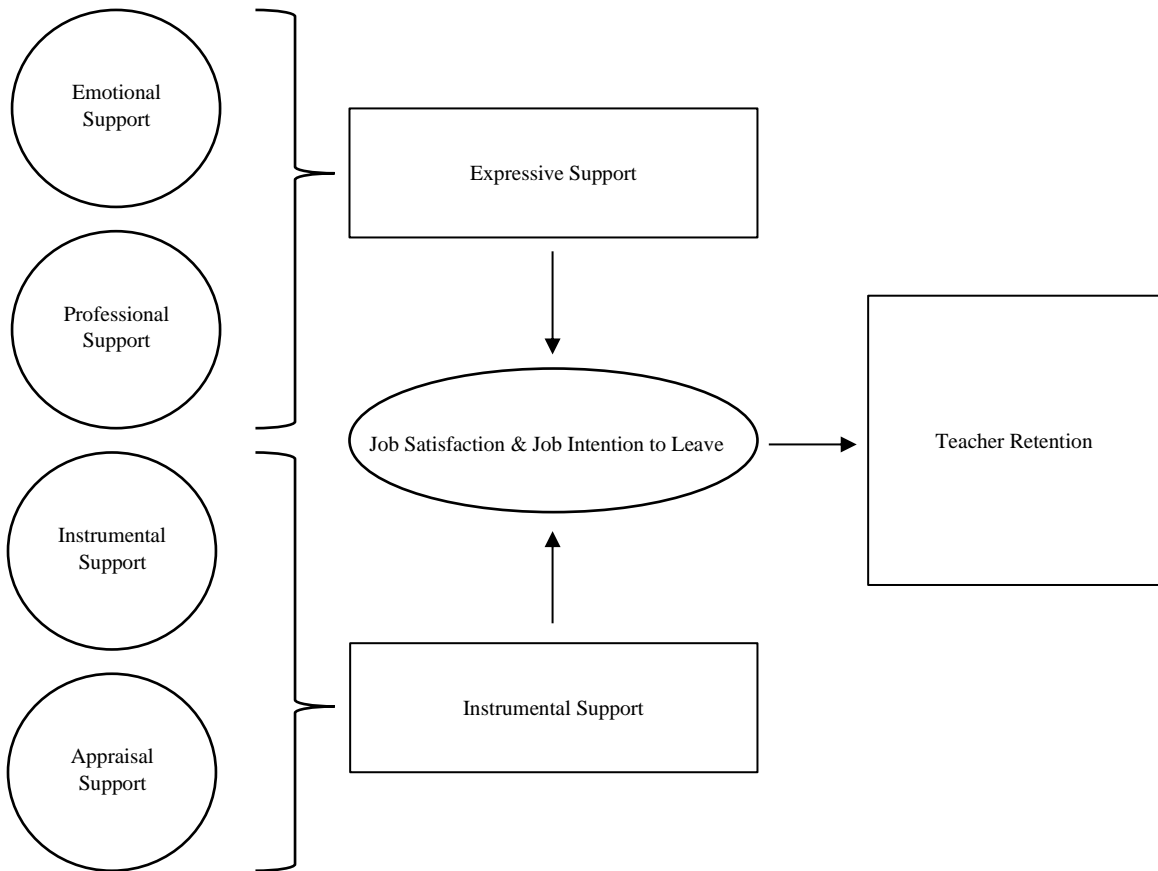
Figure 2. Conceptual framework of principal support, job satisfaction and job stress, and intention to leave.

Problem Statement

Clearly, teacher turnover and retention are a national problem. And further, it is evident that principals are key to effectively addressing this dilemma. A need exists to understand what principals can do to increase the job satisfaction and retention of quality, ECTs. Turnover is a problem that is driven by and subject to local context and is difficult to address with specificity and certainty at the federal and state policy levels. Additionally, teacher turnover is extremely costly across multiple levels, including state and local budgets (Haynes, 2014; Sutcher et al., 2016) and, more importantly, in terms of student learning (Hanselman, Grigg, Bruch, & Gamoran, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

Ultimately, the annual failure to mitigate ECTs' mass exodus from the education field is troubling and calls for an in-depth analysis into "why" teachers are abandoning the nation's classrooms and how principals can resolve or minimize ECT flight and the negative impact it has on student achievement. Given this context, the purpose of this study was to investigate ECTs' perceptions regarding principals' support and how perceived levels of support influence teachers' decisions to remain in the field of education.

Research Questions

1. What are ECTs' perceptions regarding the support they receive from principals in four dimensions of support: emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal?

    a. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on grade-level configurations of schools?

b. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on the socioeconomic status of the student population as measured by free and reduced-price lunch status?

c. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on school letter grade as issued by the state department of education?

2. What is the relationship between principal support, job satisfaction, and ECT intentions to leave the teaching profession?

3. What perceived support is most valued by ECTs and how does this perceived support differ in schools based on:

a. grade-level configuration?

b. high Socioeconomic Status (SES) and low SES?

4. Do principals perceive that their ECTs feel supported in the four dimensions of support (professional, emotional, appraisal, and instrumental)? What is the difference between teachers' perceptions of support and principals' perceptions?

Significance of the Study

Teacher turnover is a problem without a simple explanation. Teachers leave for a variety of reasons and how we define turnover itself has an important bearing on how we might approach the design and development of solutions. Researchers define a number of categories related to teacher turnover, including identifying teachers who move across schools within a district, teachers who move to schools outside of district but within the state, teachers who transition to new assignments within the field of education, and teachers who leave the profession. Given the impact on schools, the most important distinction to be made for this study was between those who stay and those who move at

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the school level. Making the choice a simple, binary outcome was critical because at the school level, the most important factor was whether a teacher decided to remain in place or leave (Ingersoll et al., 2012; Marinell & Coca, 2013).

In addition to the above noted categories for teacher departure, teacher turnover can be costly and detrimental to student achievement and engagement in education (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Often, under such circumstances students and community members resign themselves to a revolving door of teachers. As the importance of well-qualified teachers for student achievement has become increasingly clear, the disruptions associated with low retention rates has become difficult to justify and ignore (Kaden & Patterson, 2014). Such dynamics may harm schools with historically underserved student populations the most, as these schools tend to have more persistent turnover and, in some cases, have fewer overall resources. In addition, new hires in underserved schools often are less experienced and require more supports to improve (S. Carroll, Reichardt, & Guarino, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

Despite the severity of the turnover problem, disagreement persists over a number of its underlying causes, complicating the search for effective remedies. Earlier research focused on the attributes of teachers and schools associated with the incidence of turnover, including how student characteristics shape working conditions (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006) and how features of teachers mesh with neighboring labor markets. Teachers' ages, prior university training, verbal proficiencies, and family plans—along with labor market alternatives, given one's skillset—help to explain who stays and who leaves teaching (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Murnane, Singer, & Willett, 1988). Less is known about ECTs' perception of principal support and how this factor

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swings the pendulum in their decision to leave or remain in the teaching profession. Given this context, the purpose of this study was to investigate ECTs' perceptions regarding principals' support across DiPaola's (2012) four key dimensions of support: emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal. We also rigorously investigated how these four dimensions of support affect job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession. In the end, the yearly failure to alleviate ECTs' departure from the education field is of great concern and calls for a thorough examination into "why" teachers are leaving the nation's schools and how principals can lessen this growing flight from the profession.

Definitions of Terms

Appraisal support—Appraisal support is administrative feedback that is pertinent and relevant to and for self-reflection and self-evaluation (House, 1981). With appraisal support, administrators share feedback and findings with teachers and outline teachers' roles and responsibilities. This feedback is critical for and essential to teacher performance and development (Littrell et al., 1994).

ECT—Teachers who have served as full-time classroom educators for two to five years.

Emotional support—Emotional support is defined as the most important form of support (House, 1981). It is a form of social support that comprises emotions that consist of "trust, love, care, and empathy" (House, 1981, p. 24). House (1981) also argued emotional support promoted and fostered bonds and strengthened relationships between people and was the only form of support that was directly and indirectly embedded in all four dimensions of support.

Florida School Grade System—School grades provide an easily understandable metric to measure the performance of a school. Parents and the general public can use the school grade and its associated components to understand how well each school is serving its students. Each school is assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F annually, if it has sufficient data for at least one school grading component, tested at least 95% of eligible students, and is not under investigation for a testing irregularity. A school shall receive a grade based solely on the components for which it has sufficient data. Sufficient data exists when at least 10 students are eligible for inclusion in the calculation of the component. If a school has less than 10 eligible students with data for a particular component, that component will not be calculated for the school.

High Socioeconomic Status (SES)—a classification assigned to schools with a low percentage or concentration of students who receive free or reduced priced lunch based on state and federal guidelines, procedures, and criteria. High SES schools across the four grade configurations (elementary, middle, K-8 center, and senior high school) within this study were identified and determined by the following cut percentages of students receiving free or reduced priced lunch within each of the grade bands: elementary, 89% or lower; middle, 92% or lower; K-8, 60% or lower; and senior high school, 84% or lower.

Higher level of support—The amount and frequency of received principal support.

Informational support—Termed professional support by DiPaola (2012) provides "a person with information the person can use in coping with personal and environmental problems" (House, 1981, p. 25). Informational support is intended to be absent of social ties and social well-being (House, 1981; Littrell et al., 1994). See *Professional support*.

Instrumental support—Instrumental support is assistance to individuals in need of help. This form of support includes but is not limited to principals offering the necessary information, materials, energy, resources, time, and space for teachers to complete tasks and responsibilities (House, 1981). It is important to note that instrumental support is provided for teaching and non-teaching duties as well as for operational and managerial tasks.

Job satisfaction—teacher fulfillment stemming from daily classroom activities such as working with children, student progression and school climate (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Job stress—negative feelings and emotions resulting from a teacher's working conditions that may include poor student relationships, ineffective job, isolated planning, limited opportunities for collaboration with staff and restricted academic freedom and flexibility (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

Low Socioeconomic Status (SES)—a classification assigned to schools with a high percentage or concentration of students who receive free or reduced priced lunch based on state and federal guidelines, procedures, and criteria. Low SES schools across the four grade configurations (elementary, middle, K-8, and high school) within this study were identified and determined by the following cut percentages of students receiving free or reduced priced lunch within each of the grade bands: elementary, 90% or higher; middle, 93% or higher; K-8, 61% or higher; and senior high school, 85% or higher.

Principal support—"demonstrating appreciation; providing adequate resources and information; maintaining open, two-way communication, supporting a collegial

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climate; offering frequent and constructive feedback; and offering professional

development opportunities" (Bozonelos, 2008, p. 151).

Professional support—principals provide ECTs with critical information essential

to developing greater effectiveness. Professional support empowers individuals to help

themselves and to be self-sufficient beings by offering opportunities for professional

growth.

Socioeconomic status—factors that measure an individual's or a group's

educational, financial, professional, and social status within a hierarchical social structure

(Baker, 2014).

Teacher turnover—Classroom teachers who either opt to leave the teaching

profession or transfer from one district or state to another during the fiscal school year.

This definition of teacher turnover is restricted and does not include in-school change.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teacher turnover is of great concern across America. Each year, approximately half a million teachers transition from one school to another or leave teaching all together (Haynes, 2014) costing the nation approximately $8.5 billion (Podolsky et al., 2016). In addition to financial costs, increased levels of teacher turnover have been found to have adverse effects on the academic performance of students in at least two ways. First, higher turnover disrupts a school's interpersonal relationships that are foundational to student learning (Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell, 2017; Zeichner & Bier, 2015). Second, research provides evidence that teacher vacancies are typically filled with new, less experienced teachers who, due to their lack of experience, do not perform as well as measured by student standardized test scores (Watson, 2018).

To understand and stem the tide of ECT turnover, researchers have spent considerable effort studying possible causes and suggesting ways to address concerns at the federal, state, and local levels. Although it is understood that teaching is complex and demanding, developing and retaining competent and capable teachers is just as demanding as the job of teaching itself (Zeichner, 2017). According to Leithwood and Azah (2016), the two most influential school-based factors of student learning are teachers and school leadership. In many cases, the second factor, school leadership can provide an environment that counteracts the influence of teachers leaving by providing the necessary supports that reduce stress and burnout while increasing school

commitment, job satisfaction, teacher retention, and health (Perelli, 2018). To address

and correct the teacher turnover crisis, it is critical that a strong understanding of the

interactions, influences, and potential leverage points that exist among the dense,

multifaceted relationships that develop between teachers, school leadership, and school

context is developed.

Background: Current Conditions Around Teacher Turnover

Current educational policy has focused on recruiting more teachers. The problem

is not a lack of teachers; instead, it is the fact that 40-50% of all ECTs leave the

profession within the first five years of teaching (Ingersoll & May, 2016). Zeichner

(2017) states that 25% of ECTs leave the profession within the first three years. A

growing body of reports highlight the impact school environment has on teacher retention

(Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). For ECTs, the choice to continue or leave

the teaching profession is interconnected with job fulfillment (Bettini & Park, 2017). Tek

(2014) noted the connection between effective school leadership and teacher job

satisfaction also leads to higher student achievement. Thus, the role of the principal is of

paramount importance in teacher job satisfaction.

Too many teachers are leaving the workforce, causing even greater projected

shortages in the future (Sutcher et al., 2016). The Schools and Staffing Survey shows

that several states have late-fill rates higher than 2%, or teaching positions filled after the

beginning of a school year. This includes states such as Florida, California, Arizona,

Nevada, Hawaii, Alaska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Louisiana (Lacireno-Paquet,

Bocala, & Bailey, 2016). "Estimates from the Florida Education Department…suggested

that the state would need about 12,000 more teachers per year than are projected to be

supplied…this would be a dramatic situation: over eight percent of the teaching positions can go unfilled" (Lacireno-Paquet et al., 2016, p. 4). Subsequently, this pattern continues today, as noted from a longitudinal study of New York middle school teachers showing 27% of teachers exited the profession within the first year, 55% of teachers exited within 3 years into the profession, and 66% of teachers exited by five years (Papay et al., 2017).

Unfortunately for education, teacher attrition is higher among teachers in the early years of teaching, compared with midcareer teachers (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). In examining the Teach for America data from 2011-2012, Goldring et al. (2014) found that 7% of teachers with one to three years of experience left the next year. Elfers, Plecki, and Van Windekens (2017) state the percentage of novice teachers who left teaching during the first five years varied from 20-32%, depending on the state. Data from the Education Commission estimate teacher turnover percentage has reached 46% for those individuals that have reached their fifth year of teaching, which includes those who left the profession (17%) or migrated (29%) from one school to another (Aragon, 2016). Of particular concern is the loss of ECTs in their second to fifth year, especially in urban centers where the impact of turnover poses a danger to the most fragile students. Aragon (2016) speaks to the difficulty in hiring and maintaining teachers in urban and rural areas where schools tend to be populated with students having the following characteristics: high poverty, high minority, and/or a history of low student/school achievement. This attrition leads to many urban students being instructed by teachers lacking experience and/or teachers who do not remain in the profession long enough to solidify their ability to positively impact student achievement or school improvement (Bettini & Park, 2017).

Impact of Teacher Shortages and Teacher Turnover

In a 2013 study, Ronfeldt and colleagues found higher rates of turnover had negative effects on student performance overall and were even more devastating in low-achieving, high minority schools. In one of the largest urban school districts, New York City, there exists a 12% increase of attrition amongst the first-year teachers in the lowest performing schools as compared to the highest performing schools (Simon & Johnson, 2015). They found that the deleterious effects of teacher turnover had an impact not only on the students of the teachers who left the school, but the negative impact extended to the students whose teachers remained at the school. This idea is reinforced by research indicating that social capital among teachers is affected by teacher turnover in low-achieving and high-minority schools, as teachers feel they must reestablish and rebuild peer ties as other teachers leave (Hanselman et al., 2016).

Teacher turnover places increased demand on the already dwindling supply of teachers. As discussed by Grissom, Viano, and Selin (2016), a basic economic framework can be used to describe the local market for teachers. The supply and demand for teachers operate at a certain level given the local context of the labor market. Labor demand equates to the number of teaching positions that are available in a given area and in a particular subject. Supply would then simply be the number of eligible teacher candidates who could and would be willing to take the assignment given the level of compensation offered. Compensation for one of these teaching positions includes both pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits. Pecuniary benefits include salary and fringe benefits such as insurance and retirement. Non-pecuniary benefits are much broader, and amorphous and, most importantly, include teachers' perceptions of working conditions.

What becomes essential for teacher turnover is how the individual teacher balances the weighing of the totality of compensation elements when making decisions that have bearing on turnover outcomes. Historically, policymakers have focused more intentionally on the pecuniary aspects of the compensation equation, often neglecting the tremendous potential influence of non-pecuniary compensation opportunities, even though teachers traditionally report they are more gratified by intrinsic rewards than extrinsic rewards.

The current national picture and future projections of teacher supply and demand raise several concerns. In their 2016 study, Sutcher et al. highlight a growing gap in the current and projected demand for teachers and the projected supply of teachers. They cite federal data indicating a 35% decline in enrollment in teacher education programs. Additionally, they cite a decrease of 23% in the number of candidates completing certificate-awarding educator preparation programs across the country. The decrease in supply indicated by federal data coincides with a 3% increase in projected student enrollment by the year 2025 (Sutcher et al., 2016). The timing of this projected enrollment growth is of increased concern as school systems across the nation continue to struggle to replace the numbers of teachers who were laid off during the Great Recession. The compounded effect of the earlier teacher cuts, increased student enrollment, reduced teacher training enrollment, and the current pattern of teacher turnover places even greater stress on the system and creates increased impetus for policymakers to look at a broader compensation picture including an expanded focus on the possible impact of non-pecuniary factors for teacher retention (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014).

Reasons and Factors for Teacher Turnover

Teachers have been identified as the most influential school-based factor in driving student achievement followed by school leadership (Leithwood & Azah, 2016). A comprehensive body of research covers a wide array of school working conditions and attempts to measure the influence of each on teacher turnover.

School environment. A critical and high-impact factor in the student learning equation is the school environment. The school environment is a two-sided coin, connected and complementary, consisting of the students' learning environment and the teachers' working environment. Research shows that elements of school context fall into one of two general categories: aspects under the control of outside entities such as districts, unions, school boards, or state and federal legislatures and elements that are under the influence of the local school community and, particularly, school administration. To a certain degree, the problem of teacher turnover must be handled at both levels, but for immediate and most cost-effective solutions, focusing on the elements of working conditions under control of school administrators is best (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Demographics. The structure of a school's population regarding race, ethnicity, and poverty influences teacher attrition and mobility (Clandinin et al., 2015; Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016). While these factors may pose challenges, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) argue that the influence of student demographics, teacher turnover and hiring problems may be decreased when factoring-in certain positive working conditions. It is also noted there is a decline in the proportion of minority

teachers in some cases, suggesting that minority teachers' careers have been less stable than those of White teachers (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015; Ingersoll & May, 2016).

At the turn of the 21st century, research confirmed the relationship between school demographics and teacher turnover using large state-level datasets (Hanushek et al., 2016). Early studies cited evidence that student demographics and student achievement factors had a positive correlation with increased teacher turnover (Simon & Johnson, 2015). In a 2001 study of Texas schools, four measures of student characteristics were related to teacher turnover and teacher supply: percentage of low income, percentage of African Americans, percentage of Hispanics, and average student achievement scores (Hanushek et al., 2016). These initial studies captured data associated with the racial and economic characteristics of schools but were not designed to include other, more difficult to capture but potentially critical data elements (Ladd, 2017).

Further complicating the teacher turnover picture is the influence and importance of local context. Substantial research has shown that teacher turnover is directly and positively correlated to student demographics (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; Kraft, Marinell, & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Both as a factor of the diversity of schools and the control structure of American schools, the extent and severity of teacher turnover is extremely variable. This variability, in turn, makes it difficult for policy makers at higher levels to develop and implement broad policies that are effective across the board. By framing policy with a limited focus, research has found that the costs of increasing teacher retention through solely pecuniary incentives winds up being well beyond the

capacity of current education budgets and, in all likelihood, is politically untenable. Research estimates that districts would have to pay between 20% and 50% more to retain teachers who served in predominantly non-minority, high achieving schools (Hanushek et al., 2001).

Principal influence. Research in 2011 found that student characteristics, in conjunction with working conditions, were just as accurate in predicting teacher retention, placing added focus on the principal's ability to create positive working conditions (Burkhauser, 2017). Simon and Johnson (2015) noted that increased opportunities to collaborate and plan had a positive impact on how teachers viewed working conditions and increased their intention to remain at a current school. Therefore, most recent data finds that the principal's influence on working conditions in a positive manner can counteract student characteristics.

Mobility of novice teachers. Novice teachers are considerably more likely to move than other teachers (Goldring et al., 2014). In a longitudinal study of new teachers, Simon and Johnson (2015) found that experiences at the school site were central in influencing new teachers' decisions to stay in their schools and teaching. They argue that novice teachers' professional success and satisfaction is tied to the school site and working conditions found to support their teaching. These working conditions included collegial interaction, opportunities for growth, appropriate assignments, adequate resources, and school-wide structures to support student learning. These issues may be particularly acute for new teachers in low-income schools (Simon & Johnson, 2015). Others have found that participation in a combination of mentoring and group induction programs may reduce beginning teacher turnover (Callahan, 2016; Epps & Foor, 2015),

though the qualitative distinctions among these programs and their relative cost-effectiveness are not always clear (Sparks et al., 2017).

Within the first three years, 25% percent of public-school teachers leave the profession—this impacts student achievement (Simon & Johnson, 2015). An interesting data point is that teachers who leave after their first year or third and fourth years are less effective than those that stay. Other research indicates that a novice teacher can make significant on-the job growth through observations, feedback, and coaching (Redding & Henry, 2019). Epps and Foor (2015) noted that of the 29% of teachers that left the profession due to job dissatisfaction, four areas played a pivotal role in the decision to leave: student discipline, lack of support from school administration, poor student motivation, and lack of teacher influence within the classroom and school.

Using Screening Assessment and Support Services and Teach for America data, Ingersoll et al. (2018), reported that teacher turnover is a part of the organization and management of schools. Many teachers leave the profession for reasons other than retirement (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Goldring et al. (2014) suggest that when teachers move, they often transfer to other schools within their district. Between the school years 2011 and 2012, an analysis of Teach for America data found that among those who transferred, 59% moved to another school within their district, and 38% moved to a school in another district (Goldring et al., 2014). This intra-district movement indicates that certain school characteristics such as working conditions of schools, the socio-economic status, and ethnicity of students may motivate teachers to move or leave, in addition to the commonly perceived reasons of retirement and child-rearing (Clandinin et al., 2015; Rood, 2018).

Other factors. Multiple studies on teacher retention also illuminate school climate factors that affect teacher turnover across all levels of schooling (Simon & Johnson, 2015). According to a series of national studies, lack of collegial and administrative support, student misbehavior and disinterest, insufficient salary, lack of teacher autonomy, unreasonable teaching assignment, lack of professional development opportunities, and inadequate allocation of time all contribute to the departure of teachers (Burkhauser, 2017; Zeichner, 2017). In analyzing teacher responses and reasons for attrition, compensation, unsatisfactory student conduct, inadequate administrative support, working conditions, lack of student motivation, large class sizes, limited upward mobility, lack of faculty influence, classroom disruptions, and insufficient time were identified as the factors that led and contributed to beginning teachers' discontentment with the profession and job stress (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Torres & Oluwole, 2015).

The identified reasons for attrition "suggest that the roots of the teacher shortage largely reside in the working conditions with schools and districts and not teacher recruitment efforts" (S. V. Ryan et al., 2017, p. 32). Ingersoll and May (2016) uses a bucket-filled-with holes metaphor to describe the perpetual process of staffing schools with new teachers only to lose the experienced ones. One theory suggests that teacher attrition must be remedied and counteracted by increased teacher recruitment practices (Ingersoll & May, 2016). Their findings illuminated that the root cause of teacher attrition was anchored in working conditions, not teacher recruitment efforts, stressing and emphasizing the value and importance of the role of principal. Burkhauser (2017) states improving a principal's ability within the areas of "addressing teacher concerns,

providing useful feedback, and/or establishing mutual respect and trust may improve the perception of working conditions or environment in a meaningful way" (p. 139).

If this type of turnover or attrition were seen in other comparable industries it may not be as alarming, however this is not the case. Subsequently, when comparing teacher turnover to other professions that pay substantially more or perceived as a higher working status, teacher turnover rates are higher (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Similarly, Young (2018) surveyed teachers leaving the profession and found that 42% of teachers left for family or personal reasons; 39% of teachers left to pursue other jobs; 29% of teachers left for job dissatisfaction; and 19% of teachers left for school staffing actions. In 2016, the teacher turnover rate was 17% nationally, however this did not include teachers who migrate (26%) from one school to another. It is also important to note the turnover rate is 50% higher than the aforementioned in high poverty schools (Aragon, 2016; Zeichner & Bier, 2015). Nevertheless, most teachers chose the profession because they are expected to make a difference in students' lives.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

Intentional and deliberate improvement of teachers' working conditions would decrease new teacher turnover. This intentionality would positively impact school staffing problems and improve the performance of schools (S. V. Ryan et al., 2017). A proactive retention process would eliminate ineffective teachers within a school by providing effective teachers feedback and development, satisfactory working conditions, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and resources (Väisänen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom, & Soini, 2018). The key to the establishment of these better-quality and enhanced working conditions is the principal. As a result, it is incumbent upon principals to define

and develop systematic structures and routines within their respective schools that are professionally supportive.

Understanding teacher job satisfaction is one of the greatest influences in retaining novice teachers and is crucial to an administrator's success in limiting teacher attrition. In a study conducted on the retention of first year teachers, the strongest measure related to teacher retention is job satisfaction with school management serving as a related factor (Kapa & Gimbert, 2018). This job satisfaction component incorporates categories for administrators, specifically principals that have the responsibility of directing and/or facilitating school site environments and working conditions. Additional factors new teachers cite as reasons they decide to leave the profession or seek another school site are lack of administrative support and non-involvement in decision making (Epps & Foor, 2015). Subsequently, as noted by Cihak (2015), "Administrative support may be a primary vehicle for reducing teacher work stress, thus contributing to teacher retention" (p. 19).

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) determine job dissatisfaction stems from teacher burnout and emotional exhaustion resulting in a teacher's decision to leave the profession. M. T. Brown (2000) states according to behaviorism, people do not act but react to external stimuli; to change the response, the stimuli must be changed. Thus, for teachers to experience job satisfaction, a value consonance must be embedded through a sense of belonging that positively contributes to the organization (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Notably, the principal's influence on teacher job satisfaction and motivation are intrinsically interconnected in the fact that one allows an easement in the progression of the other. The ability to motivate teachers to remain in the field of teaching begins with

the innate ability to understand their perceptions as it relates to their feeling of job stress (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). This will afford them the opportunities to bring a task to fruition and ultimately establish intrinsic gratification (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Teacher job satisfaction comes from true self-motivation fostered by the reward of student's learning and the development in a class that should be encouraged and transcending. Self-motivation is the impetus of exploring, learning, creativity, inquisitiveness and readiness to act (R. Ryan & Deci, 2000). This sets the stage for the importance of social support as it relates to education, specifically teacher retention, as it pertains to school leadership. Therefore, it is also imperative to point out that essentially, the principal's influence with teacher retention is to increase teacher job satisfaction by minimizing unfavorable working conditions.

History of Social Support as Related to Principal Support

Throughout the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the importance of social relationships in and around the workplace moved to the forefront of research efforts. House (1981) found that organizational stress posed a health threat and that developing stronger social supports within or outside of the workplace could significantly increase an individual's resistance to stress-related health concerns. House further indicated that the time and investment that adults make around the workplace could parallel the conditions felt by students in the schoolhouse.

House's conception of social support is framed around answering the question: Who gives what support to whom regarding which problem? (House, 1981, p. 22). To provide a structure for possible answers, House constructed a matrix that included the by whom provided category, and which support one might expect to encounter frequently.

In subsequent research, House (1981) expanded the concept of social support to include the concept of social structure to social support. The processes of social support including relational demands and social regulation (House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988) further clarified the importance of social support in and around the workplace by specifying the manners by which relationships affect well-being.

House et al. (1988) studied the existence, number, and frequencies of social relationships and the influence they had on a person's well-being. They found that social relationships at both the micro and macro levels were important for individual health in a learning community. House extended social structure and process research to include work environments. To understand the concept of principal support, it is pertinent to understand the operating definition of social support and its relationship to principal support. House (1981) referenced social support as a "flow of emotional concern, instrumental aid, information, and/or appraisal (information relevant to self-evaluation) between people" (p. 26).

To connect House's study to the educational sector, Littrell et al. (1994) applied House's theory of social support to principal support of special education teachers. DiPaola (2012) further developed their operational definition to create the Principal Support Scale to capture the social supports provided to teachers in the educational arena. In refining Littrell and colleagues' study of special education teachers on principal support, DiPaola (2012) sampled 1,276 teachers in 34 high schools. A principal axis factor analysis was performed using the criterion of eigenvalue greater than one for factors. The four components identified in the pilot study, which mirrored House's original framework, combined into two more general factors. The finding was not

surprising since it is consistent with the general research on leadership. For example, Bales (1954) identified task and social leaders and Etzioni (1961) called the basic functions of any group instrumental and expressive; thus, the two factors were labeled instrumental support and expressive support. Hence, DiPaola classified and condensed principal support into two overarching categories of support: expressive support and instrumental. He recast the four levels of social support, labeling them professional, emotional, instrumental, and appraisal (DiPaola & Hoy, 2015). This statement best explains the concept:

Professional support and emotional support comprised the general construct of expressive support whereas instrumental support was composed of appraisal and instrumental support. The four components of the social support of the principal were captured in two basic school categories: expressive support and instrumental support (DiPaola & Hoy, 2015 p. 9).

Principal support is a vital and essential piece for addressing the teacher turnover and retention conundrum (Bozonelos, 2008; Littrell et al., 1994). As ECTs grapple with the nuances and challenges of entering a new profession, principal support is instrumental for establishing supportive structures, providing guidance, focusing direction, and creating a culture of coherence.

Types of Principal Support

Principal support is defined as "demonstrating appreciation; providing adequate resources and information; maintaining open, two-way communication, supporting a collegial climate; offering frequent and constructive feedback; and offering professional development opportunities" (Bozonelos, 2008, p. 151). House's conceptualization

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consisted of four levels of social support—emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal (DiPaola & Hoy, 2015). In bridging House's framework of social support, Littrell et al. (1994) provide refined definitions of House's four categories of support that reference the actions and behaviors of principals.

Based on these modified definitions, Littrell et al. (1994) developed a survey that included a 40-item principal support section that was divided into the four framework categories and administered to 1,226 special education teachers in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Results indicated two important outcomes. The data collected revealed that there was a gap between how important teachers found principal support and the amount of support they reported receiving. Second, based on the survey data, emotional support was rated most important followed by instrumental support, informational support, and finally, appraisal support (Littrell et al., 1994).

Emotional support. Emotional support is defined as the most important form of support (House, 1981). It is a form of social support that comprises emotions that consist of "trust, love, care, and empathy" (House, 1981, p. 24). House (1981) also argued emotional support promoted and fostered bonds, strengthened relationships between people and was the only form of support that was directly and indirectly embedded in all four dimensions of support. The definition of emotional support was refined to include how principals show teachers that they are esteemed by taking into account teachers' interests and ideas, trusting their professional judgments, encouraging open communication and valuing appreciation (Littrell et al., 1994).

Professional support. Professional support provides "a person with information the person can use in coping with personal and environmental problems" (House, 1981,

p. 25). Professional support empowers individuals to help themselves and to be self-sufficient beings. Professional support is intended to be absent of social ties and social well-being (House, 1981). Professional support speaks to the need for principals to provide teachers with critical information they can use to improve classroom practice and increase student learning.

Instrumental support. Instrumental support assists individuals in need of help. This form of support includes, but is not limited to, the principal's offering the necessary information, materials, energy, resources, time, and space for teachers to complete tasks and responsibilities (House, 1981). It is important to note that instrumental support is provided for teaching and non-teaching duties, as well as for operational and managerial tasks. Littrell et al. (1994) refined the definition of instrumental support to state that principals directly assist teachers with work-related tasks, including the provision of materials, space, and adequate resources (including time).

Appraisal support. Appraisal support is administrative feedback that is pertinent and relevant to and for self-reflection and self-evaluation (House, 1981). With appraisal support, administrators share feedback and findings with teachers and outline teachers' roles and responsibilities. This feedback is critical for and essential to teacher performance and development (Littrell et al., 1994). Appraisal support is refined to include the charge to principals to provide appraisal such as frequent, constructive feedback, and information about what quality instruction and instructional environments look like (Littrell et al., 1994).

Principal's Role in Teacher Retention

As previously noted, teacher retention is a significant problem across the country. Almost 500,000 teachers annually decide to leave the school at which they currently teach. With 18% of teachers leaving due to retirement and 14% accounted for by involuntary separation, the remaining 32% transferring schools or making a career change (Boyd et al., 2011) represent job transitions chosen by the individual teacher. In addressing teacher turnover and attrition, the role of the principal is central. The principal's capacity to create a school environment and provide support for ECTs has a direct impact on ECTs' growth and development, the strengthening of the social support network available for the school community, and on a teacher's ultimate decision to remain or leave the profession (Zeichner, 2017). Principals serve as catalysts in helping teachers to develop their teaching to think and act more inclusively. A principal's role is to guide and support the course of change, drawing together the teachers and the resources necessary to be successful.

The principal is the instructional leader of the school, responsible for establishing an instructional vision, having a focused plan for improving student achievement and fostering a culture of high expectations for all teachers to improve student academic achievement. In addition, the principal is charged with empowering teachers to recommend, create, and solve issues by way of impacting teachers' decisions to remain in the teaching field (Zeichner, 2017). To that end, principal support is essential in the development and retention of ECTs (Hughes, Matt, & O'Reilly, 2015; Ingersoll et al., 2012; Papay & Kraft, 2016).

Current research also depicts principals as having the most significant impact on student learning through their influence on school climate, culture and by supporting a teacher's commitment and growth. Principal support for teachers through various leadership styles comes in many forms and is dependent upon a variety of teacher and school characteristics (Zeichner, 2017). In a study of teachers who left the profession, over 40% claimed that dissatisfaction with the administration was a leading determinant in their decision to leave teaching (Zeichner, 2017). Additionally, Burkhauser (2017) found that teachers' ratings of a school's climate depended heavily on the principal. Independent of other district level variables, teacher retention and satisfaction were heavily tied to the teachers' perceptions of their principal.

Principal's Impact on Teacher Retention: Negative Factors

Teacher turnover has negative consequences on the cohesiveness and effectiveness of school communities. Teacher turnover disrupts educational programs and professional relationships intended to improve student learning (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Bryk, Lee, & Smith, 1990; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Teacher turnover is also a growing financial impact on school systems across the nation. Estimates vary but K. M. Brown and Wynn (2009) cite a Texas example that estimates the overall cost of teacher attrition and turnover at approximately $329 million per year with the cost per teacher falling somewhere around the $8000 figure. This speaks only to the financial drain upon schools neglecting to estimate the human costs related to loss of capacity and inability to sustain reform and growth. "In a profession already suffering from budget cuts and funding difficulties…it is in administrators' best interest to explore

ways to increase retention in order to lower the costs associated with recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers" (Cihak, 2015, p. 5).

In a study conducted on the retention of first year teachers, the strongest measure related to teacher retention is job satisfaction with school management serving as a related factor (Cihak, 2015; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). This job satisfaction component incorporates a few categories that administrators, specifically principals, have the responsibility of directing and/or facilitating. Additional factors new teachers cite as reasons they decide to leave the profession or seek another school site are lack of administrative support and non-involvement in decision making (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Understanding teacher satisfaction is one of the greatest influences in retaining novice teachers is crucial to an administrator's success in the area of limiting teacher attrition.

Characteristics that are directly under the control of school building administrators [are]…the support they receive from others, the control they have over work environment, the mentoring they receive, [success] in the classroom, and environments [that] are safe and orderly. (Stockard & Lehman, 2004, p. 763)

Principal's Impact on Teacher Retention: Positive Factors

The teacher retention challenge is impacted by environmental factors that measure a school's environment and include areas such as administrative support, teacher empowerment and decision-making capacity, professional development, use of time, student behavior, school facilities, and community and family support (Burkhauser, 2017). A proactive retention process would involve eliminating the ineffective teachers within a school and providing effective teachers feedback and development, satisfactory

working conditions, recognition, responsibility and advancement, and resources (Jacob, Vidyarthi, & Carroll, 2012). Subsequently, intentionally and deliberately "improving teachers' working conditions would contribute to lower rates of new teacher turnover, thereby diminishing school staffing problems and improving the performance of schools" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 33).

Teachers are more likely to remain in the teaching profession when they have the support of their principals with instructional resources, professional development, and open and direct communication. The social relationships driven by and dependent upon the school's culture and climate are often a manifestation of the school's leadership. Teacher retention is heavily influenced through the way the principal works to create and sustain a supportive environment.

A research study conducted by Ladd (2017) in North Carolina showed the impact school leadership has on teacher retention. This study surveyed 70% of the state's public-school teachers in all configuration levels. According to this study, school leadership has a significant impact on a teacher's decision to remain at a school location in all configuration levels including elementary, middle, K-8 center and high school. Elementary and middle school teachers seem to benefit from more time to collaborate and develop while high school teachers required more autonomy or empowerment (Ladd, 2017). This would reflect that an elementary, middle and K-8 center school principal would need to be a leader that supports teachers via trust, empathy, time/resources and opportunities to develop together, whereas high school principals would need to provide teachers opportunities to empower themselves or become self-sufficient (Ladd, 2017).

Another study conducted with teachers from Chicago Public Schools mirrored some of the same information from the North Carolina study. Unlike the North Carolina study, this research only surveyed elementary and high school teachers. A unique finding in this research mentioned that mobility rates among teachers are 5% lower when teachers perceive the principal as a positively impactful instructional leader and a person they can trust (Allensworth et al., 2018). This signifies the importance or at least hints at the principal's ability to provide honest feedback. "The principal, who is the teacher's supervisor, can provide direct support to their practice. Therefore, teachers' perceptions of their principal matter for teacher retention, as well as the conditions established for teachers' cooperative work" (Allensworth et al., 2018, p. 30).

Principal Support as a Primary Factor in Teacher Retention

Leadership behaviors can reflect House's conceptual framework of social support. Research studies dating as far back as the 1980s connected improved working conditions to social support. House's (1981) conceptual framework of social support was one study that confirmed and validated the correlation between support and job satisfaction. The findings from House's (1981) research encouraged principals to establish and promote a rewards system, build collaborative communities, and mentoring opportunities within schools.

Burkhauser's (2017) study and research found a direct correlation between teachers' working conditions as influenced by the principal and teacher retention. As highlighted in her research, similar working conditions (empowerment, physical environment, time management, collaborative structures, student conduct, and administrative support) influenced and affected teachers' decisions to abandon or leave

the teaching profession (Burkhauser, 2017). Johnson et al. (2012, as cited by Burkhauser, 2017) asserted, "teachers' desire[s] or decisions to leave a school is mostly explained by their satisfaction with school working conditions, including measures of collegial relationships, school leadership, and school culture" (p. 127).

Burkhauser's (2017) study, which explored the relationship between teachers' perceptions of four measures and their school principal, proved there was a direct correlation between the two variables. The four measures explored in this study included professional development or training, school-site leadership, physical environment, and teacher time use (Burkhauser, 2017). Burkhauser (2017) conducted a longitudinal study for four school years (2005-2012) in the North Carolina public school system. With sample sizes larger than 2,000 for each school year, the research revealed that teacher perception of the four school-based measures influenced teachers' decisions to remain or leave the profession. Findings from Burkhauser's (2017) research confirmed that principals are the best-suited stakeholder to transform physical environments. Therefore, "the individual principal matters when it comes to a teacher's perception of his or her work environment" (Burkhauser, 2017, p. 137).

Building upon prior research, Fuller, Waite, and Torres Irribarra (2016) validated the importance of principal support and the teacher retention phenomenon. Fuller et al. (2016) classified principal support as "essential support" as it relates to teacher turnover. In their 2011-2012 study of 548 teachers across all grade level configurations (elementary, middle, and high) in 13 Los Angeles public schools, Fuller et al.'s (2016) findings suggested that measures such as school leadership and collegial relationships were the most influential factor for stayers and leavers in the teaching profession. One of

the three notable findings from their study was that principal support, teacher

relationships, and cohesion were more influential determinants in a teacher's decision to

remain or exit the classroom than intrinsic motivation.

Zeichner's (2017) research on teacher attrition was another study that identified a

positive correlation between teachers' perceptions and administrative leadership styles.

Zeichner's (2017) research on teacher attrition within New York public schools for two

years revealed that school leadership was the most impactful variable in teacher turnover,

especially for beginning teachers. In analyzing the relationship between school

contextual factors (teachers' influence over school policy, effective leadership, staff

relationships, safety-to-life measures, and facilities) and teacher turnover, Zeichner

(2017) argued the principal's role is crucial and statistically significant.

This study analyzed survey data and data from district administrative files from

concurrent years, 2004-2005 and spring of 2006 of a 4,360-sample size of first year

teachers to assess which school contextual factors influenced teacher retention. The

teacher survey was a five-point scale that ranged from not important to extremely

important while the administrative data were inclusive of school demographics and

teacher information such as age, race, sex, and entry pathway. Consistent with similar

and previous studies of authors (e.g. Burkhauser, 2017; Fuller et al., 2016), the findings

of Zeichner (2017) showed a direct correlation between teacher retention decisions and

principal relationship. Evidence and results from both survey administrations in this

study linked teacher dissatisfaction to administrative support as the most compelling

school contextual factor. This study confirmed that teacher attrition is typically higher

across urban, minority, and socio-economically depressed communities and "the results

of both analyses point to the importance of working conditions and particularly of administrative support in teacher retention" (Zeichner, 2017, p. 328).

Summary

Teachers are more likely to remain in the teaching profession who feel they have the support of their principals in the areas of expressive and instrumental support. The social relationships are dependent upon the school's climate and culture, often a manifestation of the school's leadership. Therefore, how the principal works to create and sustain the climate has a tremendous impact on teacher retention. DiPaola and Hoy (2015) stated that the importance of social relationships in a school began to rise in the 1970s and 1980s.

There are multiple ways to approach the teacher turnover dilemma in the United States. We can encourage an ever-increasing number of new teachers through recruitment or, even more importantly, we can look at the teacher crisis from the perspective of teacher turnover (Grissom et al., 2016). In comparison with other first world nations, U.S. teachers leave education over two times more frequently, 8% compared to 3-4% (Sutcher et al., 2016) in other industrialized nations. In reality, the solution that the nation's educational systems need is a combination of the two. With the turnover graph looking like a U, more teachers turning over early and later in their career, (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003) it becomes critical that we can study and come to understand what factors influence teacher decisions to remain in or leave the teaching profession early in their careers.

The principal's capacity to create a school environment focused on providing support for ECTs has a direct impact on ECTs' growth and development. The strength of

the social support network available within the school community has a direct impact, and on a teacher's ultimate decision to remain or leave the profession. If the conditions of American schooling remain the status quo, then the need for school leaders to understand, measure, and strengthen school environments for teachers to ultimately benefit students will continue to grow. Ultimately, the annual failure to mitigate ECTs' mass exodus from the education field is troubling and calls for an in-depth analysis into why teachers are fleeing the nation's schools, and more importantly, how principals can resolve or minimize this growing concern.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This study used an explanatory mixed-methods (Mertler, 2017) design based on the pragmatic paradigm (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The explanatory mixed methods design under the pragmatic paradigm allowed the researchers to frame outcomes in a manner that addressed the current concerns related to ECT turnover. In this two-phase method, the quantitative data were introduced and analyzed first. Qualitative data were collected to build on and elucidate the quantitative findings. The quantitative aspect of the mixed methods design analyzed the data sets from a Likert scale survey, whereas the qualitative aspect of the design utilized a priori coding of focus group data. Advantages of using a mixed methods approach involved efficiently gathering support for one's findings, strengthening support, and offering a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of principal support at a school-site level, and minimizing and mitigating the limitations of a single method study.

Research Questions

As listed in Chapter 1, the following research questions drove this study.

1. What are ECTs' perceptions regarding the support they receive from principals in four dimensions of support: emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal?

   a. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on grade-level configurations of schools?

b. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on the socioeconomic status of the student population as measured by free and reduced-price lunch status?

c. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on school letter grade as issued by the state department of education?

2. What is the relationship between principal support, job satisfaction, and ECT intentions to leave the teaching profession?

3. What perceived support is most valued by ECTs and how does this perceived support differ in schools based on:

a. grade-level configuration?

b. high SES and low SES?

4. Do principals perceive that their ECTs feel supported in the four dimensions of support (professional, emotional, appraisal, and instrumental)? What is the difference between teachers' perceptions of support and principals' perceptions?

Participants

The population of interest for this study was ECTs and all principals who worked in an urban school district located in the southeastern region in the United States. For this study's purpose, ECTs were defined as educators who have taught for more than one and less than six years. Teachers in their first year of classroom experience were intentionally excluded from our definition of ECT. Our rationale for selecting this range of experience as ECTs had to do with state and district policy. First year teachers were not included as they work under the designation of a probationary teacher. This state mandated contractual status, in effect, makes all first-year teachers at will employees

(terminated without cause) which resulted in an increased rate of termination. Additionally, the district contract stipulates that a teacher in his or her first three years of employment are not eligible to transfer. Given this condition, we included teachers in years four and five to adequately capture the intra-district mobility of ECTs.

This study selected participants from a subsection of schools located in a geographically bounded, administratively distinct set of schools from within the school district. Letters of introduction to the teacher (Appendix F) and principals (Appendix G) were dispersed. The subset of schools was part of the largest of the three such areas in the school district, and was composed of 109 schools, including 59 elementary schools, grades pre-K through 5; 18 K-8 center schools, grades K through 8; 15 middle schools, grades 6 through 8; and 17 high schools, grades 9 through 12. The area schools enrolled nearly 84,000 students (see Table 1) and employed over 5,600 teachers, 1,128 of whom are considered ECTs (see Table 2). For the purpose of this study, we surveyed 1,128 ECTs. For the qualitative portion, we chose a sample of approximately 10% of the ECTs who completed the PSS to participate in focus groups to illuminate and clarify the results garnered by the survey. Focus groups were created that represented ECTs across the study's four school grade configurations and from both schools with high socioeconomic and low socioeconomic student body characteristics.

Table 1

Student Demographics

Level	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Female	Male	Total Students
Elementary	1393	7842	23440	350	15577	17448	33025
Middle	576	2069	9071	136	5718	6134	11852
K-8 Center	1015	3421	10683	239	7546	7812	15358
Senior High	1054	6025	16431	240	12014	11736	23750
All Area	4038	19357	59625	965	40855	43130	83985

Table 2

Teacher Career Stages

Level	First Year	Early Career	Mid-Career	Late Career	Total Teachers
Elementary	148	473	1230	549	2400
Middle	89	142	323	148	702
K-8 Center	74	266	625	245	1210
Senior High	93	247	648	309	1297
All Area	404	1128	2826	1251	5609

The area represented by the subset of schools covered a broad swath of the county that ranged from urban, coastal areas, and suburban sprawl that are relatively densely populated neighborhoods to areas that also included small farms and horse ranches. In the far western extremes of the region, there are unique saltwater estuary system as well. The western and central areas of the region have been rapidly developed in recent years.

The student enrollment in schools in the chosen subset ranged from just below 190 to over 3,300 students. The student body demographic compositions ranged greatly as well (Appendix A). Faculty body composition for each school varied considerably by age, race, and experience (Appendix B).

Data Sources

As an explanatory mixed methods study, our project included three data sources, teacher and principal surveys to collect quantitative data and focus groups that follow, which were designed to expand, deepen, and add experiential connection to the survey findings.

Teacher survey. The Principal Support Scale (PSS) was developed by DiPaola (2012) and, like Littrell et al.'s (1994) much longer Principal Support Questionnaire, was derived from House's framework of social support. The PSS is a 16-item survey divided into four dimensions of support: emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal. With Cronbach's Alpha at .94 for emotional support, .93 for appraisal support, .88 for instrumental support, and .87 for professional support, reliability for each of the dimensions is high (DiPaola, 2012). The four dimensions were then grouped into two larger categories with emotional and professional support forming the expressive support category and instrumental and appraisal support forming the instrumental support category. A factor analysis (Table 3) was run to determine the reliability of the two larger categories. The variance explained by the two categories of the Principal Support Scale was 79.94% and they each had a reliability of .95 (DiPaola, 2012).

Table 3

Table of Specifications for Principal Support Survey

Dimensions	Factor 1: Expressive Support	Factor 2: Instrumental Support
Expressive Support		
Emotional Items		
My principal …		
gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference.	.822	
supports my decisions.	.825	
trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions.	.694	
shows confidence in my actions.	.735	
Professional Items		
My principal …		
gives my undivided attention when I am talking	.774	
is honest and straightforward with the staff.	.848	
provides opportunities for me to grow professionally.	.700	
encourages professional growth.	.893	
Instrumental Support		
Instrumental Items		
My principal …		
provides adequate planning time.		.811
provides tie for various nonteaching responsibilities.		.809
provides extra assistance when I become overwhelmed.		.720
equally distributes resources and unpopular chores.		.683
Appraisal Items		
My principal …		
provides data for me to reflect on following classroom observations		.652
provides frequent feedback about my performance.		.735
helps me evaluate my needs.		.755
provides suggestions for me to improve my instruction.		.574
Eigenvalue	11.312	1.478
Cumulative variance	70.701	79.937
Alpha Coefficient of Reliability	.954	.955

Note. Reprinted with permission from *Conceptualizing and validating a measure of principal support* by M. F. DiPaola (2012).

To compliment the 16 items of the PSS, the survey included seven items, four for job satisfaction and three for motivation to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The four items pertaining to job satisfaction were found to have a Cronbach's Alpha of .91 while the three items related to teacher motivation to remain in the teaching profession had a Cronbach's Alpha of .92. The four items related to job satisfaction and three items related to intention to remain in the profession are:

Job Satisfaction Items

1) I enjoy working as a teacher.

2) I look forward to going to school every day.

3) Working as a teacher is extremely rewarding.

4) When I wake up in the morning, I look forward to going to work.

Intention to Remain in the Teaching Profession Items

1) I wish that I had a different job than being a teacher

2) If I could choose over again, I would not be a teacher.

3) I often think of leaving the teaching profession.

The revised PSS for teachers contained 29 total questions; 23 of which were 6-point Likert-scale type questions with a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*), the four job stress and three intention to stay in the teaching profession questions also had a 6-point Likert-scale type questions, but with a scale of 1 (*Completely Disagree*) to 6 (*Completely Agree*), and six short answer questions relating to the teacher's experience, history, and current context.

ECT focus groups. Focus groups of ECTs were conducted by teams of trained researchers working in facilitator/moderator pairs. The same Focus Group Protocol was

used for each group (Appendix H). Each team conducted two focus groups at a single

school configuration level. One focus group was conducted for early career elementary

school teachers whose schools had an average PSS score that places the school in the top

half amongst all elementary schools for both high and low SES characteristic schools.

The same procedure was used to identify similar top half schools with high and low SES

characteristics at the middle, K-8 center, and senior high school levels. Focus groups

were conducted for these groups as well. Researchers conducted a total of eight focus

groups including two groups per school configuration group. Each focus group consisted

of six to eight participants with an average of seven participants per focus group. All

focus groups were audio recorded with the participants' permission.

  Verbatim transcripts of the interviews were analyzed using structural coding

(Saldana, 2016) employing a priori codes that are drawn from the structure of the PSS

(Appendix E). The pre-designed codes have been developed to align focus group data to

the framework provided by the Principal Support Survey. To ensure reliability and

validity of the qualitative data, samples of focus group transcripts were coded by multiple

researchers to ensure coding consistency. Each facilitator/moderator team also developed

analytic memos following each focus group. Additionally, member checks were

employed to make sure data collected and preliminary conclusions properly represented

participants perspectives (Mertler, 2017). Prior to participation, teachers invited to

participate in each focus group were provided a thorough background of the research and

signed a letter of informed consent (Appendix E). Participants were assured that

participation was voluntary, and they could remove themselves from the project at any

time without negative repercussion. The researchers incentivized participation by

providing a gift card to all focus group participants at the conclusion of each focus group interview session.

Principal survey. In order to measure principals' perceptions of ECTs at his or her school, the PSS was adapted to measure how principals believed ECTs perceived principal support. For this survey, the term principal was expanded to include support provided by any and all members of the school's administrative team. The adapted PSS was tested with a group of principals that worked within the same district but are outside of the sample identified for the study. Of the 20 principals invited to participate in the review, 85.7% found the survey to be clear and understandable. On a scale from 1 (*very uncomfortable*) to 5 (*very comfortable*), 100% of respondents believed that their peers would be comfortable in answering the survey questions. The adapted version of the PSS contains 20 total questions including the 16 original PSS items reworded to capture principals' perceptions of how ECTs under his or her supervision would see his or her own experience through the four dimensions, emotional, professional, instrumental, appraisal, of support. The 20 questions included 16 Likert-scale type questions with a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*) and four short answer questions related to the principal's experience, history, and current context. A copy of the revised PSS for principals can be found in Appendix D.

Data Collection

As this study an explanatory mixed methods design, we collected quantitative data through surveying and followed up with teacher focus groups in an effort to add further detail and expanded meaning to the survey data.

Data collection for this study took place in two, sequential activities. Following the explanatory mixed methods approach (Mertler, 2017), quantitative survey data were collected initially. The teacher survey was comprised of 29 questions: the revised PSS (DiPaola, 2012), 16 Likert-scale type questions with a range of six options (1: *Strongly Disagree* to 6: *Strongly Agree*), four job stress and three intention to remain in the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Likert-scale type questions with a range of six options (1: *Completely Disagree* to 6: *Completely Agree*), followed by six questions designed to collect demographic data related to individual teachers' career experience and career intentions. Appendix C contains a copy of the Survey used for this project. The adapted 20-item survey was comprised of the PSS for principals with 16 Likert-scale type questions (1: *Strongly Disagree* to 6: *Strongly Agree*) and four short answer questions related to the principal's experience, history, and current context. After survey data have been collected and reviewed, the second phase of data collection, qualitative in nature, were collected through a series of focus groups with a sample of ECTs drawn from a ranking of schools based on school configuration and SES characteristics. To incentivize ECT participation in the survey, the researchers provided $50 Amazon gift cards to be given to 12 randomly selected survey participants. Three survey participants were randomly selected from each grade level configuration group.

All teachers in the sample were emailed a copy of the PSS (Appendix C) via their individual work email address. The email contained a link to the PSS as well as information about the study, a consent form, and contact information for the researchers for any questions or to notify the researchers of any wish to discontinue participation and exclude provided data from the study. Given the structure of the revised PSS, it was

assumed that the online version of the survey took each participant approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

All principals in the designated subarea of the district were emailed a copy of the modified principal PSS (Appendix D) via their individual work email address. The email contained a link to the modified principal PSS as well as information about the study, a consent form, and contact information for the researchers for any questions or to notify the researchers of any wish to discontinue participation and exclude provided data from the study. Given the structure of the modified principal PSS, it was anticipated and confirmed that the online version of the survey took each participant approximately 15 minutes to complete. To encourage principal participation, all survey participants were included in a random drawing for one of two $50 Amazon gift cards.

For the second phase of data collection, we convened focus groups with a random selection of ECTs chosen from the eight categories outlined for the study: elementary, high SES; elementary, low SES; middle, high SES; middle, low SES; K-8 center, high SES; K-8 center, low SES senior high, high SES; and senior high, low SES. We conducted a total of eight focus groups of ECTs. Each focus group was facilitated and moderated by a team of two researchers. The focus groups were arranged for a time and location that was mutually convenient for the facilitator/moderator and focus group participants. All focus groups were conducted outside of participant work hours so as not to interfere with professional obligations and student learning. Focus groups were conducted independently, and participants were made aware of the identity of other focus groups' participants identities. Prior to the start of each focus group, the participants were made fully aware of the intent of the study, apprised of his or her right to decline

participation and/or withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse impact, and each participant signed a letter of consent (Appendix F). All focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis. Upon receipt and confirmation of consent, focus group participants were asked a series of prepared questions related to his or her perceptions of the administrative support he or she has received. As an incentive for participants, each focus group member received a $10 Amazon gift card and each participating member of the focus group was entered into an independent pool for where one participating focus group member was selected for a $100 VISA gift card.

To provide the link from the qualitative survey data, qualitative data collected through the focus groups were coded utilizing a structured (Saldana, 2016), a priori coding scheme (Appendix D). A second round of coding based on grounded theory was conducted to determine the supportive behaviors that ECTs found most valuable. In order to ensure validity and reliability, focus group facilitators/moderators were trained, each focus group session was audio recorded as it was conducted, researchers then transcribed the focus group data verbatim, and coded the transcripts on multiple passes. In addition, at the completion of each focus group, the facilitator/moderator composed analytic memoranda to capture relevant and pertinent information that may not be captured by the audio recording. A portion of the focus group transcripts were recorded by a facilitator/mediator to ensure consistency. In a final step to ensure validity, researchers conducted member checks to verify that participants were in agreement with the understandings the facilitator/mediator had taken from the focus group experience.

Survey data collection. For the survey portion of the study, we administered the 16-item PSS to all 1,128 ECTs from all the elementary (59), middle (15), K-8 centers

(18), and senior high schools (17) within the selected district area. The PSS was

administered online via Qualtrics during May through August of 2019. The participants

were notified via email of the opportunity to participate. Follow-up email

communication was arranged for a second and a final notification of opportunity to

participate for those who had not participated after the first week and then again after 14

days. The survey window closed three weeks after opening.

      Focus group data collection. For the ECT focus group portion of the study, four

pairs of trained facilitator/moderators conducted eight focus groups. Focus group

participants were randomly selected from one of eight categories. The categories were

framed based on school grade level configuration and school socioeconomic level. See

Table 4 for further detail as to how the groupings for focus group participant selection

was done.

Table 4

Distribution of Selection of ECT Focus Groups

Team	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools		K-8 Centers		High Schools	
	High SES	Low SES	High SES	Low SES	High SES	Low SES	High SES	Low SES
1	1	1						
2			1	1				
3					1	1		
4							1	1

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

      Training for the facilitator/moderators included practice in conducting a focus

group, practice in reflecting on and debriefing as a facilitation/moderation team, and

guidance in coding the transcripts of the focus group discussions based on a field test of the focus group procedure. Prior to conducting actual focus group interviews, the researchers participated in a trial focus group with a group of teachers outside the sample of teachers who were eligible to participate in the study. The researchers reviewed and reflected upon the data gleaned from the trial and independently coded the transcript. The coding for the individual researchers were then compared and discussions held around ensuring that the individual researchers had a common understanding of how data fit the established coding scheme. Emerging themes were also discussed and explored as a means to deepen understanding. Once the focus groups began, inter-rater reliability was verified by examining the percentage of commonly coded elements from the focus group transcripts by multiple researchers independently coding and then comparing results.

Focus groups for each of the eight groups were conducted at a time and place of mutual convenience for participants and facilitator/moderator teams. Focus groups were conducted after the survey window closed, following the explanatory mixed methods approach, and a preliminary analysis of the PSS data provided the needed information to create each subgroup. Focus groups were conducted between June and August of 2019.

In order to establish the eight pools from which focus group participants were selected, we created four levels of teacher career experience within the teaching body of all area elementary, middle, K-8 center, and senior high schools. The results of which can be seen in Table 5 below. The four levels included first year teachers, ECTs with more than one but less than six years of experience, mid-career teachers with more than five years but less than 20 years of experience, and late career teachers with 20 or more

years of experience. Across the four school grade level configurations elementary,

middle, K-8 center, and senior high schools, there were a total 1,128 ECTs from which to

draw possible focus group participants. The schools from which focus groups were

chosen based on school-wide average across the dimensions of the PSS. ECTs from

schools that have an average PSS score that fell within the top half of schools within each

grade configuration were included in the pool of possible focus group participants. Four

teams of facilitator/moderators conducted focus groups of ECTs in high and low SES

elementary, high and low SES middle, high and low SES K-8 center, and high and low

SES senior high schools.

Table 5

Counts of Teachers by Career Experience and School Configuration

Level	First Year	Early Career	Mid-Career	Late Career	Total Teachers
Elementary	148	473	1230	549	2400
Middle	89	142	323	148	702
K-8 Center	74	266	625	245	1210
Senior High	93	247	648	309	1297
All Area	404	1128	2826	1251	5609

To set criteria for determining high or low socioeconomic levels within each

school grade level configuration, we used each school's free and reduced-price lunch

participation rate percentage within each school grade level configuration group and then

analyzed the distribution of ECTs and approximated a percentage of free and reduced-

price lunch participation that allowed us to have adequately sized pools of teachers in

order to conduct analysis on survey results (Table 6). For elementary schools and K-8

Centers, we selected free and reduced-price lunch participation rate of 90%, for middle

schools a rate of 93%, and for high schools a rate of 85%.

Table 6

Proportion of Teachers at High and Low Socioeconomic Schools

Level	FARPL Cut Points	High SES		Low SES	
		Schools	Teachers	Schools	Teachers
Elementary	90%	25	1111	34	1289
Middle	93%	9	411	6	291
K-8 Center	61%	10	730	8	302
Senior High	85%	10	678	7	619
All Area		44	2200	47	2199

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status; FARPL = Free and Reduced-Price Lunch

Data Analysis

Table 7 shows the detailed data analysis plan of this study. The data analysis of

each research questions is further described below.

Research question one. What are ECTs' perceptions regarding the support they

receive from principals in four dimensions of support: emotional, professional,

instrumental, and appraisal?

    a. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on grade-level

       configurations of schools?

    b. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on the

       socioeconomic status of the student population as measured by free and

       reduced-price lunch status?

c. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on school letter grade as issued by the state department of education?

Our first research question had three elements. The primary question sought to establish any differences in teacher perceptions of principal support in the four dimensions of the PSS in general. To accomplish this, we employed descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for each cluster of survey items that pertained to each of the PSS dimensions including emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal support (DiPaola, 2012) as well as the clusters of items related to job satisfaction and intention to leave teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). For the first sub question, we conducted ANOVA tests to determine if the means of the scores by dimension and by each school grade level configuration are significantly different for ECTs. For the second sub question, we likewise ran ANOVA tests to determine if there were significant differences in teacher responses by school grade level configurations and school's socioeconomic status. Additionally, we tested for a relationship between responses on the PSS dimensions as compared with the school letter grade at each school grade level configuration using a one-way ANOVA test. Analysis of survey data served as the base by which individual interview data were sought to provide greater depth of understanding, add qualitative, humanistic value and behavioral connection to the quantitative analysis.

Research question two. What is the relationship between principal support, job satisfaction, and ECT intentions to leave the teaching profession?

To summarize ECTs' perceptions of the impact of principal support on intentions to remain in the teaching profession, we ran descriptive statistics, mean and standard

deviation, on the questions from the survey regarding job satisfaction and intentions and motivation to remain in the teaching profession. We also tested for correlation between principal support and job satisfaction and between principal support and intention to leave.

Data collected from the ECT focus groups were coded in order to provide specific examples and developed a deeper understanding of the types of principal support focus group participants believed was most and least beneficial as it related to their intention to remain either at a particular school or in the teaching profession.

Research question three. What perceived support is most valued by ECTs and how does this perceived support differ in schools based on:

    a. grade-level configuration?

    b. high SES and low SES?

Based on the data collected and the analysis completed in questions one and three, we created two groups per school configuration, one high SES, one low SES, that included ECTs from schools that were in the top half based on the perceived levels of support that ECTs felt they have been provided by their principals as measured by the PSS. Once these two groups were determined and focus groups conducted, we reanalyzed interview transcripts using a structured, a priori coding scheme to identify ranges and types of supportive behavior that ECT claimed to find most valuable and supportive. Additionally, we employed grounded theory coding techniques in an additional analysis of focus group data to determine any additional important themes that emerged from ECTs' descriptions of their experiences.

Research question four. Do principals perceive that their ECTs feel supported in the four dimensions of support (professional, emotional, appraisal, and instrumental)? What is the difference between teachers' perceptions of support and principals' perceptions?

Based on the results of the PSS adapted for principals, we created four comparison groups representing the teachers and principals for each of the four-school grade-level configuration groups – elementary principals and elementary teachers, middle school principals and middle school teachers, K-8 center principals with K-8 center teachers, and high school principals and high school teachers. For each group we ran a t-test comparing principal and teacher responses on the PSS to determine the possible difference in the perceptions of principals and teachers around the support that ECTs received related to the four dimensions of support.

Table 7

Data Analysis Plan of Each Research Questions

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Analysis
1. What are ECTs' perceptions regarding the support they receive from principals in four dimensions of support: emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal?	PSS and teacher demographic data	Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and ANOVA tests. Results of four dimensions across all teachers and across teachers at each career level.
a. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on grade-level configurations of schools?	PSS and school configuration data	Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and ANOVA tests. Results across teachers at each career level and each school level.
b. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on the socioeconomic status of the student population as measured by free and reduced-price lunch status?	PSS and student demographic data	Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and ANOVA tests. Results across teachers at each career level and at each SES designation.
c. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on school letter grade as issued by the state department of education?	PSS and school letter grade data	ANOVA tests
2. What is the relationship between principal support, job satisfaction, and ECT intentions to leave the teaching profession?	PSS, other survey questions, and ECT focus groups	Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), correlations, t-test, and qualitative analysis of interview transcripts (a priori coding)

3. What perceived support is most valued by ECTs and how does this perceived support differ in schools based on:
  a. grade-level configuration?
  b. high SES and low SES?
	PSS and ECT focus groups	Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and qualitative analysis of interview transcripts (a priori coding)

4. Do principals perceive that their ECTs feel supported in the four dimensions of support (professional, emotional, appraisal, and instrumental)? What is the difference between teachers' perceptions of support and principals' perceptions?	PSS and other survey questions	Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and t-tests

Timeline

In order for the research team to properly complete all the steps needed, our team defended the research proposal in May and sought Institutional Review Board approval first from William & Mary and then from the school district. In early May of 2019, the team distributed and collected survey data. Collection of survey data lasted two to three weeks. Once the collection of survey data reached its second week, the focus group teams contacted randomly selected participants and arranged convenient times and places to conduct and record focus groups.

Focus groups were conducted from May to mid-August. We completed analysis of the data during the months of September and October of 2019 and subsequently prepared Chapters 4 and 5.

Based on the anticipated research outcomes, this study revealed how ECTs' perception of principal support significantly affected teacher retention for ECTs. The importance of the expected outcomes in this study may possibly provide school leaders and principals more information on support techniques that influence teacher retention in urban settings, as the study used a large sample size of ECTs. It also examined teachers across multiple school grade level configurations in one study whereas most recent studies focus on high schools in isolation and tend to exclude elementary and middle schools.

This study is also unique because it incorporated quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data was used to provide clarification and deeper meaning to the quantitative data, providing a deeper look into principal support. The study also analyzed the data collected from multiple perspectives including years in teaching, school level

and configuration, level of poverty as measured by free and reduced-price lunch status, and locally constructed school tiers related to school performance on state accountability standards. Thus, the study's outcomes added to the font of data available to policymakers and administrators in designing and implementing plans to reduce teacher attrition and turnover, focusing on ECTs

Delimitations

Delimitations are inevitable with any research study. These delimitations may shift and alter results and outcomes. They can vary from sample size to data collection strategies. Specific to this study, the delimitations were the exclusion of first-year teachers.

This study excluded first-year teachers' perceptions of principal support. Omitting first-year teachers' perceptions limited the feedback of ECTs that work in the district. This delimitation prevented the researchers from including the perspectives and experiences from this cohort of teachers, who are arguably the most transient across the district, state, and nation.

Additional concerns included the inclusion of only four school levels or configurations. This study reported on results from only traditional elementary (pre-K-Grade 5), middle (Grades 6-8), K-8 center (K-Grade 8), and high (Grades 9-12) schools. Given the variety of school-level configurations that existed beyond the sample types, there was a possibility that the outcomes may not accurately reflect perceptions and intentions found in other school-level configurations. Another concern was the measuring of teachers' intentions as compared to actual actions. It is possible that stated intentions do not lead to actual action. The opposite is also a threat wherein a teacher

expressed an intention to leave and then remains in the profession. A final consideration was the context presented by the district from which the schools were chosen. The district is a large, urban district with many more suburban areas. There was a possibility that, for districts or schools in more rural settings, the outcomes were not be transferable.

Limitations

A limitation that existed was selecting participants from a specific geographical region of this large urban district. This geographic region was representative of all socio-economic statuses, ethnicities, genders, and age groups for students and teachers. This geographic region was also representative of most urban school districts within the entire school district selected, as well as most large urban districts in the U.S. This creates possible limited transferability to suburban or rural areas, as well as areas lacking socio-economic or cultural diversity.

Another limitation was the percentage and/or number of submitted surveys. Teacher participation varied for a bevy and/or variety of reasons and the interpretation of principal support may be influenced by a teacher's affinity for a specific leader and/or by a teacher's like or dislike for his or her principal. As such, teachers' personal and professional experiences and opinions may adversely impact and influence the response rates of the selected participants.

The final limitation of this study was the sample size of the focus groups. A total of eight focus groups with an average of seven participants were conducted for this study. The qualitative data and emerging themes captured from the focus groups may not accurately reflect or represent the opinions of the district's ECTs as a whole.

Ethical Considerations

All participants and stakeholders' race, creed, color, culture, disabilities, and any other pertinent provided information were protected and respected and their involvement in the study remained confidential and anonymous, guaranteeing that all collected data, unique or general, was not traceable nor compromised. To assist with the process, informed consent forms were issued for signatures and all stakeholders and participants also had a clear understanding of their roles in the study and the purpose of the study. Finally, this study also adhered to the guidelines and procedures outlined by the Institutional Review Board at the local, college, and federal levels. To that end, the proposal was reviewed and approved by William & Mary and by the local district's Office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis prior to conducting the needed research for the study.

As this is a mixed-methods study, special care was exercised to ensure the trustworthiness of the collected data (Mertler, 2017). The interpretation of data posed a concern to the study's reliability as well as to the transferability of outcomes. To ameliorate these possible threats to credibility and transferability, steps were taken to verify the study's outcomes and findings and to ensure the study properly captured the ideas and perspectives of the participants. Possible concerns of transferability were handled by including detailed descriptions of the contexts surrounding conclusions drawn from the focus group data and calibrated researcher training. Additionally, verification methods for the focus groups were used to confirm conclusions, to cross-check codes and to member check, to triangulate data, and to identify disconfirming evidence (information that is not aligned to recurring themes and interpretations; outlier information) (Creswell, 2014; Lauer, 2006).

Researchers' positionality and potential biases did not compromise and/or jeopardize the qualitative data collection process. Positionality is a researcher's position on a research-based study and how he or she views the world based on his or her gender, race, values, views, and class (Bourke, 2014). This "position" typically influences three key aspects of research: the researched topic, the context of the study, and the participants (Bourke, 2014). The researchers in this study were employed by and professionally connected to the district in question. As Managerial Exempt Personnel with prominent roles in the district in which the study was conducted, the researchers were cognizant, intentional, and deliberate in understanding and acknowledging how their biases, identities, race and/or ethnicities, experiences, and other variables may have influenced the outcome of the study.

Specific to this study, the researchers' professional makeup included an assistant superintendent from school operations, an assistant superintendent from academics and transformation, two administrative directors, one from school operations and one from human capital, and one K-8 center principal. As a result of each researcher's professional role in the district, data collection procedures were not adversely affected due to the positional power and the administrative roles of each researcher. To this point, potential biases and challenges that might have impacted this study included the Hawthorne Effect, the researchers' relationships with participants, the researchers' expertise and experience within the context of the study, and the demographic and ethnicity make-up of the researchers. This 'insider-outsider" relationship between the researchers and the participants in this study did not result in the Hawthorne Effect. The Hawthorne Effect occurs when "a change in the subject's normal behavior, attributed to the knowledge that

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their behavior is being watched or studied" (Oswald, Sherratt, & Smith, 2014, p. 57). The change in the subject's normal behavior, or responses in this case, may have occurred if the participants ever became aware of the supervisory titles the researchers hold within the organization before the data collection was completed. In addition, the collective researchers' expertise and experience in the field of study may have influenced their beliefs and opinions as to how the responses should have been interpreted, collected, coded, and communicated.

Preconceptions, ideals, thoughts, and experiences of the researchers may have skewed the findings, meanings, and interpretations from the focus groups. Equally important to note was the lack of researcher diversity as it relates to ethnicity and race. The demographic make-up of the group is primarily African American and Caucasian. This lack of Hispanic and Haitian representation in a district where the majority minority is Hispanic may have resulted in the participants' hesitation to disclose and share their experiences and opinions.

In an effort to address positionality and biases, methods were employed to address subjective biases. These methods include, but were not limited to the researcher reflective approach, trusting relationships, random participant selection, calibrated documented participant responses regarding principal support and job satisfaction, and member checking. Each researcher engaged in self-reflection and calibration training. Creswell (2014) emphasizes good qualitative research includes a researcher who acknowledges and addresses how his or her personal experiences, historical contexts, and demographics influence and shape their interpretations of the findings and responses (Creswell, 2014; Lauer, 2006).

Member checking is the process of researchers verifying the findings of a study with the participants to ensure the collected data accurately reflects and depicts the ideas, opinions, thoughts, and viewpoints of the participants being studied (Kornbluh, 2015). This is a technique used in qualitative studies to ensure findings are accurate and free of biases researchers may bring into the experiment, avoiding researcher bias within the analysis and findings. This process is beneficial for researchers and participants alike in that researchers are able to identify personal biases, preferences, and gaps as it relates to the data collection process. This deep dive into the participants' meanings, perspectives, and ideas offers insight and allows researchers a chance to enhance the study by leveraging and confirming the findings. Additionally, member checking ensures researchers are ethically accountable and responsible for their data interpretations and findings and it is a viable avenue for researchers to establish trust with the participants by involving them in the data analysis of the study (Creswell, 2014; Mertler, 2017)

During this study, member checking was conducted during the focus group process and at the end of the study. This practice increased the credibility and validity of a qualitative study. The researchers strove to build rapport with the focus group in order to obtain honest and open responses. During the focus group, the researchers restated or summarized information and then questioned the participants to determine accuracy. Member checks completed after the study were done by sharing all of the findings with the participants involved. This allowed participants to critically analyze and comment on the findings. The member checking process afforded participants the opportunity to either affirm, validate, or reject that the summaries reflect their views, feelings, and experiences, or that they do not reflect these experiences. If the participants affirmed the

accuracy and completeness, then the study was said to have credibility. Member checks were not without fault and criticism, but they served to decrease the incidence of incorrect data and the incorrect interpretation of data. The overall goal of this process was to provide findings that were authentic, original, and reliable.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This explanatory mixed methods study examined the perceptions of ECTs, with two to five years of experience, of the principal support they have received. In the first step of the study, the ECTs' perceptions were measured using the Principal Support Scale (PSS; DiPaola, 2012). The PSS has four dimensions, emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal. These dimensions are classified into two broader categories: emotional and professional support, formed the expressive support category; and instrumental and appraisal dimensions, constituted the instrumental category.

The researchers administered the PSS, including job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) survey items to 1,128 ECTs in schools across a geographic area in a large, urban school district in the southeast United States. In total, 614 ECTs completed the PSS online for a return rate of 54.4%. Teachers were surveyed in schools from four school configuration groups: elementary, K-8, middle, and senior high schools. These schools were categorized as either high socioeconomic status (high SES) or low socioeconomic status (low SES), based on the percentage of students in each school that qualified for free and reduced-price lunch—a proxy for SES.

Additionally, eight focus groups were formed with teachers representing schools scoring in the top 50% based on the average scores of PSS responses. The intention of

selecting the focus group members from the top 50% of PSS responses was to glean

successful practices and experiences that could be used to strengthen principal support for

ECTs. These semi-structured focus group interviews provided qualitative data that

supported and expounded on the results from the PSS, job satisfaction and intention to

leave survey items. Each focus group had between five and thirteen participants,

averaging seven participants per group. The focus groups represented each of the four

school configurations, as well as being identified as having a low or high SES.

In this chapter, we report the results of each of the four research questions.

Questions one and four are purely quantitative while questions two and three employed

qualitative data analyses to construct a more vivid and meaningful picture of what and

how ECTs perceived principal support. Question one has four parts and is answered

using descriptive statistics, ANOVA tests, and Pearson's correlations around ECT

responses to the PSS. Question two first analyzes the correlations between job

satisfaction and intention to leave the profession with the PSS's four dimensions and two

categories. The same correlations were then run separately for schools designated as high

and low SES. Qualitative data collected from the eight focus groups were then used to

deepen the meaning of the quantitative results. In question three, descriptive statistics

generated by the PSS were used along with qualitative data to show which types of

support ECTs find most valuable. Finally, question four employed an independent

samples t-test to compare the responses of principals and ECT to determine if there were

significant differences between how principals believe their ECTs perceive support and

how ECTs actually reported their perceptions of principal support.

Qualitative data collected via eight focus groups were coded using two methods of analysis. First, the researchers used a structured, a priori coding scheme (Saldana, 2016) that matched ECT participants' utterances with the dimensions of the PSS. Once this was completed, a second round of coding was conducted using grounded theory (Saldana, 2016) to ascertain the themes that naturally derive from the reported experiences of ECTs around principal support. Four themes emerged from the grounded theory analysis: principal accessibility and support, dedication to and appreciation of peers, commitment to students, and mutual respect.

Principal accessibility and support were defined as the ECTs feeling that it was easy to communicate with the principal and that the principal was able to provide and/or facilitate support that the ECT needed. The "dedication to and appreciation of peers" theme provided meaning around colleagues being invested in each other's success and development. It also indicated a degree of confidence in oneself and peers or what Edmondson (2012) labels as psychological safety. The theme of commitment to students was also highlighted by each focus group. Commitment to students as a theme indicated an ECTs compulsion toward action and a calling or passion to connect with learners. The fourth theme that emerged from the analysis was mutual respect. Mutual respect includes the assumption of good will, the willingness to illuminate and check assumptions, and a level of interpersonal faith and trust.

Research Question 1

1. What are ECTs' perceptions regarding the support they receive from principals in four dimensions of support: emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal?

ECTs' perceptions regarding the support they received from principals were categorized into four dimensions; emotional, professional, instrumental, appraisal, and two overarching categories; expressive, including the emotional and professional dimensions, and instrumental, including the instrumental and appraisal dimensions. The dimensions and categories were identified in the development and subsequent studies using DiPaola's (2012) PSS. The PSS asked teachers to rate their perception of 16 survey items using a 6-point Likert scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Teachers, on average, perceived the greatest levels of support in the instrumental support dimension (*M* = 4.74, *SD* = 1.52) and the least in the appraisal support dimension (*M* = 4.36, *SD* = 1.70) with the emotional support dimension falling closely behind the instrumental support dimension (*M* = 4.71, *SD* = 1.50) and the professional support dimension (*M* = 4.37, *SD* = 1.51) slightly greater than the appraisal support dimension. For the overarching categories of expressive support (*M* = 4.54, *SD* = 1.44) and instrumental support (*M* = 4.55, *SD* = 1.56), ECTs' perceptions of principal support were nearly identical.

Appraisal support was the dimension with the lowest mean, however, one item from the professional support dimension, "provides extra assistance when I become overwhelmed," was the item with the overall lowest score (*M* = 4.13, *SD* = 1.75), with the next two items with the lowest means falling in the appraisal support dimension. The professional support dimension that had two items with the greatest disparity range of the means with "provides adequate planning time" (*M* = 4.71, *SD* = 1.56) and "provides assistance when I become overwhelmed" (*M* = 4.13, *SD* = 1.75), a range of .58 of a point. Five of the 16 PSS response items, means were within .05 of each other with all of these

response items located in the appraisal support dimension or the professional dimension

(Table 8).

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for the PSS

PSS Category, Dimension, and Item	*M*	*SD*
Expressive Support Category	**4.54**	**1.44**
Emotional Support Dimension	**4.71**	**1.50**
My principal ...		
ES1_gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference	4.62	1.62
ES2_supports my decisions	4.65	1.57
ES3_trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions	4.82	1.54
ES4_shows confidence in my actions	4.76	1.54
Professional Support Dimension	**4.37**	**1.51**
My principal ...		
PS1_ gives me undivided attention when I am talking	4.71	1.56
PS2_ is honest and straight-forward with the staff	4.32	1.62
PS3_ provides opportunities for me to grow professionally	4.13	1.75
PS4_	4.33	1.68
Instrumental Support Category	**4.55**	**1.56**
Instrumental Support Dimension	**4.74**	**1.52**
My principal ...		
IS1_ provides adequate planning time	4.76	1.58
IS2_ provides time for various non-teaching responsibilities	4.65	1.65
IS3_ provides extra assistance when I become overwhelmed	4.71	1.67
IS4_ equally distributes resources and unpopular chores encourages professional growth	4.83	1.62
Appraisal Support Dimension	**4.36**	**1.70**
My principal ...		
AS1_offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching	4.50	1.78
AS2_provides frequent feedback about my performance	4.31	1.80
AS3_helps me evaluate my needs	4.27	1.75
AS4_provides suggestions for me to improve my instruction	4.35	1.75

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale

Job satisfaction and intention to leave. ECTs' level of job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession were measured by four 6-point Likert-scale like items and three 6-point Likert-scale like items, respectively (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The items were scored from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), with the language of the three intention to leave items worded such that lower scores would indicate less of an intention to leave the profession.

Teacher's responses to the questions within the job satisfaction group had a mean of 5.03 with a standard deviation of 1.14 and the intention to leave group had a mean of 2.56 with a standard deviation of 1.56. The job satisfaction group recorded the highest mean response to the question "I enjoy working as a teacher" ($M = 5.30$, $SD = 1.14$) and the lowest mean response to the question "When I wake up in the morning, I look forward to going to work" ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.35$). The intention to leave group recorded the highest mean response to the question "I often think of leaving the teaching profession" ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.14$) and the lowest mean response to the question "If I could choose over again, I would not become a teacher" ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.79$). See Table 9 for a summary of the descriptive statistics for these survey items.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave Questions

Item	M	SD
Job Satisfaction	**5.03**	**1.14**
JS1_I enjoy working as a teacher	5.30	1.14
JS2_I look forward to going to schools everyday	4.94	1.30
JS3_Working as a teacher is extremely rewarding	5.05	1.26
JS4_When I wake up in the morning, I look forward to going to work	4.85	1.35
Intention to Leave	**2.56**	**1.56**
IL1_I wish I had a different job than being a teacher	2.54	1.67
IL2_If I could choose over again, I would not become a teacher	2.52	1.79
IL3_I often think of leaving the teaching profession	2.61	1.74

Note. Responses were based on a 6-point Likert-scale

Research Question 1a

> a. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on grade-level
>
> configurations of schools?

To determine if there were any differences in the perceptions of ECTs based on school configuration, the researchers conducted a series of one-way ANOVA tests to compare the means of ECTs' responses for each of the four dimensions, emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal, and the two categories, expressive and instrumental, of the PSS across four school configurations: elementary schools, K-8 centers, middle schools, and senior high schools. Each of these grade level configuration groups consisted of schools with common grade level configurations.

Based on the results of the ANOVA tests, there were no statistically significant differences in ECTs' perceptions of principal support between any of the PSS dimensions or categories, job satisfaction, or intention to leave the profession when considered from the perspective of school configuration. Based on the results of the statistical analyses, school configuration does not appear to have a bearing on ECT perceptions of the principal support they receive nor on their job satisfaction or intention to leave the profession.

Research Question 1b

b. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on the socioeconomic status of the student population as measured by free and reduced-price lunch status?

To determine if there were any differences in the perceptions of ECTs based on school SES levels, the researchers conducted a series of independent sample t-tests to compare the means of ECTs' responses for each of the four dimensions and the two categories of the PSS as well as the job satisfaction and intention to leave groups within high SES and low SES school designations. The descriptive statistics for each SES level designation by PSS dimension and category can be found in Table 10.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for PSS Dimension, Category, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Leave Groups

Category or Group	SES	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Expressive Support	High	297	4.70	1.43
	Low	317	4.40	1.44
Emotional Dimension	High	297	4.84	1.48
	Low	317	4.60	1.52
Professional Dimension	High	297	4.56	1.48
	Low	317	4.20	1.50
Instrumental Support	High	297	4.73	1.52
	Low	317	4.37	1.59
Instrumental Dimension	High	297	4.94	1.45
	Low	317	4.55	1.55
Appraisal Dimension	High	297	4.53	1.67
	Low	317	4.20	1.72
Job Satisfaction	High	296	2.67	1.70
	Low	316	3.30	1.77
Intention to Leave	High	296	2.80	1.22
	Low	316	3.07	1.18

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale; SES = Socioeconomic Status

Independent samples t-tests were conducted for high and low SES groups across all participants and within each of the school configuration subgroups given equal variances assumed. For the high and low SES groupings across all participants regardless of school configuration, the t-test, $t(612) = 1.98$, $p = .048$, indicated that teachers in high and low SES groups have significantly different perceptions of principal support—teachers in high SES schools perceive more support in both dimensions of support, as well as in all four categories of support.

The t-tests for job satisfaction, intention to leave the teaching profession, and intention to remain at the current school indicated the groups' perceptions were significantly different, respectively. The results of the independent samples t-test can be found in Table 11.

Table 11

Independent Samples t-tests for PSS Dimension, Category, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Leave Groups

Category or Group	Equality of Variances		Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional Support	0.798	0.372	1.980	612	0.048
Professional Support	1.156	0.283	3.014	612	0.003
Expressive Support	0.238	0.625	2.607	612	0.009
Instrumental Support	3.467	0.063	3.226	612	0.001
Appraisal Support	1.623	0.203	2.403	612	0.017
Instrumental Support	2.067	0.151	2.874	612	0.004
Job Satisfaction	0.194	0.66	-4.451	610	0.000
Intention to Leave	0.183	0.669	-2.832	610	0.005

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale

Research Question 1c

  c. Do ECTs' perceptions of principal support vary based on school letter grade as

      issued by the state department of education?

For the analysis of school grades and ECTs' perceptions of principal support, 17 responses were excluded because the respondents' schools did not receive school grades. Nine respondents were from new schools that had yet to receive a letter grade from the

state. Eight other responses were from participants whose schools received an "I" or incomplete from the state pending further investigation. This left 597 responses for one-way ANOVA tests comparing school grade and the four dimensions and two categories of the PSS. In addition, for the job satisfaction and intention to leave groups, there were two additional respondents who did not provide responses. This left 595 responses for the one-way ANOVA tests comparing respondents job satisfaction and intention to leave with school grades as issued by the state department of education in accordance with the state's accountability plan.

Eight ANOVA tests were run to compare the perceptions of ECTs with schools having earned the letter grades of A, B, C, or D. There were no F rated schools in the district. Likewise, there were only 28 responses from ECTs at D rated schools. As this group was not a large enough sample to make an adequate comparison, the information for D schools is included as a point of information only. The eight ANOVA tests compared the responses for ECT at A, B, and C schools with the four PSS dimensions and two categories, job satisfaction, and intention to leave the profession. Of the eight tests, half, four of eight, showed significant differences. The results of the ANOVA tests for the professional support dimension, the expressive support category, the appraisal support dimension, and intention to leave the profession did not show significant differences between the grade of the school at which the ECT was employed. For comparisons of school grade and the emotional support dimension, the instrumental support dimension, the instrumental support category and job satisfaction, ANOVA tests showed significant differences.

Analysis of the emotional support dimension revealed significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of principal support in the dimension and school grade, $F(3,593) = 0.044$, $p < .05$. A Tukey follow up test indicated a significant difference between ECTs' perceptions of principal support between A and B schools. The results of the ANOVA tests indicated that ECTs at A schools ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.36$) hold a significantly higher perception of principals' support in the emotional support dimension when compared with ECTs at B-rated schools ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.66$). The difference is likely caused by a general perception at A-rated schools that they have reached the goal and are focused on maintaining the A grade compared with those from B-rated schools where teachers are seeking something different in terms of principal support, while their energies are directed at both striving to achieve the A-rating and ensuring that the school grade does not drop to a C. The results of the descriptive statistics and ANOVA test can be found in Table 12 and Table 13 respectively.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Support Dimension and School Grade

Grade	*MM*	*SD*	*N*
A	4.95	1.36	155
B	4.49	1.66	174
C	4.75	1.41	240
D	4.73	1.68	28
Total	4.72	1.49	597

Table 13

ANOVA Results for the Emotional Support Dimension and School Grade

Source	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
SchGr	3	2.715	0.044	0.014
Error	593			

Note. R Squared = .014 (Adjusted R Squared = .009)

Analysis of the instrumental support dimension showed a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of principal support in the dimension and school grade, $F(3,593) = 0.011$, $p < .05$. A Tukey follow up test indicated a significant difference between the perceptions of ECTs of principal support between A and B schools and between A and C schools. ANOVA test results revealed that ECTs who worked in schools with a state -issued grade of A ($M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.32$) had perceptions of principal support in the instrumental support dimension that were significantly higher than the perceptions of ECTs working at either B schools ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.63$) or C schools ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.50$). This outcome is evidence that ECTs at A-rated schools have a different focus, maintenance of performance, as compared with ECTs from B and C-rated schools who have a dual focus and double pressure of not only striving for the next level of school performance grade but also ensuring that current performance does not decline so as to cause a drop in school letter grade. The results from the descriptive statistics and ANOVA test can be seen in Table 14 and Table 15 respectively.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics of Instrumental Support Dimension and School Grade

Grade	*MM*	*SD*	*N*
A	5.09	1.32	155
B	4.62	1.63	174
C	4.62	1.50	240
D	4.62	1.65	28
Total	4.74	1.51	597

Table 15

ANOVA Results for the Instrumental Support Dimension and School Grade

Source	*df*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Partial Eta Squared*
SchGr	3	3.72	0.011	0.018
Error	593			

Note. R Squared = .018 (Adjusted R Squared = .014)

Analysis of the instrumental support category showed that there was a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of principal support in the category and school grade, $F(3,593) = 0.022$, $p < .05$. A Tukey follow up test indicated a significant difference between the perceptions of ECTs of principal support between A and B schools and between A and C rated schools. When comparing results on the ANOVA tests, ECTs at A schools ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.39$) perceived principal support on the instrumental support category to be significantly higher than the perceptions of ECT colleagues at B schools ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.67$) or C schools ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 1.55$). The differences in ECT perceptions of principal support for instrumental support are likely a manifestation of accountability pressures where teachers at A schools compared to non-A

schools perceive greater emphasis on support and development compared with maintenance assuring that school performance does not falter. The results from the descriptive statistics and ANOVA test can be seen in Table 16 and Table 17 respectively.

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics of Instrumental Support Category (Instrumental & Appraisal) and School Grade

Grade	*M*	*SD*	*N*
A	4.89	1.39	155
B	4.45	1.67	174
C	4.45	1.55	240
D	4.33	1.60	28
Total	4.56	1.56	597

Table 17

ANOVA Results for the Instrumental Support Category (Instrumental & Appraisal) and School Grade

Source	*df*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Partial Eta Squared*
SchGr	3	3.22	0.022	0.016
Error	593			

Note. R Squared = .016 (Adjusted R Squared = .011)

Analysis of the Job Satisfaction group category showed a significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of principal support in the group and school grade, $F(3,593) = 0.004$, $p < .05$. A Tukey follow up test indicated a significant difference between the perceptions of ECTs of principal support between A and C schools. The ANOVA results for the job satisfaction group compared to school grades indicated that there is a

significant difference in the perceptions of ECTs at A and C-rated schools with the

perceptions of ECTs from C-rated schools rating their level of job satisfaction

significantly higher than that of their peers at school with an A grade. Much like in prior

cases, the perceptions of ECTs at A- and C-rated schools is likely a product of

environmental variables that are in place to support lower performing schools that often

supplant principal support and alter how ECTs perceive the role of the principal. The

results from the descriptive statistics and ANOVA test can be seen in Table 18 and Table

19 respectively.

Table 18

Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction Group and School Grade

Grade	*M*	*SD*	*N*
A	4.89	1.39	155
B	4.45	1.67	174
C	4.45	1.55	240
D	4.33	1.60	28
Total	4.56	1.56	597

Table 19

ANOVA Results for the Job Satisfaction Group and School Grade

Source	*df*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Partial Eta Squared*
SchGr	3	3.22	0.022	0.016
Error	593			

Note. R Squared = .022 (Adjusted R Squared = .017)

In summary, based on the results of the PSS responses from ECTs there was no

significant difference in the perceptions of teachers based on school configuration. When

comparisons were conducted for ECTs at high and low SES schools, findings showed

that there was a significant difference in ECTs' perceptions of principal support across all

four dimensions and both categories of the PSS. The independent samples t-tests revealed

that ECTs at high SES designated schools perceive greater levels of principal support in

the emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal support dimensions than do their

counterparts in low SES designated schools.

In addition, the results indicate that the same relationship between ECTs at high

and low SES designated schools existed across the overarching expressive and

instrumental support categories as well. The perceptions of ECTs regarding jobs

satisfaction for the two SES designations, high and low, were inversed with ECTs at low

SES designated schools (M = 3.30, SD = 1.77). It shows a significantly higher level of

job satisfaction than ECTs in high SES designated schools (M = 2.67, SD=1.70). Finally,

t-test results revealed that ECTs at low SES designated (M = 3.07, SD = 1.18) schools

had a significantly higher intention to leave the profession when compared to ECTs

working in high SES designated schools (M = 2.80, SD = 1.22).

Finally, when ECTs' perceptions of principal support were compared based on

school grades as issued by the state department of education based on state accountability

criteria the was a significant difference between the perceptions of ECTs at A and B-rated

and A and C-rated schools. In both cases, SES level and school grade, ECT perceptions

of principal support were influenced by performance pressures to both strive for

increased performance outcomes while ensuring chances of regression are minimized and

adjustments in the role of the principal due to increased district support provided to

teachers at schools with lower performance outcomes and school grades.

Research Question 2

2. What is the relationship between principal support, job satisfaction, and ECT intentions to leave the teaching profession?

To determine how the perceptions of ECTs of principal support relate to ECTs' level of job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession, survey data were analyzed in order to determine relationships between the variables of job satisfaction, intention to leave the profession, and the dimensions of principal support. Pearson's correlations were calculated to assess the relationship between ECTs' job satisfaction, each of the four dimensions and two categories of the PSS, and intention to leave. Researchers conducted three Pearson's correlations including one for all participants, one for high SES participants and one for low SES participants. To substantiate the quantitative findings, researchers conducted an analysis of qualitative data gleaned from eight focus groups using a structured, a-priori coding schema followed by grounded theory coding to determine secondary themes. In all cases, there was a significant, positive correlation between job satisfaction and PSS dimensions and categories.

Quantitative results. The correlations ranged from, $r(613)=.479, p < .001$ to, $r(613)=.409, p < .001$. The emotional support dimension was significantly correlated to job satisfaction, $r(613)=.409, p < .001$. The professional support dimension was likewise significantly, correlated to job satisfaction, $r(613)=.479, p < .001$. The expressive support category was significantly correlated to job satisfaction, $r(613)=.464, p < .001$. The instrumental support dimension was also significantly and positively correlated to job satisfaction, $r(613)=.444, p < .001$. The appraisal support dimension was significantly correlated to job satisfaction, $r(613)=.471, p < .001$. The instrumental

support category as well was significantly correlated to job satisfaction, $r(613)=.472, p <$ .001 (Table 21). The results from the descriptive statistics and correlation test can be seen in Table 20 and Table 21 respectively.

Table 20

Descriptive Statistics of PSS Dimensions, Categories, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Leave

Dimension	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Emotional Support Dimension	614	4.71	1.50
Emotional Support Dimension	614	4.37	1.51
Expressive Support Category	614	4.54	1.44
Instrumental Support Dimension	614	4.74	1.52
Appraisal Support Dimension	614	4.36	1.70
Instrumental Support Category	614	4.55	1.56
Job Satisfaction Group	613	5.03	1.14
Intention to Leave Group	613	2.56	1.56

Table 21

Correlation of PSS Dimensions, Categories, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Leave

	Job Satisfaction	Intention to Leave
Emotional Support Dimension	.409**	-.123**
Professional Support Dimension	.479**	-.151**
Expressive Support Category	.464**	-.143**
Instrumental Support Dimension	.444**	-.151**
Appraisal Support Dimension	.471**	-.144**
Instrumental Support Category	.472**	-.151**
Job Satisfaction	1	-.424**
Intention to Leave	-.424**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In addition to correlations with job satisfaction, Pearson's correlations were calculated to show the relationship between ECTs' intention to leave the profession and each of the PSS negatively correlated to intention to leave, $r(612)=-.110$, $p<.007$. The appraisal support dimension was found to be significantly, negatively correlated to intention to leave, $r(612)=-.138$, $p<.001$. The instrumental support category was found to be significantly, negatively correlated to intention to leave, $r(612)=-.129$, $p<.001$. Unlike all other correlations, ECTs' job satisfaction was found to be significantly, positively correlated to intention to leave, $r(612)=.543$, $p<.001$, and all PSS dimensions and categories. The instrumental support dimension was found to be significant (Table 23). The results from the descriptive statistics and correlation test can be seen in Table 22 and Table 23 respectively.

Table 22

Descriptive Statistics of PSS dimensions, Categories, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to

Leave for Schools Designated as High SES and Low SES

Dimension	High SES School			Low SES Schools		
	N	*MM*	*SD*	*N*	*MM*	*SD*
Emotional Support Dimension	297	4.84	1.48	317	4.60	1.52
Professional Support Dimension	297	4.56	1.48	317	4.20	1.51
Expressive Support Category	297	4.70	1.43	317	4.40	1.44
Instrumental Support Dimension	297	4.94	1.45	317	4.55	1.55
Appraisal Support Dimension	297	4.53	1.67	317	4.20	1.72
Instrumental Support Dimension	297	4.73	1.52	317	4.37	1.59
Job Satisfaction Group	297	5.22	1.08	316	4.86	1.17
Intention to Leave Group	297	2.53	1.65	316	2.58	1.47

Table 23

Correlation of PSS dimensions, Categories, Job Satisfaction, and Intention to Leave for

Schools Designated as High SES and Low SES

Dimension	High SES Schools		Low SES Schools	
	Job Satisfaction	Intention to Leave	Job Satisfaction	Intention to Leave
Emotional Support Dimension	.375**	-0.113	.428**	-.132*
Professional Support Dimension	.490**	-.155**	.453**	-.144*
Expressive Support Category	.449**	-.139*	.463**	-.145**
Instrumental Support Dimension	.431**	-.151**	.435**	-.150**
Appraisal Support Dimension	.449**	-.153**	.477**	-.133*
Instrumental Support Category	.454**	-.157**	.472**	-.145**
Job Satisfaction Group	1	-.439**	1	-.419**
Intention to Leave Group	-.439**	1	-.419**	1

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale; SES = Socioeconomic Status
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results of the Pearson correlations reveal that there was a significant correlation

between their perception of principal support on the dimensions and categories of the

PSS and the ECTs' job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession. This finding, as

expected and in agreement with prior research across the nation, held across both high

and low SES schools (Table 16). Across all school configurations and between both of

the designated SES levels, job satisfaction was positively correlated with teachers'

perceptions of principal support, while intention to leave the professional was negatively correlated. Although the correlations were slightly stronger in the low SES schools compared to the high SES schools, all correlations were significant.

Qualitative data analysis for focus group results. Following the explanatory mixed-methods design, following the collection of quantitative survey data, the researchers conducted focus group interviews designed to collect and analyze qualitative data from ECT perceptions of principal support through a series of focus group interviews. Focus group interview questions were based on House's (1981) work on social support and corresponded to job satisfaction or intention to remain in the field of education (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The selected focus group samples were derived from responses provided by ECTs from the eight school configuration and SES level combinations outlined for the study: elementary, high SES; elementary, low SES; K-8, high SES; K-8, low SES; middle, high SES; middle, low SES; senior high, high SES; and senior high, low SES.

Eight focus group interviews were conducted with participants representing a high SES designated school and a low SES designated school within each of the four school configurations. As part of the focus group interviews, 56 participants were asked about their perceptions of principal support and plans for how long they intended to remain in education. Each of the eight focus groups consisted of between five and 13 participants, with an average of seven participants per group. Qualitative data were coded by teams of researchers utilizing a structured, a priori coding scheme (Saldana, 2016). First, words and phrases were extrapolated from focus group interviews using a structured (Saldana, 2016) a priori coding scheme based on the structure provided by the PSS. A second

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round of coding based on grounded theory was conducted to determine the common themes around the supportive behaviors that ECTs found most valuable. Lastly, names of participants were removed for each ECT interviewed to assure anonymity.

Focus group results. The findings from the qualitative data analysis substantiate the quantitative findings of a significant correlation regarding ECTs' perceptions of the impact principal support has on their job satisfaction and intention to leave the teaching profession. Across all PSS dimensions and categories, ECTs found principal support essential to job satisfaction and indicative of a decrease in the intentions of ECTs to leave the profession. Prevalent themes that emerged from the grounded theory analysis of focus groups participant responses included principal accessibility and support, dedication to and appreciation of peers, commitment to students, and mutual respect. These themes emerged from the researchers' review and discussion of the focus group transcripts and throughout the process of coding the participant responses.

Principal accessibility and support, theme one, is defined as ECT perceptions of how easily and comfortably he or she can communicate with the principal and the principal provides and/or facilitates the meeting of the ECT needs. Researchers then defined dedication to and appreciation of peers, theme two, in two fashions; the ECT perceives that colleagues are invested in each other's development and success and mutual trust/confidence or psychological safety (Edmondson, 2012). Commitment to students, theme three, means that ECTs perceive a compulsion for action towards student success and they feel a calling to connect with learners. Finally, mutual respect, theme four, was defined as an ECT's perception of growing relationships based on the assumption of good will, the development of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) and

increased interpersonal trust or faith. These findings and emerging themes from the focus

group interviews corroborated the quantitative data points and allowed for the

comparison between the PSS and ECTs' responses across all grade level configurations.

Table 24 provides details of the themes by the dimensions of the PSS.

Table 24

Themes by PSS Dimension

	Support Dimension							
	Emotional		Professional		Instrumental		Appraisal	
Theme	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
1	83	24.85%	107	32.04%	102	30.54%	42	12.57%
2	24	18.46%	23	17.69%	66	50.77%	17	13.08%
3	6	30.00%	2	10.00%	11	55.00%	1	5.00%
4	22	29.33%	22	29.33%	18	24.00%	13	17.33%
Total	135	24.15%	154	27.55%	197	35.24%	73	13.06%

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale

Analysis of qualitative data by theme across the four school configuration groups

and SES designation provided insight and support for quantitative findings as well. The

theme of principal support and access was most prevalent verbally across all grade level

configurations and SES designations while commitment to students was least often

expressed by participants but garnered strong peer agreement when brought up by

participants during focus group interviews. Theme-coded responses by focus group

participants corroborated the importance of principal access and support as paramount

among the themes. ECT responses in themes two and four, dedication to and

appreciation of peers and mutual respect respectively, provide evidence that peer culture

and connection are central to job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession.

Finally, commitment to students, although less numerous in coded ECT responses, were

strongly supported by all focus groups when participants brought up the theme. Table 25

and Table 26 provides a detailed information on themes by school configuration and SES

designation respectively.

Table 25

Themes by School Configuration

Theme	Elementary		Middle		K-8 Centers		Senior High	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Principal access and support	112	50.22	52	23.32	19	8.52	40	17.94
Dedication to and appreciation of peers	23	21.90	48	45.71	17	16.19	17	16.19
Commitment to students	10	52.63	8	42.11	1	5.26	8	42.11
Mutual respect	23	32.86	24	34.29	20	28.57	3	4.29
Total	168	39.53	132	31.06	57	13.41	68	16.00

Table 26

Themes by SES Designation

Theme	High SES		Low SES	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Principal access and support	251	55.90	198	44.10
Dedication to and appreciation of peers	81	52.26	74	47.74
Commitment to students	32	59.26	22	40.74
Mutual respect	66	37.50	110	62.50
Total	430	51.56	404	48.44

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Theme one: Principal accessibility and support. This theme speaks to the ease of communication between the ECT and the administration and how the ECT perceives support and resources provided as follow-up to the interaction. Within theme one, principal support and accessibility, 83 responses from focus group participants centered on elements of emotional support, 107 responses from professional support, 102 from instrumental support and 42 from appraisal support. Dominant terms from ECT responses for theme one includes but are not limited to having an open-door policy, facilitating regular interaction, being approachable and available, and functioning as problem-solvers who coordinate the resources to address perceived needs. Evidence gleaned from the focus group participants' reflections and responses in support of the theme include:

- "She's always eager to lend me support."

- "She's very supportive in the sense that she would always approach teachers and ask is there anything I can help you with?"

- "Principal support plays a big role in how comfortable you feel in approaching them."

- "She would always come in and provide constant feedback on how to improve."

- "My principal always talks to me and calls to tell me I am doing a good job."

- "If I need something from my principal, I get it. She provides extra time to practice for performances in support of the music program."

- "As an ECT, one of the things that stood out was the timely feedback from the assistant principal and principal…as soon as they would leave my room, there was an email in my inbox outlining what I needed to improve upon and the good things I have going on."

- "I feel like it is very important for the principal to have an open line of communication with their teachers and that is what I experienced with the first principal at the school."

- "My principal would pop into meetings and would provide whatever I needed. Just having her support was really great and I will always appreciate that."

- "When you see your administrator around, it makes it easier to approach them when you have small questions"

Theme one is further exemplified by what was shared by a participant from one of the middle school focus groups in the following:

My fellow teachers with the administration and team know that data and scores are their primary focus. As a first-year teacher, there's a lot of things that a person who's been doing this for a long time know. The administrator assigned to my subject was awesome. He was very supportive. You could come to him whenever or open the door and call out his name and he'd be right there. He was willing to do whatever he could to help you survive and excel.

Theme two: Dedication to and appreciation of peers. This theme includes two elements. First, colleagues are invested in each other's success and, second, the school environments provide psychological safety (Edmondson, 2012). Within theme two, 24 responses from focus group participants centered on elements of emotional support, 23 responses from professional support, 50.77% from instrumental support and 17 from appraisal support. Prevailing terms from ECT responses for theme two are being dedicated to and having appreciation of peers, mentoring, lending support, and assisting with the implementation of resources and best practices. Evidence from the focus group participants' responses in support of this theme included:

- "It was really helpful to do observations of other teachers. So, peer observation within the school and an observation or two outside of the school were really enlightening and really helpful."

- "Anytime my assistant principal would come across a professional development outside the school or during school hours, she would send me an email or provide coverage in order for me to attend."

- "Sending me resources in areas of need for growth."

- "I had a teacher in the social studies department that helped me a ton with giving me lots of resources in terms of lesson plans and resources."

- "My MINT (Mentoring and Induction for New Teachers) mentor, actually she was very helpful by modeling and brought a uniqueness into it with sharing previous experiences and this provided a lot more credibility."

- "My first year in the county, I think the biggest thing that helped me was the peer to peer interaction, just ready to answer any questions."

- "I was just overwhelmed so having the day to day support was very helpful."

- "I think the biggest thing for me to be successful with the mentorship is having good people helping me."

- "My teaching big brother, I bugged him the most and my mentor was really good and they got me through."

- "One thing that we actually had was a neighboring district and we had great PLC's and we would go and collaborate with each other. There were other teachers teaching the same grade level and we would collaborate and share best practices."

- "I was new, but I felt like I had a support system at least … they kind of guided me so I always had someone to learn from."

The theme of appreciation of and dedication to peers is well characterized by what was shared by a teacher who participated in a K-8 center focus group when he said,

So, because of those co-workers and coaches at my previous school, now that I'm at this new school, I've used all those experiences to try and help my grade level. I feel grateful to my previous co-workers and administration because I learned a

lot from them that I can share with teachers who are brand new. You learn and

try new things out and you can go to your co-workers and colleagues maybe

before you go to your administration.

Theme three: Commitment to students. This theme addresses the ECT actions

toward student success and their passion to connect with learners. Within theme three,

30% of the responses from focus group participants centered on elements of emotional

support, 10% of responses from professional support, 55% from instrumental support and

5% from appraisal support. Terms from ECT responses for theme three included but are

not limited to family involvement, environmental conditions, commitment to all learners

and feelings of responsibility. In support of this theme are the responses with statements

such as:

- "There should be family…there is a ton of support there."

- "Student discipline is tough…contacting parents with administration and
  working out a plan."

- "You can call me anytime, they come in for an hour or stay for the whole
  day."

- "Support with discipline…that's always something that is difficult for
  teachers."

- "Because all students need to know that there is someone who cares."

- "I had to teach…also handle the special education students."

- "They had the counselor come in and help pull the students out at different
  hours…"

- "You might miss your lunch or planning, because you might need to talk with them (students)."

- "The responsibility of not only my individual education plans but also for my general education students."

- "I would leave work, go home, and work until 8:00 p.m.….., get up and work, then teach all day."

- "What can I do to help this child, I still have to teach all the students."

- "I've always loved the kids, especially at this age … helping kids at his age and just inspiring them to be lifelong learners."

The third theme was further highlighted and supported with the following statement made by a senior high school focus group member;

It was definitely an experience. Those young children have so much going on outside of the building. What I learned from the kids and what I took from the experience was that if you were able to connect with these kids and help them and show a little relatability, you know, whether with music or sports or what not, with simple conversation you can get through to them and at the end of the year our gains were ridiculous.

Theme four: Mutual respect. This theme is defined by the development of relationships that foster good will, growth mindset, and interdependent relationships. Within theme four, 22 responses from focus group participants centered on elements of emotional support, 29.33% of responses from professional support, 18 from instrumental support and 17.33% from appraisal support. Central terms from ECT responses for theme four included appreciation, community connection, opportunity for improvement

and clear, common expectations. Evidence from the focus group participants' responses in support of the theme included:

- "Give me the support…let me know you see something in me."

- "The principal support was there…what I felt was scary, but I was able to go on."

- "Don't lose sight of appreciating the teachers throughout the whole year…that appreciation gets lost because there are so many things going on at school."

- "She would give me a heads-up; this is what we were looking for."

- "Give us a little credit, show me off, but also let us brag on you."

- "Sending me the resources…areas of opportunity for me and giving me chances to grow."

- "Gave me huge opportunities."

- "Running the afterschool program, improved my relationships with students in the classroom."

- "Gave me the opportunity to teach at different levels and to be grade level chairperson."

- "That's where the walk-throughs come in."

- "Seeing the students at the Saturday program helped make the connection outside of class."

- "Communication is key."

- "Made me feel more comfortable…whether it was classroom management or lesson planning."

- "He expects things of us but also gives us support to succeed."

- "It's about support and not just expectations."

Mutual respect, theme four, is well exemplified by an early career elementary school teacher who shared,

> I would go to many PDs (professional development opportunities) and those were
> very helpful. Getting the chance to interact and learn from different peers and
> hearing how others deal with their issues and how they do things in their
> classrooms was very helpful. I think feedback is great. What am I doing wrong?
> How can I fix it? Having us collaborate, come together more as teachers, I
> learned more from two of my peers. You can really learn a lot as a new teacher.

Summary. Qualitative findings from the eight focus group interviews supported and illuminated the significant results found by statistical testing. Evidence indicated that ECTs find principal support to be a key determining factor related to both their levels of job satisfaction and their decisions to leave the teaching profession. Across all school configurations, SES levels, and school grade, the quantitative and qualitative data showed a significant, positive relationship between ECT perceptions of principal support and job satisfaction and a significant negative relationship between ECT perceptions of principal support and intention to leave the profession. The data clearly revealed that the more that ECTs perceive the value of the support provided by their principal, the more satisfied they feel with teaching, and the more likely they are to remain in the field of education.

Research Question 3

3. What perceived support is most valued by ECTs and how does this perceived
   support differ in schools based on:
   a. grade-level configuration?

b. high SES and low SES?

The perceptions of ECTs as measured by the PSS were analyzed based on school configuration and school SES levels. The perceptions of ECTs on the 16 items of the PSS, the four items of job satisfaction, and the three intention to leave items were averaged across each school grade level configuration and SES designation to determine which dimensions and categories were seen as most evident and valuable to ECTs at the different school grade level configurations and under the two socioeconomic conditions.

Research Question 3a

School configuration. ECTs, on average, perceived the greatest levels of support in the instrumental dimension (*m*=4.74, *SD*=1.52) and the least in the appraisal dimension (*m*=4.36, *SD*=1.70). The emotional support dimension (*m*=4.71, *SD*=1.50) fell closely behind the instrumental support dimension while the professional support dimension (*m*=4.37, *SD*=1.51) was perceived slightly greater than the appraisal support dimension. For the overarching expressive support category (*m*=4.54, *SD*=1.44), including the emotional and professional support dimensions, and instrumental support (*m*=4.55, *SD*=1.56), ECTs' perceptions of principal support were nearly identical.

The perceptions of ECTs showed several patterns. In 12 of the 16 items of the PSS, high school ECTs perceived the lowest average principal support. The high school configuration group had the lowest average perception rating in all four of the items in the emotional, professional, instrumental and appraisal support dimensions. The senior high school group also had the lowest average in the instrumental support (*m*=4.38, *SD*=1.53) category and was tied with K-8 Centers in the expressive support category (*m*=4.51, *SD*=1.36) for the lowest overall average perception scores. The elementary

school and K-8 center groups each scored the lowest in two of the 16 items, two items each in the emotional support dimension, while the middle school group had no overall item perception scores with the lowest average scores.

At the opposite end of the spectrum were the perceptions of ECTs in the middle school group. Their scores topped the averages on 11 of the 16 PSS items and were tops for both the emotional support dimension (m=4.87, SD=1.40) and professional support dimension (m=4.44, SD=1.45) while equaling the high average for the appraisal support dimension along with the K-8 centers. K-8 centers and elementary school configuration groups had overall principal support survey perceptions closer to the overall mean than the middle and high school groups. The K-8 center group having top perception scores on only four of the 16 items and elementary school group had the highest averages on only three of the 16 items. This points to ECT perceptions of principal support in the K-8 center and elementary school groups being more consistent than those of their peers in middle and senior high schools. This indicated that middle and senior high school administrators have clear and specific areas upon which they can focus to better support ECTs.

Overall, in the expressive support category the middle school group had the highest average perception scores (m=4.66, SD=1.34) while the K-8 centers and senior high groups had the lowest (m=4.51, SD=1.49 and m=4.51, SD=1.44) respectively. For the emotional support dimension, the middle school group had the highest average perception scores (m=4.87, SD=1.40), followed by the senior high group (m=4.73, SD=1.44), then the elementary school group (m=4.68, SD=1.54), and finally the K-8 center group (m=4.66, SD=1.56). For the second component dimension of the expressive

support category, professional support, the middle school group again had the highest average perception scores (*m*=4.44, *SD*=1.45) while the senior high group had the lowest (*m*=4.29, *SD*=1.44), the elementary school and K-8 center groups fell between the extremes (*m*=4.39, *SD*=1.55 and *m*=4.36, *SD*=1.53) respectively.

ECTs' perceptions of the instrumental support dimension were led by the middle and K-8 center groups (*m*=4.80, *SD*=1.45 and *m*=4.80, *SD*=1.53) followed by the elementary school groups' perceptions (*m*=4.78, *SD*=1.53), while the senior high school group had the lowest perception outcomes (*m*=4.55, *SD*=1.52). The appraisal support dimension had the elementary school group tying with the K-8 center group for the highest average (*m*=4.40, *SD*=1.75 and *m*=4.40, *SD*=1.69), the middle school group perceptions were only slightly lower (*m*=4.37, *SD*=1.61). Again, the senior high group recorded the lowest average within the appraisal support dimension (*m*=4.21, *SD*=1.66). The results are presented in tables 27 to table 32.

Table 27

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Support (ES) Dimension and Category by School Configuration

Level	N	ES1		ES2		ES3		ES4		ES Avg	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Elementary	293	4.58	1.64	4.61	1.61	4.78	1.58	4.74	1.57	4.68	1.54
Middle	83	4.76	1.54	4.81	1.51	5.04	1.40	4.89	1.47	4.87	1.40
K-8 Centers	109	4.59	1.67	4.62	1.60	4.77	1.59	4.64	1.63	4.66	1.56
Senior High	129	4.63	1.60	4.67	1.49	4.81	1.50	4.83	1.46	4.73	1.44
Total	614	4.62	1.62	4.65	1.57	4.82	1.54	4.76	1.54	4.71	1.50

Table 28

Descriptive Statistics for Professional Support (PS) Dimension and Category by School

Configuration

Level	N	PS1		PS2		PS3		PS4		PS Avg	
		MM	*SD*	*MM*	*SD*	*MM*	*SD*	*MM*	*SD*	*MM*	*SD*
Elementary	293	4.74	1.64	4.33	1.66	4.16	1.80	4.34	1.72	4.39	1.55
Middle	83	4.80	1.42	4.48	1.60	4.12	1.71	4.37	1.73	4.44	1.45
K-8 Centers	109	4.72	1.55	4.26	1.55	4.09	1.83	4.38	1.69	4.36	1.53
Senior High	129	4.60	1.51	4.24	1.64	4.08	1.61	4.24	1.58	4.29	1.44
Total	614	4.71	1.56	4.32	1.62	4.13	1.75	4.33	1.68	4.37	1.51

Table 29

Descriptive Statistics for Expressive Support Category Summary and Category by School

Configuration

Level	N	M	SD
Elementary	293	4.54	1.49
Middle	83	4.66	1.34
K-8 Centers	109	4.51	1.49
Senior High	129	4.51	1.36
Total	614	4.54	1.44

Table 30

Descriptive Statistics for Instrumental Support (IS) Dimension and Category by School

Configuration

Level	N	IS1 M	IS1 SD	IS2 M	IS2 SD	IS3 M	IS3 SD	IS4 M	IS4 SD	IS Avg M	IS Avg SD
Elementary	293	4.76	1.61	4.71	1.65	4.77	1.67	4.87	1.63	4.78	1.53
Middle	83	4.81	1.54	4.65	1.69	4.82	1.65	4.93	1.56	4.80	1.45
K-8 Centers	109	4.79	1.58	4.76	1.58	4.77	1.63	4.87	1.65	4.80	1.53
Senior High	129	4.70	1.56	4.41	1.69	4.47	1.71	4.64	1.60	4.55	1.51
Total	614	4.76	1.58	4.65	1.65	4.71	1.67	4.83	1.62	4.74	1.52

Table 31

Descriptive Statistics for Appraisal Support Dimension (AS) and Category by School

Configuration

Level	N	AS1 M	AS1 SD	AS2 M	AS2 SD	AS3 M	AS3 SD	AS4 M	AS4 SD	AS Avg M	AS Avg SD
Elementary	293	4.49	1.86	4.40	1.82	4.30	1.79	4.40	1.80	4.40	1.75
Middle	83	4.59	1.68	4.23	1.72	4.25	1.68	4.40	1.73	4.37	1.61
K-8 Centers	109	4.61	1.75	4.28	1.83	4.34	1.73	4.39	1.74	4.40	1.69
Senior High	129	4.36	1.71	4.17	1.79	4.14	1.72	4.19	1.68	4.21	1.66
Total	614	4.50	1.78	4.31	1.80	4.27	1.75	4.35	1.75	4.36	1.70

Table 32

Descriptive Statistics for Instrumental Support Category Summary and Category by

School Configuration

Level	N	M	SD
Elementary	293	4.59	1.60
Middle	83	4.58	1.47
K-8 Centers	109	4.60	1.57
Senior High	129	4.38	1.53
Total	614	4.55	1.56

ECTs' level of job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession were measured by four 6-point Likert-scale items and three 6-point Likert-scale items (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) respectively. Unlike the PSS results, the elementary school group had the highest perception scores in three of the four job satisfaction items. The K-8 school group had two of the four highest rated items related to job satisfaction while the senior high group had two of the four lowest perceived averages for the job satisfaction items. Overall, the elementary group had the highest average perception ratings for job satisfaction (*m*=5.09, *SD*=1.13). The K-8 school group had the second highest perception averages across the job satisfaction items (*m*=5.08, *SD*=1.15) followed by the middle school group (*m*=4.98, *SD*=1.17). The senior high group perceptions of job satisfaction were lowest with a mean score of 4.91 and a standard deviation of 1.16.

The three intention to leave items followed a similar pattern with the senior high group having the second highest average scores on all three items, with the highest and lowest mean score of any response group for questions one and three. The middle group

likewise topped the intention the leave group (*m*=2.61, *SD*=1.56). The K-8 school group

came in with the lowest perceptions on two of the three items while the senior high

school group had the lowest average on one of the three intention to leave items. Overall,

the middle school group had the lowest average perceptions regarding intention to leave

the profession (*m*=2.61, *SD*=1.56). See Table 33 and Table 34 for complete data

regarding ECTs' responses to the PSS, job satisfaction, and intention to leave the

profession by school configuration.

Table 33

Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction (JS) Group and Category by School

Configuration

Level		JS1		JS2		JS3		JS4		JS_Avg	
	N	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Elementary	292	5.36	1.14	5.02	1.30	5.12	1.24	4.85	1.38	5.09	1.13
Middle	83	5.13	1.28	4.86	1.31	5.08	1.23	4.83	1.31	4.98	1.17
K-8 Centers	109	5.31	1.15	5.02	1.23	5.02	1.28	4.96	1.31	5.08	1.15
Senior High	129	5.26	1.03	4.74	1.36	4.89	1.31	4.78	1.35	4.91	1.16
Total	613	5.30	1.14	4.94	1.30	5.05	1.26	4.85	1.35	5.03	1.14

Table 34

Descriptive Statistics for Intention to Leave (IL) Group and Category by School

Configuration

Level	N	IL1		IL2		IL3		IL Avg	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Elementary	292	2.53	1.70	2.54	1.81	2.52	1.76	2.53	1.61
Middle	83	2.66	1.82	2.57	1.86	2.60	1.74	2.61	1.56
K-8 Centers	109	2.45	1.66	2.62	1.82	2.63	1.74	2.57	1.55
Senior High	129	2.57	1.55	2.35	1.67	2.79	1.68	2.57	1.47
Total	613	2.54	1.67	2.52	1.79	2.61	1.74	2.56	1.56

Research Question 3b

School SES level. ECTs were very consistent in terms of their perceptions of principal support as measured by the PSS, job satisfaction, and intention to leave the profession. Across all 16 items of the PSS the perceptions of ECTs at high SES designated schools were higher than those of their peers at schools designated as low SES. For the emotional support dimension, ECTs at high SES designated schools had a mean score on the four related items of 4.84 with a standard deviation of 1.48 while ECTs at schools designated as low SES had a mean of 4.60 with a standard deviation of 1.52.

This pattern continued in the professional support dimension where high SES designated school (*m*=4.56, *SD*=1.48) topped low SES designated schools' ECTs' perceptions (*m*=4.20, *SD*=1.51). For the overarching expressive support category, the result was the same with high SES designated schools (*m*=4.70, *SD*=1.43) had greater

average perception scores than the low SES designated schools (m=4.40, SD=1.44). The

instrumental support category and its constituent dimensions, instrumental and appraisal

support, likewise has ECTs from high SES designated schools consistently showing a

greater level of perceived principal support across the board. For instrumental support

dimension items, high SES designated schools (m=4.94, SD=1.45) topped low SES

designated schools (m=4.55, SD=1.55) while the low SES designated schools perceptions

around appraisal support (m=4.20, SD=1.72) was below that of the high SES designated

schools (m=4.53, SD=1.67). For the instrumental support category, the high SES

designated schools' ECTs' perceptions were greater than the low SES designated schools

(m=4.73, SD=1.52 and m=4.37, SD=1.59) respectively. The results are presented in tables

35 to table 40.

Table 35

Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Support (ES) Dimension and School SES

Designation

SES		ES1		ES2		ES3		ES4		ES Avg	
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High	297	4.77	1.58	4.77	1.52	4.94	1.50	4.87	1.53	4.84	1.48
Low	317	4.48	1.64	4.54	1.61	4.71	1.57	4.66	1.55	4.60	1.52
Total	614	4.62	1.62	4.65	1.57	4.82	1.54	4.76	1.54	4.71	1.50

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Table 36

Descriptive Statistics for Professional Support (PS) Dimension and School SES

Designation

SES	N	PS1		PS2		PS3		PS4		PS Avg	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High	297	4.82	1.54	4.54	1.59	4.32	1.70	4.57	1.64	4.56	1.48
Low	317	4.61	1.58	4.11	1.64	3.95	1.78	4.11	1.70	4.20	1.51
Total	614	4.71	1.56	4.32	1.62	4.13	1.75	4.33	1.68	4.37	1.51

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Table 37

Descriptive Statistics for Expressive Support Category Summary and Category by School

Configuration

SES	N	M	SD
High	297	4.70	1.43
Low	317	4.40	1.44
Total	614	4.54	1.44

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Table 38

Descriptive Statistics for Instrumental Support (IS) Dimension and School SES

Designation

SES	N	IS1		IS2		IS3		IS4		IS Avg	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High	297	4.93	1.49	4.87	1.60	4.95	1.58	5.01	1.55	4.94	1.45
Low	317	4.60	1.65	4.44	1.68	4.49	1.73	4.66	1.67	4.55	1.55
Total	614	4.76	1.58	4.65	1.65	4.71	1.67	4.83	1.62	4.74	1.52

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Table 39

Descriptive Statistics for Appraisal Support (AS) Dimension and School SES Designation

SES	N	AS1		AS2		AS3		AS4		AS Avg	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High	297	4.69	1.72	4.43	1.76	4.44	1.72	4.54	1.70	4.53	1.67
Low	317	4.32	1.83	4.20	1.83	4.10	1.76	4.17	1.79	4.20	1.72
Total	614	4.50	1.78	4.31	1.80	4.27	1.75	4.35	1.75	4.36	1.70

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Table 40

Descriptive Statistics for Instrumental Support Category Summary and Category by

School Configuration

SES	*N*	*M*	*SD*
High	297	4.73	1.52
Low	317	4.37	1.59
Total	614	4.55	1.56

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

In the aggregate, ECT responses for job satisfaction items were inversely related to ECT responses for the intention to leave items. In comparing, ECTs working at low SES designated schools had both higher job satisfaction across all four items and had greater intention to leave the profession as indicated by perceptions measured by the three survey items. For job satisfaction, high SES designated schools (*m*=2.67, *SD*=1.70) averaged much lower than low SES designated schools (*m*=3.30, *SD*=1.77). ECTs' perceptions on intention to leave the profession was higher for low SES schools (*m*=3.07, *SD*=1.18) as compared to ECTs at high SES designated schools (*m*=2.80, *SD*=1.22). See Table 41 and Table 42 for complete data regarding ECTs' responses to the PSS, job satisfaction, and intention to leave the profession by school SES designation.

Table 41

Descriptive Statistics for Job Satisfaction (JS) Group and School SES Designation

SES	N	JS1		JS2		JS3		JS4		JS Avg	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
High	297	5.47	1.05	5.17	1.24	5.15	1.22	5.07	1.29	5.22	1.08
Low	316	5.13	1.19	4.72	1.33	4.95	1.29	4.65	1.37	4.86	1.17
Total	613	5.30	1.14	4.94	1.30	5.05	1.26	4.85	1.35	5.03	1.14

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Table 42

Descriptive Statistics for Intention to Leave (IL) Group and School SES Designation

SES	N	IL1		IL2		IL3		IL Avg	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
High	297	2.50	1.77	2.57	1.85	2.53	1.78	2.53	1.65
Low	316	2.59	1.58	2.48	1.73	2.68	1.69	2.58	1.47
Total	613	2.54	1.67	2.52	1.79	2.61	1.74	2.56	1.56

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status

Qualitative support from focus groups. In order to determine which dimensions and categories were more valued by ECTs, the researchers examined the mean scores for each PSS element and subsequently grouped them by elementary and secondary groups. The pattern that emerged had elementary and K-8 center ECTs, the elementary group, rating and ranking the dimensions in the following order: instrumental support, emotional support, appraisal support and professional support. The secondary group, consisting of middle and senior high school ECTs rated and ranked the dimensions in a different order:

emotional support, instrumental support, professional support, and appraisal support. The

elementary group ranked the instrumental support category over the expressive support

category while the secondary group ranked the categories in reverse. Table 43, Table 44

and Table 45 provide details as to how ECTs rated and ranked the PSS dimensions and

categories.

Table 43

PSS Dimension Mean Score Ranking by School Configuration

| | Support Dimension | | | | | | | |
| | Emotional | | Professional | | Instrumental | | Appraisal | |
Level	*M*	Rank	*M*	Rank	*M*	Rank	*M*	Rank
Elementary	4.68	2	4.39	4	4.78	1	4.40	3
Middle	4.87	1	4.44	3	4.80	2	4.37	4
K-8 Centers	4.66	2	4.36	4	4.80	1	4.40	3
Senior High	4.73	1	4.29	3	4.55	2	4.21	4

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale

Table 44

Category Mean Score Ranking by School Configuration

| | Support Category | | | |
| | Expressive | | Instrumental | |
Level	*M*	Rank	*M*	Rank
Elementary	4.54	2	4.59	1
Middle	4.66	1	4.58	2
K-8 Centers	4.51	2	4.60	1
Senior High	4.51	1	4.38	2

Table 45

Distribution of Coded Excerpts from Focus Group Transcripts

| | Support Dimension | | | | | | | | | |
| | Emotional | | Professional | | Instrumental | | Appraisal | | Total | |
Level	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Elementary	80	33.20	73	30.29	74	30.71	14	5.81	241	30.86
Middle	49	28.32	57	32.95	47	27.17	20	11.56	173	22.15
K-8 Centers	66	26.51	51	20.48	99	39.76	33	13.25	249	31.88
Senior High	29	24.58	33	27.97	37	31.36	19	16.10	118	15.11
Total	224	28.68	214	27.40	257	32.91	86	11.01	781	

Grade level configuration. The extensive discussion of research question three in the focus groups included aspects of the discussion of question two, specifically regarding perceived support. To further explore research question three, the structured, a

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priori coding scheme for qualitative data were used to code the ECTs' responses into ranked groups based on the PSS categories of expressive support and instrumental support. Elementary and K-8 ECTs' perceptions of support most valued focused on the instrumental support category while the expressive support category appeared less important. To the contrary, middle school and senior high school ECTs' perceptions of most valued support focused on expressive support while the instrumental support category appeared less important. Themes, commonalities, and patterns emerged from the ECTs' responses were highlighted and analyzed to capture relevance related to the nature and purpose of the study. The data analyses and findings confirmed the significance of examining the expressive and instrumental support categories in which the coded excerpts reflected the highest ranking.

Examining the qualitative data supports the correlation between early career elementary and K-8 teachers' perception of instrumental and emotional support with the PSS dimensions and categories. These are evident from the excerpts from the speakers as well as the reflections from the analytic memorandums. While the survey analysis indicated that teachers' perceptions are highest with the expressive support category, this correlation was evident when participants, from the elementary and K-8 center focus groups shared:

- "She would come in and assist me with a lot and take the kid out and let them sit out for a while."
- "This was a very challenging year and it was almost daily the principal had to come to the class to assist."

- "If it was not for the support of my principal and assistant principal, I think it would have been even more overwhelming."

- "The environment that they created for me made me strive even further."

- "They (administration) created such a friendly environment."

- "They made me more relaxed and made things run smoother for me."

- "The environment made me flourish, beautiful environment."

- "The principal interaction was very constant."

- "My principal wanted to just make sure that everyone…was ok doing what they had to be doing."

- "The principal visits were very often and it was needed."

- "The principal actually was amazing… actually spoke to another principal…was able to find something for me so that I could finish on Friday and then begin on Monday."

The participants' comments from the focus groups provided qualitative data and of particular note, the analytic memoranda for elementary and K-8 provided definitive support that participants were very appreciative of the instrumental support they received from their principal. The participants felt strongly that they benefitted from the support and reassurance they received. They appreciated the open-door policy and access to the principal in the event they had questions. A participant noted that it was very helpful with the principal being so visible throughout the school because if a question or concern arose when walking in the hallway, the principal is right there to quickly provide a recommendation or solution. The tone and demeanor perceived was that of the principal being a key reason for the success of ECTs. ECTs at the elementary and K-8 group

levels highlighted the importance of the principal's role to create a positive learning culture by establishing systems and routines. In their professional estimate, these systems and routines were pivotal in building their teaching capacity and cementing their professional foundation in the field of education. Patterns from the elementary and K-8 focus groups continued with the expressive support in the form of the principal affording ECTs' the opportunities to build teacher capacity through mentorships, collegial learning walks and peer to peer classroom observations. Support systems were noted as being essential for ECTs to establish a network, share experiences and best practices that often develop into collegial relationships and friendships.

Quantitative survey results from the PSS for the middle and high school grade configuration indicated that middle and high school ECTs most valued support from the expressive category. There are many nuances reflected in the analytic memoranda as well as excerpts from the participants to highlight conclusions around expressive support.

In the discussions with the focus group participants, a pattern emerged that highlighted the importance of an ECT's ready access to administrative support. This access to support gave participants confidence and provided a feeling of belonging and of being important for the success of the school. Examples of the pattern that surfaced from the middle and high school focus groups were evident when participants noted,

- "Knowing that I knew her vision from day one and I was just part of her vision… that made the plan a hundred percent."
- "The support was definitely there with the whole administration team."
- "Everything just fell into place."
- "I received motivation from my administrative team."

- "She said you can do it…she made me the chairperson of my department."

- "She had confidence in me…gave me…the go get it attitude that I can do it."

- "Some might say he's too nice… but you feel at home with him."

- "I have a very strong relationship; he helps me with everything."

- "If I have a concern, you know, he's there."

- "My first year went very smooth…I started out with lots of support."

- "My coach and the other teachers…were very supportive."

These remarks and comments provided additional insight into the qualitative component of the study. The data further suggested that ECT support in terms of the expressive category contributed most to teachers' perceptions of support.

School SES characteristics. To further explore the qualitative data, several emerging patterns from the analytic memoranda were evident during low and high SES focus groups. The ECT participants in the low SES focus groups for elementary, K-8, middle and high schools all expressed an evident divide between the school-site and the mandated district support for turnaround schools. The perception of ECTs who work in the district's most fragile schools is one of a top-down approach that is dominated by the feedback and recommendations that are provided by the district personnel. This was evident when participants from low SES level schools commented,

- "School support issues such as district support is so important… we have to teach the whole school…music and art and other subjects are also important."

- "My buddy teacher would say...no, that is not how it is. She would give you a heads up... she would say this is what I need and this is what they (district) were looking for."

- "It was 'I am not out to get you' type of thing, she was very direct."

- "I think that was a bit overwhelming … my coach wasn't there and our math team had about five new people."

- "Certain programs, teachers may not like…because the children are not grasping the content at the required pace of the curriculum." (related to additional curriculum materials)

- "Especially as a new teacher, it is very difficult for me… I know of a couple of teachers that left because they had issues with feedback from district."

- "As a first-year teacher you feel like there's a lot of stuff you don't know … it seems like nonsense it's stuff you want to know."

- "How am I supposed to know to put up a data board? Where do I get that stuff from? How do I know what to do? What's the meaning of that?

- "Just tell me what you want to see … Tell me what you expect when you walk in. Talk to me."

- I know you're a busy person … feels like I present and you absorb. What does it mean for me?"

The perception of the focus group was centered around the stresses and pressures of test-based accountability in the teaching profession. The accountability pressure forces ECTs to contemplate transferring into higher performing or more affluent schools, neighboring districts, or to other states. Subsequently, ECTs who work in district supported or turnaround schools believe in many instances that the administrative approach was a more of a checklist mentality. Based on the information shared by this focus group of teachers, often times, the school-site administration relies too heavily on district support

for turnaround school's direction. ECTs feel that this stifles growth and learning through collaboration and accelerates teacher burnout. Despite this, ECTs in low SES schools shared that they would prefer and value consistent ongoing feedback and collaboration for core and non-core teachers alike.

ECTs at high and low SES designated schools differ in their perceptions of principal support. Evidence that emerged during the high SES focus group focused on principal support and appreciation and value of mentoring. Much like the low SES focus group participants, the high SES focus groups valued professional support. The difference between high and low SES focus groups as compared with their colleagues was their struggle with highly demanding parents. The high SES ECT focus groups indicated the need for support as specified by,

- "My principal she is very loving and supportive."

- "I had to create the winter concert and spring program…it was very challenging and again the principal support was there."

- "I did have support from administration, they helped me with my grading and a lot of stuff."

- "I felt the challenge was not so much classroom management but as far as everything that is required…they helped me get through it and it helped me better organize myself."

- "Allotting the time for the buddy mentor teacher program… was very beneficial."

- "Both of us had the opportunity to visit someone else's class and receive professional development... the administration was very open with that."

- "I think it is very helpful to have mentorships be assigned from the get-go to ensure that we are going to be successful because it can be very overwhelming."

There was a high degree of consistency among ECTs' perception of the importance of principal support in the qualitative data gleaned from the focus group interviews. ECTs' perceptions depicted by shared experiences and examples broaden and deepen our understanding of, while also increasing focus on the importance of principal support. ECTs who participated in the focus groups clearly valued principal support. Among ECTs, the analysis of their responses clearly demonstrated the high value placed on principal support that encouraged professional growth, trusted their opinions, and fostered their sense of importance.

Research Question 4

4. Do principals perceive that their ECTs feel supported in the four dimensions of support (professional, emotional, appraisal, and instrumental)? What is the difference between teachers' perceptions of support and principals' perceptions?

To determine any differences in how principals see and understand the ECTs' perceptions of the support provided to ECTs at his or her school and the actual perceptions of principal support of ECTs as measured by the PSS, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the means of the groups' responses related to the four dimensions and two categories of principal support. Table 46 contains the descriptive statistics of the PSS results for the two job roles, teacher and principal.

Table 46

Descriptive Statistics for PSS Dimension and Category by Job Role

Support Dimension or Category	Role	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Emotional	Teacher	614	4.71	1.50
	Principal	90	4.54	0.69
Professional	Teacher	614	4.37	1.51
	Principal	90	4.54	0.76
Expressive	Teacher	614	4.54	1.44
	Principal	90	4.53	1.11
Instrumental	Teacher	614	4.74	1.52
	Principal	90	5.03	0.79
Appraisal	Teacher	614	4.36	1.70
	Principal	90	4.60	0.77
Instrumental	Teacher	614	4.55	1.56
	Principal	90	4.81	1.20

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale

The independent samples t-tests conducted indicate that in comparing the means for teachers and principals across the four dimensions and two categories of the PSS there were no statistically significant differences given equal variances assumed (Table 47).

Table 47

Independent Samples t-test for PSS Dimension and Category and Job Role

Support Dimension or Category	Equality of Variances		Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional	50.19	.000	1.09	702	0.276
Professional	53.40	.000	-1.02	702	0.308
Expressive	19.71	.000	0.11	702	0.917
Instrumental	38.26	.000	-1.79	702	0.074
Appraisal	83.54	.000	-1.35	702	0.179
Instrumental	24.60	.000	-1.51	702	0.132

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale

For teacher and principal perceptions of the emotional support dimension, t-test results ($t(702) = 1.09$, $p = .276$) indicate that there was no significant difference. The same result indicating no significant difference was indicated by the results of the t-tests conducted for the professional support dimension and the expressive category as a whole with t-test results of $t(702) = -1.02$, $p = .308$ and $t(702) = .11$, $p = .917$, respectively.

The three t-tests conducted for the second category of the PSS, instrumental support, including the instrumental support dimension and the appraisal support dimension, likewise indicated no significant differences with the t-test for the instrumental support dimension ($t(702) = -1.79$, $p = .074$), the t-test for the appraisal support dimension ($t(702) = -1.35$, $p = .179$), and the t-test for the overarching instrumental support category ($t(702) = -1.51$, $p = .132$) demonstrating that there was no

significant difference between the principals' perceptions of how ECT perceive the support provided and the ECTs' perceptions of that support.

In summary, the data reveal that there was no significant difference between the ECTs' perception of principal support and the way in which principals believe that the ECTs at his or her school perceive the support provided by the principal. Chapter 5 begins with an outline of the quantitative and qualitative research study findings. A more in-depth analysis of the research data allows for a focused interpretation from which to draw detailed conclusions. Implications for practice were a central theme of this research so school districts can develop policies or procedures to retain ECTs. Finally, recommendations for future research that correspond to or focus on school districts and teacher retention policies and practices are detailed.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, summary findings of the explanatory mixed-methods study are reviewed. Incorporating extant relevant literature and our analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, conclusions centered around the research questions are presented. Next, implications for practice are discussed, and practical suggestions are provided for principals and school boards. Lastly, recommendations for future research are outlined and a summary conclusion is provided.

This explanatory mixed methods study examined ECTs' perceptions of principal support as measured by the dimensions and categories of the PSS and how those elements related to job satisfaction and intention to leave the field of education based on several school characteristics including school configuration, school SES designation, and school rating from the state department of education's school accountability criteria. This study revealed significant findings in several areas. It also provides a platform for educational researchers to further examine the impact of principal support and connections between ECT perceptions of principal support across a variety of settings that have serious implications in national efforts to stem the tide of ECT attrition.

Several themes emerged from the focus group interviews that are critical to addressing the urgent national concern around ECT retention. A key finding is that developing school leaders who are capable in creating and maintaining an environment and conditions that focus on supporting the needs of ECTs is critical in

teacher retention. Principals who support teachers in both the expressive and instrumental categories, guided by the themes of accessibility, dedication to and appreciation of peers, commitment to students, and mutual respect are critical in increasing job satisfaction and reducing ECT attrition.

Discussion of Findings

We surveyed ECTs, those with between two and six years of experience, as to their perceptions of principal support across the four dimensions and two categories of DiPaola's (2012) PSS. We then surveyed principals to ascertain principals' perception and understanding of how they believed ECTs at their schools would perceive the support provided to them. Eight focus groups were then conducted based on school configuration and SES designations. The results of the surveys were compared using a series of statistical tests to discover any statistical differences between the comparison groups described in the four research questions. The conceptual framework for the study can be seen in Figure 2 in chapter 1.

School districts often face the dilemma of attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Consequently, turnover in teaching staff can contribute to students having inequitable access to effective instruction (Nicotera, Pepper, Springer, & Milanowski, 2017). Teacher attrition and retention are closely tied to job satisfaction (Friesen, 2016; Herzberg, 2003; McNeill, 2016; Phillips, 2015; Pink, 2009). This research study revealed the significant relationship of principal support on ECT's decision to stay or leave the field of education. More importantly it examined the types of support that ECTs see most often and the types of support that may have a greater impact on retention.

When discussing teacher turnover, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) stated:

> For most teachers, the decision to leave is associated with dissatisfaction with teaching. Among the most prominent reasons for dissatisfaction in recent years have been pressures associated with test-based accountability, unhappiness with administrative support, and dissatisfaction with teaching as a career. (p. 30)

Identifying the most important type of support valued by ECTs can have a positive impact on the education of students and stability of a school district (de Feijter, 2015; McAtee, 2015; Thompson, 2017; Watts, 2016). Focus group interviews and surveys were conducted with both ECTs and principals to glean quantitative and qualitative data to establish perceived levels and types of support. Utilizing surveys, perceptions of both ECTs and principals were collected and analyzed for similarities and differences in an effort to identify if difference exist in their perceptions.

ECT Perceptions of Principal Support

This study found that the overarching categories of expressive support and instrumental support measured by the PSS were perceived at, approximately, the same level on a 6-point Likert-scale according to responses provided by ECTs, with means of 4.54 and 4.55 respectively. However, the dimensions within these categories showed stark differences in the range of the type of support most often provided to ECT with instrumental support ($M = 4.74$) ranked as the top dimension from the PSS across all school configuration types and varying levels of student SES. This was closely followed by emotional support ($M = 4.71$) ranked second among the PSS dimensions. Professional and appraisal dimensions held the third and fourth ranking from the PSS with means of

4.37 and 4.36, respectively. It was interesting to note the top two dimensions (instrumental and emotional) and bottom two dimensions (professional and appraisal) are from different categories of the PSS. In this study, teachers' perceptions of support varied from other studies that included all teachers in schools. Evidently, ECT perceptions vary from those of teachers in general. This is an important finding, since administrators should strive to support the ECT in ways that provide the most job satisfaction.

ECT perceptions of principal support based on school configuration. To determine the possible differences in ECT perceptions between the four school configurations, a series of one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the participants' responses for each PSS dimension and category and for job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession. None of the eight ANOVA comparisons showed a significant difference in ECT perceptions based on school level configurations. The ANOVA tests having shown no significant differences in the perceptions of ECT by school configuration indicates that future policy considerations should not provide resources to differentiate principal support for ECTs based on the grade level configurations of the schools at which they teach. Future studies may want to consider student population size as a factor rather than configuration.

ECT perceptions of principal support based on school SES designation. To determine the possible differences in ECT perceptions between the two SES designations, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the participants' responses for each PSS dimension and category and for job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession. For each of the eight comparisons, two categories and four dimensions of the

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PSS and the job satisfaction and intention to leave groups, the tests revealed a significant difference in the perceptions of principal support held by ECTs. Such a finding indicates that policy makers and high-level administrators should consider differentiating resources and training for principals and administrative teams based on the SES characteristics of schools.

ECT perceptions of principal support based on school performance. To determine the possible differences in ECT perceptions between the school letter grades as issued by the state department of education, a series of one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the participants' responses for each PSS dimension and category and for job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession.

The ANOVA tests showed significant differences in several conditions. First, the tests indicated a significant difference in the instrumental support category, the instrumental support dimension, and the emotional support dimension for schools receiving a grade of A compared to schools receiving a grade of B. Second, for schools receiving a grade of A and schools receiving a grade of C, results showed a significant difference for the two groups in the instrumental support category, the instrumental support dimension, and the job satisfaction group. The implication of such findings indicates that resources and training for the development of the capacity of school principals to support ECTs should be differentiated based on school performance letter grades.

The relationship between the elements of principal support, job satisfaction, and intention to leave the profession. To determine the relationships that exist between the PSS dimensions and categories to job satisfaction and intention to leave the

profession, the researchers conducted independent samples t-tests. Three t-tests were conducted: one for all responses regardless of SES designation, a second for schools designated as high SES, and a third for schools designated as low SES. All three tests revealed similar results. In each case there were significant, positive correlations found between each PSS dimension and category to job satisfaction; significant, negative correlations found between PSS dimensions and categories and intention to leave the profession; and significant, negative correlations between job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession.

From an overarching perspective, both positive and negative correlations from low SES schools were slightly stronger, indicating that principal support plays an even greater role in schools that have higher learning demands. Within the PSS and across the tests, the instrumental support dimensions and categories were more strongly correlated to job satisfaction than were the dimensions of the expressive support category: emotional and professional support. This would appear to imply a number of critical issues. First, as noted by earlier discussion of the PSS results, teachers found instrumental support an essential element when they considered how support provided by the principal influences job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession. Second, although ECT responses placed appraisal support at the bottom of the rankings of the PSS scores, it was consistently had strong correlations in all three correlation groups, indicating that there is a need for greater attention to appraisal support across all schools. For the overall and low SES correlation groups, appraisal support had the strongest correlation with job satisfaction and second strongest correlation in the high SES designated schools. Given the strength of the correlation this study found between job

satisfaction and intention to leave the profession, it is clear that future policy implications around developing local capacity related to the instrumental category of support, the instrumental and appraisal dimensions, may hold disproportionate potential to increase schools' ability to retain ECTs.

The dimension of professional support displayed the greatest difference in response range among its four questions, .58, which was approximately three times greater than the other PSS dimensions: emotional support, .20; instrumental support, .18; and appraisal support, .19. Within the professional support dimension, the item "provides opportunities for me to grow professionally" had the lowest average response across all PSS items with a 4.13 of a possible 6 points. At the top of the professional support dimension was the item "gives me undivided attention when I am talking" with a mean item response of 4.71. This upper mean is not extraordinary as five other items across the PSS score at least as well by mean. The reason for this range of response within the professional support dimension and in particular the low rating on this single item may have to do with the structure of professional development opportunities that heavily favor accountability areas while not providing as robust a range of opportunities for elective or non-accountability content area teachers. An alternative perspective may be that ECTs, despite their range of content foci, are being provided common professional development opportunities that are misaligned with their own perceptions of the learning that they perceive they need or feel would be most beneficial. Additionally, choice opportunities that are tailored to teacher preferences are limited. As such, professional development is often viewed as a non-negotiable mandate and/or punishment that is perceived by ECTs as too narrow.

Intention to remain in the teaching profession: Qualitative support. Across all participants, regardless of the configuration of the schools in which they taught, principal support was viewed as an essential element in ECTs' drive to remain in the field of education. The findings were reinforced by ECT responses from focus groups. ECT responses indicated that their job satisfaction was greatly bolstered by involvement and support from the principal. For ECTs, principal support drives a commitment to not only remain in the field of education but to remain in the classroom as well as evidenced a participant from a high SES designated group who stated, "I like the personal, hands-on thing in a school setting," and "a lot of people are trying to talk me into leadership but, for me, that would take me away from the kids." Similarly, but expressing some doubt as to longevity, a participant from a low SES designated school shared, "I don't know what the future holds, but right now, where I am as a teacher, I'm very, very happy." Another example of how principal support inspired and influenced teachers can be found in what was shared by a focus group participant in the high SES K-8 center focus group when the teacher shared how the principal assigned her a classroom assignment that was not familiar to her but, with the principal's support, commented "I just appreciate her taking a chance with me in transitioning," and "she was always eager to lend support."

ECT perceptions of most valued support. In analyzing the PSS results, the researchers found that ECTs' perceptions of principal support were strongest for the instrumental support category and lowest for the appraisal support category. The emotional support and professional support categories fell between the other, with emotional support ranking only slightly lower than instrumental support and professional

support only slightly higher than appraisal support. See Table 48 for a ranking of the PSS responses by category.

Table 48

PSS Perceptions Ranked by Mean for All Responses

Support Dimension			
Instrumental	Emotional	Professional	Appraisal
(Highest)			(Lowest)
$M = 4.74$	$M = 4.71$	$M = 4.37$	$M = 4.36$
$SD = 1.52$	$SD = 1.50$	$SD = 1.51$	$SD = 1.70$

Note. PSS = Principal Support Scale

The ranking of the dimensions of the PSS notes a powerful implication for this study and points to the need for policy makers and administrations to look at establishing practice that promotes the development of principals' capacity and ability to support teachers and particularly ECTs around the dimensions of professional and appraisal support.

Within school configurations there are subtle differences in the rankings of the dimensions but were not of significant difference. For example, middle and senior high school configurations ranked emotional support as the top dimension and instrumental support second with all other dimension rankings remaining the same. These finding were consistent with prior studies of support in secondary schools. On the other hand, elementary and K-8 schools swapped the bottom ranked dimensions with appraisal ranked third and professional ranked last, maintaining the order of the top two dimensions.

For the high and low SES designated schools across all participants, regardless of school configuration, the results indicated that teachers in high and low SES groups have significantly different perceptions of principal support across all dimensions. The mean responses across all dimensions (emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal) by ECTs coming from high SES schools were higher than those of ECTs located in low SES schools. The dimension with the greatest difference in range of average mean score between high SES and low SES was instrumental with means of $M=4.94$, $SD=1.45$ and $M=4.55$, $SD=1.55$, respectively and a $p=.001$. Whereas the emotional dimension resulted in the least range difference between high SES ($M=4.84$, $SD=1.48$) and low SES ($M=4.60$, $SD=1.52$), still resulting in a significant difference ($p=.048$). This finding does not denote a difference in the school type, as much as it denotes a difference in the support perceived from ECTs by the principal in high SES and low SES schools.

For example, a participant from the K-8 center high SES focus group stated, "The principal was amazing because she provided me a lot of support. When I had to teach math, the math coach and reading coach were paired up with me and they showed me a lot of best practices and a lesson plan." This really highlighted the instrumental and emotional support dimensions as the participant expresses how the reading and math coaches were essential in developing her practice as a teacher. Also, the simple description of the principal being "amazing" evokes a feeling that hinted at the emotional support dimension.

Behind the PSS data: Emergent themes from ECT focus groups. Themes that emerged from the focus group participants included principal accessibility and support, mutual respect, commitment to students, dedication and appreciation of peers, clear

expectations, feelings of hope and inspiration experienced from learner progress. These themes were representative of focus group participants across all school configurations and SES designations and related to the PSS dimensions, job satisfaction, and intention to leave. The qualitative data supported the quantitative findings such as instrumental and emotional dimensions being perceived as the more highly ranked support reported by ECTs, the difference in perceived principal support provided by school configuration, SES designation, school accountability grade, and the desire for more support from principals in the dimensions of professional and appraisal.

Principals especially tended to exhibit qualities towards ECTs such as undivided attention/accessibility and encouraging/providing opportunities for professional growth, which are characteristics of instrumental support dimension. ECTs specifically felt principals trust their judgement in classroom and shows confidence in their actions, which are all traits of emotional support. The dimension of instrumental support seemed to stand out amongst the rest due to the "open-door policy" frequently mentioned in the focus group interviews, showing a willingness for principals to be accessible and willing to provide resources (usually in the form of other school personnel) or assistance in the form of informal and formal professional development or growth opportunities. The dimension of emotional support came in many forms but usually involved a one-on-one interaction between the ECT and the principal resulting in a perception of positive emotional support for the ECT.

In alignment with the results from the Principal Support Survey, the qualitative coding scheme utilized by the researchers found the focus group participants, most often, gave examples or made statements that referenced emotional and instrumental

support. There were, in total, 781 coded excerpts, with 224 being in the emotional dimension (28.68%) and 257 in the instrumental dimension (32.91%). On the contrary, appraisal and professional dimensions garnered the fewest coded responses by the researchers, with professional support being coded 214 times (27.4%) and the appraisal dimension having the least coded excerpts at 86 instances (11.01%).

The correlation of PSS responses and job satisfaction showed the strongest relationship within the dimensions of appraisal and professional support. There were several responses from participants that supported these findings, for instance in the dimension of professionalism it was stated, "it's just the lack of support. I wish they would have hired someone sooner…as soon as they hired that co-teacher…it was smooth." This honed in on the opportunity to improve "providing extra assistance when I become overwhelmed,'" survey question PS3 from the professional dimension of the PSS.

A response that emphasized the importance of appraisal dimension was a statement from a K-8 center focus group participant that referenced the timing of data chats, a protocol used by the district wherein with the principal and teacher focus on student performance data to gain common understanding and academic insight on students and pedagogical adjustments needed to increase student learning. The participants simply stated, "You're giving me data chats towards the end of the year and it's like what do you want at this point." This quote was so poignant because this same participant stated they would not be returning to the teaching profession the following year. The frustration that could not be captured by the survey was clearly evident and memorialized in the previous statement from qualitative data sources.

Additional themes that emerged from the focus group participants included principal accessibility and support, mutual respect, commitment to students, dedication and appreciation of peers, clear expectations, are all themes that surfaced from the responses of focus group participants across all configurations and SES types, with the major themes being principal support, job satisfaction, and intention to leave. These secondary themes vary across all dimensions of the PSS and, therefore, appeared within specific dimensions or across multiple dimensions.

Elementary school configuration seemed to qualify the importance of principal accessibility/support and dedication and appreciation of peers in responses. On the other hand, K-8 schools really spoke to the importance of clear expectations and mutual respect. Whereas commitment to students and dedication/appreciation of peers was a theme that was emphasized in middle schools. Lastly, the high school configuration expressed the need for principal accessibility/support and mutual respect.

There were no major themes that presented themselves across high SES and low SES designated schools, but more so a difference in the catalyst for the themes. An example of this would be how mutual respect was viewed differently by K-8 center focus group participants in high SES and low SES schools. Both groups highlighted mutual respect as being important, however the ECTs in the high SES schools were referring to the need for respect from parents and administration when one stated, "I don't know how to word this so it doesn't come out so negative but support from the parents...catering too much to the parents…The difference between what the teacher says and what their parent wants." While the ECTs in the low SES schools desired more respect from district support personnel and administration when they exclaimed, "come back here and see it.

How would you know? I'm telling you something, but she is telling you something different. All I am asking you to do is come see me," after a visit from district personnel prompted a follow up conversation with the principal and ECT. Regardless of the difference in catalyst, the common component for ECTs at both high and low SES schools was principal support.

The qualitative data not only support the quantitative findings such as emotional and instrumental dimensions being the support most often perceived by ECTs and the desire for more support from principals in the dimensions of professional and appraisal support, but reveals reasons behind responses that would have remained unknown without the focus groups. It shed light on the need for immediate feedback and responses, taking an active role in professional growth, the importance of mentors and colleagues for support, and personal accessibility from ECT.

Within the theme of mutual respect, a noticeable difference existed between the counts of mutual respect occurring between ECTs at low SES schools as opposed to high SES schools. ECTs at low SES designated schools referred to the theme of mutual respect 25% more often than ECTs at high SES designated schools. Based on the focus group discussions, the catalyst for the difference around the theme of mutual respect stemmed from the increased frequency and intensity of support provided by district personnel at low SES schools compared to high SES schools. The ECTs at low SES schools perceived the increased support from the district as overwhelming. These perceptions drove an increase in intention to leave the profession for ECTs at low SES designated schools. Focus group participants expressed a desire for greater, clearer

communication from principals about district support and appeared to yearn for validation of their classroom practice.

Despite ECTs having elevated intention to leave the profession, ECT job satisfaction was bolstered by principals' capacity to foster an environment conducive to growing strong peer to peer relationships. ECTs indicated that these relationships were important to them within and beyond their classrooms. In fact, focus group participants at the low SES designated schools highlighted the importance of relationships at the school, with both teachers and students, in increasing motivation and promoting higher levels of job satisfaction.

Principal support: ECT perceptions and principal beliefs about ECT perceptions. We used a survey of 90 principals to ascertain the degree to which principals believed ECTs at her or his school would perceive the support provided by the principal. The survey used was a modified version of the PSS called the PSS for Principals. The survey was field tested prior to use. The PSS for principals followed the same format and logic as the PSS administered to ECTs but did not include questions related to job satisfaction or intention to leave the profession. The PSS for Principals sought the principals' perspectives on how ECTs at his or her school would perceive the support provided by the principal around the same four dimensions, emotional, professional, instrumental, and appraisal support, and same two categories, expressive and instrumental support.

Independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences between the principals' perceptions and the ECT's perceptions. Although not significant, an interesting pattern did emerge from the descriptive statistics accompanying the t-tests.

First, the survey results for the two groups, principal and ECT, based on response means

indicated that for the expressive support category and its two dimensions were much

closer—with a range nearly half of that found between the two groups for the

instrumental category and its two dimensions. Second, the means for teachers were

higher in the expressive category and constituent dimensions whereas the means for

principal responses were greater in the instrumental support category and the two

constituent dimensions. This finding could point to a significant difference in the

perceived importance of the different types of support wherein teachers see that

principals provide support that is misaligned with the type of support that ECTs expected

and wanted from principals. A summary of our findings and recommendations can be

found in Table 49.

Table 49

Summary Table of Research Findings and Recommendations

RQ	Results	Recommendations
1.	ECTs perceived greatest levels of principal support in the instrumental dimension and the least principal support in the appraisal dimension. The range of means for the 16 PSS items was 4.82-4.13. Outcomes at the category level were very similar, with mean scores of 4.54 and 4.55 for expressive and instrumental support, respectively.	Provide ECT and principals an on-going, formative process to ensure that perceptions of support and actual support provided are meeting the needs of ECTs and encouraging ECT retention.
1a.	There are no significant differences between ECT perceptions of principal support based on the four tested school configurations— elementary, K-8 centers, middle, and senior high.	Future policy direction should place an emphasis on differentiating ECT support based on the school' SES at which ECTs are teaching. Support for ECTs based on the school SES characteristics is critical for the retention. Although there is a slight change in the rank of each PSS dimension based on SES designation, the true need seems to be focused on intensity. ECTs in low SES schools need more intensive and regular support from their principal to combat threats to job satisfaction that lead to greater intention to leave and greater attrition and mobility.
1b.	Across all 10 comparisons, findings indicated a significant difference between the perceptions of ECTs at high and low SES designated schools	
1c.	Results indicated significant difference on certain PSS elements between schools receiving an accountability grade of A and those receiving a grade of C and between schools receiving a grade of A and those receiving a grade of B. The significant differences between A and B schools included the instrumental support category, the instrumental support dimension, and the emotional support dimension. The significant differences between A and C schools included the instrumental support category, the instrumental support dimension, and the job satisfaction group.	Develop avenues of differentiated support for ECTs in schools receiving grades of B and C. As these schools may be seen as performing adequately, they may not have the additional attention and support seen in lower performing schools, but accountability pressure does place greater emphasis on the support provided by principals

Note. RC = Research Question; PSS = Principal Support Scale; ECT = Early Career Teacher

Table 49 (Continued)

Summary Table of Research Findings and Recommendations

RQ	Results	Recommendations
2.	Results showed significant, positive correlations across all tests for each PSS dimension and category with job satisfaction. Significant, negative correlations were found across all tests for each PSS dimension and intention to leave the profession. Job satisfaction and intention to leave were also significantly, negatively correlated. Correlations were supported by qualitative data from 8 focus groups conducted by school configuration and SES level.	Provide ECT and principals an on-going, formative process to ensure that perceptions of support and actual support provided are meeting the needs of ECTs and encouraging ECT retention.
2a.	The correlation between ECT perceptions of principal support across all PSS dimensions and categories and job satisfaction was significant and positive.	Provide differentiated professional learning for principals and teachers on how to address the needs for support and how to build and strengthen supportive school cultures.
2b.	The correlation between ECT perceptions of principal support across all PSS dimensions and categories and intention to leave was significant and negative.	
3.	Middle school ECTs had the highest overall perceptions of principal support while high school ECTs had the lowest. By category, ECTs in middle school had the highest and senior high and K-8 centers the lowest rated perceptions for the expressive support. The instrumental support category results showed middle and K-8 center ECTs with the highest and the senior high ECTs the lowest rated perceptions of principal support. Findings were supported by qualitative data from the 8 focus groups.	Provide ECT and principals an on-going, formative process to ensure that perceptions of support and actual support provided are meeting the needs of ECTs and encouraging ECT retention. Provide differentiated professional development for principals based on support elements.

Note. RC = Research Question; PSS = Principal Support Scale; ECT = Early Career Teacher

Table 49 (Continued)

Summary Table of Research Findings and Recommendations

RQ	Results	Recommendations
4.	There were no significant differences between principal and ECT responses by PSS dimension or category. By dimension, the means for principal and ECT responses were highest for the instrumental support dimension. Principal participants had the lowest mean perception scores in the emotional and professional support dimensions. Teachers had the lowest perception numbers in the professional support dimension. Mean ranges between principals' perceptions and ECTs' perceptions were much greater in the instrumental support category. The instrumental dimension mean difference was .28 and the appraisal support dimension difference was .24, while the differences for emotional and professional support were .15 and .17, respectively. Principals' and ECTs' perceptions at the categorical levels echoed this divergence, with an expressive support category mean difference of .01 and an instrumental support mean difference of .27. Principals' perceptions mean scores were lower in the expressive support category whereas ECTs' perception mean scores were lower for the instrumental support category.	Provide ECT and principals an on-going, formative process to ensure that perceptions of support and actual support provided are meeting the needs of ECTs and encouraging ECT retention. Provide principals and ECTs a protocol for guiding discussion around perceptions of support and classroom performance in meeting the learning needs of students. Develop and deploy programs that focus on team achievement as well as individual achievement to promote greater, more consistent supportive interactions between ECTs and principals

Note. RC = Research Question; PSS = Principal Support Scale; ECT = Early Career Teacher

Conclusions

Conclusions were drawn from the data analysis and findings that supported the guiding research questions for this project. Based upon the findings, the researchers concluded that factors identified by analysis of PSS responses can be utilized by principals and school boards to positively impact ECT retention. Based upon ECTs' perceptions, support/retention factors such as recognizing teacher achievement and successes, ensuring a positive school climate, providing support from administration and the community are areas upon which policy should focus more than the typical policy tools of increasing salaries and providing increased opportunities for advancement and professional development. If a school district aims to reduce teacher turnover and impact the classroom, the key lies in the quality of support provided by the principal (de Feijter, 2015).

Applying the implications for practice in Chapter 5 provides school districts possible solutions that will increase ECT job satisfaction and retain more teachers. Educational leaders who recognize the importance of reducing teacher attrition do not simply save time and money. They position themselves to provide the very best environment and ensure increased student learning outcomes. Future research on teacher retention is needed to empower all educational stakeholders to ultimately focus on the important end result of student achievement.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Merely hiring more teachers will not solve the teacher shortage concern, especially if more teachers leave than are available for hire (Carroll & Foster, 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Teachers play an important role in developing and advancing a

positive classroom culture that promotes student learning and social-emotional growth (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & Davidson, 2013). This study was designed to fill the gap in the available research regarding principal support for ECTs, which holds promise as a local, high potential policy tool to reduce attrition and increase retention. The results and findings of this research study confirm that principal support, as described by the PSS dimensions and categories, illuminate a pathway that holds powerful potential to positively impact ECT retention and is something that should be implemented and monitored by both schools and districts.

The implications from principal's perceptions also connect to the ECT's perceptions, which indicated positive teacher retention outcomes when school boards and superintendents address the common factors listed by both. It can be concluded from this study that ECTs who are satisfied and feel valued by their districts are less likely to leave, thus decreasing teacher attrition and increasing retention (Davis, 2013).

Reducing teacher turnover in a district saves money on hiring and training beginning teachers and can positively impact student achievement (Flook et al., 2013; Ingersoll & May, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Beyond simply restating the retention factors identified, a more useful and meaningful application of practices is to measure and monitor the factors that have shown the greatest influence on the perceptions of ECTs as it correlates to job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession. The following are implications for practice that school districts may choose to address.

Principal/administrative support. Banerjee, Stearns, Moller, and Mickelson (2017) argued any meaningful school reform aimed at improving student achievement must include addressing teacher job satisfaction and school culture. A constant and

recurring theme from focus group interviews and survey data was that administrative

support is highly valued by teachers. Many ECTs interviewed commented about a

positive and supportive relationship with their administrators. Data indicated ECTs felt a

lack of recognition or appreciation by their administrative team for hard work and

dedication; however, the survey data also revealed a slight difference in perceptions

between teachers and principals. To create an increased level of job satisfaction and

reduce attrition, administrators need to ensure teachers feel supported and comfortable in

their jobs (Lytle, 2013; McCoy, Wilson-Jones, & Jones, 2013; Phillips, 2015).

These findings added to the existing research could impact how principals are

hired based on the leadership qualities of the principal and the needs for recruiting and

retaining ECTs. The results may have implications around a needed shift in hiring

practices for schools that have higher teacher turnover, by looking for principal

candidates that rate higher in these dimensions by different school characteristics such as

school SES designations. This can also provide direction on the type of professional

development provided for administrators and teachers. To better meet and serve the

needs of ECTs, more consideration may have to be given to the dimensions of

professional and appraisal support, especially since they seem to have the strongest

correlation to job satisfaction.

This finding has potential influence on the training of principals and the

developmental support of ECTs. The findings point to a need in reviewing and revising

how principals are trained to support ECTs around support across all support dimensions,

but specifically in the areas of providing teacher's feedback and facilitating/guiding the

professional growth and development of teachers, which pertain to the appraisal support

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dimension. The need for training on both ends of the formative assessment spectrum is clear as principals and ECTs alike perceived weakness in the appraisal dimension.

Additionally, critical opportunities exist to build teacher and administrative communication during teacher observations and evaluations (Guskey, 2014). One-on-one discussions about expectations and performance, and even giving and taking constructive feedback, can be opportunities to strengthen relationships and express gratitude and appreciation for mutual respect (Harris, 2015; Podolsky & Sutcher, 2016). Teachers who are comfortable sharing and communicating with their administrators build bonds and create support and loyalties that improve job satisfaction and increase retention.

As the paragraph above describes attributes of appraisal support, this study supported and extended the existing research regarding the principal's ability to create an environment that fosters open communication and candid collaboration. These findings make it clear that ECTs perceive principal support most strongly in the emotional and instrumental dimension.

School environment. School districts need to promote a positive school climate/environment and culture that recognizes and rewards achievement, hard work, and dedication (Banerjee et al., 2017; Dou, Devos, & Valcke, 2017; Flook et al., 2013). Weekly newsletters home, available school social media accounts, and traditional newspaper articles can be utilized to detail student, teacher, and school accomplishments and successes to all stakeholders. School districts must develop processes and have practices in place that ensure teachers develop a sense of enjoyment and pride in teaching and feel they make a difference, beyond just recognition (Butler, 2016; Gu, 2016;

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Ingersoll, 2001; Thompson, 2017). Connecting teachers to the community can also positively impact teacher retention (Butler, 2016; Friesen, 2016).

Recommendations for Future Research

The available research consulted throughout this project greatly aided in the direction and support of this paper. Furthermore, the related research on teacher retention helped provide a measure of reliability to the results and a level of validity to the focus group interviews and survey instruments and data collected and analyzed. This study specifically focused on a range of schools in a particular geographic area of a large, urban school district in the southeastern United States and the perceptions of ECTs and principals around principal support. This study also supplemented the available research on retention factors for teachers to remain at school districts. Participant responses included the ability to develop individual student relationships, a strong sense of community pride and support, excellent administrative support, teacher and student recognition of achievements and successes, and positive school culture and climate.

Recommendations for future research arising as a result of this explanatory mixed-methods study include the following:

1. Survey, analyze, and rank the perceptions of ECTs in other states and categorize the results to compare to previous research on teacher retention.

2. Conduct research to investigate and analyze the perceptions of ECTs and principals in similar and different settings utilizing a similar mixed methods study with the same instruments as this research project. The data collected could be compared to these research data to see if any differences or commonalities exist.

3. Conduct additional research to study the perceptions of ECTs in the large urban districts regarding the difference administrative support makes in teacher retention to determine if there is any impact on teacher retention.

4. Since many small urban schools have lower student-to-teacher ratios, a mixed method study could be undertaken to analyze class sizes and student achievement data from the state assessments. Results would add to the available research on test scores and class size and provide states and school districts evidence to support their guidance and position on class sizes.

5. Take this mixed-methods study one step further and analyze neighboring and or similar school district attrition data on the exact reasons why teachers leave districts. Reasons for leaving could include retirement, moving to another district for more money, becoming an administrator, and changing careers, just to name a few. Utilizing exit interviews and surveys, valuable data could be gleaned that detail exactly why teachers depart.

Summary

For this research project the theoretical framework was based upon the work of DiPaola (2012) that detailed factors impacting teachers' attitudes and ultimately job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The overarching goal of this research project was to elicit the perceptions of ECTs around principal support and to identify factors that impact teacher retention through a mixed-methods methodology. After considering the established theoretical framework and synthesizing the quantitative and qualitative research data and findings, the four research questions outlined in this research project were addressed. The findings demonstrated that the PSS dimensions and categories are

positively correlated to job satisfaction. The quantitative data garnered from participants'

responses to the PSS were supported and illuminated by qualitative data collected from

the focus group interviews. Coleman (as cited in Merton, 1987) recommended school

administrators and school districts focus on implementing retention practices such as

cultivating a positive and supportive school environment, reducing teacher workloads,

providing teacher recognition, offering professional development, and mentoring. Our

findings add support of principals to these recommendations. Clearly, teachers who feel

supported experience greater job satisfaction and tend to remain in the profession.

CHAPTER 6

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Leadership Transformation

No matter the arena or the profession, it is no revelation that leadership is firmly grounded and deeply rooted in basic principles that mobilize the masses to achieve a desired and/or intended outcome for the greater good of an organization. As "keepers of expectation," leaders must work to build relationships, to foster open and healthy climates and cultures, and to serve as agents of change individually, collectively, personally, and professionally. According to Northouse, leadership is defined as "a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2018, p. 6). Since the early 1900s, the leadership definition has evolved from a definition of control, power, and domination to motivation and inspiration. Therefore, now more than ever, leaders are tasked with being aware of their implicit biases, adapting their leadership styles, focusing on their followers, and leading with care (Northouse, 2018).

A current and relative real-world experience that embodies Northouse's (2018) denotative definition of leadership is firmly and deeply rooted in William & Mary's collaborative dissertation experience. Simply stated, the dissertation group experience was priceless. Relationships were forged, professional and personal lessons were learned, and educational epiphanies were gleaned from and garnered by/through rich discussions and educational exploration and research. It was a journey, like most journeys, that presented successes and failures and "bumps and bruises." At times, these "bumps and bruises" were difficult to navigate and challenging to cast into the sea of

forgetfulness; however, as I reflect on this educational journey, this experience was a necessary evil and/or a necessary fork in the road that was needed to achieve and accomplish the ultimate goal—a doctoral degree from William & Mary.

To that end, when I analyze and dissect my group dissertation experience, notable shifts in my professional attitude, behaviors, and mindset all transpired. These shifts resulted in a changed and professionally matured expanded frame of reference encompassing habits of mind and points of view that prompted individual and collective professional growth. In traveling this unfamiliar path and road not taken, a mental reset button had to be pushed and pressed prior to this expansion in thinking and mental breakthrough. This "breakthrough" influenced professional thought processes and objective points of view that were instrumental in annihilating habits and limited perspectives that initially stifled and impeded the team's progression. Examples of these barriers and limitations were inclusive of, but not limited to tone, approach, delegation, and old-fashioned respect for others' opinions, ideas, and recommendations.

As such, guiding principles emerged and an expanded and new mindset developed. This shift in mindset, coupled with an expanded frame of reference encompassing habits of mind and points of view fostered and cultivated seven guiding principles that were essential for this experience —a collaborative community where shared decision-making was the expected way of work; listening; problem-solving; self-reflection and analysis; commitment to integrity, respect for others; and moral purpose. These principles and expanded frames of reference were key for my effective leadership and collaborative scholarship and were equally important for transforming cultures and climates from pessimistic to optimistic, hopeless to hopeful, and defeated to determined.

Unequivocally, this experience has assisted and aided in my development as an autonomous critical thinker and a consumer of research. In working with assertive and intelligent leaders and scholars, I quickly learned the importance and benefit of research. Research strengthens pre-existing claims, supports arguments, and enhances current hypotheses. As such, I now anchor my thoughts, rationales, and reasoning in the power of research as opposed to subjective and uniformed reasons, beliefs, and ideas. Through this experience as a leader, I have also learned how to leverage the value of research to mitigate and reduce biases, to address root causes of problems, and to serve as my defense and rationale when engaging in debates and dialogue with peers and/or when proposing an initiative and action plan. Thus, as a result of the group dissertation experience, the research process has improved my abilities to think critically and to synthesize and analyze information that is critical for enhancing current studies and for exploring professional and innovative ideas.

It is no revelation that effective leadership is cemented and anchored in awareness-awareness of self, culture, community, context, circumstances, and the children we serve. According to Staats (2016), "this unwavering desire to ensure the best for children is precisely why educators should become aware of the concept of implicit bias: the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner" (p. 29). To that end, the collaborative dissertation experience has enhanced my awareness and unawareness of my personal style of leadership. This internal and external thought process exposed my professional shortfalls, prompted a shift in my personal leadership practice, and illuminated the need for me to evolve as a leader.

Prior to this experience, I self-anointed myself as a servant and transformational leader. Through this experience, the collaborative dissertation experience, I realized the need to grow professionally and to gravitate into realms and roles that would accelerate my development as a leader. In essence, I realized that as a leader, I was complacent and content with what was safe, secure, and easy. I also allowed people's perceptions of my intentions to dictate my actions and reactions. Post this experience, I am now more attuned and aware of my leadership styles. As a result, I am more intentional and deliberate in my interactions with leaders in the upper echelons of their respective professions and I am more connected to and aware of the actions and reactions that are triggered by events, people, outcomes, and situations that I may disagree with or dislike. Additionally, I am more cognizant and conscious of developments and trainings that will improve and plug the self-identified gaps and holes in my leadership skillset; and while the epiphanies and revelations such as the ones noted above have enhanced my awareness of my personal leadership styles, more importantly, they have empowered me to take the necessary steps to improve my leadership capacity in an informed and proactive manner, which in my professional estimate, directly and indirectly positively impact change and growth at all levels.

Collaborative Scholarship

> It was the best of times…it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us. (Dickens, 1859, p. 2)

Similar to the opposing forces depicted and conveyed in Charles Dickens' novel, a *Tale of Two Cities*, the contrasting themes and dichotomies of rewards and challenges were ever-present throughout the collaborative dissertation experience, specifically as we worked collectively. Working collectively to conduct research, to identify the problem of practice, and to determine research methods posed both challenges and rewards.

In order to understand and mentally process the challenges of the group, it is equally imperative to understand the dynamics and make-up of the research team. As a team, individually and collectively, the researchers were passionate, energetic, intelligent, and assertive leaders in the field of education with Type A personalities. This alpha male and female mentality and borderline attitude of arrogance initially constructed walls as opposed to bridges as we navigated through the research process and its sub-components (problem of practice and research methods). The egos within the group also presented hurdles and roadblocks that resulted in the "blind leading the blind," and wrong educational turns, detours and decisions, especially as we worked through Chapter 4. Chapter 4 was a nightmare. The jargon, the data disaggregation and aggregation, quantitative and qualitatively, and analytic memorandums were all monumental tasks and unchartered territory for all team members. This fear of the unknown caused the research team to remain mired in an extended period of stagnation, inaction, and unproductivity. Without prevarication/In stark contrast to the challenges endured and experienced by the dissertation group, the noted obstacles and struggles paled in comparison to the successes and rewards achieved via the group effort. Truthfully and fortunately, the rewards outnumbered, outweighed, and overpowered the challenges. These rewards were inclusive of, but not limited to working in a professional learning community that

afforded each researcher an opportunity to explore and exchange ideas as a collective unit that centered around the problem of practice, research methods, and the overall research process. As a collaborative community, the team also worked in a concerted effort to build and strengthen the capacity of each team member in areas in need of development throughout the study.

The final reward, which in my personal and professional opinion, was the greatest reward. Conducting a meaningful and purposeful study that provided insight and possible solutions and policy proposals for a growing local and national concern was powerful. Hence, working in a concerted effort with a group of colleagues who were vested in a problem of practice and research methods for the common good of our educational community was beyond beneficial and rewarding.

To that end, as with any and all relationships, no relationship is perfect. All relationships have peaks and valleys, highs and lows, challenges and rewards. However, throughout this collaborative research process, the benefits and rewards far surpassed the challenges that attempted to derail the team's progress and success as we explored and investigated the problem of practice and determined the research methods.

Norman Vincent Peale (2012) said that in every problems one can find seeds for solutions. This served as the mantra and motto for our collaborative research team as we experienced and navigated beyond adversity, disappointments, failures, and challenges. The individual and collective skillset and expertise of the team afforded us the opportunity and luxury to lean in on the strengths and talents of one another to tackle gaps in communication, impasses, stalemates, revisions, rewrites, confusion, and the everyday struggles of life.

Subsequently, as a team and a cohesive unit, we worked in a concerted effort to confront and to address challenges. This spirit of perseverance and determination and an "united we stand" mentality and approach were woven in the fabric and DNA make-up of the group. Hence, as a group, we successfully leveraged and maximized the talents of each group member to defy the odds and to overcome challenges; a feat and accomplishment that should be commended, as it speaks volumes about the character, resiliency, and resolve of this team.

Working in isolation in the William and Mary cohort drastically differed from working as a research team. Unlike the other participants in the District's cohort, due to extenuating and unique circumstances, my entry into the program was delayed. As a result of this "delayed entry," I often times felt as though I was a running a race where I could never cross the finish line; and although some cohort members were gracious and supportive of me during this "catch up" period, initially, it was a lonely road to travel. Conversely to working as an individual, the process and experience was altogether different than working as a research team. As a research team, "no man was an island" and everyone swam or sunk as a team. The group experience was similar to that of a sorority and/or fraternity, in that as a unit, we endured the good, bad, and indifferent and understood the magnitude of the commitment and significance of collective efficacy. We were each other's keeper, and ultimately, we were responsible for ensuring that no one faltered or failed, as our success was predicated on the success of all as opposed to one individual. This sense of family and sense of belonging was the key difference that made all the difference.

Hindsight is 20/20. To that end, when I reflect on the final chapter of my post-secondary experience with the prestigious College of William and Mary, several poignant and powerful lessons were learned that I feel compelled to share; and while some lessons may be deemed and classified as rudimentary or simplistic by some, in my humble and professional opinion, they are lessons that should not be taken for granted or overlooked. This experience was an experience of a lifetime. It was a childhood dream that is now my reality; and for that testimony, I am eternally grateful to Miami-Dade County Public Schools and to William & Mary. To that point, during this experience, I had the opportunity to interact and work with some of the most amazing people. These individuals were special people with special talents. In fact, through my professional lens, they ranked as some of the best and brightest in the educational sector. However, as amazing and as special as these educators and teammates were throughout this process and experience, they, like all human beings, myself included, made mistakes and experienced failed attempts along the way. This realization taught me two valuable lessons that are vital for succeeding with collaborative work on complex projects. First, we as leaders must embrace failure. As suggested by Wheatley (2007), innovative ideas and thoughts are birthed and born from these failed attempts. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the leader and critical for the leader of the organization and/or group to create and nurture a culture that leverages shortcomings and shortfalls as opportunities for improvement. When people are offered a creative license to be innovative and are afforded the opportunity to work in tandem, to work collectively, to work in rigid, but flexible environments, and to work and explore without fear of failure, possibilities are limitless. Once this culture and environment is created and established, the trajectory of

the team's success drastically changes and team members are more likely than not to be willing participants who respect the partnership, share ideas, receive feedback, and trust and believe in the process. Another lesson learned from this process is the importance of relationships. Therefore, relationship dynamics determine and dictate the success or lack thereof of the group. In collaborative work, each team member must "play his or her role" throughout the process, value the power of the relationship and its collaborative structures by investing in each other, connect through communication and information, support the vision of the group, and exercise and practice flexibility and adaptability. Connections to people result in connections to information and connections to the struggles and successes of the work. It also serves as the barometer that provides insight into the internal and external factors that impede or promote the growth and success for all participants in the collaborative community. Thus, simply stated, the better the relationships, the better the outcomes.

To conclude, I would strongly recommend William & Mary to continue to extend the collaborative group dissertation experience. This experience has truly been rewarding personally, academically, socially, and emotionally. Working in a concerted effort with colleagues that are committed and passionate about improving teaching, learning, and outcomes has been a blessing. The rich discussions, realized revelations and epiphanies, network systems, and lifetime friendships that were created through this experience will forever remain etched in my mind and my heart because this experience made a difference in my life and in the community that saved my life.

APPENDIX A

Student Demographics by School

AnonID	Total Students	Free & Reduced-Price Lunch		SES Level	School Grade
		Count	Percentage		
ELEM01	445	437	98.20%	Low SES	C
ELEM02	559	542	96.96%	Low SES	A
ELEM03	745	705	94.63%	Low SES	B
ELEM04	837	735	87.81%	High SES	B
ELEM05	344	272	79.07%	High SES	A
ELEM06	530	506	95.47%	Low SES	C
ELEM07	465	440	94.62%	Low SES	C
ELEM08	437	277	63.39%	High SES	A
ELEM09	930	883	94.95%	Low SES	B
ELEM10	443	130	29.35%	High SES	A
ELEM11	542	532	98.15%	Low SES	B
ELEM12	1066	825	77.39%	High SES	A
ELEM13	439	414	94.31%	Low SES	A
ELEM14	248	245	98.79%	Low SES	I
ELEM15	453	443	97.79%	Low SES	A
ELEM16	355	288	81.13%	High SES	A
ELEM17	581	183	31.50%	High SES	A
ELEM18	615	556	90.41%	High SES	A
ELEM19	379	332	87.60%	High SES	A
ELEM20	689	631	91.58%	Low SES	A
ELEM21	884	719	81.33%	High SES	B
ELEM22	430	418	97.21%	Low SES	C
ELEM23	650	599	92.15%	Low SES	A
ELEM24	424	422	99.53%	Low SES	D
ELEM25	1089	976	89.62%	High SES	B
ELEM26	613	535	87.28%	High SES	B
ELEM27	410	396	96.59%	Low SES	B
ELEM28	387	384	99.22%	Low SES	C
ELEM29	504	486	96.43%	Low SES	B
ELEM30	327	316	96.64%	Low SES	I
ELEM31	392	373	95.15%	Low SES	B
ELEM32	313	221	70.61%	High SES	A
ELEM33	640	614	95.94%	Low SES	A
ELEM34	310	303	97.74%	Low SES	C
ELEM35	675	475	70.37%	High SES	C
ELEM36	403	340	84.37%	High SES	A
ELEM37	662	582	87.92%	High SES	B
ELEM38	404	387	95.79%	Low SES	I
ELEM39	400	392	98.00%	Low SES	C
ELEM40	362	353	97.51%	Low SES	B
ELEM41	545	515	94.50%	Low SES	B
ELEM42	310	287	92.58%	Low SES	C
ELEM43	1197	1153	96.32%	Low SES	I
ELEM44	446	351	78.70%	High SES	B

AnonID	Total Students	Free & Reduced-Price Lunch		SES Level	School Grade
		Count	Percentage		
ELEM45	639	632	98.90%	Low SES	C
ELEM46	570	477	83.68%	High SES	A
ELEM47	221	217	98.19%	Low SES	C
ELEM48	865	811	93.76%	Low SES	B
ELEM49	453	381	84.11%	High SES	A
ELEM50	939	889	94.68%	Low SES	A
ELEM51	839	484	57.69%	High SES	A
ELEM52	448	233	52.01%	High SES	A
ELEM53	941	731	77.68%	High SES	A
ELEM54	1184	148	12.50%	High SES	A
ELEM55	594	542	91.25%	Low SES	B
ELEM56	512	407	79.49%	High SES	A
ELEM57	323	278	86.07%	High SES	A
ELEM58	367	86	23.43%	High SES	A
ELEM59	251	246	98.01%	Low SES	C
MIDD01	443	425	95.94%	Low SES	D
MIDD02	404	382	94.55%	Low SES	D
MIDD03	1002	256	25.55%	High SES	A
MIDD04	734	699	95.23%	Low SES	C
MIDD05	593	520	87.69%	High SES	B
MIDD06	715	654	91.47%	High SES	C
MIDD07	852	817	95.89%	Low SES	C
MIDD08	422	411	97.39%	Low SES	D
MIDD09	605	561	92.73%	Low SES	C
MIDD10	833	769	92.32%	Low SES	C
MIDD11	1218	998	81.94%	High SES	A
MIDD12	1162	936	80.55%	High SES	A
MIDD13	1322	1253	94.78%	Low SES	C
MIDD14	872	463	53.10%	High SES	A
MIDD15	675	608	90.07%	High SES	C
COMB01	1680	809	48.15%	High SES	A
COMB02	1190	575	48.32%	High SES	A
COMB03	978	400	40.90%	High SES	A
COMB04	1231	891	72.38%	High SES	A
COMB05	656	647	98.63%	Low SES	B
COMB06	374	364	97.33%	Low SES	C
COMB07	491	475	96.74%	Low SES	B
COMB08	393	389	98.98%	Low SES	I
COMB09	996	743	74.60%	High SES	A
COMB10	543	508	93.55%	Low SES	C
COMB11	1257	120	9.55%	High SES	A
COMB12	754	265	35.15%	High SES	A
COMB13	527	476	90.32%	Low SES	B
COMB14	610	277	45.41%	High SES	#N/A
COMB15	1793	955	53.26%	High SES	I
COMB16	763	448	58.72%	High SES	A
COMB17	397	385	96.98%	Low SES	C
COMB18	725	701	96.69%	Low SES	C
SRHS01	193	164	84.97%	High SES	B

AnonID	Total Students	Free & Reduced-Price Lunch		SES Level	School Grade
		Count	Percentage		
SRHS02	382	321	84.03%	High SES	A
SRHS03	3134	2117	67.55%	High SES	B
SRHS04	495	178	35.96%	High SES	A
SRHS05	2552	1283	50.27%	High SES	I
SRHS06	1579	1358	86.00%	High SES	C
SRHS07	2486	2013	80.97%	High SES	C
SRHS08	737	649	88.06%	Low SES	C
SRHS09	1479	1411	95.40%	Low SES	C
SRHS10	1446	1271	87.90%	Low SES	C
SRHS11	2757	2409	87.38%	Low SES	I
SRHS12	1445	1164	80.55%	High SES	C
SRHS13	364	153	42.03%	High SES	A
SRHS14	1347	1172	87.01%	Low SES	B
SRHS15	1942	1531	78.84%	High SES	C
SRHS16	930	831	89.35%	Low SES	C
SRHS17	482	169	35.06%	High SES	A

APPENDIX B

Teacher Demographics and Career Experience

School	Total Students	First Year		Early Career		Mid-Career		Late Career		Total Teachers
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
ELEM01	445	7	20.00%	11	31.43%	15	42.86%	2	5.71%	35
ELEM02	559	6	13.33%	14	31.11%	23	51.11%	2	4.44%	45
ELEM03	745	4	8.00%	14	28.00%	24	48.00%	8	16.00%	50
ELEM04	837	7	10.00%	16	22.86%	27	38.57%	20	28.57%	70
ELEM05	344	1	3.85%	5	19.23%	8	30.77%	12	46.15%	26
ELEM06	530	7	18.42%	17	44.74%	9	23.68%	5	13.16%	38
ELEM07	465	0	0.00%	14	40.00%	16	45.71%	5	14.29%	35
ELEM08	437	5	15.63%	3	9.38%	17	53.13%	7	21.88%	32
ELEM09	930	3	3.95%	24	31.58%	39	51.32%	10	13.16%	76
ELEM10	443	1	2.70%	5	13.51%	25	67.57%	6	16.22%	37
ELEM11	542	0	0.00%	10	28.57%	19	54.29%	6	17.14%	35
ELEM12	1066	2	2.63%	11	14.47%	47	61.84%	16	21.05%	76
ELEM13	439	1	3.13%	2	6.25%	16	50.00%	13	40.63%	32
ELEM14	248	5	26.32%	10	52.63%	4	21.05%	0	0.00%	19
ELEM15	453	9	26.47%	16	47.06%	5	14.71%	4	11.76%	34
ELEM16	355	0	0.00%	3	11.11%	15	55.56%	9	33.33%	27
ELEM17	581	1	2.50%	2	5.00%	25	62.50%	12	30.00%	40
ELEM18	615	3	7.32%	1	2.44%	17	41.46%	20	48.78%	41
ELEM19	379	1	3.23%	3	9.68%	20	64.52%	7	22.58%	31
ELEM20	689	0	0.00%	3	6.00%	30	60.00%	17	34.00%	50
ELEM21	884	0	0.00%	6	9.84%	28	45.90%	27	44.26%	61
ELEM22	430	2	6.06%	8	24.24%	16	48.48%	7	21.21%	33
ELEM23	650	0	0.00%	3	6.98%	24	55.81%	16	37.21%	43
ELEM24	424	5	16.13%	12	38.71%	9	29.03%	5	16.13%	31
ELEM25	1089	7	7.45%	13	13.83%	55	58.51%	19	20.21%	94
ELEM26	613	1	2.33%	1	2.33%	26	60.47%	15	34.88%	43
ELEM27	410	0	0.00%	5	16.13%	18	58.06%	8	25.81%	31
ELEM28	387	1	3.57%	12	42.86%	14	50.00%	1	3.57%	28
ELEM29	504	0	0.00%	20	55.56%	12	33.33%	4	11.11%	36
ELEM30	327	0	0.00%	4	16.00%	17	68.00%	4	16.00%	25

School	Total Students	First Year		Early Career		Mid-Career		Late Career		Total Teachers
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
ELEM31	392	1	3.23%	5	16.13%	22	70.97%	3	9.68%	31
ELEM32	313	2	8.33%	1	4.17%	14	58.33%	7	29.17%	24
ELEM33	640	1	3.33%	8	26.67%	18	60.00%	3	10.00%	30
ELEM34	310	1	5.26%	4	21.05%	10	52.63%	4	21.05%	19
ELEM35	675	1	2.27%	5	11.36%	31	70.45%	7	15.91%	44
ELEM36	403	1	3.13%	2	6.25%	14	43.75%	15	46.88%	32
ELEM37	662	0	0.00%	5	12.20%	28	68.29%	8	19.51%	41
ELEM38	404	3	8.33%	14	38.89%	16	44.44%	3	8.33%	36
ELEM39	400	4	13.33%	10	33.33%	13	43.33%	3	10.00%	30
ELEM40	362	1	3.57%	7	25.00%	17	60.71%	3	10.71%	28
ELEM41	545	1	2.94%	2	5.88%	24	70.59%	7	20.59%	34
ELEM42	310	6	20.00%	13	43.33%	10	33.33%	1	3.33%	30
ELEM43	1197	1	1.18%	34	40.00%	34	40.00%	16	18.82%	85
ELEM44	446	2	5.71%	6	17.14%	18	51.43%	9	25.71%	35
ELEM45	639	9	20.00%	11	24.44%	18	40.00%	7	15.56%	45
ELEM46	570	4	10.00%	6	15.00%	23	57.50%	7	17.50%	40
ELEM47	221	1	5.26%	1	5.26%	10	52.63%	7	36.84%	19
ELEM48	865	1	1.67%	5	8.33%	44	73.33%	10	16.67%	60
ELEM49	453	2	5.71%	5	14.29%	18	51.43%	10	28.57%	35
ELEM50	939	0	0.00%	5	7.94%	41	65.08%	17	26.98%	63
ELEM51	839	1	1.85%	7	12.96%	33	61.11%	13	24.07%	54
ELEM52	448	1	3.23%	3	9.68%	10	32.26%	17	54.84%	31
ELEM53	941	5	8.20%	8	13.11%	34	55.74%	14	22.95%	61
ELEM54	1184	8	9.41%	11	12.94%	40	47.06%	26	30.59%	85
ELEM55	594	1	2.63%	1	2.63%	14	36.84%	22	57.89%	38
ELEM56	512	4	10.00%	8	20.00%	20	50.00%	8	20.00%	40
ELEM57	323	1	3.85%	7	26.92%	14	53.85%	4	15.38%	26
ELEM58	367	1	3.85%	3	11.54%	14	53.85%	8	30.77%	26
ELEM59	251	5	20.83%	8	33.33%	8	33.33%	3	12.50%	24
MIDD01	443	2	6.25%	5	15.63%	22	68.75%	3	9.38%	32
MIDD02	404	6	18.18%	10	30.30%	17	51.52%	0	0.00%	33
MIDD03	1002	0	0.00%	6	11.32%	27	50.94%	20	37.74%	53
MIDD04	734	12	22.22%	14	25.93%	18	33.33%	10	18.52%	54
MIDD05	593	3	10.00%	6	20.00%	15	50.00%	6	20.00%	30

School	Total Students	First Year		Early Career		Mid-Career		Late Career		Total Teachers
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
MIDD06	715	1	2.27%	9	20.45%	21	47.73%	13	29.55%	44
MIDD07	852	15	24.59%	30	49.18%	13	21.31%	3	4.92%	61
MIDD08	422	10	26.32%	14	36.84%	12	31.58%	2	5.26%	38
MIDD09	605	6	14.63%	9	21.95%	12	29.27%	14	34.15%	41
MIDD10	833	7	15.22%	5	10.87%	22	47.83%	12	26.09%	46
MIDD11	1218	4	6.67%	6	10.00%	39	65.00%	11	18.33%	60
MIDD12	1162	6	10.71%	9	16.07%	30	53.57%	11	19.64%	56
MIDD13	1322	12	16.44%	11	15.07%	33	45.21%	17	23.29%	73
MIDD14	872	2	4.65%	3	6.98%	24	55.81%	14	32.56%	43
MIDD15	675	3	7.89%	5	13.16%	18	47.37%	12	31.58%	38
COMB01	1680	1	0.98%	20	19.61%	68	66.67%	13	12.75%	102
COMB02	1190	3	4.29%	2	2.86%	53	75.71%	12	17.14%	70
COMB03	978	1	1.67%	9	15.00%	33	55.00%	17	28.33%	60
COMB04	1231	4	5.00%	7	8.75%	42	52.50%	27	33.75%	80
COMB05	656	7	14.58%	19	39.58%	17	35.42%	5	10.42%	48
COMB06	374	2	7.69%	5	19.23%	10	38.46%	9	34.62%	26
COMB07	491	2	5.41%	10	27.03%	18	48.65%	7	18.92%	37
COMB08	393	1	4.00%	6	24.00%	14	56.00%	4	16.00%	25
COMB09	996	1	1.37%	10	13.70%	41	56.16%	21	28.77%	73
COMB10	543	5	13.51%	7	18.92%	17	45.95%	8	21.62%	37
COMB11	1257	5	6.33%	11	13.92%	40	50.63%	23	29.11%	79
COMB12	754	4	7.55%	6	11.32%	35	66.04%	8	15.09%	53
COMB13	527	3	7.32%	19	46.34%	14	34.15%	5	12.20%	41
COMB14	610	7	16.28%	19	44.19%	15	34.88%	2	4.65%	43
COMB15	1793	7	6.03%	23	19.83%	58	50.00%	28	24.14%	116
COMB16	763	1	1.85%	7	12.96%	26	48.15%	20	37.04%	54
COMB17	397	0	0.00%	12	42.86%	14	50.00%	2	7.14%	28
COMB18	725	6	10.00%	20	33.33%	27	45.00%	7	11.67%	60
SRHS01	193	4	23.53%	5	29.41%	6	35.29%	2	11.76%	17
SRHS02	382	1	5.26%	4	21.05%	12	63.16%	2	10.53%	19
SRHS03	3134	7	4.73%	26	17.57%	73	49.32%	42	28.38%	148
SRHS04	495	2	6.06%	7	21.21%	19	57.58%	5	15.15%	33
SRHS05	2552	2	1.92%	8	7.69%	69	66.35%	25	24.04%	104
SRHS06	1579	14	12.61%	25	22.52%	54	48.65%	18	16.22%	111

School	Total Students	First Year		Early Career		Mid-Career		Late Career		Total Teachers
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
SRHS07	2486	6	4.88%	15	12.20%	63	51.22%	39	31.71%	123
SRHS08	737	3	5.56%	15	27.78%	27	50.00%	9	16.67%	54
SRHS09	1479	7	8.43%	25	30.12%	34	40.96%	17	20.48%	83
SRHS10	1446	12	13.04%	30	32.61%	37	40.22%	13	14.13%	92
SRHS11	2757	5	3.65%	29	21.17%	72	52.55%	31	22.63%	137
SRHS12	1445	4	5.71%	5	7.14%	32	45.71%	29	41.43%	70
SRHS13	364	2	8.00%	5	20.00%	12	48.00%	6	24.00%	25
SRHS14	1347	1	1.47%	7	10.29%	42	61.76%	18	26.47%	68
SRHS15	1942	8	7.62%	14	13.33%	53	50.48%	30	28.57%	105
SRHS16	930	14	18.92%	19	25.68%	26	35.14%	15	20.27%	74
SRHS17	482	1	2.94%	8	23.53%	17	50.00%	8	23.53%	34

	First Year		Early Career		Mid-Career		Late Career	
	Low SES	High SES	Low SES	High SES	Low SES	High SES	Low SES	High SES
Elementary	69	79	241	232	327	903	100	449
Middle	57	32	84	58	115	208	35	113
K-8 Centers	26	34	98	114	131	411	47	171
Senior High	42	51	125	122	238	410	103	206
Totals per School Type, SES Level, and Career Stage	194	196	548	526	811	1932	285	939

	First Year		Early Career		Mid-Career		Late Career	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Elementary	16	132	69	404	162	1068	58	491
Middle	25	64	49	93	93	230	47	101
K-8 Centers	18	42	40	172	79	463	32	186
Senior High	42	51	112	135	261	387	131	178
Totals per School Type, SES Level, and Career Stage	101	289	270	804	595	2148	268	956

	First Year			
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other
Elementary	41	82	22	3
Middle	29	43	16	1
K-8 Centers	19	34	5	2
Senior High	34	39	18	2
Total per School Type, Race, and Career Stage	123	198	61	8

	Early Career			
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other
Elementary	142	233	91	7
Middle	42	66	33	1
K-8 Centers	62	105	44	1
Senior High	68	111	63	5
Total per School Type, Race, and Career Stage	314	515	231	14

	Mid-Career			
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other
Elementary	322	705	183	20
Middle	110	160	44	9
K-8 Centers	139	318	73	12
Senior High	209	311	108	20
Total per School Type, Race, and Career Stage	780	1494	408	61

	Late Career			
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other
Elementary	146	313	88	2
Middle	38	69	39	2
K-8 Centers	57	127	34	0
Senior High	84	142	75	8
Total per School Type, Race, and Career Stage	325	651	236	12

APPENDIX C

Principal Support Survey (PSS)

Part I: Principal Support Survey
Directions:
The following statements are about your perceptions of supportive behaviors provided by members of your school's administrative team. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements along a scale from STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) to STRONGLY AGREE (6) by filling in the appropriate circle.

My principal …		Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1.	gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
2.	supports my decisions.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
3.	trusts my judgment in making classroom decisions.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
4.	shows confidence in my actions.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
5.	provides adequate planning time.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
6.	provides time for various nonteaching responsibilities.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
7.	provides extra assistance when I become overwhelmed.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
8.	equally distributes resources and unpopular chores.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
9.	gives my undivided attention when I am talking	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
10.	is honest and straightforward with the staff.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
11.	provides opportunities for me to grow professionally.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
12.	encourages professional growth.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
13.	offers constructive feedback after observing my teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
14.	provides frequent feedback about my performance.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
15.	helps me evaluate my needs.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
16.	provides suggestions for me to improve my instruction.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Part II: Job Satisfaction

Directions:
The following statements are about your degree of satisfaction with teaching. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements along a scale from COMPLETELY DISAGREE (1) to COMPLETELY AGREE (6) by filling in the appropriate circle.

		Completely Disagree					Completely Agree
17.	I enjoy working as a teacher.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
18.	I look forward to going to school every day.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
19.	Working as a teacher is extremely rewarding.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
20.	When I wake up in the morning, I look forward to going to work.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
21.	I wish I had a different job than being a teacher.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
22.	If I could choose over again, I would not become a teacher.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
23.	I often think of leaving the teaching profession.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Part III: Career Information and Intentions

24. What is your Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Employee ID Number?

25. For how many years have you taught full-time?

26. Prior to teaching with M-DCPS, did you teach full-time outside of M-DCPS?

○ Yes   ○ No

27. How many years have you taught in total?

28. How many years have you taught with M-DCPS?

<div style="border:1px solid black; width:60px; height:40px;"></div>

29. For how long do you intend to teach?

Leave as soon as possible	Leave after this year	One to three years	Four to ten years	Eleven to twenty years	Until retirement
①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Principal Perceptions of Early Career Teachers Beliefs Around Principal Support

Directions:
The following statements are about your perceptions of how early career teachers would see principal support. Please indicate the extent to which you believe early career teachers would agree with each of the following statements along a scale from STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) to STRONGLY AGREE (6) by filling in the appropriate circle.

Early career teachers would say that their principal …	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1. gives him/her a sense of importance that he/she make a difference.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
2. supports his/her decisions.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
3. trusts his/her judgment in making classroom decisions.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
4. shows confidence in his/her actions.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
5. provides adequate planning time.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
6. provides time for various nonteaching responsibilities.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
7. provides extra assistance when he/she becomes overwhelmed.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
8. equally distributes resources and unpopular chores.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
9. gives his/her undivided attention when the teacher is talking	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
10. is honest and straightforward with the staff.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
11. provides opportunities for him/her to grow professionally.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
12. encourages professional growth.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
13. offers constructive feedback after observing his/her teaching.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
14. provides frequent feedback about his/her performance.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
15. helps him/her evaluate his/her needs.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
16. provides suggestions for him/her to improve his/her instruction.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Part II: Career Information

17. What is your Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Employee ID Number?

18. For how many years have you been a principal?

19. For how many years did you teach before becoming an administrator?

20. What is the grade configuration of your current school?

Elementary	Middle	K- 8 Center	Senior High	Other
①	②	③	④	⑤

Structured, A Priori Coding Scheme for Qualitative Date

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	
Expressive Support (M)	Emotional Support (ES)	1. Gives me a sense of importance that I make a difference	+	-
		2. Supports my (teacher's) decisions	+	-
		3. Trusts my judgement in making classroom decisions	+	-
		4. Shows confidence in my actions	+	-
	Professional Support (PS)	1. Gives me undivided attention when I am talking	+	-
		2. Is honest and straightforward with staff	+	-
		3. Provides opportunities for me to grow professionally	+	-
		4. Encourages professional growth	+	-

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	
Instrumental Support (B)	Instrumental Support (IS)	1. Provides adequate Planning time	+	-
		2. Provides time for various non-teaching responsibilities	+	-
		3. Provides extra assistance when I get overloaded	+	-
		4. Equally distributes resources and unpopular chores	+	-
	Appraisal Support (AS)	1. Provides data for me to reflect on following classroom observations	+	-
		2. Provides frequent feedback about my performance	+	-
		3. Helps me evaluate my needs	+	-
		4. Provides suggestions for me to improve my practice	+	-

What would be our short-hand codes?	Example: M.ES.1+ would be an utterance that indicated expressive, emotional support focused on giving the teacher a sense of importance and that s/he makes a difference that reduced work stress. Finally, we'd indicate whether the utterance indicated a positive or negative experience for the teacher (positive indicating a reduction in work stress, negative indicating an increase in work stress – implying impact on an early career teacher's likelihood to staying in the profession.

APPENDIX F

Letter of Introduction – Teacher

Dear Colleague,

This information is provided for you to decide whether you are willing to participate in a study about early career teacher's perception of the kinds of support provided by school principals. Please be aware that your participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time.

The study seeks to explore early career teachers' perceptions of principal support across a variety of school settings. The study is an exploratory mixed methods design—data are collected both via survey and also through a series of focus group interviews.

Participation in this study poses no known risks and/or discomforts. Completion of the short survey should take no more than 15 minutes. In order to thank you for your participation in the survey, we will select twelve participants at random to receive a $50 Amazon gift card. Those also willing to be involved in a focus group interview will also be provided a $10 Amazon gift card and the chance to win a $100 VISA gift card. There will be one VISA gift card per focus group.

Your participation in the study will contribute to our understanding and add to the research concerning the role of principal support in early career teacher retention. Upon completion of the study, our team will be more than happy to share our final outcomes and findings.

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact our dissertation chair, Dr. Michael F. DiPaola at mfdipaola@wm.edu. To report any dissatisfaction with

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the study, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Jennifer A. Stevens at jastev@wm.edu.

Please provide your consent to participate by clicking as appropriate at the bottom of this message with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of this study and its intended outcomes. A copy of this consent letter can be provided to you for your records if you wish.

Warmest regards,

Tracey Crews, Try Diggs, Thomas Fisher, Michael Lewis, and John Pace

Research Team Members

APPENDIX G

Letter of Introduction – Principal

Dear Colleague,

This information is provided for you to decide whether you are willing to participate in a study about early career teacher's perception of the kinds of support provided by school principals. Please be aware that your participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time.

The study seeks to explore early career teachers' perceptions of principal support across a variety of school settings. The study is an exploratory mixed methods design— data are collected both via survey and also through a series of focus group interviews.

Participation in this study poses no known risks and/or discomforts. Completion of the short survey should take no more than 15 minutes. In order to thank you for your participation in the survey, we will select two participants at random to receive a $50 Amazon gift card.

Your participation in the study will contribute to our understanding and add to the research concerning the role of principal support in early career teacher retention. Upon completion of the study, our team will be more than happy to share our final outcomes and findings.

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact our dissertation chair, Dr. Michael F. DiPaola at mfdipaola@wm.edu. To report any dissatisfaction with the study, please contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Jennifer A. Stevens at jastev@wm.edu.

Please provide your consent to participate by clicking as appropriate at the bottom of this message with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of this study and its intended outcomes. A copy of this consent letter can be provided to you for your records if you wish.

Warmest regards,

Tracey Crews, Try Diggs, Thomas Fisher, Michael Lewis, and John Pace

Research Team Members

APPENDIX H

Focus Group Protocol

Project: Perceptions of Early Career Teachers Regarding Support from Principals: Impact

of Teachers' Decisions to Remain in Teaching

Focus Group Time: _____

Focus Group Date: _____

Focus Group Place: _____

Facilitator/Moderator: _____

Focus Group Member Name
     and employee number: _____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Introduction

As you know, we are conducting a study about the influence that principal support has on the decision of early career teachers to remain in teaching. The project has several elements including looking at how early career teachers perceive the support received from their principals and how that support translates to the early career teacher's intention to remain at their particular school or remain in teaching altogether.

Have the participants read and sign the consent form.

Turn on audio recording device.

Questions

Directions: This is a focus group interview. Major questions are numbered in Arabic numbers while sub-questions and follow up probing questions listed hierarchically first by alphabet and then by roman numerals. Each question should be asked and the participants response recorded for transcription. The interviewer will take notes following each question to allow for analytic memoranda writing following the interview.

1. Reflecting back, what made you decide to become a teacher?

2. Take me back to your first year in the classroom, can you briefly describe:

    a. What was it like?

    b. What did you teach? Where? What grade level(s)?

    c. What experiences stand out most in your memory?

3. Principals have been shown to be key players in the experiences of early career teachers. As you think back over your experiences:

    a. How would you describe your interactions with your principal?

    b. How often did (do) you interact with your principal?

      i.   What do your interactions with him or her typically look like?

     ii.   How would you characterize the support you get from your
principal?

   iii.   Can you share examples of the support he or she has provided?

4. Think back over your experiences as an early career teacher, what have been the
most positive supports you have received?

   a.   Who has provided your most meaningful support?

5. In what other ways would you like to be supported?

6. Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding the support you have been
provided by your principal (or others)?

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ADMINISTRATIVE/LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

District Leadership
Miami-Dade County Public Schools – Academics, Accountability, School Improvement and Educational Transformation Office
- Assistant Superintendent, Division of Academic Support, 2019 - present
- Administrative Director, Educational Transformation Office, 2017-2019

School Leadership
Principal
- Miami Edison Senior High School, 2012-2017
Vice Principal
- Miami Norland Senior High School, 2011-2012
Assistant Principal
- Miami Norland Senior High School, AP for Curriculum, 2007-2011

Teacher Leadership and Professional Development Experience
- District Master Trainer for the Certified Assessor Training Tool, 2014-Present
- Florida International University, Principal Leadership Development, 2014-2015
- Harvard Graduate School of Education: Redesigning High Schools for Improved Instruction, 2010

Teaching Experience
School for Applied Technology, English Language Arts, 1995-2007
Miami Jackson Adult Education, English Language Arts, 1997-2000
Troy Academy Juvenile Detention Center, English Language Arts, Social Skills, 1996-2007

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

Executive Lead Principal, 2016-2017
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