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Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and their
Alignment with Current District Practices
in a Rural School District

by

Taneal Marie Wallace

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Education

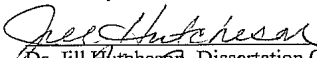
School of Education

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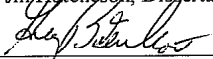
This dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Education
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education



Dr. Jill Hutcherson, Dissertation Chair

11/19/10

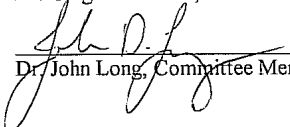
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Dr. Greg Batenhorst, Committee Member

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Date



Dr. John Long, Committee Member

11/19/10

Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Taneal M. Wallace

Signature: Jameal M. Wallace Date: 2-21-10

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Abstract

School districts' decisions across the country are influencing the satisfaction level of teachers, in both positive and negative ways. With statistics reporting as high as fifty percent of teachers leaving the profession in the first five years of experience (Ingersoll, 2003), determining the reasons for teacher dissatisfaction are important in correcting district practices to be more supportive and satisfying to teachers.

The purpose of this research study was to (a) determine the satisfaction level of teachers in a specific school district, (b) determine the practices building-level administrators have put into place and how they relate to the factors identified in the research as being contributive to teacher satisfaction levels, (c) determine the alignment of administrator practices and perceptions with those perceived by teachers in the same district, and (d) compare the results of the rural school district in this study with the results of a suburban school district to determine if demographics influenced the results of this research.

The results of this study showed that teachers in the rural school district were satisfied in their position and profession, as shown by their responses on a majority of questions asked in the Factors Influencing Teacher Satisfaction Survey. The majority of responses in the highly satisfied to moderately satisfied categories in this survey supported alignment between district practices and practices identified through the research as being supportive of positive teacher job satisfaction. In a comparison of the administrator follow up interview questions and teacher follow up interview questions, a strong alignment was present between the two groups' perceptions and

practices perceived to be in place within the rural school district. The results of this study when compared with the results of the suburban school district proved that demographics had no impact on teacher job satisfaction.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

Flourishing companies have put much thought and energy into designing and implementing systems and programs that help make a person's position more fulfilling and satisfying. In order to do this, an employer must know its employees and what is important to them. Michelli (2007) targeted what motivates individuals when he said, "If leaders understand what matters to employees, it is easier to excite and motivate those employees to give constant effort-even in the less enjoyable aspects of their jobs" (p. 75). Individuals satisfied and fulfilled by their work tend to be more productive and better advocates for their organizations. Additionally, companies with loyal, hard-working employees are simply more productive and reach higher levels of success.

The same effort is necessary for school districts to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. As events in society have unfolded, school districts experienced times when it was difficult to retain teachers and fill positions with individuals that were the best fit for the job. With recent studies examining teacher retention at all different points in their careers, school districts have begun to study the research on job satisfaction and their own current practices to determine what factors provide job satisfaction to teachers in their positions (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

Darling-Hammond (2003), Wiebke and Bardin (2009), and Brown (2002) found a significant number of teachers leave the education profession within the first five years of teaching. Consequently, educational institutions have been working to pinpoint the disconnect that exists between teacher preparation programs and the day-to-day work of a

beginning teacher. Education professionals are working to determine which factors, present during the first few years of teaching, are not conducive to retaining new teachers. These negative factors actually cause teachers to look at other options, and a significant number leave the education profession entirely before they have reached the midpoint in their careers. Several experts point to a variety of reasons beginning and experienced teachers leave the profession. When comparing education with other professions which require similar training, less support and lower compensation seem to be major differences (Bracey, 2007). Beginning teachers may find these two factors reason enough for leaving a profession where hard work and personal sacrifices are common. As Kopkowski (2008) noted, over half of the teachers that left the profession in 2003-2004, left in search of a new career.

While a large number of beginning teachers leave the education profession, they are not alone. Bracey (2007) identified, “Teachers with three years of experience or less and teachers with twenty or more years of experience were most likely to leave (8.1% and 11.2%, respectively)” (p. 634). Teachers at other points in their careers are looking at and pursuing other options for fulfilling work. However, the needs and desires of teachers beyond the first five years can vary significantly from those just entering the profession. This leads school districts to realize the importance of knowing employees at all different points in their careers. School districts also need to consider what experienced educators need to reach new heights and stay committed to the profession. Just as infants have different needs than teenagers, new teachers have different needs than tenured teachers. Fone (2006) described the relationship that exists between a supervisor and supervisee.

The relationship is described as being two-part, with the focus being on the personal and professional needs of the employee and how the supervisor can support the employee's efforts. Therefore, supervisors need to communicate with teachers at all different levels in their careers to ensure their professional needs are being met.

Unique individuals come together to create companies and organizations; therefore, practices that are satisfying and fulfilling for one organization may not meet the needs of another. It is of utmost importance for supervisors in all industries to listen to their employees and use the information learned to make informed decisions concerning the practices of the company or organization. Within school districts, and even more specifically in schools, supervisors and principals need to listen to the teachers (beginning and experienced) and communicate effectively. Supervisors need to build avenues which make it possible for communication to exist in order to share, appreciate, and consider each individual's needs, wants, and values; personally and professionally. To be a successful company and organization, it takes the work of many talented individuals working for a common purpose or goal.

Educators everywhere are working to better the lives of our youth and help every child become a well-rounded, contributing, successful member of society. To help teachers better serve the students in their classrooms, district and school-level supervisors must focus on the needs of beginning and experienced teachers in their buildings and how they can support them in order to better support the students. Beginning teachers often receive induction support, and when this continues into their second year of teaching, improvement in student achievement scores is the result. This supports the argument that

teacher mentoring or induction programs make a difference for new teachers (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Beginning and experienced teachers who feel supported in their work will be more capable of supporting students in the learning process.

Statement of the Problem

The primary goal of every decision made in education should be to do what is best for the students. With this in mind, one of the most important decisions educational professionals make is hiring the most talented teachers to fill America's classrooms. These individuals will have some of the greatest impacts on children during some of the most formative and developmental times of their young lives. During the academic school year, there are children across America that will spend more time with their classroom teacher than with their parents or guardians during the five-day school week. This fact reinforces the need to examine the issue of teacher job satisfaction and the factors that school districts can control to set classroom teachers up for successful experiences. If teachers are dissatisfied in their roles, there will be a negative impact on the students they teach; conversely teachers who are satisfied will have a more positive impact on their students (Mihans, 2008).

Educational research studies have shown a large number of classroom teachers abandon the education profession within the first five years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009; Brown, 2002). The number of teachers leaving the profession early in their careers can range from one-third of beginning teachers to as high as fifty percent (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2003). According to a study completed by Zhang, Verstegen, & Kim (2008), "2.2 million new

teachers, 666,000 (30%) will leave sometime during their first three years of teaching, and one million (45%) will turn over within the first five years of their teaching career” (p.19). Mihans (2008) believed attrition rates for beginning and experienced teachers will increase in the years to come. In a study conducted by Mertler (2001), over one-third of educators surveyed responded that if given the chance to start over, they would not choose to enter the teaching profession. These data indicate there are factors within the profession of education that are dissatisfying to a significant number of practitioners.

In order for school districts to increase teacher retention, district practices and teacher values must be aligned. Therefore, if school districts nationwide want to increase their ability to retain highly qualified teachers, they need to find what beginning and experienced teachers in their districts value and reexamine their practices to see if these two entities are in alignment. The focus of the teacher dissatisfaction problem is not the inability to find educators to replace those teachers that are leaving, but figuring out ways to retain teachers, so they may continue to grow and develop into sound educators who are successful with students in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2003). When educators abandon the profession they have trained for early in the process, it forces schools and districts to bring in new, possibly inexperienced individuals to replace them. Therefore, the investment the district has made in the leaving teachers is a loss for the district.

Darling-Hammond (2003) found the state of Texas, “estimated that the state’s annual turnover rate of 15%, which includes a 40% turnover rate for public school teachers in their first three years, costs the state a ‘conservative’ \$329 million a year, or at least \$8,000 per recruit who leaves in the first few years of teaching” (p. 8). School districts

are not reaping the benefits of their investment through a teacher that has used district-provided training and resources to grow and improve. Instead, they must reinvest in the new, replacement teacher in hopes that the resources they receive will help this teacher grow into a well-rounded educator.

A 1991 study completed by Quaglia, Marion, and McIntire indicated that over 50% of educators were dissatisfied with their work. While each teacher is unique, definite patterns exist among groups of teachers and the factors valued that influence their level of job satisfaction. There are a wide range of factors that contribute to determining how satisfied a teacher is with his/her position. These factors can be grouped into two different categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. In the same study completed by Quaglia, Marion, and McIntire, some sources of teacher job satisfaction were recognized as being rooted within teachers' personal values, opinions, feelings, and preferences. These factors resonated with teachers personally and centered on how schools and their practices, conditions, and environments made them feel. This study also recognized how satisfaction levels are determined by conditions of the job.

Each school is unique and the physical conditions of working environments, including resources, supplies, and classrooms, along with the safety features of a school, can have strong influences on teachers' levels of satisfaction. Research also found significant differences in these factors depending on the location of the school environment. When focusing on the physical conditions of a school, there were noted differences in the conditions identified in rural, urban, and suburban school districts. Quaglia, Marian, and McIntire (1991) reported rural teachers as having the most concern

over their working conditions. In the report, “America’s Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993-1994,” the National Council for Education Statistics found teachers working in more affluent areas tend to have less concerns over the physical aspects of their teaching environments (United States DOE, 1994). In these more prosperous areas, class sizes tend to be smaller, which results in lighter student-to-teacher ratios. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) and Mihans (2008) reported that schools serving lower income families have working conditions that were not satisfactory to most teachers. This resulted in a significant number of teachers looking for positions in schools with better extrinsic working conditions.

A single factor or a combination of the extrinsic or intrinsic factors can force a teacher into leaving the profession or looking for employment elsewhere. There are numerous factors for teachers to contend with while working in the school setting. The factors highlight a need for school districts to communicate with teachers to determine if the district’s current practices align with what the teachers perceive as important factors in determining their satisfaction level with their current position. In research studies focused on identifying factors in teacher satisfaction (Inman & Marlow, 2004; Quaglia, Marion, & McIntire, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003), researchers presented a variety of reasons that teachers are leaving the profession. All of these reasons can be classified into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic.

Collaborative Study

Taneal Wallace, the author of this study, *Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices in a Rural School*

District, collaborated with another researcher, Kimberly Dickens. The foundation, outline, research framework, and data collection instruments were created by two researchers. The researchers conducted this study in two different school districts, each with a unique demographic profile, resulting in a comparative study to determine how a school district's demographic profile can influence teachers' job satisfaction levels.

Of the two school districts, which served as study sites for this research, the rural school district is considered to be a small school district and will further be referred to in this study as the rural school district. The suburban school district is considered to be a large district and will be referred to in this study as the suburban school district. After data were collected through the course of this study, the researchers analyzed the data to determine how the results compared between the two different school districts. The researchers looked for relationships or patterns existing in the data and how the results were impacted by the demographic profile of the school district.

Wallace is a special education teacher and supervisor in the rural school district and conducted the research on teacher job satisfaction within this school district. After developing an interest in the teacher job satisfaction levels within her district, Wallace determined the rural school district did not have an instrument in place to measure the level of teachers' job satisfaction. Furthermore, Wallace conducted this research study within her school district to determine how the demographic profile of the rural school district influenced the results teachers expressed through the research study instrument. Wallace also desired to determine areas of strength in regards to teacher job satisfaction and to find areas of lower levels of job satisfaction which could be improved.

The rural school district strives to meet the needs of all students as portrayed through the district commitment, “All Students Will Learn-Whatever It Takes-No Excuses” (NWR1 Employee Handbook, 2009, p. 2). The rural school district utilizes the community, staff, and students to provide a high quality education. Their mission “to develop life-long learners by providing and supporting quality educational programs designed to develop skilled individuals who are prepared to make choices in a complex and ever-changing global community” (NWR1, Policy 0200, 2001) provides the basis upon which the district functions and forms its philosophy and vision.

The vision of the rural school district is built on five basic principles that provide steps that help to meet the goals of their mission statement. These five principles that form the rural school district’s vision are

1. To place the welfare of our children above all else
2. To have schools in which teaching and learning take place in a climate of mutual respect
3. To serve our public in a professional and courteous manner
4. To expect a high level of performance from our students and ourselves
5. To educate students to become a credit to themselves, their families, and their community. (NWR1, Employee Handbook, 2009, p. 2)

With these goals serving as a guide, the rural school district’s current practices were examined and a comparison was made between the practices that the district had in place to the practices that have been identified as key components to teacher job satisfaction as obtained through the literature review. Additionally, the alignment

between the perceptions of the teachers with the administrators' perceptions and practices regarding components of teacher job satisfaction were examined. The data collected through this study may help provide the rural school district with a realistic picture of their teachers' job satisfaction levels and where they stand in a variety of areas that have been determined to be important to current, practicing teachers in the profession. Data for this study were gathered from certified teachers within the rural school district in the form of an online survey and voluntary follow-up interview questions. Additionally, to determine practices within the district and specific practices that may exist from building to building, administrators were also surveyed and given the opportunity to participate in voluntary follow-up interview questions. All building administrators and certified teachers were given the opportunity to participate in this study to provide an overall picture of how the rural school district's practices are in alignment with the key factors of teacher job satisfaction.

Dickens, the collaborative partner for this research study, is an assistant principal at the middle school level in the suburban school district. With overall satisfactory marks on the annual survey completed by teachers in the area of teacher job satisfaction, Dickens began this study based upon an interest in determining what factors are most important to teachers in the suburban school district and what areas of the school district's practices were moderately satisfying and could be improved to highly satisfying levels. Within the overall satisfaction level of the teachers in the suburban school district, Dickens probed deeper into individual ratings of different factors to determine which

practices could be improved to raise moderate levels of job satisfaction to higher levels of job satisfaction.

The suburban school district works to provide a world class education to its students. Through their established mission, vision, core value statements, and goals, it is clear to students, staff members, and community members what they are striving for in their day-to-day work. Their foundation is based upon the following mission statement, “We do whatever it takes to ensure all students realize their potential” (RSD, Strategic Plan & CSIP, 2009). One major component to ensuring that students realize their potential is putting them with qualified educators in the classroom. Not only are these individuals qualified, but they should also be satisfied by their work in the education profession and in their school and classroom. Satisfied teachers in the classroom produce higher achievement results from their students, therefore helping students realize their potential.

Using the suburban school district’s mission, vision, and core value statements; the district identified six goals to describe how the district will help all students realize their potential and continuously improve every aspect of their schools. The goals presented for the suburban school district are in alignment with the focus of this study; to determine what satisfies teachers and use this information to improve practices to better the overall experience for our students. Each goal presented by the suburban school district can be compared with factors identified in the research as being important to teacher job satisfaction.

The suburban school district's goals are described as follows

1. Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals
2. Provide curriculum and instructional approaches that prepare students for an increasingly diverse and global society
3. Recruit, attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff to carry out the District's mission, goals and objectives
4. Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student and community involvement in District education programs
5. Provide and maintain appropriate instructional resources, support services and functional and safe facilities
6. Govern the District in an efficient and effective manner, providing leadership and representation to benefit the students, staff and patrons of the district.

(RSD, Strategic Plan & CSIP, 2009)

In an effort to fulfill these principles, as well as meet the suburban school district's commitment and mission, they aim to hire and retain highly qualified teachers. To do so, it is important to identify the level of satisfaction among educators employed within the school district and use this information to make recommendations to refine current practices. Additionally, teachers within the suburban school district may experience increased levels of teacher job satisfaction when an alignment exists between the practices in place by building-level administration and factors that are most important

to teachers. It is reasonable to say that highly satisfied teachers are more likely to remain in their current school district of employment.

Rationale for the Study

This study focused on two school districts; a small, rural school district and a large, suburban school district; and how they met the needs of their teachers. The suburban school district is historically a school district with acceptable marks in the area of teacher job satisfaction while the rural school has no data because the district has no tool to measure teacher job satisfaction. This study was rooted in the interest of the collaborative researchers to provide data and research to aid these districts in achieving higher levels of satisfaction from areas of moderate satisfaction to dissatisfaction in all areas of focus in this study.

While the overall marks of the districts in the area of job satisfaction have been adequate, the researchers examined individual factors and focused on areas with a recorded level of teacher job satisfaction below the level of highly satisfied, as measured on the Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey. The researchers used a combination of data collected to make recommendations to the school districts on how practices can be refined and the levels of job satisfaction can be increased.

The foundation of the study was laid by determining which factors were valued by teachers and establishing a framework of key factors that play an essential role in determining a teacher's level of job satisfaction. This framework was used to develop a survey to gather data from practicing teachers in the districts to gain their perspectives on how the districts' current practices matched the established framework for teacher

satisfaction. Additionally, the administration within the districts was surveyed to determine how they put the key factors into practice through their day to day work in the school setting. A comparison was then made between the current practices reported by school district administration and what was perceived to be in place by the teachers surveyed from each district. The purpose of this study was to determine areas of strength and weakness and use this data to make recommendations to refine current and develop new district practices.

In this study, one of the components was to determine if current district practices were in alignment with contributing factors to teacher job satisfaction. In order to do this, themes emerging from the literature review helped to determine the most prominent factors relating to teachers' job satisfaction. These research themes were then used to develop a framework to be used as a comparison tool for the school districts' practices with the factors cited most frequently in the current literature as being influential to the level of teachers' job satisfaction. The purpose of the framework was to determine if the practices of the school districts were in alignment with the literature review's most frequently cited factors as being influential to the level of teachers' job satisfaction.

In order to make the connection to teachers' job satisfaction for the school districts, an additional component was examined to determine how teachers perceived the effectiveness of each school district's current practices in regards to the prominent factors identified in the framework. After establishing the teachers' perceptions, the data were used to identify how the demographic profile for each district may influence the results in regards to the teachers' perceptions. The rural school district is located outside of St.

Louis, Missouri in Jefferson County, which consists of over 200,000 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to the 2008-2009 School Accountability Report Card (MO DESE, School Accountability Report Card, NWR1, 2009), the 121 square mile school district served 6,892 students in preschool through grade twelve during the 2008-2009 school year. In order to meet the needs of this student population, the district employs over 900 staff members which are composed of certified and support staff members in one administrative center, one high school, one seventh and eighth grade center, three intermediate schools, six elementary schools, and one early childhood center. The rural school district's students are 97.50% Caucasian, 1.0% Hispanic, 0.80% Asian, 0.50% African American, and 0.10% Native American. Over a third (35.10%) of the students participates in the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program. In 2008-2009, the rural school district reported an 84% graduation rate, 3.5% dropout rate, and 79.3% post-secondary education rate. The assessed valuation of the rural school district in 2008-2009 was recorded as \$476,250,236, with 49.0% of funding for the district coming from local resources (MO DESE, School Accountability Report Card, NWR1, 2009).

The data obtained from the rural school district's teachers regarding their current level of job satisfaction were compared to the suburban school district, a larger school district also located in the state of Missouri. The physical area of the suburban school district is classified as a small school district, located outside of Saint Louis, Missouri in part of Jefferson and Saint Louis counties, which together consist of just fewer than one million residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The suburban school district covers 150 square miles and serves approximately 150,000 residents over eleven different

municipalities lying within the district's boundaries (RSD, About Us, Demographics, 2009). The suburban district served 22,566 students according to the Missouri Department of Education's 2009 School District Report Card. The suburban school district is comprised of two administrative centers, four high schools, six middle schools, nineteen elementary schools, one individualized learning center, two elementary talent and gifted resource centers, and two early childhood education centers. The suburban school district's students are 82.7% Caucasian, 10.3% African American, 5.1% Asian, 1.8% Hispanic, and 0.2% Native American. This district has 12.7% of their student population participating in the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program. On this same report card, it is reported the suburban school district had a 95.2% graduation rate, 1.2% dropout rate, and 84.6% post-secondary education rate. The assessed valuation of the suburban school district was recorded as \$2,890,618,210, with 85.1% of funding for the district coming from local resources (MO DESE, School Accountability Report Card, RSD, 2009). These data were used to establish a demographic profile for each school district. The information obtained through this research study was compared between the two school districts to determine how the demographic profile for each school district influenced the results received regarding the satisfaction levels of teachers in each school district.

Finding high quality educators and retaining them in a school and district should be a top priority for every individual involved in educating children (Levin, 2008). The students should be the center and focus of each practice in a school district, and the direct impact those decisions have on the children are the basis for every practice in place. The

primary goal in education is to provide students with a solid, well-rounded, high-quality education. Darling-Hammond reported the research completed by Kain and Singleton (1996) in which they found in their study that teacher effectiveness in the classroom increased after the first few years in the profession. Therefore, keeping teachers and investing in them may help them grow into more well-rounded educators who should produce better achievement results for the students. With the state and federal governments placing strict guidelines upon our schools to measure student achievement, it is of utmost importance to have practices in place that help teachers feel satisfied in their roles in educating children. If the teachers feel fulfilled in their position, and they feel valued and have the necessary resources to help their students, it should help schools progress and improve in their achievement levels obtained by the students.

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed data gathered from the rural school district and the suburban school district concerning teachers' levels of job satisfaction and current practices in place by building administration. The results obtained from each of the two school districts were compared to determine if their demographic profile influenced the practices in place by each district and the levels of teacher job satisfaction reported. The results from the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey (Appendix A) provided insight to areas of strength and weakness concerning the factors identified from the literature review that contribute to the level of teacher job satisfaction and the effect they have on their teachers. The Administrator Participant Survey (Appendix B) responses outlined current practices in place within the schools of each respective school district. The

follow-up interview questions for teachers and administrators allowed the researchers to gain further insight to the perceptions of teachers in each district and how the administration uses the research on teacher job satisfaction to influence the practices they have in place within their school.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. Which factors identified in the literature review most contribute to teacher job satisfaction?
2. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices?
3. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction?
4. How does the demographic profile for the rural school district and the suburban school district influence the results in regards to current district practices and teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction?

Assumption

There is an underlying assumption that high levels of teacher job satisfaction will lead to the retention of teachers within the profession. This assumption is based upon the belief that satisfactory performing teachers who are satisfied in their work will choose to remain in the same profession.

Limitations of the Study

Individual school demographic profile. The rural school district is comprised of 12 schools ranging from early childhood education through high school. The school district covers approximately 120 square miles and serves six different communities within Jefferson County (Dr. Kevin Carl, Personal Communication, April 12, 2010). The suburban school district is comprised of 34 schools ranging from early childhood education through high school. This school district covers approximately 150 square miles serves over eleven different municipalities within Saint Louis County (RSD, About Us, Demographics, 2009). Therefore, teachers surveyed in this study may be considered representative of schools throughout their district, which may have variations in their demographic profile data in regards to items such as the percentage of students participating in the free and reduced lunch program, the percentage of students identified as special education students, and differing percentages of racial composition among their students.

Individual teacher demographic profile. Every teacher within the rural school district and the suburban school district was given the opportunity to participate in this study through the distribution of an online survey, with an opportunity to answer additional interview questions. Teachers across the districts may differ in their demographic profile in regards to items such as age, ethnicity, and gender. An individual teacher's demographic profile may have an influence on their responses to the questions posed through the online survey or follow-up interview questions. An attempt was made

to minimize this limitation by asking respondents to identify their gender, ethnicity, and age (within a range).

Indoctrination. Boote (2001) found that working closely with others over a period of time can lead to individuals learning the principles and beliefs of those who are within the same work environment. Continued work and personal relationships with one another can lead the individual to conform to shared principles and beliefs. Depending on the level of cohesiveness among a teaching staff, teachers may, over time, align their principles and beliefs to match those of the colleagues with which they spend the majority of their work time. The points of view of the participants may have changed over time to become more cohesive with the group in which they teach. This could affect the perceptions of the participants in regards to this study and their level of satisfaction with their current position, thus causing these principles and beliefs to be a limitation of this study.

Personal experiences. Educators bring with them their own personal experiences regarding education and teaching to their work each day. These experiences directly affect the perceptions they have towards specific areas within their chosen careers. Past experiences may have an influence on their feelings towards certain questions asked of them and how they evaluate their district's performance within the online survey and/or follow-up interview questions.

Survey distribution. The online teacher satisfaction survey was distributed to all teachers within the rural school district and the suburban school district during the last week of the 2008-2009 academic school year. Due to the demands the last week of school

can place upon teachers in regards to the closing of school and the completion of grade reporting requirements, the initial teacher response to the survey was low. Therefore, when the schools reopened in the fall, the survey was redistributed to teachers within the district. Additionally, the original administrator participation survey was submitted during the month of July, a time of year when administrators are typically working while the majority of the staff is on summer vacation. Again, due to a low response rate, the administrator participant survey was redistributed when the schools reopened in the fall semester. As a result of having two rounds of survey distribution, there is a possibility that some respondents completed the survey twice. Efforts were made to minimize this possibility by reminding teachers of the original distribution and setting the online survey to not allow repeat responses from the same computer.

Survey instruments. The survey instruments created for this study were created by the researchers and are not standardized documents. These instruments were developed for the purpose of this study based upon the research that was obtained and reviewed through the literature review prior to their creation. Within the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, the beginning stem of each question was, “How satisfied are you with . . . ?” This is a limitation of this survey instrument because it can insinuate to the respondent they are satisfied with the factor being addressed in the question. The questions were worded in this manner because it decreased the time commitment for survey participants and may have increased the number of teachers who chose to participate due to the ease of responding to the questions.

Teacher preparation program. The format and design each college follows to prepare its pre-service teachers can be unique in relation to other preparation programs. If the preparation teachers receive inadequately prepares them for their work in the classroom, this will have a negative impact on their desire and ability to remain in the profession. College preparation programs differ in intensity and format, and the preparation the participants in this study received may have a direct impact on their current level of teacher job satisfaction. In addition, a growing number of teachers are receiving their certification through alternative programs that do not include a four-year undergraduate degree in education. “Studies have found that teachers prepared in extended teacher education programs enter and remain in teaching at higher rates than teachers in traditional four-year programs, and remain at much higher rates than those prepared in short-term, alternative certification programs”(Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 21). For this reason, it is possible for the teacher preparation programs to influence the perception teachers develop regarding teaching and the education profession.

Teacher tenure. In the state of Missouri, teachers are awarded tenure after teaching for five successive years and one school day (the progression of continuing in the same position) in a Missouri school district (MOGA, Missouri Revised Statutes, 2009). Teachers who have not achieved this level within a school district are referred to as probationary teachers. Depending on the classification of the teacher participants in this study, their tenure status may have impacted the way they responded to the posed questions. With the tenured status, teachers experience a greater level of stability within the school district and are given employment priority over probationary teachers. This

factor could have impacted the comfort level of individual teachers to respond to answers honestly.

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Adequate Yearly Progress is a designation assigned to schools based upon their performance results from the mandatory state assessments given annually in the areas of mathematics and communication arts. The goal for all states is for students to reach the proficient designation level on state assessments by the year 2014 (United States DOE, Key Letters, 2002). Each year, there are benchmark requirements for each subgroup of students (school total, special education, free and reduced lunch program, Caucasian, African American, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, and limited English proficiency) regarding the percentage of students within each group that should be scoring in the proficient or higher range on the state assessment. If a school reaches the required percentage in each subgroup, it achieved adequate yearly progress.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An Individualized Education Plan is written for students with a disability as a way to provide them with a unique program that addresses their educational needs due to their disability. According to the U.S. Department of Education, “The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires education institutions, in collaboration with parents (and older students), to tailor an individualized education program (IEP) for each student with a disability who meets the unique needs of that student” (United States DOE, IEP section, 2010, ¶1). The IEP includes statements about a child’s present level of academic achievement and functional

performance, as well as, identification of annual measurable goals and related services for the next calendar year.

Induction program. An induction program is an outlined plan put into place to acclimate an individual to the teaching profession. The induction programs are often designed and mandated at the school district level; however they can be designed and mandated at the state level. Presently, there are 21 states that require participation in induction programs to obtain full licensure (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001). Induction programs include components such as assigning each new teacher a mentor, which is an individual with significant experience in a similar content area of teaching, forming new teacher support groups, providing specific professional development geared towards addressing new teachers' needs, and participating in opportunities to observe other teachers and be observed by the assigned mentor to receive feedback on current practices (Wong, 2004).

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). The Missouri Assessment Program measures student achievement in Missouri's public schools through the use of state-designed assessments in the areas of communication arts, mathematics, and science. These assessments measure students' progress towards specific proficiency goals established by the state. Students in grades three through eight participate in annual assessments in communication arts and mathematics. Students participate in the science assessment in grades five and eight (MO DESE, A Parent's Guide to the MAP Grade-level Assessment, 2008, p. 7). The MAP assessments are criterion-referenced standardized tests. Therefore, students' answers are scored based upon a predetermined

set of criteria, which results in a correct answer, and this determines their level of achievement on the assessment.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is the main piece of legislation concerning public school education in grades Kindergarten through twelfth grade. NCLB mandates that all states develop assessments to measure students' performance in communication arts and mathematics. States are required to measure yearly progress towards the goal of all children being proficient in communication arts and mathematics by the year 2014 (MO DESE, Understanding Your Adequate Yearly Progress Report, 2010).

School climate. According to the Best Practice Brief produced by Michigan State University, school climate refers to, "the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place" (School Climate & Learning, 2004, p. 2). School climate can also refer to the way the school building looks and feels to the students and staff that comprise the school community.

Teacher attrition. Teacher attrition, also described as teacher turnover, describes the number of teachers leaving the education profession on a yearly basis. Teacher attrition refers to teachers who exit the profession completely. For the purposes of this paper, teacher attrition will refer to those teachers that choose to leave the profession based upon their own desires and choices. This will not include teachers who have left the profession based upon financial constraints or downsizing which resulted in a reduction in teaching personnel or teachers who did not remain in the profession due to

the non-renewal of their contract based upon poor job performance (Teacher Attrition: A Costly Loss to the Nation and to the States, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005).

Summary

This study identified a framework that accounted for teacher job satisfaction and made a connection to how the rural school district's and the suburban school district's practices aligned with the established framework based upon the findings in current research. The satisfaction of teachers and their perception about their job and their chosen profession can have a direct effect upon student success, development, and achievement in their daily lives, on classroom assessments, and on standardized tests, such as the assessments that comprise the Missouri Assessment Program. For this reason, it is the responsibility of the educational system to ensure that qualified, prepared teachers are entering the education profession, and more importantly, are being retained and staying in the profession beyond the first few years. To do this, school districts must review and reflect upon their current practices to ensure they are in alignment with the important elements in teacher job satisfaction identified in the research process.

Through the identification of these factors, school districts can begin to reform their educational practices based upon the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction. Identifying why teachers leave the profession and what components of their job they felt ill-prepared for or received inadequate support to handle may help school districts identify their areas of strength and weakness and help them implement practices to better retain their teachers. This, in turn, may result in a higher level of teacher job satisfaction. In attempting to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and achieving

Adequate Yearly Progress, it is imperative for qualified teachers to feel valued and satisfied and be committed to the profession beyond their first years of experience.

Teachers face daily personal and professional challenges, which affect them in numerous ways. These challenges can have an influence in the classroom. According to Bratlien and McGuire, challenges and issues “must be addressed because of their impact on the state of education in the United States and the future of our culture” (2002, Background, ¶ 1). The review of the literature addresses the framework for teacher job satisfaction. A discussion of the framework and the educational strategies to increase job satisfaction are included in chapter two.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Predicting factors that will determine the level of employee job satisfaction is an important practice. When examining studies focused on global job satisfaction, factors determined to be important by study participants were identified. In a study conducted by Heckert et al. (2002), it was determined that the most important job characteristics were an interest in the position's focus area, having a sense of accomplishment, and making use of personal abilities. In a 1997 study conducted by Stamps (as cited in Harris, Winskowski, & Engdahl, 2007), high levels of job satisfaction were found when individuals experienced positive relationships in the workplace. These are global factors that can be found in a myriad of settings. This study focused on determining which specific factors in the profession of education have the greatest impact on the level of job satisfaction teachers perceive in their chosen profession.

A review of the literature presented a solid foundation of information identifying major factors in the profession of education that contribute to teacher job satisfaction including statistical information regarding teacher attrition, teacher turnover, and teacher retention rates, which in turn prompted research studies to determine the primary factors that contribute to teachers leaving the profession and the practices that are crucial to retaining qualified educators in the classroom. This chapter outlines and describes the factors identified as having an effect on teacher job satisfaction and how they impact retention rates in the profession. These factors included new teacher induction programs, administrator support, teacher compensation, working conditions, and teacher autonomy. The research reviewed in this study identified key practices, conditions, and components

related to each major factor. These practices may play a role in keeping teachers satisfied or have negative impacts on the satisfaction levels of teachers. From the research reviewed, the collaborative researchers identified key practices, components, and conditions that effect teacher satisfaction in both positive and negative ways through the research reviewed.

Preparation for Post-Secondary Study

Previous research reviewed for this study provided information that highlighted the rates at which teacher attrition occurs in the education profession. In a report by Ingersoll and Smith (2003), results were used from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) to draw the conclusion that nearly half of beginning teachers leave the profession within the first five years. Wiebke and Bardin (2009) reported, “14% of new teachers leave by the end of their first year, 33% leave within three years, and almost 50% leave in five years” (p. 34). Darling-Hammond (2003) reported that since the beginning of the 1990s, more teachers leave the profession than individuals coming into the profession. This finding has been attributed to the rise in retirement rates as Baby Boomers near retirement age, but Ingersoll (2001) pointed out that less than 20% of the attrition rate results from retirement. These data show a need to focus on the factors that contribute to these statistics, which report a significant number of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years.

School and district climate plays a role in the satisfaction level of educators. With the startling number of teachers leaving the profession, it is evident that district practices need to be examined to determine the alignment between what the research supports as

good practices for teachers and what the district actually has in place to support its educators.

Motivation for Study

Teachers are placed in classrooms across the country to work directly with the students to achieve academically centered goals. These individuals have a direct impact on the students they teach and with whom they interact. Their outlook, ideals, morals, and perceptions impact the experience students have in their classroom directly and indirectly. When teachers in the classroom are satisfied in their position, they create a satisfying environment for their students (Mihans, 2008). Over time, as individuals continue in a profession, they experience professional growth that comes with practice, repetition, refinement, and development (Ost, 2009). Because of this, it is imperative that districts across America determine how their current practices affect teachers and their willingness to stay in the profession. If school districts can determine how their current practices compare with factors being identified as important to the satisfaction level of teachers, they may be able to adjust their position to create a more desirable environment for teachers.

When significant cause for change is absent in an organization, individuals assume that the order is in place and employees are generally happy with their position and the relationships they establish with their colleagues. However, if a forum is not in place for individuals to offer insight and feedback, they most often will not come forth with their feelings and emotions. It is important for school districts and schools to provide opportunities for individuals to share their perceptions regarding their positions

and what it feels like to be a part of the organization. It is through these avenues that issues, problems, and feelings often arise of which the administration is unaware. Hensley and Burmeister (2006) reported, “In trusting and supportive environments, communication is open, honest, and free-flowing” (p. 27). Therefore, when the environment is not optimal, avenues need to be put into place to provide school districts an accurate picture of the effect their practices have on the satisfaction level of teachers and how this impacts their desire to remain in the profession long-term. This study was designed to focus on two school districts (rural and suburban) to determine the effect current practices have on teachers’ perceptions of job satisfaction. Additionally, this study will examine how these same practices align with research-proven practices that support positive levels of teacher job satisfaction.

Theory

This review of the literature centers on factors affecting teachers in education and how they impact their decision to remain or leave the education profession, provide precedent and theoretical information concerning practices that have been documented and recorded by educational organizations and the impact they have had on their teaching force. The profession of education was examined over a period of time and the trends and patterns were isolated, which allowed common practices to surface within school districts and schools. Practices that produced positive results in the satisfaction levels of teachers were identified. The research provides information related to important aspects of teaching and conditions that are optimal for teacher success. These identified factors and

conditions may help other school districts refine their practices to help improve the retention of teachers in the profession, especially teachers in their beginning years.

New teacher induction programs. Given the reported statistics, attention has been given to determining the reasons teachers are leaving the profession in large numbers. Determining the factors and reasons teachers are leaving will shape the recommendations given to school districts to improve teacher retention. Mihans (2008), Kopkowski (2008), Wiebke and Bardin (2009), and Darling-Hammond (2003) reported the type of mentoring programs provided for first year teachers as a top factor that contributed to teachers being retained in the profession. Numerous beginning teachers arrive in the teaching profession directly from the completion of their studies at the university level. If the teacher preparation program inadequately prepared the teachers to take on the demands of the teaching, they will be more likely to leave the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003). As Wiebke and Bardin (2009) pointed out, from day one, beginning teachers are expected to manage a classroom and implement a curriculum to meet the expectations of the school district, individual school, and of the parents who send their children to these classrooms on a daily basis. Mihans (2008) identified the profession of teaching as the only one that puts the same responsibilities and expectations upon beginning educators as it does veteran teachers. New teachers placed in this position have had little experience in the actual classroom role before they are given the responsibility of their own classroom.

During the capstone of incoming teachers' collegiate experiences, they take sole responsibility for their cooperating teacher's classroom for a limited amount of time. Even though the time is limited, pre-service teachers who experience student teaching are

more likely to remain in the profession than their counterparts who do not partake in this process and thus have a 14% greater chance of leaving the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

While there are benefits to participating in the student teaching experience, new teachers sometimes encounter a disconnect between what was learned in university courses of study and what the day to day responsibilities and activities are for a beginning teacher. For example, Kopkowski (2008) recalled little instruction or guidance on how to handle student discipline incidents when they arose in the classroom, which is an important element of classroom management. Because of the identified disconnect between the university classes and programs to the realistic duties of a practicing teacher, Moore and Sampson (2008) called on practitioners to focus on building collaborative partnerships between universities and public schools. According to Wiebke and Bardin (2009), new teachers are for the most part on their own, working to ensure student learning will take place while still taking care of other responsibilities that rest upon a classroom teacher. According to Inman and Marlow (2004), some beginning teachers experience feelings within the first days of classroom teaching that cause them to question their profession choice.

As much as teacher preparation programs are designed to prepare the student to be an independent classroom teacher, there are still very few experiences available that provide new teachers an opportunity to experience the feeling of being solely in charge of a group of students. The main reason for school districts to have in place strong induction programs is to acclimate new teachers to the profession and provide them a support

system to rely on when the demands of the job become strong and help is needed to handle themselves in a myriad of situations that may arise.

Induction programs within school districts have provided benefits to beginning teachers. Ingersoll (2003) and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) reported that using mentoring programs can raise retention rates for beginning teachers. Darling-Hammond (2003) reported that mentoring programs help to raise the retention rate of beginning teachers. It allows them to improve in several areas of teaching including their instructional skill set and their attitudes towards their profession, which increases their feelings of efficacy. Darling-Hammond pointed out that these programs must be well-designed and well-supported to be effective (2003). These mentoring programs can provide teachers the type of support they need to remain in the profession. The Educational Issues Policy Brief published in September 2001, "Beginning Teacher Induction . . ." noted programs in California, New York, and Ohio that have reduced the rate teachers leave the profession. A beginning two-year teacher induction program implemented in the state of California, known as the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program reduced the states attrition rate by 30% while the program implemented in Rochester, New York retained 95% of beginning teachers after ten years in the district. Established induction programs implemented in school districts have impacted the retention rates for specific states.

Induction programs for beginning teachers are not required in every state. By 2002, 33 states within the United States offered induction programs for teachers (Ingersoll, 2003). The increased amount of teachers exiting the educational field in the

beginning years of their career indicates a need for a comprehensive induction program in every school district (Brown, 2002). The presence of a program does not guarantee success for beginning teachers. For a program to be successful, researchers have identified crucial components to the induction program that will help improve the success rate of beginning teachers. The Alliance for Excellent Education identifies crucial components to induction programs: common planning time, mentoring, professional development, a network group of teachers, a standards-based evaluation, and release time for the mentor and mentee (Understanding and Reducing Teacher Turnover, 2008). Programs which include these crucial components have shown to be more successful for beginning teachers.

Pairing a beginning teacher with an experienced, mentor teacher is a critical component in the induction process (Moir, 2003; Ingersoll, 2003; “Beginning Teacher Induction”, 2001; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Developing relationships with colleagues whom new teachers can confide in will help them feel more comfortable in their position and allow them to gain insight and expertise by sharing information with other educators (Inman & Marlow, 2004). Mihans (2008) reported that in order to increase teacher retention, mentoring partnerships for beginning teachers are a critical component. To make an impact, the individuals identified to serve as mentors must experience some type of training to prepare them for the role they agree to fulfill. In addition to working with a trained mentor, Wiebke and Bardin (2009) and EIPB (2001) would like to see teachers serving as full-time mentors to their mentees in programs of one to two years duration. Choosing a mentor that has experience in the same content area as the beginning teacher

can also provide credibility to the mentor in the eyes of the beginning teacher (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009).

Not only do beginning teachers benefit from induction programs utilizing teacher mentors, veteran teachers view the role of a mentor as a factor that contributes to staying in the profession. The opportunity to mentor beginning teachers appeals to veteran teachers because it provides an avenue for them to share their experiences and expertise with new teachers and also provides them an opportunity to learn from others (Ingersoll, 2003; Mihans, 2008). Darling-Hammond (2003) has also identified benefits to enlisting veteran, experienced teachers to fill the mentor role for beginning teachers. Darling-Hammond found that “these programs provide a new lease on life for many veteran teachers” (2003, p. 12). The collaborative nature of a mentor partnership entices teachers to remain in the profession because it creates new and challenging situations for them, in addition to providing experienced teachers an opportunity to share their experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2003 & Mihans, 2009). The mentoring process can provide benefits to both the new teacher and the veteran teacher, who is serving in the role of a mentor.

In addition to matching beginning teachers with an experienced teacher to serve as mentor, there are other components and characteristics that help induction programs retain teachers and set them up for success. Programs have higher success rates when they include all new teachers in the program, the program extends beyond the first year in the classroom, beginning teachers are responsible for less students and/or class/course assignments, and they participate in a comprehensive review based upon best practices in the classroom (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001). The first year

of teaching is unique in regards to the experiences a new teacher faces. Therefore, if the supportive partnership can continue beyond the first year, this will allow new teachers the opportunity to continue to refine their practices after having one year of experience in the classroom to use as a foundation of knowledge. Conway (2006) identified the fact that teachers beyond their first year face challenges that go beyond making it from day to day in the classroom. Since nearly half of K-12 educators leave the profession during the first five years (Budig, 2006), Conway (2006) found logic in continuing mentoring programs beyond the first year.

Effective programs also utilize interventions and practices that include providing release time for collaboration among educators, participating in professional development opportunities to refine instructional skills, having a common planning time during the school day for beginning teachers to collaborate with other educators who are responsible for teaching similar classes, and having a network of teachers in which supportive relationships can be developed (Understanding and Reducing Teacher Turnover, 2008). Because the mentorship is such a vital part of the induction program, providing new teachers with time to collaborate with mentoring teachers is critical, as mentioned above, in the form of common planning time and providing release time to partnerships during the contracted school day. "Induction provides the essential bridge for a beginning teacher between being a student learning about teaching and becoming a professional teacher" (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001, p. 6). Individuals stepping into the classroom for the first time need structure and support to transition them to the next level. Significant gains can be measured for beginning teachers when they

receive dedicated and continual support from a professional, well-trained mentor (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Therefore, the level of support given to new teachers is a primary factor in contributing to their length of time in the profession.

The beginning induction program for new teachers should be representative of a foundation for the educator to stand on. If the foundation is strong and solid, it will set the teacher up for success. If the foundation is weak and lacks critical components, the teacher will struggle in managing all the critical components of being a successful classroom teacher. A positive feeling is rooted in the teachers when they feel confident about what they know and they feel that how they teach makes a difference in the education of their students. Ma and MacMillan (1999) found professional competence to be a key contributor in teacher job satisfaction, and divided competence into three categories based on teacher belief. The first category can be described as a belief by teachers that they have the prerequisite subject-content knowledge and skills in sufficient detail to be able to teach the particular course effectively and with confidence. The second factor is the teachers' belief that they have access to effective and current instructional strategies and skills for their use. The final category can be expressed as their ability to use their subject-content knowledge in conjunction with instructional techniques to enable students to meet the standards for the course they are being taught.

After educators become adjusted to the profession over time, their focus becomes more curriculum and instructionally centered (Conway, 2006), and other factors will contribute to their satisfaction levels in the profession and in the classroom. The amount and type of support teachers receive from their building-level administrator will have a

large impact in teachers' perceptions of their profession (Marston, Brunetti, & Courtney, 2005). Administrator support penetrates many factors in teacher job satisfaction and is an important element throughout all practices put into place by school districts including the rural and suburban school districts.

Administrator support. As Wiebke and Bardin (2009) pointed out, a supportive work environment for any organization is crucial to the group's success. Within a school, administrators play a key and central role to the success of the school. Teachers repeatedly identify the support they received from their school principal as a crucial factor in their profession and in specific aspects of their everyday work (Mihans, 2008; Rafoth & Foriska, 2006). Goldberg and Proctor (2000) reported that there is a significant correlation between the behaviors of administration and teacher job satisfaction. In 2003, Richards found the lack of support from administrators was the number one reason teachers left the profession. More specifically, Richards reported that teachers needed to be emotionally supported, respected, praised, and acknowledged by their administrators.

Lack of support is a major cause of burnout and dissatisfaction. Teachers crave effective principals who make an effort to become personally involved in supporting teachers. Principals must create environments in which positive support is apparent. Job satisfaction has been shown to increase when regular, supportive feedback is a high priority for those in supervisory positions. (Mihans, 2008, p. 23)

According to Hurren (2006), the most frequently cited reason for teachers leaving the profession, are those related to the school principal. There is often the assumption that

administrators will be accessible, respectful, and involved in the life of the school.

However, administrators can fail to support their staff and seem inaccessible and aloof.

One major key to teacher satisfaction is having the support and respect of the school administration (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Bloom, Danilovich, and Fogel found in their study at the University of California-Santa Cruz that well-prepared principals have a positive effect on student achievement, which is a result of their daily work within the school and with the teachers (2005). Teachers want their school administrators to be supportive of various aspects of their school day. Marston, Brunetti, and Courtney explained,

The roles teachers wanted administrators to play included providing leadership; setting the tone/climate of the school; providing support for teachers in the form of positive feedback, disciplinary matters, resources, professional growth, hiring competent staff, and getting rid of incompetent teachers; participating in classrooms; and serving as a buffer between the teachers, parents, and community. (2005, p. 486)

The expectations for building administrators are high and they must possess leadership skills that allow them to be knowledgeable and supportive in a variety of facets in the school community. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found in their research study entitled, *The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers*, those educators who voluntarily moved to different school buildings during the four-year study named administrator dissatisfaction as being a top factor, being mentioned more frequently than any other reason. As Whitaker (2002) pointed out, great schools are led by great principals. These

individuals never lose sight of the purpose of their everyday work and they morph themselves into myriad roles to help all individuals in the school reach success.

Support given by a school administrator is crucial to teachers in all aspects of their career and it does not always look the same from school to school and from teacher to teacher. Along with the support provided by beginning teacher mentor programs, teachers are also concerned about the level of support they receive from their building-level administrators. As a beginning teacher, any type of feedback and support an administrator can offer is valuable and can often have a greater impact than feedback they may receive from a peer teacher (Bender, 2005). Improving a teacher's level of confidence and their ability to work through challenging experiences increases when they have the support of their building principal (Bender, 2005). Arranging tours of the school's attendance area, selecting high-quality mentors, interviewing teachers to develop a profile of their expertise, creating a schedule for classroom visits and conferencing, peer-coaching, and having an open-door policy are steps a building administrator can do to acclimate a new teacher to their school and to the profession (Brown, 2002). Not only is a new teacher's mentor a large component of the induction program, but the building principal is a key factor. Bender (2005) suggested after her work with beginning teachers, it is often the building principal's feedback and approval new teachers are searching for. The individual in this role is held in high esteem in the eyes of someone new to the profession.

Of the many qualities teachers desire their administrators to possess, Hurren (2006) determined that one of the most important qualities was a sense of humor. Not

only was this evident in Hurren's study, but also in studies conducted by Moxley and Olson (1988), Wilson (1991), and the United States Department of Education, as cited by Hurren in his report. The demands of the teaching profession are intense, and teachers look to their leaders to provide avenues to relieve some of the stress that is presented with this position. This can be done in the form of laughter; therefore, cementing the importance to educators that the leaders have a good sense of humor.

Managing student discipline in the classroom has been identified as a challenge for beginning teachers (Tulley & Chiu, 1995). Therefore, administrator support in this area can help lead teachers to put sound practices in place to help facilitate positive situations for students in the classroom. With little practical experience in dealing with student misbehavior, having the expertise to rely on in the building administrator can be a comforting factor to teachers. Wiebke and Bardin (2009) identified having administrative support in dealing with student behaviors as being an essential component of a school leader. Administrators can provide their support to discipline situations and decisions by becoming involved. Teachers appreciate when administrators get involved with discipline, especially when the students are perceived as being disruptive or aggressive and measures are taken to remove the student from the classroom environment (Rafoth & Foriska, 2003). New teachers will feel supported in student discipline issues if they receive reinforcement from their building administrator on the actions they take to manage situations and they perceive their administrator as being supportive during their induction period.

All of the teachers that participated in the study conducted by Richards (2003) indicated the level of support they receive in regards to discipline issues was directly related to the extent of their job satisfaction. Unruly discipline problems erode the teacher's desire to invest time and energy in lesson plans that are more interesting for students (Kopkowski, 2008). A supportive work environment includes support for student discipline. Beginning teachers, as well as novice teachers, indicate that discipline is a major concern. In 1996, a survey conducted by Langdon determined that discipline was the key reason that teachers left the profession. More recently, Inman and Marlow (2004) conducted a survey and the results were the same: disruptive students contribute to the demoralization of teachers.

Teacher leaders, just as beginning teachers, are in need of support from their administrators (Lattimer, 2007). As teachers progress in their careers and reach a level beyond a beginning teacher, an administrator's support is still a primary factor in teachers' job satisfaction. Mihans (2008) and Kopkowski (2008) both identified the level of support given by administrators to their teachers as a primary factor in teacher attrition. Raftery and Foriska (2006) reveal that teachers desire a leadership balance from their supervisor. They want the principal to be a leader, but they also want the principal to provide the staff with leadership opportunities. Knowing when to lead and when to step back is a skill effective school administrators possess. Rooney (2007) described the satisfaction some teachers feel when administrators put a situation, issue, or problem into the hands of the teachers and let them use their expertise to create and promote a solution. An administrator's role is to create an environment of continual improvement and put the

necessary resources into place for the teachers to be successful (Rooney, 2007). As Lattimer (2007) noted, teachers appreciate when administrators are not scared to present the school's current reality to the staff members. In interviewing teacher leaders, Lattimer identified an individual who reported her most rewarding time as a teacher was when her building principal presented an unpleasant reality to the staff about their school and empowered them to come up with a solution (2006). It was clear that the principal would be there for support, but the teachers were trusted to solve the problem given their expertise in educating students. Certo and Fox (2002) found through their study, *Retaining Quality Teachers*, that teachers viewed having quality administration as one of their top three reasons for remaining in the profession. When looking at this reason more in-depth, teachers were highly satisfied when their work was supported and when they were treated as professionals by the administration in their building.

Through the study conducted by Certo and Fox (2002), the importance of support in the work environment was evident in their findings. They found, with salary excluded, that a lack of administrative support at the district and building-level was the number one reason teachers leave their position. This was also confirmed with their finding that very involved teachers named having an unsupportive place to work as their top reason for leaving the education profession. In this same study, when teachers were asked to identify the reasons they felt teachers left the profession, building-level support was named, along with compensation and other employment opportunities outside of their current position. Teachers view a supportive work environment as a top priority in their chosen profession.

Support is a critical component to teachers in the education profession, especially support provided by the administration. The opinions and insights administrators can offer to their teachers are very valuable to them personally and to their work (Bender, 2005). Teachers need to know that they have someone who trusts their professional judgment, will advocate for them, and will ensure they are set up in an optimal environment to give their best to their students.

Teacher compensation. Within the framework for teacher satisfaction, in addition to administrator support and strong beginning teacher induction programs, educators also consider their compensation, which is comprised of their annual salary and their benefits provided by their employing school district, as a top factor in determining teachers' level of job satisfaction. Compensating employees is a major factor in education, accounting for eighty percent of public funding designated for education (Zhang, Verstegen, & Kim, 2008). Among the reasons the American Federation of Teachers has identified for beginning teachers leaving the profession, salary and lack of support are two of the top reasons these teachers are moving on to other professions (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001). Teachers are concerned about low monetary compensation (Marston & Courtney, 2002). In a research study conducted by Certo and Fox (2002), the number one reason, as perceived by other teachers, why educators leave the profession is salary.

When the education profession is compared with others, the numbers do not always match up. In Mihans' 2008 report, students graduating with a four-year degree and comparable experience levels are earning approximately 12% more in weekly

salaries than those graduates that entered the teaching profession. This divide can be even greater when the education and experience of specific types of graduates are examined. For example, students who study mathematics and science may find larger gaps in compensation depending upon their decision to either teach their area of study or enter another aspect of the scientific or mathematics field (Mihans, 2008). In a study conducted by the Economic Policy Institute, Allegretto, Corcoran, and Mishel (2008) used skill criteria to study several different jobs. Their study concluded that public school teachers earned approximately 15% less in weekly earnings than workers in comparable categories. Bracey (2007) showed the teaching profession's salaries trailed all other occupations with similar skill criteria except for one, the clergy. Mihans (2008) and Darling-Hammond (2003) reported that teachers are earning on average less in annual salary when they were compared with individuals in careers that required similar educational preparation. In Darling-Hammond's report, data was cited from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that showed teacher salaries ranking below nurses, accountants, dental hygienists, and computer programmers (2003). Darling-Hammond recognized that most teachers are intrinsically motivated, but still desire a career with a competitive salary. As Mihans identified, salaries for teachers must increase in order to be competitive with other occupations (2008).

In a majority of school districts nation-wide, educators' compensation is based upon two key factors, years of experience and level of education (Goldhaber, DeArmond, Player, & Choi, 2005). These two factors constitute a salary schedule, which ensures that all teachers within a specific district receive the same compensation if they have the same

years of experience and educational level. This salary is in no way dependent on job performance or on the achievement of the students assigned to each specific teacher (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). When the salary schedule system was initially instituted, it was designed to eliminate favoritism among teachers and other inequities that may exist (Toch, 2009). However, using a salary schedule translates into all teachers with the same experience and college credits earned receiving the same compensation, regardless of their job performance (Toch, 2009).

School districts have tried to implement programs to increase the compensation of teachers. One example is merit pay, or pay incentives. Bishay (1996) found that paying teachers extra money as an incentive to go above and beyond did little to increase teacher motivation. Toch (2009) pointed out, merit pay is an idea that has been around for decades, but is often plagued by problems, which mainly include correctly defining the terms for receiving incentive pay. According to Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp (1998), districts have tried to entice teachers into the profession with financial incentives such as scholarships, grants, and the ability for retired teachers to work part-time without discontinuing the payout of retirement benefits. In addition, there are districts that are also giving signing bonuses to allure new teachers into their district. Increasing teacher compensation can have positive effects on teacher job satisfaction.

While salary schedules can ensure consistency in pay within one district, teacher salaries between districts can often vary, which can be a source of dissatisfaction among teachers (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007). As reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics, teachers in urban districts on average earn approximately 33% less than

teachers in more affluent school districts (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Hanushek and Rivkin reported further data obtained from the National Center for Educational Statistics concerning annual teacher salaries. They suggested in their 2007 article that 44.4% of urban teachers and 69.6% of rural teachers in their first year earn less than \$30,000 annually, compared with 41.7% of teachers in suburban school districts. Accordingly, suburban teachers have a higher percentage of educators earning over \$35,000 annually in their first year of teaching at 31.7%, compared with 29.2% in urban school districts and 15.7% in rural school districts. As the data demonstrates, the type of school district in which a teacher is employed can have a direct impact on the type of salary teachers will receive. Therefore, from one school district to another, teachers may experience varying levels of compensation even when the amount of teaching experience and education is comparable thus being a leading cause of dissatisfaction.

Not only are teachers earning less in annual salary, but they are spending their own money on resources for their classroom. Kopkowski (2008) found on average teachers spend \$438 annually on supplies for their classrooms and eight percent of educators spend closer to \$1000 on materials to use to facilitate student learning. With school districts closely watching their budgets, teachers spend their personal money to obtain the supplies and resources they need for their classrooms (Olszewski & Maury, 1997). When Olszewski and Maury conducted their study of teachers in Minnesota, it was determined that teachers spend an average of \$492 annually on instructional materials for their classrooms (1997). The lack of materials and resources for teachers to use in their classroom, created feelings of stress among teachers, which led to teacher

burnout and teacher turnover (Kaufhold, Alvarez, & Arnold, 2006). Adequate instructional resources need to be available to teachers that support the curriculum they are implementing in their classroom.

In a study conducted by Ingersoll and Smith (2003), data from the National Center of Education Statistics 1994-1995 Teacher Follow-up Survey, showed that 78.5% of teachers who left the profession did so because they were dissatisfied with their salary. Klecker and Loadman (1997) found through their work with former teachers that low salaries are a major reason behind their decision to leave the profession. Quaglia, Marion, and McIntire identified through interviews conducted by Moore (1987) that there is a “close connection between status, pay, and power, especially for dissatisfied teachers” (1991, p. 207). While teacher compensation may not be the top factor in determining their level of satisfaction in the profession, it is imperative that the compensation be fair (Levin, 2008) and allows them to lead a middle class lifestyle (Kopkowski, 2008). Compensation factors for school districts need to be a top concern when evaluating practices that contribute to teacher job satisfaction levels.

Working conditions. Working conditions is an all-encompassing term that refers to numerous aspects of the working environment. Working conditions not only refers to the physical conditions of the building and workspace, but also the non-physical aspects of the position, which can be described as an environment’s climate. The working conditions within a school are an important factor in teachers’ job satisfaction. The environment in which they work needs to be safe, comfortable, and conducive to the learning process. When teachers find the working conditions to be poor, they will look

for employment that will provide them with better surroundings (Mihans, 2008).

Beginning teachers often leave the profession when their employing school has difficult working conditions (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001). While school districts will never be able to supply everything a teacher may want (Levin, 2008), it is important for school districts to listen to their teachers' needs and allocate resources appropriately based upon feedback from the teachers.

Providing teachers with the correct materials, supplies, and resources to use in their classroom is an important part of the working conditions at a school facility.

Darling-Hammond identified the effect poor conditions and lack of supplies can have on teachers; it devastates their morale (2003). Educators in public schools tend to have to deal with more difficult working conditions than their counterparts in other educational settings. One component of these conditions is that public schools are more likely to have un-maintained facilities and inadequate instructional resources (Marston & Courtney, 2002). With the expectations of teachers set at a high level, frustration becomes evident among teachers when they are unable to secure the necessary materials, supplies, and resources to successfully implement their curriculum for their students.

Schools located in varying socioeconomic settings include different patterns of working conditions based upon the economic stability of the communities they educate. A survey given to California teachers found working conditions to be less desirable in schools with a low-income, high-minority student population. The physical structure of the school buildings were in poor condition and there was less or limited access to instructional resources (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Mihans (2008) found that the poorest

conditions are often found in schools with high percentages of minority students, which often results in teachers seeking employment opportunities in school districts located in more suburban-type settings. Schools with a large number of students from low-income families also experienced poorer working conditions, which prompted teachers to seek employment elsewhere (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). If the working conditions in one position are undesirable, educators are likely to migrate to another similar position in a different school or district in search of working conditions that impact their work in a positive manner.

The climate of a school environment can directly impact the day to day practices in place within the school. According to an education brief produced by Michigan State University, school climate refers to “the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place” (School Climate & Learning, 2004, p. 2). School climate can also refer to the way the school building looks and feels to the students and staff that comprise the school community. Hurren (2006) believed school climate is established by the everyday behaviors of a school’s leadership team, which consist of the principal, among other important people holding leadership roles within the school. Through Hurren’s work, it was determined that there is a connection between a school’s climate and how students learn and that climate has a stronger influence on student learning over a student’s socioeconomic status and race.

The way that teachers feel about their school’s climate can have an impact on their level of satisfaction with their current position. Zhang, Verstegen, and Kim (2008)

found school climate to have an effect over teacher job satisfaction, as well as professional growth, compensation, and teacher autonomy. When teacher autonomy was perceived to be low, teachers found this to be a great source of dissatisfaction with their position (Quaglia, Marion, & McIntire, 1991). Teachers with a low commitment to the profession reported concerns with the relationships in their school, as well as how they felt empowered in their position (Berry, Wade, & Trantham, 2008). In the work of Berry, Wade, and Trantham (2008), the findings of a 2006 annual survey conducted by the state of North Carolina and given to its teachers, found that teachers believed they had little influence on decisions made within their schools.

Teachers want to feel valued and that they are progressing in their careers, with opportunities to expand in knowledge and expertise to new levels (Kopkowski, 2008). Feeling empowered and supported at work are important elements for teacher job satisfaction and retention in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Teachers want to have input when it comes to making decisions that affect the school and they want to have the ability to make their own choices over their areas of responsibility (Darling-Hammond, 2003 & Mihans, 2008). Teachers can experience professional growth when they are empowered to analyze current practices, share ideas, and come up with solutions to problems that personally affect them (Lattimer, 2007). Levin (2008) identified several aspects of a school environment that are crucial to possess in order to have a positive atmosphere in which individuals can grow and develop. Levin spoke of the importance of strong relationships among colleagues, providing feedback on the performance of teachers, and having opportunities for leadership development and professional growth.

These are working conditions that are of great importance to educators and lead to constructing a school with positive working conditions. When teachers are part of the decision-making process occurring in their schools, teacher morale increases, teachers take on more responsibility in the school, and are able to create better solutions to problems (Seed, 2008).

The relationships teachers build with colleagues can lead to a higher level of job satisfaction. In a 1994 study completed by Yee (as cited in Marston & Courtney, 2002), it was found that the interactions teachers have with their coworkers offer the most valued form of motivation. Marston and Courtney (2002) also cited other researchers (Popkewitz & Myrdal, 1991; Theobald, 1989) who have reported that support from and interactions with colleagues influence both the retention and satisfaction of teachers. Certo and Fox (2002) found a “strong presence of collegial relations was also a factor in teachers’ reasons for staying” (Research Question #1, ¶ 3) in the profession.

Relationships between students and teachers are also a significant form of intrinsic motivation for teachers. Research reported by Marston and Courtney (2002) demonstrated that effective teachers place a significant emphasis on their relationships with students as found in research studies by Gay, 1995 and Ladson-Billings, 1994. Marston and Courtney (2002) found that teachers feel a personal sense of satisfaction seeing children develop and learn. “Satisfaction also came from hearing about the accomplishments of former students as a result of teachers staying in touch with them or their families throughout the years” (p. 5). In a study conducted by Klecker and Loadman

(1997), interactions with students are rated the most positive by teachers and are the most satisfying aspect of classroom teaching.

The environment that surrounds an individual sends an insurmountable number of messages. From the physical conditions of their surroundings, to the practices in place within the building and how they influence teachers, all have an effect on a school's working environment. Working conditions are an important factor in teacher job satisfaction and have a direct influence on the satisfaction level of teachers and whether or not they choose to stay in a specific position or in the educational profession. Attention should be paid not only to appearance, security, and safety of the school building, but also to the effect current practices have on teachers and the feelings they create within the school.

Teacher autonomy. Measuring the achievement and success of schools is an important component of the educational system. Within the past decade, efforts have been made to ensure schools are making progress and students are achieving at proficient levels. When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, measures were put into place to hold every school accountable for the achievement of their students. In order to do this, students in grades three through eight are tested annually in the areas of communication arts and mathematics (United States DOE, Introduction, No Child Left Behind, 2009). These scores are then used to compare schools to one another and determine if a school has made adequate yearly progress. Each year, specific goals are established which define the percentage of students that must reach a specific level on each standardized assessment

prescribed by the state in conjunction with NCLB. When schools fail to meet annual proficiency goals they become a School of Improvement. When a Title I school receives the designation “School of Improvement” parents have the option of sending their child to an alternative public school and may be eligible to receive additional supports such as tutoring (MO DESE, Understanding Your Adequate Yearly Progress Report, 2010). With the achievement levels for the annual goals continually rising, teachers are feeling pressure to ensure their students are achieving and meeting the required state standards (Kopkowski, 2008).

With a focus on reaching the goals established for schools under the NCLB legislation, teachers are seeing their level of autonomy in the classroom dissipate and their stress level rising in an effort to meet state achievement expectations (Quiocho & Stall, 2008; Marston & Courtney, 2002; Mihans, 2008; Bunting, 2006). Lessons in classrooms are becoming test-driven, with a focus being placed on the skills that will be tested on state assessments (Bunting, 2006). Teachers feel their input and creativity is no longer integral to their role in the classroom, since the focus has shifted to teaching only what is tested. Bunting (2006) noted, “creativity, joy, and a sense of teacher ownership have lost their place in the conversation about teaching” (p. 12). Teachers in low-performing schools have experienced prearranged curricula and methodology, which has limited teacher autonomy and decision-making, two essential components to high levels of teacher job satisfaction (Quiocho & Stall, 2008). Kopkowski (2008) and Marston and Courtney (2002) both noted the increased amount of stress and demands teachers feel due to the emphasis placed upon them by standardized testing.

In efforts to reform any school, teacher autonomy is vital and it is imperative that all stakeholders be supportive of the school's efforts and mission (Quiocho & Stall, 2008). Professional autonomy or decision-making authority plays a role in the level of satisfaction teachers feel. "Empowered teachers are allowed, in fact encouraged, to share in decisions about important issues" (Quaglia, Marion, McIntire, 1991, p. 208). A study completed by Klecker and Loadman (1997) found that teachers who had five or fewer years of teaching experience rated their satisfaction with the degree of autonomy more positively than teachers who had been teaching 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, and 26 or more years. In a study conducted by Marston and Courtney (2002) "Teachers appeared to be satisfied with their work when administrators and parents were supportive and yet still allowed teachers the freedom and flexibility to make decisions regarding best practices for their students" (p. 7). Allowing teachers to become more involved in class and school decisions should lead to an increase in teacher satisfaction due to the fact that teachers who have control over them and its terms are more committed to the field (Certo & Fox, 2002). If teachers are not treated as professionals and a part of crucial conversations and school reform, their satisfaction level with teaching will decrease. Teachers need to feel supported, valued, and autonomous. They want to be a part of decision-making that directly impacts their work with students.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

A review of the literature revealed numerous studies identifying key factors in determining the level of teacher job satisfaction. In 1997, Shen determined the following: (a) teachers with less experience tend to move or leave, whereas more experienced

teachers tend to stay; (b) the amount of teacher salary was positively correlated with teacher retention;(c) recognition and appreciation help teachers stay in the profession;(d) empowering teachers and giving them more influence over school and teaching policies are associated with teacher retention; and (e) teacher attrition was associated more with poor schools. He also found the location of the school, teaching level, and subject matter did not play a role in retention and attrition (p. 87).

Mertler (2001) completed a study and found 77% of the participants to be satisfied with their job with no significant difference in responses based on gender or ethnicity which is supported by Greiner, Espinoza, and Smith (2005) who also found gender and ethnicity not to be a predictor in teacher attrition. However, age did indicate a significant difference. Teachers in the age range of 26-30 years and those 56 years and older were more satisfied than their colleagues, while teachers ages 31-35 were the least satisfied. Years of teaching experience also indicated a significant difference in teacher job satisfaction. Beginning teachers and those who were nearing retirement were more satisfied than their colleagues whose experience ranged from 6-10 years. Mertler did not find a significant difference in satisfaction based on school setting or level (Mertler, 2001).

Ingersoll's (2001) predictors for teacher turnover were contradictory to the above studies. While Ingersoll noted age to be a predictor, it was found teachers less than 30 years of age and over 50 years of age were more likely to depart due to dissatisfaction than middle-aged teachers. He also indicated gender and ethnicity as a predictor, stating male teachers and minority teachers are less likely to leave the profession. Teachers

earning higher salaries, teachers who teach in public schools versus private, and teachers in both suburban and rural schools are less likely to leave the profession. Schools with fewer discipline problems and higher administrative support have lower teacher turnover rates, as well as schools which provide teachers with autonomy and higher levels of decision-making influence.

Marston, Brunetti, and Courtney (2005) compared teacher satisfaction between elementary and high school teachers in Pennsylvania and California. For their study, they surveyed an elementary and high school group in California, along with two elementary groups of teachers in Pennsylvania. They found teachers at both levels have a high level of satisfaction with their jobs. Elementary teachers in Pennsylvania valued autonomy more than the California elementary teachers. Researchers explained that this difference could have been caused by regional factors or by the stricter curricular constraints placed upon Pennsylvania teachers in 2000-2001, at the onset of NCLB. The high school teachers surveyed in California were found to be less motivated by extrinsic factors (tenure, salaries, and schedule) than teachers at the elementary level. In follow-up interviews, there were high school teachers that stated they felt the elimination of teacher tenure would improve the profession. High school teachers also placed emphasis on the importance of subject matter they taught over other related factors. High school teachers indicated that the subject they teach is very important and relates their desire to remain in the classroom while elementary teachers indicated this to be only somewhat important, pointing out the fact that high school teachers teach a specific subject while elementary teachers are responsible for teaching numerous subjects. However, elementary teachers

indicated a higher degree of satisfaction at seeing children learn and grow, although this was still a powerful motivator for high school teachers. Based on the results, good relationships with co-workers and a good principal are more important to the elementary teacher than the high school teacher. Overall, teachers at both levels are satisfied with their jobs while core values are what keep teachers at both levels in the profession.

Summary

The factors that impact teacher job satisfaction have become an increasingly studied educational issue. Studies offer a wide variety of factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction, which range from intrinsic to extrinsic motivators. Although there are other factors beyond those listed in this chapter that have an effect on teacher job satisfaction, the majority of the research shows working conditions, administrator support, teacher compensation, new teacher induction programs, and the effects of standardized testing to be some of the key factors in determining the satisfaction levels of teachers. This literature review provides evidence that these factors can be used by schools as a framework to create and implement strategies to improve teacher job satisfaction. If teachers feel positive about these motivating factors, districts should see a significant increase in teacher job satisfaction compared to teachers who do not have a positive perception of these factors in their teaching experience. School districts that record high levels of teacher job satisfaction, should find their practices to be in alignment with these motivating factors in the profession of education.

Chapter 3: Method

This collaborative study was designed to determine the satisfaction level of teachers employed by a specific rural school district and a specific suburban school district. Additionally, this study sought to determine if the current practices put into place by each school district were in alignment with practices identified in the literature review as being positive contributors to high levels of teacher job satisfaction. Further, this study was also used to determine if a relationship existed between the satisfaction level of teachers and the alignment of practices in a rural district compared with the satisfaction level of teachers and the alignment of practices in a suburban school district.

Identification of factors that keep teachers satisfied may provide the rural school district and the suburban school district tools for improving the school districts' levels of teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention in the profession. There are a myriad of factors that can influence one teacher's decision to stay or leave the education profession. As a result of research conducted by Darling-Hammond (2003), Mihans (2008), and Wiebke and Bardin (2009), patterns of factors have emerged that tend to have a greater effect on the satisfaction level of teachers. A design for a survey to be used in this research study was created using the identified factors. The survey was used to gather data from teachers and administrators currently practicing in the rural and suburban school district study sites. The focal point of the survey questions and subsequent interview questions were centered on the factors identified through the literature review.

The survey distributed to teachers in each school district provided data concerning the satisfaction level of teachers on a series of 31 questions in which teachers rated their

level of satisfaction using a Likert scale. Using the responses from this survey, patterns and relationships were identified for the different aspects of the profession, including new teacher induction programs, administrator support, and working conditions within the school environment. In addition to the survey questions, teachers were also asked to respond to six demographically based questions in order to further develop patterns that may exist in the data. Finally, teachers were given the opportunity to participate further in this study by providing their name and school location. A survey distributed to administrators served to determine how the district's outlined policies and practices are implemented at the building level. This survey consisted of 17 open-ended questions focused on the aspects of their position that directly or indirectly impact teachers in their building. Additionally, building administrators were also asked to respond to five demographically-based questions, in addition to having the opportunity to further participate in this study by providing their name and school location.

Respondents who expressed interest in continuing their participation in this study were given the opportunity to participate further through the use of an online questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions, a telephone interview, or an in-person interview. The basis of the second group of questions was to allow the researchers to delve deeper into the perceptions of teachers and administrators and determine how their perspectives relate to current district policies and practices.

The data collected through this survey research study may provide the two school districts with an insight into how their practices impact teachers and the effect they have on the satisfaction level of teachers. Research identified in the literature review suggests

that teachers who are satisfied in their positions may lead to positive school climates, better working conditions, and greater success in the classroom.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. Which factors identified in the literature review most contribute to teacher job satisfaction?
2. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices?
3. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction?
4. How does the demographic profile for the rural school district and the suburban school district affect the results in regards to current district practices and teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction?

Research Methodology

Research is one way knowledge can be gathered. Taken a step further, scientific research ensures the information gathered is reliable and accurate. Based on the survey data collected, this study was characterized as qualitative research. Qualitative research consists of gathering information in order to understand a situation based on the view of the participants. Qualitative research, according to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), has five features:

1. The source of data comes from the natural setting where the researcher is the key instrument.

2. Data is obtained using words or pictures rather than numbers.
3. Researchers focus on the process and the product.
4. Researchers analyze the data inductively.
5. Researchers are concerned with the way people make sense of their lives.

The research design of this study was classified as a comparative study. This classification comes from the examination of two school districts in order to identify if the practices in a rural and suburban school district affects the results obtained by the researchers on teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction. This study focused on teacher job satisfaction, gathered relevant information, and analyzed the data, which resulted in recommendations for future research. In order to obtain information concerning the focus of teacher satisfaction in the rural and suburban school districts, data were collected using an online survey to gather information on teachers' perceptions and opinions concerning their chosen profession. Administrators were also questioned using an online survey in order to gather information about how they implement practices and interact with the teachers in their school buildings. Teacher and administrator respondents were given the option to voluntarily participate further in this study and they expressed their interest by providing their name and building location within each school district. Participants who chose to continue with the study were given the option to answer a second set of open-ended questions via an in-person interview, a telephone interview, or by typing their responses in an online questionnaire.

Participants

In order to obtain a sufficient number of survey responses, all teachers (beginning and experienced) and building administrators currently practicing in the rural and suburban school districts were solicited for participation in this study. The rural school district is located in rural Jefferson County covering 121 square miles in and around six different municipalities (Dr. Kevin Carl, Personal Communication, April 12, 2010). The suburban school district is located in suburban Saint Louis County and serves 11 different municipalities covering 150 square miles (RSD, About Us, Demographics, 2009).

The rural school district served a student population of approximately 6,892 throughout their 11 schools during the 2008-2009 school year. The demographics for the school district are shown in Table 1. For the academic year 2008-2009, as taken from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Accountability Report Card, the study site of the rural school district's student population was represented by 97.5% Caucasian, 1.0% Hispanic, with 35.1% of the students participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (MO DESE, NSD, 2009).

The suburban school district began in 1908, when four school districts were consolidated. Over the next 100 years, the school district grew to serve over 22,000 students and is comprised of 34 different schools (RSD, About Us, District Facts, 2009). The demographics for the school district are shown in Table 2. For the academic year 2008-2009, as taken from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Accountability Report Card, the study site of the suburban school district's student population was represented by 82.7% Caucasian, 10.3% African American, with

12.7% of the school district's students participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (MO DESE, RSD, 2009).

Table 1

Demographics: The Rural School District

Year	2008-2009
Enrollment	6,892
Caucasian	97.5%
Hispanic	1.0%
Asian	0.8%
African American	0.5%
Native American	0.1%
Free and Reduced Lunch	35.1%

Note. From MO DESE (2009)

Table 2

Demographics: The Suburban School District

Year	2008-2009
Enrollment	22,566
Caucasian	82.7%
African American	10.3%
Asian	5.1%
Hispanic	1.8%
Native American	0.2%
Free and Reduced Lunch	12.7%

Note. From MO DESE (2009)

Table 3 illustrates the distribution for the students enrolled in the rural school district at the elementary, intermediate, seventh and eighth grade center, and high school levels. This enrollment distribution does include the students who are enrolled in the early childhood program in the rural school district, which is located within the seventh and eighth grade center. In addition, Table 3 includes the distribution of the 541 certified teachers at each academic level, as well as, the administrators at each level (MO DESE, School Directory, NWR1, 2009).

Table 4 highlights the enrollment distribution for the suburban school district at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Enrollment data presented here does not include students participating in the early childhood programs provided by the suburban school district. However, students attending the elementary-level gifted center and students attending the alternative education high school are included in the total enrollment for their respective levels. Additionally, Table 3 illustrates the number of certified staff at each academic level (MO DESE, Staff and Salary Analysis, 2007; RSD, Attendance Recap Report, 2009).

Table 3

The Rural School District Staff and Student Enrollment Distribution

	Schools	Certified Staff	Administrators	Total Enrollment
Elementary Schools (K-4)	6	210	6	2,665
Intermediate (5-6)	3	98	3	959
7 th and 8 th Grade Center	1	88	3	1,083
High Schools	1	145	6	2,359
Total	11	541	18	7,066

Note. Classroom teacher data and Administrator data was obtained from the MO DESE (School Directory, 2009). School enrollment was taken from MO DESE (2009).

Table 4

The Suburban School District Staff and Student Enrollment Distribution

	Schools	Classroom Teachers	Administrators	Total Enrollment
Elementary Schools	19	610.8	36	9,539
Middle Schools	6	341.2	19	5,298
Junior High Schools	0	0	0	0
High Schools	4	436.7	27	7,563
Total	29	1,388.7	82	22,400

Note. Classroom teacher data was obtained from the MO DESE (Staff and Salary Analysis, 2007). Administrator data was taken from the 2009-2010 Schools and School Services Directory. School enrollment was taken from the Suburban School District Period 4 Attendance Recap Report dated 12/2/2009.

This study analyzed the satisfaction level of teachers in the rural and suburban school districts at each of the levels of academic distribution. The initial online survey was distributed to teachers in the rural school district on May 19, 2009 and then a second time on September 24, 2009. The initial online survey was distributed to teachers in the suburban school district on May 18, 2009, and then a second time on September 23, 2009. Therefore, the survey was sent to approximately 541 certified staff in the rural school district based on the data presented in Table 3, and approximately 1,300 certified staff in the suburban school district based upon the data presented in Table 4.

School administrators within the rural school district were initially sent the survey on July 8, 2009 and again on September 24, 2009. All school administrators in the rural school district were solicited through each distribution. School administrators within the suburban school district were sent the Administrator Participant Survey initially on July 13, 2009, and again on September 23, 2009. During the first distribution of the administrator survey, 82 school administrators were solicited. During the second distribution of the survey, it was sent to all building-level administrators, which accounted for 81 administrators in September of 2009, due to the restructuring of one position at the middle school level. However, the online survey for both school districts was set to allow only one response per computer; therefore decreasing the chance respondents would complete the survey more than one time.

The majority of the respondents in the rural school district's initial, online teacher satisfaction survey had been teaching for 11-15 years. The majority of teacher respondents for the suburban school district's initial, online teacher satisfaction survey

were classified as beginning teachers, within their first five years of the profession. The majority of respondents for both school districts can also be described as Caucasian and female based upon the results of the demographic profiling questions at the end of the online survey.

In the rural school district most of the respondents worked at the elementary level (41.2%), followed by high school (30.6%), and middle school (29.4%). There was one respondent categorized as an early childhood teacher, which accounted for 1.2% of the respondents. For the initial administration survey, 44.4% of the respondents fell into the 6-10 year category. The respondents were closely distributed in the area of gender, with 55.6% classified as female and 44.4% classified as male. There was an even distribution among the administrator respondents who practiced at the elementary level and the intermediate level (33.3%), followed by the seventh and eighth grade center (22.2%) and the high school (11.1%).

In the suburban school district there was a similar distribution of academic level represented by the respondents, with the majority teaching in the high school setting at 37.5%, followed by middle school (35.6%) and elementary school (26.5%). There was one respondent classified as an early childhood teacher, which accounted for 0.4% of the respondents. For the initial administration survey, 75% of respondents were in their first five years of their administrative careers. The respondents were largely female and the majority practiced at the elementary level (41.7%), followed by middle school (33.3%) and high school (25.0%).

Research Design

Qualitative data was presented in this teacher job satisfaction study. Qualitative data, as described by Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), can be used to investigate circumstances, identify causes, and predict outcomes or behaviors. This type of data is collected through observations, interviews, field studies, and case studies. In this study, qualitative data was collected from the initial teacher and administrator online surveys, and a second time in the teacher and administrator follow-up interview questions. During the initial teacher survey, respondents were asked to rate a series of questions on a scale ranging from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied. After each question, teachers were given the opportunity to add comments or justify their rating in a text box below the question. This data, along with the open-ended responses from the teacher follow-up interview questions constitute the qualitative data for teachers in this study. Qualitative data was also collected from the administrator participants in this study. Their initial online survey was a series of open-ended questions. For each question, which can be described as open-ended, administrators were asked to describe their current practices relevant to the question. Additionally, administrator volunteers choosing to further participate in this research study were given an additional series of open-ended questions, which allowed the researchers to gather more in-depth information about their level of practice in their school buildings thus providing the qualitative data this study.

In the initial teacher online survey, teachers were asked 31 questions that each began with the stem, “How satisfied are you with . . . ?” Teachers were asked to rate their feelings using a Likert scale with the rating categories identified using the following

headings; highly satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, highly dissatisfied, and not applicable. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003, p. G-4) described a Likert scale as, “A self-reporting instrument in which an individual responds to a series of statements by indicating the extent of agreement. Each choice is given a numerical value, and the total score is presumed to indicate the attitude or belief in question.” For each question in the initial teacher online survey, the number of responses was tabulated for each category heading to give a percentage of respondent agreements with the specific question. For example, looking at a specific question, the Likert scale tabulations can tell the researchers what percentage of teacher respondents are highly satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, highly dissatisfied, or perceived the question to not be applicable to them. The pattern formed from these responses provided the researchers with evidence as to the attitudes and opinions of the participants.

Data for this research study were taken from four instruments; the online teacher job satisfaction survey, the online administrator participant survey, the teacher follow-up interview questionnaire, and the administrator follow-up interview questionnaire. The researchers were interested in the opinions and perceptions of all teachers and administrators in the rural and suburban school districts. Therefore, all current teachers and administrators in both districts were solicited for participation in this study. For the four different sources, an online program called SurveyMonkey.com was used to gather and calculate the data. There are several advantages for using an online tool to conduct survey research. Using the Internet to conduct this research allowed the researchers to make contact with a large number of individuals at one time. Additionally, the amount of

time necessary to survey teachers across the rural and suburban school districts and receive their responses was greatly decreased by using an online tool. This tool did not require postage or mailing fees, therefore making the online survey more cost-effective.

Survey Instruments

To gather research for this study, there were four primary instruments used to survey individuals and distribute follow-up interview questions. The four surveys utilized in this study were: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey (Appendix A), Administrator Participant Survey (Appendix B), Teacher Follow-up Interview Questionnaire (Appendix C), and Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questionnaire (Appendix D). The initial round of research collected involved the use of the Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey and the Administrator Participant Survey. Respondents in the initial survey who volunteered to participate at the next level were given a set of open-ended, follow-up interview questions. These were disseminated in one of three ways; personal interview, telephone interview, or online questionnaire. A separate set of follow-up interview questions were designed for teachers and administrators each, with 15 questions worded similarly to survey the same topics.

The follow-up interview level of research allowed the researchers to probe deeper into the opinions and perceptions of teachers and administrators involved in the research. Because the follow-up interview questions were designed to be open-ended, it required respondents to explain their answers rather than marking their level of satisfaction on a Likert scale. The combination of the two sets of questionnaires also allowed a connection to be made between the reported teacher satisfaction and the reasons that support the data

gathered from the initial survey. While the first survey may tell the researchers that a majority of the teachers are highly satisfied with their current position in education, the follow-up interview questionnaire may provide the reasons to support teachers' perception of being highly satisfied. This same connection can be made between the initial teacher job satisfaction survey and the answers provided by the school administrators on their participant survey and follow-up interview questions. Teachers may report they are dissatisfied with the amount of recognition they receive in their work, which may be connected to the amount or types of recognition building principals report implementing with their professional staff. Therefore, the four instruments used in this study provided a solid foundation of research with reasoning and rationale to support the opinions and perceptions of the teachers as reported on the job satisfaction survey. It also allowed the researchers to search for and identify patterns or relationships that exist among the data over the four different data collection instruments.

The survey instruments and questions were developed after collecting information from previously written articles and research studies on teacher job satisfaction. The researchers used the information in this study to identify the primary factors in teacher job satisfaction. Through the research, it was determined that the primary factors in education that determine a teacher's level of satisfaction with the profession include: teacher preparation and induction programs, administrator support, teacher compensation, the effects of standardized testing on teacher autonomy, and working conditions. With these factors in mind, the questions on the online surveys and in the follow-up interview questions were designed to gather information on these topics to determine teachers'

perceptions of these factors in the suburban and rural school districts and to determine how building administrators' practices address these factors in education.

The initial teacher job satisfaction survey and administrator participant survey, as well as the follow-up interview questions, were all written in second-person, as if the questions were being asked from one person to another. The teacher job satisfaction survey consisted of 31 questions focused on different aspects of the teaching position. The areas covered by the questions included beginning teacher experiences, professional development, amount of support given to teachers, teacher compensation, safety, collaboration, and interactions with others. Each question led with the sentence starter, "How satisfied are you with . . . ?" Teachers then rated their level of satisfaction using a Likert scale that consisted of the following choices; highly satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, highly dissatisfied, and not applicable. After each of these questions, there was a text box available for teacher comments. In this area, teachers were invited to add any additional information relevant to the topic in question. Teachers could also justify their rating they assigned by providing information in this area. There was no limitation to how much could be written nor any type of guideline placed in regards to the format the responses had to be in. It was left up to teacher discretion to decide if they would include additional information and what the information would look like or include.

Following the job-focused questions, constructed based upon the research gathered, there were six demographic questions to obtain information on the respondents' years of teaching experience, age, ethnicity, gender, current level of teaching, and the

school district they are employed with. After the questions used to gather information about the research participants, teachers were asked two questions with a yes/no answer option. These questions included (a) If given a second opportunity to choose your profession, would you become a teacher, and (b) Generally speaking, do you feel that a majority of the teachers you work with are satisfied with their profession? The last two questions on the teacher survey offered respondents the opportunity to continue further into the study. They were asked, “Are you interested in participating in future focus groups and/or interviews related to the topic? Future focus groups and/ or interviews may be audio taped to ensure the accuracy of responses. All participants’ identities will be kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms.” Teachers responded yes or no, and were then given the opportunity to list their name and school location as contact information for the follow-up components of this study.

The administrator participant survey was designed to consist of open-ended questions to gather insight on the practices put into place by the building-level administration. The questions in this survey were developed by the researchers based upon the information collected on the topic of teacher job satisfaction. The survey consisted of 17 open-ended questions asked in second person voice. The questions were focused on the topics of empowerment, support, professional development, leadership, motivation, collaboration, resources available, and physical aspects of the school building. Administrators were instructed within the directions of the survey that they could respond in any way that was comfortable to them. This could include writing in

paragraph form about their practices or listing key points. There was also no length requirement for each of these types of questions.

Following, the job-focused questions, there were four demographic questions to gather more information about the administrators completing the survey. These questions gathered information on the number of years of experience the individual had in administration, and their gender, age, and school building level. Following the demographic questions, administrators were asked two yes/no only response questions. The first question asked administrators if they felt a majority of the teachers they worked with were satisfied with their position. This response could only be marked as a “yes” or a “no”. The next question asked the administration if they were interested in participating in future focus groups or interviews related to this study. Respondents were able to mark either “yes” or “no”. If they marked “yes”, they were asked to provide their name and school location. This information was then used to solicit individuals to participate in the answering of the follow-up interview questions, which delve deeper into the study to gain additional information about teacher job satisfaction and how it relates to the current practices in place by the rural school district and the suburban school district.

Following the collection of data from the initial teacher survey, all respondents who were interested in answering follow-up interview questions related to this study were contacted through the use of district e-mail addresses. The respondents were given the option to participate in the next phase of the study through a telephone interview, a face-to-face conversation, or through the use of an e-mailed online questionnaire. Each teacher contacted through this e-mail was asked to reply to the researcher regarding his or her

preference for continuation in the study. The preference for each individual was recorded, and any respondents expressing interest in further participation that did not reply to the e-mail were assigned to the e-mailed, online questionnaire preference.

None of the 21 teachers contacted in the rural school district for further participation in this study expressed interest in answering the follow-up interview questions by phone or face-to-face. Therefore, all of the participants who chose to participate in the follow-up questionnaire did so using the online tool. Of the 32 teachers contacted in the suburban school district for further participation in the study, only three individuals expressed interest in using another avenue to report their answers other than through the online questionnaire. These three individuals participated in independent telephone interviews one at a time, on three different days. Therefore, all teachers who chose to participate in the follow-up interview questions were given the same questions, but the majority answered the questions using an online questionnaire, and three teachers provided their answers using a telephone interview.

The follow-up interview questions or online questionnaire for teachers consisted of 20 open-ended questions for the teachers. They were not required to answer every question. On the online questionnaire, after each question, teachers were provided a text box to enter their response. There was no length requirement for their answer and teachers could provide as much or as little information as they preferred. Respondents to the online questionnaire and telephone interview were provided the details that outlined the commitments of their participation in this study.

Nine building administrators in the rural school district and four building administrators in the suburban school district expressed interest in continuing the study through participation in the follow-up interview questions. Each of these individuals were contacted via school district e-mail and provided a link to an online questionnaire with follow-up interview questions to probe deeper into the initial topics they were questioned on in the administrator participant survey. They were not required to answer every question and there was no length requirement for their answers on the 19 open-ended questions they were asked. Prior to the administrator follow-up interview questions, they were given the same details as the teacher participants regarding their participation in the study.

Validity

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) defined validity as “The degree to which correct inferences can be made based on results from an instrument; depends not only on the instrument itself, but also on the instrumentation process and the characteristics of the group studied” (p. G-9). To gather data relevant to this research study, the researchers utilized four different instruments. As discussed previously in this chapter, the instruments were designed to gather information regarding teacher job satisfaction and information on how building administrators implement best practices in conjunction with what the research states is good for the teaching profession. The four instruments were distributed in two parts, each group, teachers and administrators, receiving one of the instruments at a time.

The first instrument, an online survey for each group, was distributed to teachers and administrators to form a foundation of knowledge regarding the perceptions held by individuals employed by the rural school district and individuals employed by the suburban school district. The questions were based upon the information gathered by the researcher while reviewing previous research studies and professionally written journal articles regarding the topic of teacher job satisfaction. The online teacher job satisfaction survey provided information on the satisfaction level of current rural and suburban school district teachers on numerous aspects of their position. Teachers were also allowed to provide comments regarding each response, but were not required to do so.

In order to better understand practices implemented by building administrators, a series of open-ended questions were used to gather unique data specific to individual buildings. This information gave administrators' perspectives regarding the professional practices the teachers evaluated by satisfaction level on their online survey. Using the information from both instruments, each researcher determined the level of alignment between what their specific district reported as their practices and what the teachers perceived to be their district practices.

After the initial instruments were distributed, each researcher determined which respondents expressed interest in continuing with the research study. Through the online surveys that were distributed to teachers and administrators, the researchers were able to form a group of teachers and administrators, separately, to gather more in-depth information regarding this study through follow-up interview questions. Volunteers for continued participation provided their name and job location if they were interested in

participating further in this study. The follow-up interview questions were distributed via an online questionnaire to teachers and all participating administrators within both school districts. In the rural school district all volunteer participants agreed to answer questions via the online tool. In the suburban school district, three of the participating teacher respondents expressed interest in completing the focus group questions using a one on one telephone interview. These interviews were conducted individually on separate days with the researcher for that district.

The teacher and administrator follow-up interview questions covered a variety of topics concerning the profession. The questions covered topic areas that included professional challenges, motivation, attrition, empowerment, relationships, and district practices. All questions were given in an open-ended manner with no length requirement provided. Respondents to this portion of the study were allowed to express their feelings, opinions, and perceptions regarding the question in their own preferred style and manner within the text box provided for each question.

All questions in the follow-up interview component of the research study and the initial online surveys were designed to reveal relevant to the research study questions.

These questions include

1. Which factors identified in the literature review most contribute to teacher job satisfaction?
2. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices?

3. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction?
4. How does the demographic profile for the rural school district and the suburban school district influence the results in regards to current district practices and teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction?

The results of the initial online surveys and the follow-up interview questions helped to determine which factors related to teacher job satisfaction are most important to the teachers in the rural school district and the suburban school district. By surveying building administrators, in addition to the teachers in both of the study districts, the researchers were able to determine how building administrators use the factors important to teacher job satisfaction in their current practices within their building. The format of the initial administrator participant survey allowed an avenue for administrators in each district to describe their practices, thoughts, and beliefs instead of rating their perceptions on a predetermined scale. To determine how both the rural and suburban school district's current practices align with the teachers' perceptions related to job satisfaction, information and data was taken from each of the four instruments. The researchers then determined the level of teacher job satisfaction with each component of the profession studied and compared it with the current practices the two school districts have in place. This was determined from information provided by both school districts and by participating administrators in this study.

Finally, information was taken from the state-level department of education, in addition to the two studied school districts, to determine how each district's demographic

profile influences teacher job satisfaction. For the basis of this study, the rural school district's results were compared with the suburban school district's results to determine if any type of pattern exists between the data and demographic profile for the two school districts.

External validity. The type and location of the school districts, the size of the school districts, the timeline of the survey distribution, and the format of the survey instruments should all be considered when conducting this study with an alternative population.

The rural school district used in this study can be describes as a small school district located in Jefferson County, Missouri. Located in a county comprised of over 200,000 residents, the district serves about 6,892 students Pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade and employs over 900 staff members (MO DESE, State Accountability Report Card: NSD, 2009). The suburban school district used in this study can be described as a large school district located outside a major metropolitan area. The school district studied is one of the largest school districts in the state and serves over 22,000 students and employs over 3,000 individuals (MO DESE, State Accountability Report Card: RSD, 2009).

Johnson and Christensen (2004) described ecological validity as taking the findings of one study and applying them to a new setting. Therefore, if this study were to be replicated in a different setting, the size, type, and location of the district would need to be considered as a factor that can influence the results of this study. The structure of a large school district can vary greatly from a district with a smaller student and staff

population. There may be potential differences in the types of programs offered in the district and the types of resources available for instructional use and professional development for the district's instructional staff. Additionally, districts located in urban, rural, and suburban settings tend to have differences in school climate and have differing impacts from the communities in which they reside.

Population validity can be described as the ability to take the findings from one research study, in which a sample of individuals were utilized to gather results of the research, and apply the findings to a larger population (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Population validity had an impact on this study because all participants in this study became involved by volunteering to complete an online survey after all qualifying subjects were solicited within each study school district. There were no mandates placed upon staff members to participate in the initial online surveys or the follow-up interview questions. The results of this study could be impacted by the fact that all responses came from individuals who made a conscious decision to participate in the research study. Therefore, the population used in this study may not be an accurate cross-section of the staff members employed by the rural school district or the suburban school district, which may impact the results of this study. Additionally, since this study was replicated within another district, the sampling method utilized in the study may have a direct impact on the type of results obtained. In this study, where the participants became involved by volunteering to participate, the results may be skewed by the idea that individuals tend to volunteer to participate if they feel particularly strongly about the topic or if they happen

to know the researcher personally and choose to participate to benefit the researcher's study.

Other threats to external validity include effects the researcher and participants may have had on the results collected from the research study. There may be actions taken by the researcher that unknowingly impacted the results of the study. Also, individuals who choose to participate in the study may have an impact on the results due to their knowledge of the study. When respondents completed the online survey and follow-up interview questions, they were aware that they were part of a research study being conducted on teacher job satisfaction. Therefore, the responses, data, and information they provided may be slightly skewed due to their awareness that they are being studied. Research has shown study participants tend to act differently when they know they are being studied (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Procedures

To begin the research process, an application to perform research was completed for both the rural school district and the suburban school district. The primary investigator for the rural school district submitted information to the superintendent of schools and received permission to conduct research in this district. The suburban school district provided a specific application that potential researchers must complete before performing their study within the district. After the submission of this application, the suburban school district's Director of Data Analysis and Quality Management determined that the research would not infringe upon student learning or the educational process and therefore could be carried out in the school district.

The next step in the process was to complete the application to conduct research for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Lindenwood University. The application process included an outline of the research study in an effort to ensure the safety of all subjects involved in the study, to ensure the confidentiality of information, and to ensure the focus topic and research plan were important to the profession and well-structured. The application to the IRB provided the necessary information to decide if the research study could begin. The information required for the application included the proposed hypothesis for the study, the purpose or objective of the research, information related to the recruitment and treatment of participants, methodology of the research study, potential benefits and risks that could exist by carrying out the study, and the plan for keeping data and information confidential. Additionally, any correspondence used during the study with potential subjects was required to be written and submitted at the time of the application to conduct research; this included the specific survey and follow up interview questions to be used during the research study. The IRB also required proof of the permission granted by the school districts to be studied during this research.

After permission was granted by the IRB on May 14, 2009 (Appendix E), the initial teacher job satisfaction survey was distributed to all teachers in both the school districts via district-provided e-mail. The survey was distributed the last week of school during the academic year 2008-2009. Teachers were instructed that there would be a 2-week time period to complete the survey using the online survey program SurveyMonkey.com. To increase the number of responses to the teacher job satisfaction survey, the survey was redistributed again in September of the following academic year,

2009-2010. The survey was distributed with a description and further instructions to prevent teacher respondents from completing the survey a second time, if they had already participated in the original survey distribution. In addition, the survey was set to not allow more than one response from the same computer in an effort to minimize repeat responses to the survey.

The Administrator Participant Survey was distributed to all building-level district administrators in July of 2009. The same survey was redistributed in September of the following academic year, 2009-2010 to increase the number of responses. The link for the survey to the SurveyMonkey.com program was again included in an e-mail with a description and instructions to prevent potential subjects from repeating the survey if they completed it during the prior distribution in July. Additionally, the survey was also set to not allow more than one response from the same computer for this survey.

In November of 2009, the names of all respondents interested in participating in a follow-up interview questions were collected and each person was contacted via e-mail to describe the process. The teacher respondents were asked to choose their method of participation among an online questionnaire, telephone interview, or in-person interview and reply to the e-mail that was sent to them with their preference. All of the teacher respondents in the rural school district and all but three teacher respondents in the suburban school district chose to use an online questionnaire or indicated they were open to any avenue of participation. Any potential subjects who did not respond to the e-mail solicitation were given the online questionnaire preference. The three respondents in the

suburban school district who did not choose an online questionnaire decided to participate through a telephone interview.

The follow-up interview questions for the online survey were distributed to the teachers through SurveyMonkey.com, which also provided the subjects with the details concerning their participation in the study. The three teachers in the suburban school district participating through a telephone interview were mailed the details of the study prior to the telephone interviews taking place. For the online questionnaire, teachers in both districts were contacted with an e-mail, which contained a link to the document. Teachers responded to the follow-up questions using the text boxes that appeared underneath each question. SurveyMonkey.com collected all subject responses. The telephone interviews conducted by the researcher in the suburban school district were conducted on three separate days during the afternoon of a school day by contacting the three teacher respondents individually at their place of employment. Their responses were recorded and all interviews were conducted during the month of November 2009.

To facilitate the involvement of administrators in the follow-up interview portion of the study, all administrator participants were contacted with an e-mail containing a link to the online questionnaire, which contained the follow-up interview questions. The online questionnaire was designed using SurveyMonkey.com and it included all the details of the study. Administrators and teachers alike, in the rural and suburban school districts, could respond to the follow-up interview questions until the end of the first semester, which concluded on December 23, 2009.

After the conclusion of the timeframe to participate in the follow-up interview questions, all responses to the online surveys and interview questions were downloaded by the researcher from the SurveyMonkey.com website for evaluation. The researcher examined the results of teacher and administrator participants from their specific school districts in order to identify patterns and relationships that existed among the data. Additionally, the data was disaggregated to determine which components of the two instruments were most relative to each research study questions proposed by this study.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to determine the level of job satisfaction for teachers employed by a rural and suburban school district. Another purpose of this study was to determine the alignment between each school district's practices related to teacher job satisfaction and what the research defines as important practices related to higher levels of teacher job satisfaction. Additionally, the researchers examined the results from the rural school district with the results of the suburban school district to determine if there is any influence upon teacher job satisfaction by the demographic profile for each school district.

To summarize, the researchers utilized four different instruments in two parts. The first part of the data collection process was fulfilled by the use of two survey instruments, one designed for teacher respondents and one designed for building-level administrator respondents. These surveys were distributed to every teacher or building administrator employed by each school district. The questions within the teacher job satisfaction survey were centered on key elements the literature review defined as

important elements in the profession. Teachers were asked to rate their level of job satisfaction for each question using a Likert scale that contained four rating options and a not applicable option. They were also allowed to justify their ratings after each question. The administrator participant survey was a collection of open-ended questions designed to solicit information from administrators concerning the practices implemented in their schools based on teacher job satisfaction best practices found in the literature review.

All respondents in the teacher and administrator survey portions of this research study were given the option to participate further in the study by participating in follow-up interview questions. These individuals provided more in-depth information about their profession by answering open-ended questions about the profession. All volunteering participants provided their answers through an online questionnaire, with the exception of three teacher respondents from the suburban school district who preferred to participate through a telephone interview.

Threats to external validity in this study included population threat, ecological threat, and researcher threat. These threats were identified by the researchers as possible factors in recreating this same research study with a different population. The population threat warned against the possibility of the effect the population used in this study could have on the results. Since all teachers were solicited for this study, each participant made a conscious decision to participate and knew their responses were part of a research study. This can have an effect over the type of responses given. The ecological threat was identified due to the impact the location of each school district can have upon the results. The size, type, and location of the each school district in this study should be considered

if this study is recreated. Lastly, effects of the participants or researcher may have had an impact on this study. There is a small possibility that behaviors by either party could have had an impact on the data collected. Therefore, the behaviors of the participants and researcher were identified as a potential threat to validity.

Through the course of this study, data were collected to determine the most important factors in teacher job satisfaction. These factors were used to create instruments in which data could be collected from current teachers and administrators regarding their perceptions of teacher job satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to determine if the rural school district and the suburban school district's practices are in alignment with what the literature review reports as important elements in a positive level of teacher job satisfaction.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this collaborative study was twofold. Using survey and interview data obtained from the rural school district and the suburban school district, the researchers sought to analyze teacher job satisfaction as well as focus on how each of the school districts of study met the needs of its teachers. This study also provided an opportunity for the researchers to examine the factors valued by teachers in each district and establish a framework of key causes that played an essential role in determining a teacher's level of satisfaction. A tool was developed by the researchers to identify what the rural and suburban school district actually does in terms of its practices which influence the satisfaction level of teachers.

The researchers in this study analyzed information to determine how similar the practices of the rural school district and the suburban school district were to the research proven practices for teachers' satisfaction that emerged from the literature review. These practices were established through the review of literature and used as the foundation for this study. Teachers from both the rural school district and the suburban school district shared thoughts and opinions regarding their levels of satisfaction by completing an online survey and participating in follow up interview questions.

The researchers collaborated on the development of the following surveys: (a) Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, (b) Administrative Participant Survey, (c) Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, and (d) Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction. After the responses were collected the researchers analyzed the results.

SurveyMonkey.com was utilized to create the instruments and to facilitate the analysis of data. The researchers used the data gathered to answer four research questions that were presented in chapter one by using narratives, tables, and charts. This qualitative study addressed the following four research questions:

1. Which factors identified in the literature review most contribute to teacher job satisfaction?
2. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices?
3. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction?
4. How does the demographic profile for the rural school district and the suburban school district affect the results in regards to current district practices and teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction?

Participants

The rural school district was a small district located in Jefferson County, Missouri. The rural school district covered 121 square miles and served 6,892 students in the 2008-2009 school year. Both beginning and experienced teachers and building-level administrators had the opportunity to participate in this study to gather an entire representation of the rural school district in order to determine the practices put into place. Through use of district-wide email, teachers and administrators were invited to provide data for this study.

Pre K-12 teachers in the rural school district were the first group contacted to participate in the study. The rural school district employs 541 certified staff members. One hundred teachers (n=100) teachers responded to the survey and provided data for the teacher portion of the analysis, with the majority of the respondents representing the elementary level. The majority of the respondents to the teacher surveys were white (92.9%), females (83.5%). Only 16.5% of the teachers completing the survey were male and 7.1% classified themselves as another ethnicity other than white. The study respondents' years of experience and age are summarized in Tables 5 and 6 respectively. The data regarding currently taught grade level was organized and presented in Table 7.

Table 5

Years of Experience of Teacher Participants

Year	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	30+
%	20.0	22.4	25.9	14.1	5.9	9.4	2.4

Note: From Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey

Table 6

Age of Teacher Participants

Age	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56+
%	6.0	8.3	17.9	22.6	7.1	9.5	11.9	16.7

Note: From Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey

Table 7

Current Level Taught by Teacher Participants

Level	Early Childhood	K-4	5-8	9-12
%	1.2	41.2	29.4	30.6

Note: From Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey

A relationship was evident between the chronological age of the teacher participants and the number of years in the teaching profession. The data showed teachers who have been in the profession 20 years or less corresponded to the age data that most of the respondents were 40 or younger. It is also important to note that the majority of the study participants (87.1%) responded that given a second chance they would choose teaching as a profession again. Over 85% of the participating teachers indicated that a majority of their colleagues are satisfied in their profession as a teacher. Particular information was gathered in order to gain a better understanding of the data presented in the surveys.

The second group that participated in this study was comprised of K-12 building-level administrators working in the rural school district. The rural school district employs 18 administrators in eleven K-12 buildings. One building principal is employed at each of the buildings with the exception of the seventh and eighth grade center and high school. These buildings have a total of seven assistant principals: two at the seventh and eighth grade center and five at the high school. The survey was sent to all 18 administrators in the rural school district. Nine out of those eighteen administrators (n=9) completed the survey, and all nine volunteered to participate further in the investigation by completing the Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questions. Demographic data obtained showed 44% of the administrator respondents were male and 55.6% were female. The participants were representative of the elementary, intermediate, seventh and eighth grade, and high school levels. The format of the survey used to obtain data from the administrators in the rural school district did not include an early childhood category

because the district does not employ an administrator at that level, instead utilizing a coordinator.

Additional data about the administrative respondents were organized into Tables 8-10. These tables include information regarding years of experience, age, and building assignment. The majority of the respondents (44.4%) have been with the district for 6-10 years and each of the respondents was at least 31 years of age or older. Overall, nine administrators participated in this study. Of these participants 100% believed that the teachers within their building are satisfied.

Table 8

Years as an Administrator

Years	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	30+
%	22.2	44.4	22.2	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0

Note: From Administrator Participant Survey

Table 9

Age of the Administrator Participants

Age	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56+
%	0.0	0.0	22.2	33.3	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1

Note: From Administrator Participant Survey

Table 10

Level of Building of the Administrator Participants

Level	K-4	5-6	7-8	9-12
%	33.3	33.3	22.2	11.1

Note: From Administrator Participant Survey

The researcher investigating the suburban school district also sent surveys to two categories of participants: teachers and building-level administrators. Both were surveyed in order to form a complete picture of the current practices in the suburban school district, and to be able to determine the practices put in place by the district. Teachers and administrators were solicited from all schools within the district, which included two early childhood centers, nineteen elementary schools, six middle schools, four high schools, two elementary talented and gifted centers, and one alternative high school.

The 268 participating teachers from the suburban school district were representative of each level of education, with the majority of the respondents at the high school level. Respondents of this initial survey were predominantly female and classified themselves as Caucasian. The majority of the respondents in the suburban school district represent teachers in the profession 20 years or less, while the chronological age of the majority of the respondents were age 40 or younger. Of the 12 administrative participants in the suburban school district, the majority was female and worked at the elementary level. Every administrative respondent had been practicing 15 years or less and had a chronological age in the range of 31-35.

Results

Through the use of four different instruments data was collected that offered answers to the fundamental research questions developed for this study. The data sources utilized in this study included

1. Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey
2. Administrative Participant Survey

3. Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction
4. Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction

Description of Instrument Data: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

This instrument, created by the researchers through SurveyMonkey.com, was presented to teachers with a series of questions that focused on common issues in teacher job satisfaction to determine their current level of satisfaction regarding the topic in question. All PreK-12 certified teachers within the rural school district and the suburban school district received this survey through district email. The participants were provided with a brief introduction as well as directions for completion. It was in the introduction where the respondents were made aware of the anonymity of their answers.

Respondents answered 31 job related questions and used a Likert Scale to mark their level of job satisfaction in each area. The answers were calculated by SurveyMonkey.com and presented in terms of how the PreK-12 certified teachers answered each question based on the following responses: “Highly Satisfied”, “Moderately Satisfied”, “Moderately Dissatisfied”, “Highly Dissatisfied”, and “Not Applicable”. Questions about factors that keep them satisfied within their career were presented. There was an option under each question that allowed for teacher respondents to give comments. The end of the survey included questions that provided the researcher with general information on the participants.

Out of 541 certified PreK-12 teachers in the rural school district who received the survey, 100 (n=100) began to answer questions. However, since an answer to each

question was not required, 100 respondents did not answer each question. There were 268 total teacher respondents in the suburban school district. The Survey Monkey program not only listed the number of responses in each category for each question, but also the percentage of respondents that marked their satisfaction level in each category, with the category containing the majority of the ratings in bold print. The Summary of Teacher Responses for the rural school district, which can be found in its entirety in Appendix G, portrays responses from the initial teacher job satisfaction survey based on answers to each question, as well as, the number of responses that each question elicited. The category with the majority of teacher responses is highlighted in bold.

When data from the Summary of Teacher Responses for the rural school district were summarized, most of the participating teachers indicated a high degree of agreement with the factors that affect teacher job satisfaction. Teachers were moderately satisfied on 20 questions out of 31 asked on the survey. Of the remaining 11 questions on this survey instrument most teachers marked eight of them as highly satisfied. Three of the questions were marked not applicable because they pertained to beginning teachers.

In addition to the Likert scale questions asked in the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, teacher participants were asked, “If given a second opportunity to choose your profession, would you choose to become a teacher?” Of the 85 participants that answered this question, 87.1% responded “yes” they would choose to become a teacher the second time. A total of 15 teachers chose to skip this question and 12.9% of the teachers responded “no”. This data linked with question one where the majority

(88%) indicated that they were satisfied with their chosen profession indicating, by providing additional comments, a love for children and teaching.

The responses given by the teachers in the suburban district showed a high level of satisfaction among teachers. On 17 of the questions asked, the majority of the teachers were highly satisfied. The remainder of the questions was marked in the moderately satisfied category with the exception of the two questions that inquired about new teacher programs. These two questions received the majority of the marks in the not applicable category. When asked if they would choose their profession again, 84.4% responded yes.

On the online survey, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, teachers in both districts were given the opportunity to leave comments regarding each of the questions. The directions in the email explained that they could leave comments in the comment box located directly below the questions. Through the comments, a variety of thoughts, opinions, and perspectives of individual respondents were included. The researchers then analyzed the comments to find patterns and relationships, as well as, to determine how they represented information regarding the research questions that served as a foundation for this study. The comments are described later in this chapter in regards to how they relate to each research question.

Description of the Instrument Data: Teacher Follow-Up Interview Questions

Additional data were obtained for this study through the use of Teacher Follow-Up Interview Questions. This survey was utilized to obtain more in-depth information regarding teachers' opinions and perceptions about their job in the rural school district and the suburban school district. A second online survey was sent via district email if the

teachers that completed this survey indicated an interest of participating further. This email included the instructions for completion and the assurance of anonymity of the survey.

The follow-up interview questions were designed by the researchers to solicit more in-depth information regarding teacher perceptions of their chosen profession. While these responses were open-ended in nature, the responses were analyzed and grouped into categories that were representative of the data. At times, teacher respondents provided more than one answer to the question within the course of their open-ended response. Each full response for each participant was analyzed and information for each answer was broken down and categorized into each specific category by the researcher for that particular school district. This provided data that showed how frequent, or what the most prevalent responses were for each question. The Summary of Teacher Responses-Follow-Up Interview Questions, which can be found in Appendix H in its entirety, highlights the responses given to each of the questions by the respondents in the rural school district. The percentage listed next to each answer represents the number of responses that fell within this category in the open-ended responses of the teachers. Therefore, to find the percentage, the number of responses with each category was compared with the overall number of responses for the question and the answer was rounded to a whole number.

The Summary of Teacher Responses-Follow-Up Interview Questions illustrates numerous perspectives of teachers that volunteered to participate further in the study. Their answers represented the viewpoints of teachers in the rural school district and were

then compared to the viewpoints of administrators in the rural school district in the research questions described later in this chapter. Question six described the majority of the teachers in the rural school district as satisfied while question seven described the majority as choosing the same career if given a second opportunity. Additionally, the questions provided various thoughts, opinions, and perceptions recorded in comment form by the teachers who participated in the follow-up interview questions in the rural school district.

Thirty-three teachers in the suburban school district participated further in the study conducted by Dickens. These respondents were then solicited in the same way as the respondents of the rural school district. Of the 33 email invitations, three individuals gave responses through a telephone interview based on their request. Dickens also analyzed and grouped responses into categories representative of the data. Each full response was broken down and placed in a specific category. The majority of the teachers in the suburban school district were categorized as satisfied individuals who would choose the same career if given the opportunity.

Description of the Instrument Data: Administrator Participant Survey

The Administrator Participant Survey was the initial survey sent to K-12 administrators in the rural school district and the suburban school district and used to gather information pertaining to building-level practices that were identified in the research as having an impact on teacher job satisfaction. Using this data, a foundation was developed in regard to building-level administrator's views, thoughts, and opinions pertaining to current practices within their building. The Administrator Participant

Survey was sent to all K-12 administrators employed at a building in the rural school district and the suburban school district. The survey included a series of 16 open-ended questions and five questions at the end to provide general information about the respondents. There were also three questions at the end allowing respondents to volunteer to participate further in the study and a spot to provide their name and school. This survey was created by the researchers, and data collected, using MonkeySurvey.com and was distributed through district email. The email contained a brief introduction to the anonymity of the survey and instructions for completion.

At the time of this research investigation, the rural school district employed a total of 18 principals: eleven head principals and seven assistant principals. All elementary and intermediate level buildings employed one head administrator. The seventh and eighth grade center employed one head principal and three assistant principals and the high school employed one head principal and four assistants. This survey was distributed to each, with nine out of the eighteen responding. The researcher reviewed the responses obtained from the participants in the rural school district and grouped them into categories. The Summary of Administrator Responses, which can be found in its entirety in Appendix I, lists the questions and represents their responses by providing the percentage of times an answer was given.

On the Administrator Participant Survey, references were made to both meetings and committees. For the purposes of this study and response classification, a meeting refers to regularly scheduled collaboration times in which a group of the same individuals meet throughout the school year. Committees refer to unique groups of the same

individuals that have come together to work on one problem or issue and their collaboration will result in a product or a solution. The survey responses included references PST and RTI. In this survey PST (Positive Support Team) referred to a group of voluntary teachers who meet twice a month to discuss at-risk students brought to the team by classroom teachers. RTI (Response to Intervention) indicated a new initiative in the rural school district used to identify struggling students in order to provide interventions that meet the student's individual needs.

All building-level administrators in the suburban school district were invited to participate in this survey through district email. They too, were given the opportunity to participate further in the study by answering yes to a question on the survey. The administrators in the suburban school district answered the same questions as the administrators in the rural school district in order for the researcher of that study to gather data as to what impacts teacher job satisfaction.

Description of Instrument Data: Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questions

Respondents to the initial surveys in both the rural school district and the suburban school district were given the option to volunteer to participate further in this study by leaving their name and school location. All nine of the original participants in the rural school district volunteered to further participate in this research investigation. Four of the responding twelve administrators in the suburban school district chose to participate. Upon collection of these names, the researchers invited each one of these individuals to participate in the follow-up interview questions through an email message. The email contained a short introduction to the survey and described its anonymity. This

message also provided the participants with a link to the online survey that was created by the researchers on SurveyMonkey.com.

This questionnaire contained 19 questions pertaining to the education profession. The questions were similar, in wording, to previous questions sent to teacher participants in the teacher follow-up group. The exception was that the questions were re-stated to the administrator in a way that provided focus on the teachers in the administrative questionnaire. The administrative participants were asked one less question than the teacher participants. “What keeps you motivated in the profession?” was omitted from the follow-up interview questions because the researchers were curious as to what motivated teachers, not administrators.

The Summary of Administrator Responses-Follow-Up Interview Questions, which can be found in its entirety in Appendix J, presents the responses given by the administrator participants in the rural school district. Next to each question, a series of answers are provided that was categorized by the researcher. Then a percentage was found for each answer given. All responses were grouped into the categories listed.

Research Questions

Research question #1: Which factors identified in the literature review most contribute to teacher job satisfaction? After a review of the literature relevant to this study, five areas emerged as leading factors in teacher job satisfaction. These five areas were the basis for the formation of questions in the four instruments described previously in this chapter. As stated in Chapter 2, the top five areas contributing to teacher job

satisfaction include new teacher induction, administrator support, and teacher compensation, working conditions, and teacher autonomy.

Upon review of the initial teacher satisfaction survey, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, most teachers in the rural school district were highly satisfied with the new teacher induction programs. Respondents were highly satisfied with how their collegiate education prepared them for their position and the hiring process they experienced to obtain their current position. Teachers that perceived themselves as beginning teachers were moderately satisfied with the new teacher support put into place by their school district, the first-year teacher orientation activities planned by their school district, and the required mentoring programs.

More than 50% of the respondents in the suburban school district were highly satisfied with the education that they had received to prepare them for their teaching position and (51.9%) and the hiring process that they went through to obtain their current position (54.3%). The majority of the responses pertaining to new teacher programs were marked in the not applicable category.

The term support was mentioned in each of the instruments used in this study. Within the first online teacher job satisfaction survey, three questions were specifically asked that relate to administrator support in the schools (question # 8, 11, and 18). Teachers in the rural school district were found to be highly satisfied with the relationship they have with their building administration. However, the majority was only moderately satisfied with the amount of support that was provided by their building-level

administrator and with the manner in which administrators address student discipline.

These data paralleled those obtained in the suburban school district.

In this research study, the term teacher compensation refers to the annual salary and benefits teachers receive from their employer based upon the terms of the position they were hired to fulfill. The teacher job satisfaction survey solicited feedback from teachers regarding their perception of their annual salary and the rural school district's benefit package. According to the results of the survey, over 50% of teachers in the rural school district were moderately satisfied with their annual salary. In addition, teachers were also found to be moderately satisfied with the benefit package provided by the district for its full-time, certified teachers. In the suburban school district just over 50% were moderately satisfied with their annual salary and benefits package.

Working conditions is a broad category, which encompasses many facets of the school environment including both physical and non-physical aspects of the school that constitutes the working environment. Questions on the teacher job satisfaction survey covered a variety of aspects of working conditions, including: relationships, communication, student behavior, availability of resources, safety and functionality of the school building, and the overall school climate (described as building pride and motivation). In terms of relationships, teacher respondents were highly satisfied with their teaching team, department, or grade level and with their students. There was an even distribution of highly satisfied and moderately satisfied teachers when responding to the question pertaining to their relationships with other teachers in their building. Satisfaction levels fell to the moderately satisfied category when the question focused on the teachers'

relationships with their students' parents. While the participants were highly satisfied with their relationships they had established with their students, they were only moderately satisfied with the behavior they see being exhibited by the students within the school. It is evident in the survey that the amount of collaboration and planning time teachers have available is important. In each of the four questions, which pertained to personal plan time per day and week and collaboration time per day and week, the majority of the teachers were moderately satisfied. When considering their school building's climate, teachers were moderately satisfied with the levels of motivation, building pride, and overall interpersonal relationships that exist. Over 50% of teachers were moderately satisfied with the instructional resources that are available to them to perform their teaching duties. Teachers were also moderately satisfied with the functionality of their school building, but were highly satisfied with the safety procedures that have been put into place at their school.

In the suburban school district, the majority of the teachers were highly satisfied with the relationships that they have built with other teachers in their building and their students. Satisfaction levels dropped to moderately satisfied when questioned about the relationships that have been built with students' parents, the amount of communication with parents, and with the behavior of the students. Most of the teachers were moderately satisfied when asked about the amount of plan time and collaboration time they were given, as well as the school climate. Marks rose back up to highly satisfied when responding to the functionality of the school and safety procedures.

The last major factor found to play a role in teacher job satisfaction is teacher autonomy, which includes standardized-testing in conjunction with NCLB. Standardized-testing often leads to districts placing extra demands on teachers in order to meet the high expectations on state tests. Teachers were asked on the teacher job satisfaction survey to rank their satisfaction level regarding the expectations that the rural school district places upon them. A total of 53.9% of teachers were found to be moderately satisfied.

Comments, in regard to expectations placed on teachers by the district and eluded to pressure, included: "I think the district increases expectations every year for students and teachers," More and more responsibility lies with the teachers for circumstances beyond our control," and "Expectations keep piling up." The suburban teachers were also moderately satisfied with the expectations placed on them (47.1%).

Five main differences in new teacher support, amount of support given by building-level principal, relationships with coworkers, instructional resources available, and functionality of the school building, were identified between the two districts in this study. The majority of the teachers in the rural school district found each factor to be moderately satisfying while the teachers in the suburban school district were highly satisfied with these five areas.

Research question # 2: How do the rural school district and the suburban school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices? As new teacher induction programs are evident in the research regarding teacher job satisfaction, administrators were surveyed via the administrator participant survey to determine how they accounted for this factor in their building practices in the

rural school district and the suburban school district. Administrators were asked to identify the types of support they offer beginning teachers. In the rural school district, the category “Have a mentor, teammate, or buddy to partner with” scored a 50%. Another category, “Principal Support”, came in second with 20%, followed by “Participation in PLC’s” (17%) and “Professional Development” (11%).

To expand further on specific practices that administrators implement in their buildings outside of the required activities mandated by the rural school district for new teachers, administrators were asked to share their practices regarding activities, programs, and in-building support. The most predominant practice administrators utilized was involvement with school faculty. Other mentioned practices include mentoring, administrative support coupled with meetings, and engaging new teachers in professional development and providing them release time for collaboration.

In order to better understand the practices in place to provide teachers support from their building-level principals, a series of questions were asked of the administrators. According to the administrators in the rural school district, their main ways of offering teachers support in their buildings is being available to them by having an open-door policy and providing professional development opportunities, both of which earned thirty-two percent of the responses. Finally, four indicators on the survey, providing teachers the opportunity to collaborate, classroom observations, making class visits, and being visible throughout the school each received 18%. The administrators were also asked a question in order to identify the types of professional development that they offer to their teachers. In addition to collaboration opportunities (40%) as a type of

professional development offered, support was given to teachers through curriculum-focused (28%) professional development, PST/RTI (16%) professional development, Building School Improvement Planning (8%), technology (4%), and topics of their choosing or personal choice (4%).

Communication is the top-rated way administrators provide teachers with support when dealing with student discipline issues. Seventy-nine percent of responses were focused on the importance of communicating while working through student discipline incidents. Providing teachers with resources necessary (i.e. providing ideas or strategies to try) to handle discipline issues was noted as a way to support teachers at 14%, while following district policy to provide consistency (7%) was also mentioned.

Another way that support is offered to staff by administrators is by motivating and empowering their teachers. When asked how they motivate their teachers, the administrative participants used recognition (50%) as their primary way. After recognition, principals identified support (19%), communication (13%), providing incentives and celebratory gifts (6%), using humor (6%), and building trusting relationships (6%) are all ways administrators have motivated teachers in their building. The empowerment of teachers made evident additional ways administrator participants provided support to their teachers. Of the ways administrators empowered their teachers, the top response, receiving 38% of the frequency markings was, allowing teachers to take part in decision-making. This was followed by providing teachers with collaboration opportunities (33%). Administrators also thought teachers felt empowered when they feel

a part of the communication taking place in the school (24%) and when building a support network for teachers within their building.

Through information provided by the administrator participants, it was evident that various procedures were in place to address working conditions within schools in the rural school district. When administrators were asked a series of questions regarding the physical working conditions of their school building, they were able to share that the majority of teachers, 95% or higher, in their schools had their own classrooms and the average class size in their buildings was in the low 20s (55% of the responses).

Administrators shared a variety of resources they make available to their teachers to benefit their instructional practices. Resources listed included: technology (29%), use of funds to purchase resources when needed (21%), textbooks and curriculum guides (18%), time to collaborate with peers through use of release time (14%), professional development (11%), and human resources, such as mentors, classroom assistants, etc. (7%). Administrators in the rural school district have worked to provide teachers with computers and computer-related materials, such as Smart Boards and software (76%), other technology, such as document cameras and student response systems (10%), wireless lab (10%), and technology support services (4%).

According to responses, administrators attempt to improve working conditions by limiting the requirements for involvement in extra duties by teachers. Thirty-six percent of the responses recorded shared that teachers are not obligated to participate in anything beyond their contractual duties. However, 36% also noted that they provide teachers with the opportunity to join committees and volunteer for things such as music concerts and

school dances. Eighteen percent provide their staff with extra pay duties that are also on a voluntary basis.

Practices were put into place by the administrative participants to create opportunities for teacher collaboration, leadership, and involvement in the decision-making process. Just as empowerment was listed above in the support category, these practices also fall under the heading of working conditions, which includes the working environment. Almost half of the recorded responses (46%) found that meetings involving teachers and administrators are a sound practice. As is, the use of committees (31%) and input is solicited on particular topics through use of surveys, email, etc. Administrators have built in times during teachers' contracted work time to promote collaboration among teachers. These professional development days and early release times earned 20% of the responses. The most frequent response (40%) included grade-level and department-level plan times. Other areas of collaboration included providing time for teachers to work in their professional learning communities (33%) and encouraging the teachers to join committees and hold meetings with one another (7%).

Administrators were asked to describe ways in which they foster an environment where teachers can assume leadership roles. Administrators reported getting teachers involved in committee work within the building (75%) as the number one way to allow them to assume leadership roles. Additionally, administrators provide teachers with after school paid opportunities (8%) and acting as a facilitator for the PST (8%).

Standardized-testing and the demands that it places on teachers was found to be a factor in teacher job satisfaction as identified in the review of literature in chapter two.

For this reason, administrators recorded a high response rate in professional development activities specifically focused on increasing student performance in academic areas. Of the types of professional development listed in the responses for the administrative participant survey, 40% indicated collaboration opportunities as the way in which they help to focus on student performance followed by 28% who indicate a high curricular focus. Additionally, in four different questions on the administrator participant survey, collaboration was listed as a frequent response given by administrators, including collaboration among principals and teachers (question #11-18%).

Support in the suburban school district looked very similar according to the administrator responses. Data obtained from the suburban school district suggested that beginning teachers are given a mentor and professional development opportunities are offered to them (33%) and they also have administrative check-ins (38%). Administrators offer support to all teachers through classroom visits, observations, and being visible (35%). Twenty-eight percent of principals allow for cross-curricular activities and 46% of the professional development offered to teachers is curricular in nature. When dealing with students and discipline 667% of administrators noted communication as a way of supporting their teachers.

When asked how the suburban administrators empowered and motivated their teachers 23% answered by providing leadership opportunities and recognition was answered by 35%. Thirty-nine percent of the leadership opportunities are offered through committee work. Extra duties are limited and 52% of administrators only require

contractual obligations in hopes of relieving the demands of standardized testing.

Classrooms also have low class sizes with an abundance of technology to utilize.

Research Question #3: How do the rural school district and suburban school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction? The administrators provided their views in the participant survey that outlined the current practices the rural school district has in place within its school. The Summary of Follow-Up Interview Question Results for the rural school district, which can be viewed in its entirety in Appendix K, displays a list of topics surveyed in the administrator survey. In the middle column the current practices in place in the rural district are listed. The final column of the table includes practices the teachers in the rural district perceive to have in place based upon the information that was provided in the teacher satisfaction survey and the teacher follow-up interview questions.

The Summary of Follow-Up Interview Questions Results for the rural school district lists eighteen questions that were asked of teachers and administrators in the rural school district to determine if the perspectives of each portrayed an alignment. Three of the questions (# 13, 14, and 16) were not included in the determination of alignment. These three questions were worded differently when asked to the administrators and teacher participants and therefore, no comparisons were made.

Question 15 was the only question found to be misaligned. This question did not show any alignment among the practices used to motivate teachers. The administrator responses listed communication, praise, visibility, humor, and give advice as ways that they motivate their teachers. However, teacher responses included the following: provide

additional training and resources, more time, financial rewards, better working conditions, and autonomy as practices that could be utilized to motivate them to continue in the profession.

The remaining 14 questions showed alignment between the teacher and administrator perspectives. For example, question 10 indicated that there was a strong alignment between the perceptions of what good administrator support looks like. Administrators and teachers alike thought administrative support consisted of respect, communication, availability, and reinforcement. Compensation, location, lack of administrative support, and better working environments were responses of both groups of participants when answering question number four on what causes teachers to pursue positions in other districts.

The same procedures were followed by Dickens to compare the administrator responses to the teacher responses in order to analyze alignment between teacher perceptions and actual practices in the suburban school district. Some type of alignment with practices the teachers perceived the district had in place and practices the administrators stated the district actually had in place was shown on 13 out of the 15 questions. Two areas in which no alignment is evident (#2 and #11) in the responses included administrator and teacher views regarding areas of the profession in need of focus in the next five to ten years and in the behaviors they feel need to be exhibited by building-level or district-level administrators that are not currently being practiced.

Research Question # 4: How does the demographic profile for the rural school district and the suburban school district affect the results in regards to current district

practices and teachers' perception of job satisfaction? In an effort to answer research question number four and determine how the demographic profile for the rural school district affects the results gathered, the researcher in this study compared the rural school district, located in Jefferson County, Missouri to the suburban school district, located in Saint Louis County, Missouri. In order to determine if the type of school district the study was conducted in had an impact on the alignment between the district practices and the teacher perceptions, the results of the rural school district were compared with those of the suburban school district. In the rural school district, 28 of 31 responses and in the suburban school district 29 of 31 responses on the teacher satisfaction survey fell into the moderately satisfied or highly satisfied categories illustrating similarities between the districts. More than half of the teachers in both districts made marks in one of the two satisfied categories pertaining to their administration and the amount of support received, compensation and benefit packages, and the relationships they have formed with their co-workers and students.

The administrator and teacher follow-up interview questions within each study were compared to determine if an alignment was present in the suburban school district in regards to administrator perceptions and practices compared to teacher perceptions. The Summary of Alignment and Teacher Perceptions (Appendix L) displays a list of topics surveyed in an administrative survey, while the middle column lists the current practices in place by the suburban school district. The final column includes practices the teachers in the suburban school district believed to be in place based upon the information

provided to the researcher of that investigation, using the same surveys utilized in this study.

Similarities were found in the actual responses given by administrators and teachers in both districts and there was alignment between the teacher and administrator responses. The majority of the questions in the Summary of Alignment and Teacher Perceptions display a strong level alignment. The rural school district had at least one categorical comment in common on 14 of the related 15 questions. In the suburban school district 13 of the 15 interview questions showed alignment.

After comparing the summaries in Appendix K and L, the researcher for the rural school district found a large number of similarities between the two districts, their practices, and their teachers' perceptions. For example, many of the administrator responses for the rural school district and the suburban school district reflected similar practices by building-level principals. Principals in both districts responded that being visible and having an open-door policy was an important way to show their staff support. Communication was mentioned by administrators in both districts as important when dealing with student discipline. The number one practice mentioned in the rural and suburban school districts as a way to empower teachers was recognition and limiting extra duties was the number one way to help control working conditions.

Summary

Chapter four presents the results that were gathered using four different survey instruments that reported the perspectives of teachers and administrators in the rural and suburban school districts. The data from the administrator participant survey, along with

the responses given in both the administrator and teacher follow-up interview questions, were presented and indicated any relationships that were observed, along with a brief description of each survey instrument utilized to gather the data. In the rural school district, alignment was evident in 14 of the 15 questions while alignment was evident in 13 of the 15 questions in the suburban school district. In chapter five, the results are reviewed in order to answer four research questions. Conclusions are presented that were drawn from the alignment of practices in regards to teacher job satisfaction and based upon the data that was collected in this research study relative to the two separate school districts, rural and suburban.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Current research indicates that teacher job satisfaction plays an important role in attracting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified teachers. Statistics have shown as many as 50% of teachers abandoning the profession in their first five years of teaching experience (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2003). With the number of teachers that exit the profession each year, the researcher chose to identify the predictors of teacher job satisfaction, as well as, determine if the current practices of the rural school district are in alignment with teachers' perceptions. The factors that were identified as having an impact on teacher job satisfaction were narrowed down to five areas: (a) new teacher induction programs, (b) administrator support, (c) teacher compensation, (d) working conditions, and (e) teacher autonomy. According to the review of literature in chapter two, districts that align their practices with the five areas that impact teacher job satisfaction may help to create a strong teaching force that remains in the profession.

The implementation of NCLB in 2002 caused many districts across the country to reflect on their practices. The rural school district focuses on meeting the demands put into place by NCLB to retain highly qualified teachers in order to improve student achievement. It is essential for teachers to feel satisfied in their profession in order to meet the demands and expectations that are placed upon them. This study was designed to determine how the rural school district's current practices align with the five areas mentioned above, to determine the degree of alignment between the practices implemented by building-level administrators with the teachers' perceptions of practices implemented by their administration, and to determine if a relationship exists between the

type of school district and the results of this study, which compared data from a rural and suburban school district. Specifically, the questions were

1. Which factors identified in the literature review most contribute to teacher job satisfaction?
2. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices?
3. How do the rural school district and the suburban school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction?
4. How does the demographic profile for the rural school district and the suburban school district affect the results in regards to current district practices and teachers' perception of job satisfaction?

In order to answer these research questions, four instruments were developed through collaboration between the researchers and were used to gather data with limitations being identified in the use of each instrument. The four research instruments created through SurveyMonkey.com were (a) Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, (b) Administrative Participant Survey, (c) Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, and (d) Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction.

Of the participants completing the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey most marked Highly Satisfied or Moderately Satisfied as their responses when asked questions pertaining to the five areas found to affect job satisfaction. Specifically, 28 of the 31 questions were marked in the top two levels of the Likert scale provided. Of the

teachers surveyed, 50% indicated that they were moderately satisfied with their job indicating, through their comments, a love for teaching and learning. However, questions 15 (34.8), 16 (40.2), and 17 (38) did not have the majority of the responses in the not applicable category. These questions asked the respondents to rate items pertaining to the new teacher programs and activities and most teachers indicated, through their comments, that they could not recall the program well enough to rate these items fairly. Not one question asked received a majority of responses in the bottom two levels of the provided Likert scale, moderately dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied.

Similar results were produced by the suburban school district with 29 of the 31 questions marked in either the highly satisfied or moderately satisfied categories. Like the rural school district, the suburban school district never had the majority of the responses fall in the moderately dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied categories. They had two questions where the majority of the responses fell into the not applicable category because the questions pertained to new teacher programs and activities. However, in both districts when the not applicable responses were eliminated from the results, the responses fell into the highly and moderately satisfied categories. These results supported the idea that the teachers in the rural and suburban school districts are satisfied in their profession.

The Administrative participant survey, completed by K-12 administrators in the rural school district, provided data to building-level administrator's views, thoughts, and opinions pertaining to current practices within their building. This instrument was used to gather information pertaining to building-level practices that were identified in the

literature review as having an impact on teacher job satisfaction levels. All responses from both the rural and suburban school districts were placed into categories and given a percentage based upon the number of times a particular response was given. This data created a foundation for which the Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction survey was created. This instrument allowed the administrators to voice the current practices that they believed to be in place in their buildings in the rural school district and in the suburban school district indicating that practices are in place that support the five areas found to effect teacher job satisfaction levels. Communication, support, and collaboration were just a few reoccurring themes that emerged.

Twenty-one PreK-12 teachers employed by the rural school district voluntarily completed the Teacher Follow-Up Interview Questions-Response Categories and Frequency instrument. This survey provided data that showed how frequent, or what the most prevalent responses were for each question that was asked. Questions were open-ended and some elicited more than one response from each participant. Each response was counted and placed into similar categories. Due to the fact that this was done on a voluntary basis, it was possible that the teachers with the strongest opinions were the only ones who completed this survey and these results should be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

The Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questions-Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction survey was completed by nine, K-12 administrators, employed by the rural school district, on a voluntary basis. The questions were similar, in wording, to

previous questions sent to teacher participants in the follow-up questions pertaining to the education profession. The exception in the administrative questionnaire was the questions were re-stated to the administrator in a way that provided focus on the teachers. The purpose of this survey was to analyze administrator responses to verify the connection, if any, between their perceptions and the teachers' perceptions in their district.

These two instruments provided data that were analyzed to determine if there was alignment between the administrator responses and the teacher responses. A strong alignment was shown between current practices and perceptions of building-level administrators along with the perceptions of the teachers comprising the interview group. Only one question out of the fifteen proved to be misaligned in the practices put into place that motivate teachers. The suburban school district showed similar results after data from the same two surveys was analyzed. Alignment was shown in 13 of the 15 questions. Misalignment existed in the data in regards to which areas of the profession should be focus areas in the next five to ten years and in regards to behaviors or practices they would like to see administrators engage in which they are not currently practicing. With similarities in both districts on the follow-up interview questions, it can be concluded that when administrators and teachers have similar perceptions and viewpoints it can lead to higher satisfaction levels among teachers within the two school districts.

Summary of the Findings Related to the Research Questions

The results obtained from this investigation, through the four instruments created on SurveyMonkey.com, helped to answer the research questions established for this study. The research questions were the focus throughout the development, creation, and

analysis of the data of this study. The subsequent is a summary of the findings based on the four research questions.

1. Which factors identified in the literature review most contribute to teacher job satisfaction?

There were many factors, identified through the literature review, contributive to teacher job satisfaction. The five most prevalent factors noted were new teacher induction programs, administrator support, teacher compensation, working conditions, and teacher autonomy. The survey, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, was used to gather data from respondents in the rural school district and the suburban school district by asking questions pertaining to the above five areas and having the participants choose from the following: Highly Satisfied, Moderately Satisfied, Moderately Dissatisfied, and Highly Dissatisfied.

Based upon responses on the survey, the majority of teachers in the rural school district are satisfied. This was determined because all of the marks having the highest percentage, with the exception of questions 15, 16, and 17, fell into one of the satisfied categories. Of the 31 Likert scale questions, data showed that on nine of those questions (# 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 28, 31) teachers were highly satisfied. On 20 questions teachers were moderately satisfied and on three questions (# 15, 16, 17) the majority of the responses fell into the not applicable category because they focused on beginning teacher programs. On one particular question (#3), which asked about the relationships with teachers in their buildings, respondents had the same percentage (46%) in both highly satisfied and moderately satisfied categories. For the entire survey, the categories

moderately dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied were never found to contain a majority of the responses. Similarly, the suburban school district was found to have a majority of the responses in the top two satisfaction categories on 29 of the 31 questions.

Based on this data, the majority of the rural school district's teachers are satisfied based on the factors that most contribute to teacher job satisfaction. In support of this, more than 85% percent of teachers indicated that if given a second opportunity they would choose teaching as their profession again. The same conclusion, teachers are satisfied in their positions and in their chosen profession, can be drawn for the suburban district. Research by Darling Hammond (2003) suggested that if districts are focusing on the five contributive areas of teacher job satisfaction, as the rural school district and the suburban school district appears to be, their teachers would be satisfied with their teaching job.

2. *How do the suburban school district and the rural school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices?*

In order to identify if there was a relationship between the five factors identified in the review of literature and the current practices used by the rural school district and the suburban school district, administrators were given the Administrative Participant survey. Responses to the series of open-ended questions given by the nine administrator participants in the rural school district and the twelve respondents in the suburban school district were grouped into categories to provide summative data for each question.

Based on the answers given by administrators, both districts provided ideal new teacher induction programs. They did so by providing the new teachers with supportive

relationships. These relationships may have been in the form of a mentor, teammate, or buddy of some type including administration support. Respondents in the rural and suburban school district noted providing new teachers with professional development opportunities as important. The administrators in the suburban school district use evaluation instruments as a tool to offer support to beginning teachers, but they were not used by the administrators in the rural school district.

In the literature review, compensation emerged as a factor that influenced the levels of teacher job satisfaction. Compensation was noted by administrators in the rural school district and the suburban school district as being important to its teachers. The administrators in the rural school district identified compensation as an area of the profession that needs to be addressed in the next five to ten years. Administrators in both districts listed compensation as the reason why teachers either leave the profession or seek positions in other districts. These notations insinuated that the principals in each district were aware of the value that compensation, including benefits, has among teachers in regards to their satisfaction levels.

Questions were asked of the administrators in both districts as to how they offer support to their faculty. In the rural school district, administrators' primary way of providing support to their teachers was having an open-door policy. Other avenues utilized in the rural school district to support teachers included providing teachers an opportunity to collaborate and being a presence within classrooms and the school building. Communication was the top-rated way administrators provided teachers with support in regards to dealing with student discipline issues in both school districts.

Seventy-nine percent of responses were focused on this importance in the rural school district while 67% of responses were focused on the importance of communicating while working through student discipline incidents in the suburban school district.

Administrators in both districts provided curriculum-based professional development as a practice. Recognition was the primary way both school districts motivated and inspired teachers.

Working conditions were also noted as a way to impact teacher job satisfaction with administrators in both districts. Administrators in the rural school district (88%) and the suburban school district (54%) noted that the 95% or higher of teachers have their own classrooms and the average class sizes in the rural school district (55%) and the suburban school district (62%) are in the low 20's. They also noted that their teachers are provided time to collaborate with their peers. Resources reported to be available for teachers in the rural school district were similar to those provided by the suburban school district. Teachers in the rural school district benefited from technology, use of funds to purchase resources, curricular materials, collaboration opportunities, professional development, and human resources. Teachers in the rural school district benefited from the same types of technology that were available in the suburban school district; computers and computer-related materials, "other" technology, such as document cameras and student response systems, and technology support services. One difference in the reported resources provided for each school district was a wireless computer lab provided by the rural school district.

Teacher autonomy is addressed through the increased demands placed on teachers due to standardized testing and the large amount of pressure placed on the teachers in both districts. Teachers are not required to participate in anything beyond their contractual duties and while it is encouraged by the principals to partake in committees, teachers have the freedom to choose what they are involved in. Both districts offer volunteer opportunities with some offering additional compensation. The practices put into place by administrators in both district showed an understanding by administrators of the pressures felt by teachers and illustrated the point that they look to minimize those pressures.

3. How do the suburban school district and the rural school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction?

The information provided by practicing administrators and teachers via the follow-up interview questions, provided results that allowed for the alignment between current district practices and teacher perception related to teacher job satisfaction to be determined. The Administrator Participant Follow-Up Interview Questions outlined the current practices the rural school district and the suburban school district has in place within its schools, as viewed by the participating administrators. These views were compared to views held by the teachers in both districts and their perception on what is in place based upon the information that was provided in teacher satisfaction survey and the teacher follow-up interview questions. .

Fifteen questions, similar in wording, were asked to both teachers and administrators in the rural school district. Their responses were analyzed and grouped

into categories based on the frequency of the response. Of these 15 questions, 14 indicated an alignment in the rural school district's perceptions. Misalignment was found in one question concerning the practices used to motivate teachers. Six questions were found to have three or more common responses from the administrators and teachers in the rural school district.

Strong alignment was shown in the questions regarding challenging situations, areas of the profession that need the most attention in the next five to ten years and from district and building-level administrators, the causes for teachers leaving the profession, and the causes for teachers pursuing positions with other districts. Both groups identified many of the same challenging situations that are in place for teachers noting student/parent issues, workload, and standardized testing. Compensation, location, lack of administrative support, and better working environments were responses of both groups of participants when answering question number four on what causes teachers to pursue positions in other districts. Question ten recorded six common responses for what good administration support looks like thus showing the strongest alignment. It was reported by teacher and administrator respondents that good administrator support included respect and communication. With strong alignment portrayed in 14 of the 15 questions, it is suggested that there is a strong alignment between the rural district's practices and teacher perceptions.

Data from the suburban school district resulted in alignment between 13 of the 15 questions that were asked of administrators and teachers. At least one common response was given in each of these 13 questions. The question topics that recorded the strongest

alignment were causes for teachers leaving the profession, causes for teachers to pursue jobs in other school districts, what schools can do to help teachers become more satisfied, reasons teachers enter the profession, and what does ideal administrator support look like. Questions asked in the follow-up interview which resulted in no alignment in the answers were questions that asked what areas of the profession should be focus areas in the next five to ten years and what behaviors they would like to see from their district and building-level administrators that are not currently being practiced in the suburban school district.

4. *How does the demographic profile for the suburban school district and the rural school district influence the results in regards to current district practices and teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction?*

Data were collected from the rural school district the suburban district in an effort to determine if the type of school district and its practices had an impact on the teacher job satisfaction results of this study. Collaborative research was conducted with Dickens of the suburban school district and the same procedures and four survey instruments were used in order to answer this question.

When data from both researchers were compared, many similarities in practices and teacher perceptions emerged. Teachers in both districts indicated a high satisfaction level marking the majority of their responses in the highly satisfied and moderately satisfied categories on the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction survey. In the rural school district, 28 of the 31 questions were marked in the top two satisfaction categories and 29 of the 31 were marked in the top two levels in the suburban school district. Both

districts also showed strong alignment on the follow-up interview questions for teachers and administrators. These interview groups resulted with common responses on 14 of the 15 questions in the rural school district and 13 of the 15 in the suburban school district. These similarities lead to the conclusion that demographics do not affect the results of this study on teacher job satisfaction.

Summary of Data Collection

Research data presented in this study indicated a high level of teacher satisfaction in the rural school district. A relationship was present between the framework of identified factors that support teacher job satisfaction and the satisfaction scores of current teachers in the rural school district as measured using the rating scale through the online survey. Teacher responses were marked in the highly or moderately satisfied categories on the majority of the questions, and over 85% of teachers would choose to enter the teaching profession if given a second opportunity. Administrators indicated 100% of their teachers were satisfied in their positions. The data obtained from this study will be used to make recommendations for future research studies.

In the follow-up interview questions, 68% of the 21 rural school district teachers would choose a career in teaching if they could begin again and more than 70% consider themselves to be very satisfied with their chosen profession. Working with students was the reason 65% of respondents gave for wanting to go into the profession and over 60% felt they have a high level of control over their day-to-day responsibilities. Sixty-four percent felt empowered by the district through the training and resources that are provided to them and nearly 90% (89%) indicated that their relationships with other

colleagues in their buildings are of extreme importance. Over 50% of the administrator interview group indicated that their teachers would choose teaching as a profession if given a second opportunity.

Consistencies in responses from teachers and administrators were revealed through the research instruments. The teacher satisfaction survey noted that the majority of teachers in the rural school district were satisfied while the follow-up questions indicated a strong alignment between the current district practices and teacher perceptions in regards to the factors that affect teacher job satisfaction. Similar viewpoints were indicated on 14 of the 15 questions asked while only one question showed misalignment. Positive practices included (a) using mentorship and positive principal relationships to provide support to beginning teachers; (b) being visible, having an open-door policy, and providing collaboration time as ways to support teachers; (c) providing teachers with supplies and resources and leadership opportunities in order to create positive working conditions or environment; (d) giving teachers autonomy in their teaching and not requiring extra duties outside of contractual obligations as ways to reduced the pressures of standardized testing; and (e) providing professional development opportunities in order to receive extra pay and advance to the next pay track and including teachers in decision-making processes in regards to benefit packages in which administrators are considerate of teacher salaries and benefits. For these reasons, the conclusion can be made that the teachers in the rural school district are satisfied with their jobs and that the rural school district's current practices are a key factor in this satisfaction.

Additionally, the researcher sought to determine if the demographics of a particular school district had an effect on the degree of alignment between administrators and teachers within the results found in this study. Upon the completion of this collaborative study including the rural school district and the suburban school district, the conclusion was made that demographics of the districts had little effect on the results of this study. Responses from both districts found the majority of teacher responses to be in the highly or moderately satisfied categories on the Factors Related to Teachers Satisfaction survey. A strong alignment was also found among the responses collected in the administrator and teacher follow-up interview questions. Of the questions asked, 15 questions were worded the same, or similarly, to elicit comparable responses from the participants. In the rural school district, 14 of the 15 questions and 13 of the 15 in the suburban school district showed at least one common response between the teacher and administrator perceptions.

Final Thoughts

According to the comparison made between the rural school district and the suburban school district, teacher satisfaction levels can be high if practices are put into place that support the factors that have been identified as having a positive effect. Demographics of the study districts are of minimal concern in comparison to what districts do to empower teachers, provide administrative support, build relationships, and provide independence to teachers. Responses from both the rural school district and the suburban school district indicate that even though the district demographic profiles are different, teachers can still feel a high level of satisfaction if certain factors are in

alignment, regardless of the rural or suburban setting. Practices in both school districts included methods to support teachers, professional development practices, resources for teachers, support for new teacher induction programs, and giving teachers leadership opportunities and the ability to be a part of the decision-making process.

While small differences were found in the amount and types of technology offered between the two school districts, the practices set in place were very similar, providing evidence that the practices followed by a district can make an impression. It was found that above all else, the administrators within a district play a very significant role in the satisfaction levels of its teachers. The majority of the rural and suburban school districts' teachers who commented when answering questions on the survey were very pleased with the administration and the support that they offered. A strong alignment between positive teacher satisfaction factors, administrative practices, and teacher perceptions leads to high teacher job satisfaction scores for these two school districts.

The rural school district should use the information from this study to evaluate current practices. This evaluation should take place often to make sure practices are in alignment with the identified factors proven to impact levels of teacher job satisfaction. Furthermore, when evaluating whether district practices are in alignment with the factors they should consider teacher input and provide a tool that will act as an avenue to gather this input.

Recommendations for Future Research Studies

This study resulted in implications and conclusions for the teaching profession and teacher job satisfaction in the rural school district and the suburban school district. However, further research is needed to gain more personalized data through the use of the interview method. In addition, the following research questions should be considered:

1. How important is it for teachers to reflect upon their career, and does it affect their decision to be a teacher and remain in the classroom?
2. What other factors relate to teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention?
3. Does teaching in an urban setting have an effect on teacher job satisfaction?
4. What are the characteristic trends of teachers who decide to leave the profession?

Future research should also include comparing levels of teacher job satisfaction in low performing and high performing school districts. It would also be beneficial to conduct research in order to determine if teacher job satisfaction can be improved by changing external conditions such as working conditions and compensation.

Hiring and retaining high-quality teachers is essential to improving teaching practices and supporting the development of student achievement. In order to retain high-quality teachers, job satisfaction must be addressed. This increasing need in the education profession warrants more research in each of the areas listed.

Conclusion

It is important for school leaders to analyze the factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction as well as the practices that they have in place in their districts. This

research study demonstrated that teachers in the rural school district are satisfied with the practices that have been put into place by the district. The alignment between the practices of the rural school district and teacher perceptions of the practices are evidence that the district utilizes the positive factors identified in the review of literature thus causing high level of teacher job satisfaction. The data from the suburban school district also demonstrated that its teachers are satisfied. The results indicate that the demographics of the rural school district and the suburban school district had little to no influence on the outcome of this study.

The issue of teacher retention is a developing crisis that the education profession has to deal with year after year. This issue gains urgency every time a teacher chooses to leave the profession due to dissatisfaction. It is important for school districts to continually address teacher job satisfaction to retain qualified teachers, turn teaching into a long-term profession, improve student-teacher relationships, and help to raise student achievement.

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Appendix A-Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey					
1. Teacher Satisfaction Survey					
<p>The questions below will be used to conduct research concerning factors related to teacher satisfaction. All responses are anonymous and are not linked to individual respondents in any way. If you would like to comment regarding a specific question, please do so in the box directly following the question.</p> <p>Please choose the answer that best describes your level of satisfaction regarding the questions below.</p>					
1. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
your job as a teacher?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>				
2. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the working relationship you have developed with your teaching team, department, or grade level?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>				
3. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the working relationship you have with other teachers in your building?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>				

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey					
4. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the relationships you have developed with your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				
5. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the relationships you have developed with your students' parents?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				
6. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the amount of communication you have with your students' parents?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				
7. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the type of communication you have with your students' parents?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey					
8. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
your relationship with your building administration?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				
9. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
your personal comfort-level with the curriculum you have been assigned to teach?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				
2.					
10. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	
the behavior of students in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				
11. How satisfied are you with...					
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the manner in which student discipline is addressed by your building administration?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments	<input type="text"/>				
	<input type="text"/>				

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

12. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the education you have received to prepare you for your teaching position?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

13. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the type of professional development offerings provided by your school district?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

14. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the number of professional development opportunities offered by your school district?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

15. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the new teacher support program in place by your school district?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

16. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the first-year teacher orientation activities planned by the school district?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

17. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the required mentor/mentee activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

18. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the amount of support given by your building administrator?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

19. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the amount of teacher collaboration time per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

3.

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

20. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the amount of teacher collaboration time per week?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

21. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the amount of personal teacher plan time per day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

22. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the amount of personal teacher plan time per week?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

23. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the expectations placed upon you by the school district?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

24. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
your annual salary?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

25. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the district's benefit package?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

26. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
the instructional resources available by the district for use with your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

27. How satisfied are you with...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A
your school climate (i.e. relationships, level of motivation, building pride, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey						
28. How satisfied are you with...						
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A	
the safety procedures put in place by your building?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Comments	<input type="text"/>					
	<input type="text"/>					
29. How satisfied are you with...						
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A	
the community in which your school is a part?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Comments	<input type="text"/>					
	<input type="text"/>					
4.						
30. How satisfied are you with...						
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A	
the functionality of your school building?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Comments	<input type="text"/>					
	<input type="text"/>					
31. How satisfied are you with...						
	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A	
the hiring process you experienced to obtain your current position?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Comments	<input type="text"/>					
	<input type="text"/>					
5.						
32. How many years, including the present year, have you been teaching?						
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 30+

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

33. What is your gender?

Male

Female

34. What is your ethnicity? (optional)

African American

Asian American

Caucasian

Hispanic
American

Other

35. What is your age? (optional)

21-25

26-30

31-35

36-40

41-45

46-50

51-55

56+

36. What is the level you are currently teaching?

Early Childhood

Elementary (K-4)

Middle (5-8)

High (9-12)

37. If given a second opportunity to choose your profession, would you choose to become a teacher?

Yes

No

38. Generally speaking, do you feel that a majority of the teachers you work with are satisfied with their profession?

Yes

No

39. Which school district are you employed with?

40. Are you interested in participating in future focus groups and/or interviews related to the topic? Future focus groups and/or interviews may be audio taped to ensure the accuracy of responses. All participants' identities will be kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms.

Yes

No

41. If you answered yes to question 40, please provide your information below.

Name

School Location

6.

Thank you for completing this survey! All responses will remain confidential and will be combined with

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

responses of all other participants to complete the study, "Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices." A comprehensive data analysis of these responses and the completed study will be made available to you through your participating school district and through the Lindenwood University Library.

Appendix B-Administrator Participant Survey

Administrator Participant Survey

1. Administrator Participant Survey

For each question below, please provide information that best describes your current practices. You may bullet point your information or write in paragraph form. There is no length requirement for any question.

1. How does the administration empower your teachers?

2. How are teachers involved in making decisions?

3. What is the average class size?

4. What types of resources are accessible for teachers?

5. What is the level of technology provided for your teachers to use in their classrooms?

6. What type of support is offered to beginning teachers?

7. What activities, programs, or in-building support do you offer beginning teachers outside of the required district activities?

Administrator Participant Survey

8. What type of professional development is offered to teachers?

9. What is the amount of extra duties given to teachers outside of their work in the classroom?

10. In what way are teachers provided opportunities to have a say in procedures, programs, and reforms that are taking place in the building?

2. Administrator participant Survey

For each question below, please provide information that best describes your current practices. You may bullet point your information or write in paragraph form. There is no length requirement for any question.

11. How do you, as a building administrator, offer support to your teachers?

12. What opportunities do teachers have for collaboration?

13. What opportunities exist for leadership roles within the school for teachers?

14. what percentage of teachers have their own classroom?

Administrator Participant Survey

15. How do you support and collaborate with teachers in regards to student discipline?

16. How do you motivate your teachers?

3. Administrator Participant Survey

Please choose the response that best describes yourself.

17. How many years, including the present year, have you been an administrator in the district?

- 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 30+

18. What is your gender? (Optional)

- Female Male

19. What is your age? (Optional)

- 21-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56+

20. What is the level of your building?

- Elementary Intermediate Valley High

21. Generally speaking, do you feel that the majority of teachers that work in your building are satisfied?

- Yes No

22. Are you interested in participating in future focus groups and/or one on one in-person or telephone interviews related to this topic?

- Yes No

Administrator Participant Survey

23. If you answered yes to question 22, please provide your information below.

Name

School Location

4. Administrator Participant Survey

Thank you for completing this survey! All responses will remain confidential and will be combined with responses of all other participants to complete the study "Factors Influencing Teacher Job satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices." A comprehensive data analysis of these responses and the completed study will be made available to you through the Lindenwood University Library.

Appendix C-Teacher Follow-Up Interview Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to further participate in the study, "Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices." The purpose of this study is to determine if current school district practices are in alignment with contributing factors in teacher job satisfaction. Here are the details of the study:

1. Your participation will include responding to the short-answer questions below.
2. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
3. There are no direct benefits for your participation in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about effective and non-effective district practices in relation to teacher job satisfaction and your participation may lead to an evaluation of district methodology pertaining to trends identified.
4. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.
5. Your responses are completely anonymous and your identity is in no way associated with your responses.
6. If you have any questions regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the investigator, Kimberly Dickens (314-277-1154). You may also direct questions to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel at 636-949-4846.

By completing this questionnaire, you are agreeing that you have read this information and you consent to participate in the study described above. You are also acknowledging that you have the opportunity to ask questions and that you may print a copy of this information for your records.

1. Looking back over your teaching career, what have been the most challenging situations to deal with?

2. What keeps you motivated in the profession?

3. What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?

4. What causes teachers to leave the profession?

5. What causes teachers to pursue positions with other school districts?

6. How satisfied are you with your chosen profession in the field of education?

7. Would you choose this same career if you could begin again?

8. What were your reasons for wanting to go into the profession? Are those reasons the same reasons you stay in the profession?

9. When looking at other careers, what important factors do they possess that are missing from the education field?

10. What can schools do to make more teachers satisfied in their profession?

11. What areas in the day to day teaching profession are overlooked by the district and building-level administration?

12. In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?

13. What behaviors would you like to see from your building-level administrators that are not currently being practiced?

14. Has your level of satisfaction with your career changed over time?

15. Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?

16. Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers? If no, what further assistance could be provided?

17. What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?

18. How do you view your level of independence and control over your day to day responsibilities and duties?

19. How does your school district empower you?

20. How important are your relationships with other colleagues in your building?

Appendix D-Administrator Follow-Up Interview Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to further participate in the study, "Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices." The purpose of this study is to determine if current school district practices are in alignment with contributing factors in teacher job satisfaction. Here are the details of the study:

1. Your participation will include responding to the short-answer questions below.
2. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
3. There are no direct benefits for your participation in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about effective and non-effective district practices in relation to teacher job satisfaction and your participation may lead to an evaluation of district methodology pertaining to trends identified.
4. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.
5. Your responses are completely anonymous and your identity is in no way associated with your responses.
6. If you have any questions regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the investigator, Kimberly Dickens (314-277-1154). You may also direct questions to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel at 636-949-4846.

By completing this questionnaire, you are agreeing that you have read this information and you consent to participate in the study described above. You are also acknowledging that you have the opportunity to ask questions and that you may print a copy of this information for your records.

1. Looking over your career, what have been the most challenging situations teachers have had to deal with?

2. What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?

3. What causes teachers to leave the profession?

4. What causes teachers to pursue positions with other school districts?

5. How satisfied are you with your chosen profession in the field of education?

6. What percentage of your teachers do you believe would choose this same career if they could begin again?

7. What do you view as the reasons teachers choose to enter the profession? Are those reasons the same reasons teachers stay in the profession?

8. When looking at other careers, what important factors do they possess that are missing from the education profession?

9. What can schools do to help teachers be more satisfied with their profession?

10. What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration?

11. In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?

12. What behaviors would you like to see from your colleagues and/or district-level administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?

13. Do you feel that teachers' level of job satisfaction changes over time?

14. How has NCLB impacted classroom teachers in your building?

15. Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers? If no, what further assistance should be provided?

16. What practices do you use to motivate your teachers?

17. How do you give teachers independence and control over their day to day responsibilities and duties?

18. How does your school district empower your teachers?

19. How important are your relationships with the teachers in your building?

Appendix E-IRB Approval

09-75
IRB Project Number

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board Disposition Report

TO: Kimberly Fallert and Taneal Wallace
CC: Dr. Vitale

Thank you for addressing the concerns raised by the IRB. Your proposal has been fully approved. Good luck with your data collection and the completion of your project.

Colleen Biri, Psy.D. 5/14/2009
Institutional Review Board Chair Date



Appendix F-Rural District Research Approval



Northwest R-I School District

A "Distinction In Performance" District

March 23, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as my support and permission for **Ms. Teneal Wallace** to complete her project entitled *Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices* utilizing participants from the Northwest R-I School District. It is my understanding that this project will begin tentatively in March 2009 and be completed tentatively in December 2009.

After a review of her proposed research, the Northwest District administration is very interested in reviewing the results and data from her project. Should you need anything further concerning the District's approval of this project, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Ziegler
Superintendent of Schools

PJZ:cj

Appendix G-Summary of Teacher Responses

*Teacher Satisfaction Survey**n = 100*

How satisfied are you with

Question	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A	Response Count
1. Your job as a teacher?	38% (38)	50% (50)	10% (10)	0% (0)	2% (2)	100
2. The working relationship you have developed with your teaching team, dept., or grade level?	58% (58)	32% (32)	8% (8)	1% (1)	1% (1)	100
3. The working relationship you have with other teachers in your building?	46% (46)	46% (46)	7% (7)	1% (1)	0%	100
4. The relationships you have developed with your students?	64% (64)	34% (34)	1% (1)	0% (0)	1% (1)	100
5. The relationship you have developed with your students' parents?	26% (26)	52% (52)	18% (18)	1% (1)	3% (3)	100
6. The amount of communication you have with your students' parents?	22% (22)	53% (53)	22% (22)	1% (1)	2% (2)	100
7. The type of communication you have with your students' parents?	28% (28)	49% (49)	19% (19)	2% (2)	2% (2)	100
8. Your relationship with your building administration?	40% (40)	33% (33)	21% (21)	6% (6)	0% (0)	100
9. Your personal comfort level with the curriculum you have been assigned to teach?	55% (55)	34% (34)	8% (8)	1% (1)	2% (2)	100
10. The behavior of students in your classroom?	27.2% (25)	51.1% (47)	15.2% (14)	6.5% (6)	0% (0)	92

Summary of Teacher Responses continued

Question	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A	Response Count
11. The manner in which student discipline is addressed by your building administrator?	18.5% (17)	50% (46)	22.8% (21)	7.6% (7)	1.1% (1)	92
12. The education you have received to prepare you for your teaching position?	42.4% (39)	40.2% (37)	15.2% (14)	1.1% (1)	1.1% (1)	92
13. The type of professional development offerings provided by your district?	29.3% (27)	43.5% (40)	18.5% (17)	8.7% (8)	0% (0)	92
14. The number of professional development opportunities offered by your school district?	43.5% (40)	40.2% (37)	8.7% (8)	7.6% (7)	0% (0)	92
15. The new teacher support program in place by your district?	27.2% (25)	31.5% (29)	6.5% (6)	0% (0)	34.8% (32)	92
16. The first-year teacher orientation activities planned by the school district?	22.8% (21)	29.3% (27)	5.4% (5)	2.2% (2)	40.2% (37)	92
17. The required mentor/mentee activities?	25% (23)	30.4% (28)	5.4% (5)	1.1% (1)	38% (35)	92
18. The amount of support given by your building administrator?	38% (35)	41.3% (38)	16.3% (15)	4.3% (4)	0% (0)	92
19. The amount of teacher collaboration time per day?	14.1% (13)	41.3% (38)	28.3% (26)	13% (12)	3.3% (3)	92
20. The amount of teacher collaboration time per week?	7.9% (7)	47.2% (42)	32.6% (29)	9.0% (8)	3.4% (3)	89
21. The amount of personal teacher plan time per day?	24.7% (22)	41.6% (37)	23.6% (21)	9% (8)	1.1% (1)	89

Summary of Teacher Responses continued

Question	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	N/A	Response Count
22. The amount of personal teacher plan time per week?	22.5% (20)	48.3% (43)	20.2% (18)	7.9% (7)	1.1% (1)	89
23. The expectations placed upon you by the district?	18.% (16)	53.9% (48)	21.3% (19)	6.7% (6)	0% (0)	89
24. Your annual salary?	9% (8)	55.1% (49)	29.2% (26)	6.7% (6)	0% (0)	89
25. The district's benefit package?	23.6% (21)	53.9% (48)	18% (16)	4.5% (4)	0% (0)	89
26. The instructional resources available by the district for use with your students?	18% (16)	57.3% (51)	18% (16)	6.7% (6)	0% (0)	89
27. Your school climate?	32.6% (29)	49.4% (44)	16.9% (15)	1.1% (1)	0% (0)	89
28. The safety procedures put in place by your building?	46.1% (41)	43.8% (39)	7.9% (7)	2.2% (2)	0% (0)	89
29. The community in which your school is a part?	25.8% (23)	49.4% (44)	19.1% (17)	3.4% (3)	2.2% (2)	89
30. The functionality of your school building?	22.5% (20)	52.8% (47)	19.1% (17)	4.5% (4)	1.1% (1)	89
31. The hiring process you experienced to obtain your current position?	59.6% (53)	36% (32)	2.2% (2)	1.1% (1)	1.1% (1)	89

Appendix H-Summary of Teacher Responses
Follow-Up Interview Questions

Teacher Follow-Up Interview-Response Categories and Frequency

n = 21

Question	Responses
1. Looking back over your teaching career, what have been the most challenging situations to deal with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Parent Issues-42% • Workload./classroom management-35% • Resource availability-6% • Curriculum changes-6% • Administration-5% • State-Testing-5%
2. What keeps you motivated in the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with students/relationships-54% • Art of teaching/enjoyment-26% • Colleagues-11% • Recognition/Praise-3% • Advances in education-3% • Parents-3%
3. What areas in the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCLB/state-testing-35% • Professional Development/RTI-30% • Teacher expectations-13% • Budgeting/Compensation-9% • Technology-9% • Parent Involvement-4%
4. What causes teachers to leave the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload-39% • Money-16% • Student issues-16% • Lack of administration support-13% • Focus on Standardized testing-6% • Too may initiatives/change of curriculum-6% • Lack of respect-3%
5. What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school district?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation/benefits-51% • Better working environment-23% • Location-11% • Lack of administration support/recognition-6% • Professional development opportunities-6% • Personal views-3%
6. How satisfied are you with your chosen profession in the field of education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very satisfied-74% • Somewhat/mostly satisfied-21% • Dissatisfied-5%
7. Would you choose the same career if you could begin again?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-68% • No-5% • Unsure-26%

Summary of Teacher Responses-Follow-Up Questions continued

<p>8. What were your reasons for wanting to go into the profession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with students-65% • Love of learning/profession-22% • Autonomy-9% • Work schedule-4%
<p>9. When looking at other careers, what important factors do they posses that are missing from the education field?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/benefits-50% • Schedule/9:00-5:00-28% • Better working environment-17% • Respect/professionalism-11%
<p>10. What can schools do to make more teachers satisfied in their profession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readjust current school practices-29% • Improve relationships-21% • Improve salary-18% • Provide additional training/resources-18% • Decrease workload-14%
<p>11. What areas in the day to day teaching profession are overlooked by the district and building-level administration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints-40% • Workload-40% • Extra effort by teachers-15% • Student issues-5%
<p>12. In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect teachers/treat as professionals-25% • Communicate-25% • Be available-17% • Facilitate/Advise-17% • Positive/provide reinforcement-9% • Discipline students/safe environment-7%
<p>13. What behaviors would you like to see from your building administrators that are not currently being practiced?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback/reinforcement-31% • Very satisfied with current practices-23% • Provide stricter discipline for students-23% • Communication with staff-15% • Be fair consistent-8%
<p>14. Has your level of satisfaction with your career changed over time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-32% • Decreased-26% • Changed (no direction given)-21% • Ebbs and flows-16% • Increased-5%
<p>15. Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-74% • No-26%
<p>16. Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-35% • Unsure-35% • Yes-30%
<p>17. What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional training/resources-38% • More time-29% • Financial rewards-14% • Better working conditions-14% • Autonomy-5%

Summary of Teacher Responses-Follow-Up Questions continued

<p>18. How do you view your level of independence and control over your day to day responsibilities and duties?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-67% • Somewhat high(some items not negotiable) -21% • Low-13%
<p>19. How does your school district empower you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training/resources-64% • Committee involvement-18% • No empowerment-18%
<p>20. How important are your relationships with other colleagues in your building?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Important-89% • Somewhat important-11%

Appendix I-Summary of Administrator Responses

Administrator Participant Survey-Response Categories and Frequency n = 9

<p>1. How does the administration empower teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow them to take part in decision-making-38% • Provide collaboration opportunities-33% • Communicate-24% • Provide support-5%
<p>2. How are teachers involved in making decisions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings-46% • Committee work-31% • Input is solicited-23%
<p>3. What is the average class size?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low 20's-55% • 25+-45%
<p>4. What types of resources are accessible for teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology-29% • No limit/use of funds-21% • Textbooks/Guides-18% • Collaboration/release time-14% • Professional Development-11% • Human Resources-7%
<p>5. What is the level of technology provided for your teachers to use in their classrooms?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers and computer-related materials (software, Smart Boards, etc.)-76% • Other (document camera,etc.)-10% • Wireless Lab-10% • Technology Services-4%
<p>6. What type of support is offered to beginning teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor/Teammate/Buddy-50% • Principal support-22% • PLC's-17% • Professional Development-11%
<p>7. What activities, programs, or in-building support do you offer beginning teachers outside of the required district activities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement with school and faculty-42% • Mentor-25% • Administrative support/meetings-17% • Professional development/release time-17%
<p>8. What type of professional development is offered to the teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration opportunities-40% • Curricular-28% • PST/RTI-16% • BSIP-8% • Technology-4% • Personal Choice-4%
<p>9. What is the amount of extra duties given to teachers outside of their work in the classroom?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractual obligations only-36% • Participation in a committee/voluntary-36% • Extra pay duties-18%

Summary of Administrator Responses continued

<p>10. In what ways are teachers provided opportunities to have a say in procedures, programs, and reforms that take place in the buildings?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings (regularly scheduled, weekly)-50% • Committees-19% • Conversations/e-mail messages-19% • Open-door policy-6% • Surveys-6%
<p>11. How do you, as a building administrator, offer support to your teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being available/open-door policy-32% • Professional Development-32% • Observations/classroom visits/being visible-18% • Collaborate with teachers-18%
<p>12. What opportunities do teachers have for collaboration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level plan time-40%% • PLC's-33%% • Staff Development Days/Release time-20% • Committees and meetings-7%
<p>13. What opportunities exist for leadership roles within the school for teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee work-75% • After-school paid opportunities-8% • Facilitator-8%
<p>14. What percentage of teachers has their own classroom?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% or higher-88% • 80%-94%-13%
<p>15. How do you support and collaborate with teachers in regards to student discipline?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication-79% • Provide resources-14% • Follow District Policy-7%
<p>16. How do you motivate your teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition-50% • Support-19% • Communication-13% • Incentives/celebratory gifts-6% • Humor-6% • Build trust-6%
<p>17. Generally speaking, do you feel that a majority of the teachers you work with are satisfied with their position?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-100% • No-0%

Appendix J-Summary of Administrator Responses
Follow-Up Interview Questions

Administrator Follow-Up Questions-Response Categories and Frequency n = 9

<p>1. Looking back over your career, what have been the most challenging situations teachers have had to deal with?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Parent Issues-33% • Working Conditions-19% • Standardized testing-14%% • Resource availability-14% • Professional Development-10% • Workload-5% • Salary-5%
<p>2. What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development/RTI-29% • Curricular areas/programs-24% • Technology-10% • Working Conditions-10% • Collaboration-10% • Teacher Preparation Programs-5% • Community Involvement-5% • Budgeting/compensation-5% • Standardized testing-5%
<p>3. What causes teachers to leave the profession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money-29% • Workload-24% • Lack of preparation/challenging-24% • Student issues-6% • Working Conditions-6% • Focus on Standardized testing-6% • Professional Development-6%
<p>4. What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school districts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation/benefits-39% • Location-17% • Personal views-17% • Lack of administration support/recognition-11% • Budgeting/Resources-11% • Better working environment-6%
<p>5. How satisfied are you with your chosen profession in the field of education?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very satisfied-100%
<p>6. What percentage of your teachers do you believe would choose the same career if they could begin again?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80%+-56% • 70-80%-44%
<p>7. What do you view as the reasons teachers choose to enter the profession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with students-53% • Love of learning/profession-13% • Make a difference in lives-13% • Work schedule-13% • Coaching-7%

Summary of Administrator Responses-Follow-Up Questions continued

<p>8. When looking at other careers, what important factors do they possess that are missing from the education field?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/benefits-50% • Schedule/9:00-5:00-13% • Adult interaction-13% • Respect/professionalism-13% • Feelings of accomplishment-13%
<p>9. What can schools do to make more teachers satisfied in their profession?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition/respect-23% • Readjust current school practices-23% • Provide additional training/resources-23% • Provide support/mentoring-15% • Improve salary-15%
<p>10. What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development/RTI-38% • Time constraints-25% • Workload-13% • Extra effort by teachers-13% • Student issues/zero tolerance-13%
<p>11. In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect teachers/treat as professionals-27% • Communicate-20% • Facilitate/Advise-17% • Be available-11% • Provide professional development-10% • Positive/provide reinforcement-8% • Discipline students/safe environment-6%
<p>12. What behaviors would you like to see from your colleagues and/or district-level administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with current practices-43% • Positive feedback/reinforcement-14% • New teacher professional development-14% • Accept feedback-14% • Allow ideas to be shared/input-14%
<p>13. Do you feel that teachers' level of satisfaction changes over time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-50% • Ebbs and flows-50%
<p>14. How has NCLB impacted classroom teachers in your building?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pressure/stress-33% • Altered teaching strategies-33% • Holds teachers accountable-22% • It has had no impact-11%
<p>15. Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-75% • No-25%
<p>16. What practices do you use to motivate your teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication-50% • Provide praise-31% • Available/visible-6% • Advise-6% • Use humor-6%

Summary of Administrator Responses-Follow-Up Questions continued

<p>17. How do you give teachers independence and control over their day to day responsibilities and duties?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide them with autonomy-69% • Provide time to complete tasks-23% • Collaboration-8%
<p>18. How does your school district empower your teachers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training/resources-27% • Autonomy-27% • Collaboration-18% • Support/recognition-18% • Compensation-9%
<p>19. How important are your relationships with your teachers in your building?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Important-100%

Appendix K-Summary of Follow-Up Interview Question Results

Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
1. What have been the most challenging situations to deal with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Parent Issues • Working Conditions • Standardized testing • Resource availability • Professional Development • Workload • Salary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/Parent Issues • Workload./classroom management • Resource availability • Curriculum changes • Administration • State-Testing
2. What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development/RTI • Curricular areas/programs • Technology • Working Conditions • Collaboration • Teacher Preparation Programs • Community Involvement • Budgeting/compensation • Standardized testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCLB/state-testing • Professional Development/RTI • Teacher expectations • Budgeting/Compensation • Technology • Parent Involvement
3. What causes teachers to leave the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Workload • Lack of preparation/challenging • Student issues • Working Conditions • Focus on Standardized testing • Professional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload • Money • Student issues • Lack of administration support • Focus on Standardized testing • Too may initiatives/change of curriculum • Lack of respect
4. What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school districts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation/benefits • Location • Personal views • Lack of administration support/recognition • Budgeting/Resources • Better working environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation/benefits • Better working environment • Location • Lack of administration support/recognition • Professional development opportunities • Personal views

Follow-Up Interview Results continued

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
5. What percentage of your teachers do you believe would choose the same career if they could begin again / Would you choose the same career if you could begin again?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80%+ • 70-79% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-68% • No-5% • Unsure-26%
6. What do you view as the reasons teachers choose to enter the profession? / What were your reasons for wanting to into the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with students • Love of learning/profession • Make a difference in lives • Work schedule • Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with students • Love of learning/profession • Autonomy • Work schedule
7. When looking at other careers, what important factors do they posses that are missing from the education field?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/benefits • Schedule/9:00-5:00 • Adult interaction • Respect/professionalism • Feelings of accomplishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/benefits • Schedule/9:00-5:00 • Better working environment • Respect/professionalism
8. What can schools do to help teachers be more satisfied with their profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition/respect • Readjust current school practices • Provide additional training/resources • Provide support/mentoring • Improve salary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readjust current school practices • Improve relationships • Improve salary • Provide additional training/resources • Decrease workload
9. What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration? /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development/RTI • Time constraints • Workload • Extra effort by teachers • Student issues/zero tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints • Workload • Extra effort by teachers • Student issues
10. In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect teachers/treat as professionals • Communicate • Facilitate/Advise • Be available • Provide professional development • Positive/provide reinforcement • Discipline students/safe environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect teachers/treat as professionals • Communicate • Be available • Facilitate/Advise • Positive/provide reinforcement • Discipline students/safe environment

Follow-Up Interview Results continued

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
11. What behaviors would you (administrators and teachers) like to see from administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with current practices • Positive feedback/reinforcement • New teacher professional development • Accept feedback • Allow ideas to be shared/input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback/reinforcement • Very satisfied with current practices • Provide stricter discipline for students • Communication with staff • Be fair consistent
12. Do you feel teachers' level of job satisfaction changes over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-50% • Ebbs and flows-50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-32% • Decreased-26% • Changed (no direction given)-21% • Ebbs and flows-16% • Increased-5%
13. How has NCLB impacted classroom teachers in your building? / Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pressure/stress • Altered teaching strategies • Holds teachers accountable • It has had no impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-74% • No-26%
14. Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-75% • No-25% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-35% • Unsure-35% • Yes-30%
15. What practices do you use to motivate your teachers? / What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Provide praise • Available/visible • Advise • Use humor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional training/resources • More time • Financial rewards • Better working conditions • Autonomy
16. How do you give teachers independence and control over their day to day responsibilities and duties? / How do you view your level of independence in your work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide them with autonomy • Provide time to complete tasks • Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-67% • Somewhat high(some items not negotiable) -21% • Low-13%
17. How does your school district empower teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training/resources • Autonomy • Collaboration • Support/recognition • Compensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training/resources • Committee involvement • No empowerment

Follow-Up Interview Results continued

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
18. How important are your relationships with the teachers in your building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Important-100% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Important-89% • Somewhat important-11%

Appendix L-Summary of Alignment and Teacher Perceptions

*Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher Perceptions
(The Suburban District)*

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
What have been the most challenging situations to deal with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints • Changing trends • Disappointing relationships • Lack of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/parent issues • Administration • Time/classroom management/work load • Home/school connection • Teaching controversial topics • Obtaining National Board Certification
What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with a diversified student body • Increasing skill in inquiry-based and hands-on learning • Developing character in students • Time for collaboration • Providing meaningful professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/parent issues • Recruiting/retaining new teachers • Assessment • Compensation/budgeting • Technology • Teacher expectations • Motivation
What causes teachers to leave the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Work load • Time demands • Non-supportive administration • Difficult parents • Lack of collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Work load • Lack of respect/support • Time demands • Burnout • Focus on standardized testing • Cannot reach high expectations
What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school districts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational circumstances (such as location) • Higher salaries • Perception of better conditions (students bodies, professional development, smaller class sizes, more positive school climate, more support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situational circumstances (such as location) • Compensations/benefits • Better working environments • Personal views • Promotion
What percentage of your teachers do you believe would choose the same career if they could begin again / Would you choose the same career if you could begin again?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% • 80% • 75% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-72% • No-17% • Unsure-11%

Summary of Alignment and Teacher Perceptions continued

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
What do you view as the reasons teachers choose to enter the profession? / What were your reasons for wanting to into the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with students • Love of learning • The influence/making a difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with people • Love of learning • The influence • Work schedule
When looking at other careers, what important factors do they posses that are missing from the education field?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/Benefits • Respect/Professionalism-View by society • In-depth professional development • Vacation time • True collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/Benefits • Respect/Professionalism • Better working environments • Opportunities for advancement
What can schools do to help teachers be more satisfied with their profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honor teachers • Challenge and support teachers • Give time • Manage student load • Engage in quality professional development • Train teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve relationships • Readjust current school practices • Improve personal benefits (time, money) • Provide training/resources • Improve communication
What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration? /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum support • Student engagement • Personal time management • Reflection • Collaboration • Having presence in the classroom • Giving teachers time to teach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time constraints • Work load • Classroom responsibilities • Student issues • Ineffective teachers • Great ideas come from below
In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence in the classrooms • Using the evaluation process/having good conversations • Providing support in work with students and parents • Providing time to work towards improvement • Student-focused decision-making • Collaboration with teachers • Organized leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect teachers/treat as professionals • Communicate/provide leadership • Facilitator/be a team player • Hire the best teachers • Focus on students
What behaviors would you (administrators and teachers) like to see from administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View teacher evaluation as a growth tool • Share success stories and obstacles overcome • Implement recognition programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalism • Holding people accountable • Respecting teachers' time • Being fair/consistent • Good rapport with students • Inspire/motivate teachers • Very satisfied with current practices

Summary of Alignment and Teacher Perceptions continued

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
Do you feel teachers' level of job satisfaction changes over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases • Decreases • It could change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased • Ebbs and flows • Decreased • Changed (no direction given)
How has NCLB impacted classroom teachers in your building? / Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pressure • Frustrating/unfair benchmarks • Focus shift from students to statistics • Teachers focus on areas in need of improvement • Individual teacher results are examined instead of a group's • Teachers feel NCLB is unrealistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – 53% • No – 47%
Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time in classrooms is needed • The program is too broad • Adequate • Focus should be on finding a good mentor • Induction program and mentor relationship should be lengthened • Teachers appear to appreciate the topics and the collegial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-55% • No-27% • Unsure-18%
What practices do you use to motivate your teachers? / What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships/have conversations • Have a sense of humor • Be a presence in the building • Use educational literature that is interesting/compelling • Give teachers gifts of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial rewards • Provide additional training/resources • Better working conditions • More time • Less work • Better communication • Already motivated to stay
How do you give teachers independence and control over their day to day responsibilities and duties? / How do you view your level of independence in your work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Remove unimportant tasks from their responsibility • Check-in with meetings and committee work • Treat teachers as professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-68% • Low-32%

Summary of Alignment and Teacher Perceptions continued

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses - Perceptions of District Practices in Place
How does your school district empower teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development • Provides a solid curriculum • Involved in decision-making process • Trust teachers/respect them • Provide teachers autonomy in their work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides training/resources • Input is solicited • Committee involvement • Administration welcomes ideas • No empowerment
How important are your relationships with the teachers in your building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships are key • Trust is an important element 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important-75% • Somewhat important-19% • Not important-6%

Appendix M – E-mail Message to Teacher Survey Participants

Dear Teacher,

In an effort to influence the experiences of teachers in the education profession, a research study is being conducted to determine how your district's current practices align with factors identified as being important to teacher job satisfaction.

Using the link provided below (survey will be electronically linked to this e-mail using Survey Monkey), please take some time to offer your insight regarding your current level of satisfaction for current district practices and your work with the Northwest R-I School District. All responses are anonymous and are in no way linked to individual respondents. There will be an opportunity to identify yourself at the end of the survey if you are interested in participating in future focus groups and/or interviews concerning this study.

The results will be used to complete a doctoral research study for Lindenwood University entitled, "Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices." The survey will be available for the next two weeks, beginning today and closing on _____, 2009. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey and offer your insight and opinions.

Sincerely,

Taneal M. Wallace
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Appendix N – E-mail Message to Administrator Survey Participants

Dear Administrator,

In an effort to influence the experiences of teachers in the education profession, a research study is being conducted to determine how your district's current practices align with factors identified as being important to teacher job satisfaction.

Using the link provided below (survey will be electronically linked to this e-mail using Survey Monkey), please take some time to offer your insight regarding current district practices for factors identified as having a strong impact in the level of teachers' job satisfaction. All responses are anonymous and are in no way linked to individual respondents. There will be an opportunity to identify yourself at the end of the survey if you are interested in participating in future focus groups and/or interviews concerning this study. The results will be used to complete a doctoral research study for Lindenwood University entitled, "Factors Related to Teacher Job Satisfaction and their Alignment with Current District Practices."

The survey will be available for the next two weeks, beginning today and closing on _____, 2009. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey and offer your insight and opinions.

Taneal M. Wallace
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Vitae

Taneal M. Wallace currently teaches 5-6th grade special education and serves as the Special Education Building Coordinator at North Jefferson Intermediate, in the Northwest R-1 School District, in Jefferson County, Missouri. Teaching experiences have included K-4th special education, 1st, and 3rd grade. Administrative experiences have included a summer school principal position at the elementary level.

Educational studies have resulted in an anticipated Doctorate in Education Degree from Lindenwood University, a Master of Arts Degree in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University, and a Bachelor of Science in Education Degree from Southeast Missouri State University.