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Exploring Principal Effect on Organizational Well-Being: Looking at Perceptual Congruence  
Between Self and Other Ratings

by

Sherri L. Humphrys

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
in  
Learning and Leading

University of Portland  
School of Education

2023

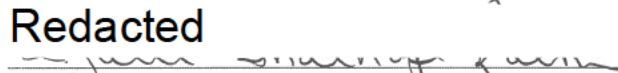
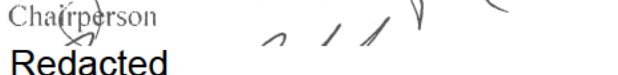

**Exploring Principal Effect on Organizational Well-Being: Looking at Perceptual  
Congruence Between Self and Other Ratings**

by



**Sherri L. Humphrys**

This dissertation is completed as a partial requirement for the Doctor of Education  
(EdD) degree at the University of Portland in Portland, Oregon.


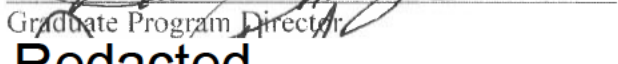

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to explore how principals and teachers in urban public schools perceived principal influence on organizational well-being and to determine the degree of perceptual congruence between principals and teachers in relation to organizational well-being outcomes. In schools with high principal-teacher perceptual congruence and reported positive organizational well-being, principals were interviewed about their leadership. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered in two districts in a metropolitan area in Alberta, Canada, through a three-phased explanatory sequential mixed-method research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The School Culture Triage Survey (Wagner, 2006), the Teacher Well-being Scale (Collie, 2015), and the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio et al., 2007) were used with open-ended items to document perceptions of organizational well-being and authentic leadership behaviors of principals. In total, 47 principal and 147 teacher participants completed full surveys. Seven principals were interviewed. Perceptions of school culture and aspects of well-being were predominantly positive. There were no statistically significant differences when looking at the entire group of respondents between teacher and principal responses. Qualitative data reflected an emic, insider perspective of school culture by teachers and an etic perspective, outsider perspective, by the principal. A lack of reciprocity in the teacher-principal relationship was noted, where teachers receive support, resources, care, and time from the principal, and the principal gives. The results of this study have implications for principal practice and systemic considerations in support of well-being and to develop

principal awareness. Finally, there is a need for systemic feedback structures that allow principals access to consistent information to develop their external awareness.

Keywords: principal leadership, authentic leadership, organization well-being, self-other agreement, principal awareness, external awareness, teacher well-being

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## Chapter One: Introduction

Principals have considerable influence on the organizational well-being of their schools that goes beyond traditional measures of student achievement (Grissom et al., 2021; Leibowitz & Porter, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020). Grissom et al. (2021) assert that “it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than improving principal leadership” (p. 91). Literature reviews on principal effect demonstrate a link to critical teacher outcomes through organizational structures such as climate, culture, and overall well-being (i.e., Grissom et al., 2021, Leithwood et al., 2020, Marzano et al., 2005). Organizational well-being occurs when school goals are obtained, the members of the organization experience well-being (Cojocaru, 2014), and there is a positive interconnectedness of individual and organizational outcomes (Coli & Risotto, 2013). One way for principals to improve individual outcomes such as student achievement and teacher professional well-being is by fostering organizational well-being.

Given the strong influence of principal leadership, it is critical to understand what principals do and how they do it to achieve positive outcomes (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020). This study examined principals’ leadership effect through positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) and positive organizational scholarship (Dutton & Glynn, 2008) to identify how principals foster organizational well-being. Atwater and Yammarino’s (1992) self-other agreement model will guide further investigation to illuminate how accurately principals understand their impact. Although principals lead with positive intent, teachers report evidence of unwellness in schools at organizational

and individual levels (ATA, 2021b). This discrepancy raises the question of why positive intent does not always translate to positive impact.

Achieving organizational well-being in schools is an increasingly complex task for principals. Public education faces many pressures, including regular scrutiny from governments operating with a neoliberal agenda looking to privatize or increase high-stakes accountability measures (Murgatroyd, 2018). Unstable or inadequate funding models and increased student diversity and special needs create a ‘do more with less’ atmosphere for school faculties. Added to the complexity in recent years is the global COVID-19 pandemic, which required teachers and principals to constantly adapt and reinvent how they connect with students and families to ensure continuity of learning in tumultuous times. Despite these multitudes of pressures, principals are responsible for improving student outcomes while maintaining a thriving learning community, including the well-being of staff (Alberta Education, 2020). A plethora of evidence highlights the adverse effects of these pressures on teachers and schools (i.e., ATA, 2021b; Fernet et al., 2012; Gray et al., 2017; Steiner & Woo, 2021). Understanding the adversity teachers face may enable principals to create organizations that support teachers proactively.

Uncertainty and disruptions to schooling have increased the responsibilities and pressures that contribute to the acute stress felt by teachers and threaten their well-being. A recent survey of over 1,000 teachers from a nationally representative sample in the U.S. found that the incidence of frequent job-related stress was almost twice as prevalent for teachers as the generally employed adult population (Steiner & Woo, 2021). Similarly, over 90% of 2,400 teachers surveyed in the Canadian province of

Alberta reported daily stress and exhaustion (ATA, 2021b). Concern for teacher well-being is an international concern. A Google search of news related to ‘teacher well-being’ yielded over 58 million results, with the first page spanning Canada, the United States, and Australia (Google Search, January 23, 2022). The headlines report concerns for teacher safety, teacher stress, attending to teacher well-being, teacher trauma, teacher shortages, and teachers leaving the profession. Comparatively, pre-pandemic research covering decades highlights the chronic pressures experienced by teachers, including daily stress, that threaten their personal and professional well-being (Ferguson et al., 2012; Fernet et al., 2012, Gray et al., 2017; Gu & Day, 2007; Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Ensuring that teachers are well is essential to school and student success, yet this evidence shows that teacher well-being is at risk, perhaps perennially and acutely, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These reports tell part of the story. Although there is strong evidence of ill-being in schools, individually and organizationally, some schools flourish despite outside pressures. For example, in a recent article in *The Virginia Pilot* (Pressley & Marshall, 2022), researchers noted that 49% of teachers surveyed in a nationwide study reported low morale. When looked at through a positive lens, it is essential to note that despite stressful working conditions experienced in the 2021-22 school year, 51% of teachers reported high morale. Cherkowski and Walker (2018) promote a strength-based approach to studying well-being in schools which they describe as the “wholeness and the aliveness of the individual and the system” (p. 2). A new narrative of hope and well-being is emerging through noticing and nurturing the factors that contribute to flourishing schools. Cherkowski and Walker (2018), among others (i.e., Cann et al.,



2021; Louis & Murphy, 2016; Peterson et al., 2008), advocate for intentional support of the well-being of teachers, similar to that given to students within the system as an “organizational pursuit” (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018, p. 8).

### **Supporting Teacher Well-Being**

Traditionally, students, rather than teachers, are the focus of well-being efforts in schools (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; von der Embse, 2019). Although student well-being is a critical concern, teachers’ health and well-being, personally and occupationally, affect the overall well-being of schools, including students (Gray et al., 2017; Gu, 2014; Herman et al., 2018). Roffey (2012) examined student and teacher well-being in six Australian schools. She highlights a bi-directional influence between teacher and student well-being. Positive teacher-student relationships nurture student outcomes which then influence teacher efficacy and well-being. In this research, Roffey identifies how high social capital (relationships, belonging, trust, value, and respect) contributes to a positive school climate, supporting teacher and student well-being and learning. Gray et al. (2017) reviewed literature from 2003 to 2017 on teacher mental health and school climate concerning inclusion and student learning. They concluded that teacher well-being and positive school climates are necessary for supporting student wellness and meeting their learning needs.

As the research indicates, there is a positive connection between teacher well-being and school and student outcomes (Gray et al, 2017; Roffey, 2012); it is vital to define and understand how to support teacher well-being. One way teacher occupational well-being is supported is when there is a balance between demands and resources. This balance supports inward outcomes for teachers (stress, burnout, or leaving the

profession) and external outcomes (classroom processes and student well-being) (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Other factors contributing to teacher well-being are strong collegial relationships, feeling valued and supported, a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment (Roffey, 2012), autonomy and efficacy in their work (Fernet et al., 2012), and a positive school climate (Gray et al., 2017). Teachers working in a positive, productive school climate (Grissom et al., 2020) with positive organizational trust, commitment, and citizenship (Shie & Chang, 2022) experience more well-being.

### **Organizational Well-Being**

Organizational well-being occurs when members of the organization can fulfill their potential while improving outcomes for the organization (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Cojocaru, 2014; Coli & Risotto, 2013; Louis & Murphy, 2016; Peterson et al., 2008). Peterson et al. (2008) suggest studying group or organizational well-being through a positive psychology lens which they define as “the study of what makes life most worth living” (p. 20). For schools, this means understanding organizational well-being in terms of what makes schools places where staff and students flourish (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018). Peterson et al. suggest that traditionally research that looks at groups focuses on “unhealthy work environments” (p. 20) rather than what works to ensure flourishing and well-being—for leaders, understanding what works provides insight into intentional and proactive actions principals can employ to lead for organizational well-being.

Organizational well-being is a social construct where individual well-being is influenced by the dynamics of the group (Cojocaru, 2014; Coli & Risotto, 2013). One factor that may contribute to the organizational well-being of schools is morale, which

Peterson et al. (2008) identify as a measure of group well-being similar to life satisfaction for individual well-being. Peterson et al. advocate for research on group well-being, where morale is a critical indicator. They suggest a “consideration of morale as a group-level characteristic that extends the scope of positive psychology beyond the individual level characteristics typically studied” (Peterson et al., 2008, p. 20). Morale is defined as “a cognitive, emotional, and motivational stance toward the goals and tasks of a group” (Peterson et al., 2008, p. 21). Gruenert and Whitaker (2014), in their book on school culture, assert that “morale is a barometer of culture...and has a strong effect on school climate” (p. 11). Likewise, Peterson et al. suggest that morale is an indicator of school organizational health and group well-being.

School culture, including group constructs such as collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy (Wagner, 2006), and individual well-being provide an interesting perspective for leading organizational well-being. The focus on individual ill-being and suffering can be a distraction from the power of the group as a mechanism for promoting individual and organizational well-being. Positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) suggests a focus on ‘what works’ rather than a focus on repairing what’s broken. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2010) suggest this is a “science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions” (para. 1). Positive organizational psychology extends the focus to work and organizational issues, including positive organizational behavior, (individual-focused), and positive organizational scholarship, (organization-focused), aspects that impact performance (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). The social aspect of well-being is critical to this conversation. Peterson et al. (2008) further assert that morale, of collective well-being, is essential

during challenging times. Interestingly, Peterson et al. identify leadership as the “Holy Grail” (p. 31) of organizational studies and that a good leader nurtures the group’s well-being. Therefore, a substantive way principals may impact teacher well-being could be through organizational well-being.

### **Leading for Teacher Well-Being**

Consistent in the research is administrator support, or lack thereof, as a primary contributing factor to teacher and organizational well-being or negative consequences such as burnout and desire to leave the profession (Fernet et al., 2012; Gray et al., 2017; Gu, 2014; Hayden, 2018). The prevalence of chronic and acute stress experienced by teachers, and the potential impact on teachers themselves, schools, and students (Viac & Fraser, 2020), creates an urgency for principals to increase their understanding of how to ensure schools are places where teachers’ well-being is nurtured. This is a monumental task, and current studies and news reports provide evidence of broken teachers (ATA, 2021b) and a broken system needing reform (Staples, 2021). And yet, despite this prevalence of contextual factors causing high levels of ill-being, some principals find ways to foster organizational well-being successfully.

Much of the research around teacher well-being begins with deficit-based attention to ill-being. There is a call for a strength-based approach (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Roffey, 2012; Shie & Chang, 2022) to support teacher well-being. Peterson et al. (2008) suggest that group-level well-being interventions are more efficient, more cost-effective, and more likely to have a greater impact on individuals and the organization as a whole. This is a shift from much of the research on individual well-being, which most recently focuses on personal ill-being indicators such as

exhaustion, depression, stress, and compassion fatigue (ATA, 2021b). Organizational well-being is more focused on the professional aspects of well-being within a group dynamic and support system. Good morale is associated with an organization that values the contributions of the individuals, and good leaders create the conditions for this to occur (Hart et al., 2000; Peterson et al., 2008).

System leaders, principals, and teachers share the responsibility for mitigating teacher stress and, more importantly, nurturing teacher well-being (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). In a systematic review, von der Embse et al. (2019) found that traditional teacher wellness efforts lacked consistency and were not supported by empirical research on effectiveness. They suggested a multimodal approach to address the complexity of ensuring teacher well-being. In addition to internal well-being strategies, teachers need external support to deal with stress effectively, personally and occupationally, within a positive school environment. A critical external support for teachers is the principal. Administrator support is often cited as a factor, positively or negatively, in school culture and teacher well-being (Fernet et al., 2012; Haydon et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). This evidence supports the importance of principals' leadership for their organizations and teachers, albeit not always with the positive outcomes intended. Furthermore, in their literature review, Leithwood et al. (2020) concluded that principals indirectly influence student achievement through their effect on school climate and culture and their support of teacher well-being.

### **Leading for Organizational Well-Being**

Efforts to promote teacher well-being in schools often focus on self-care strategies such as mindfulness, physical exercise, time to slow down, and treats. While

these efforts may help personal well-being or alleviate stress short term, it is critical that systemic or organizational supports are examined to understand the source of professional stress to develop organizational well-being where the people are well, and the goals of the organization can be achieved (Kise & Holm, 2022; Mielke, 2022; Miles et al., 2022). As Kise and Holm (2022) suggest, “self-care is only part of the long-term answer. Another huge factor is the environment in which teachers work that influences their sense of efficacy” (p. 33). Likewise, Johnson (2022) opines that self-care is not enough, but leaders need to intentionally foster organizational well-being to support educator well-being. Kise and Holm suggest that the school is like an ecosystem that requires a balance to nurture well-being, and “if the ecosystem is stressed by failing to incorporate key elements essential to its survival, the individuals are doomed” (p. 33). Principals can foster a culture of well-being by adopting a focus on strategies at the organizational level that promotes well-being from a strength-based lens.

An effective way to support teacher well-being is through organizational well-being. Ozgencle and Aksu (2020), as part of their study of principals’ ethical leadership behavior and organizational health, suggest that principals influence organizational health through goal attainment while maintaining and promoting a positive climate. Likewise, Grissom et al. (2021), through an extensive review of research on school leadership, determined that principals are responsible for people, instruction, and the organization. Grissom et al.’s (2021) literature review of leadership research outlines four influence areas that they identify as critical practices for principals supporting the school and student outcomes: creating positive, productive climates, fostering collaborative professional learning communities, engaging in instructionally focused

relationships with teachers, and managing personnel and resources strategically. They define school climate as “the behaviors and actions of the people in the school” (Grissom et al., 2021, p. 64). They posit that school culture falls under the umbrella of climate and is “the shared beliefs of the people in the school community” (p. 64). A change in the well-being of teachers may affect school climate, but school culture is what provides the support, or lack thereof, for teachers to be well. A recent study by the Alberta Teachers’ Association (2021a) included interview data from over 60 educators who identified positive school culture as a protective factor against stress outcomes. This study identifies support from staff teams and leadership as the two most essential pieces of positive school culture for teachers. Research stresses how principals support the organization’s well-being is reflected in individual and collective teacher well-being (ATA, 2021a; Ozgencle & Aksu, 2020).

As stated, there is an assumption that principals enter into their role with positive intent, hoping to make a positive difference for the school community, the people of the community, and student outcomes. In a survey sent to 200 school districts across eight provinces in Canada, 80% of principals and vice-principals who responded indicated they were worried about teacher burnout (Wong, 2021). And yet, another recent study reported that a lack of administrator support contributes to stressful working conditions for teachers (Steiner & Woo, 2021). In the 2019 Gallup report on *Understanding the K-12 Teacher Experience*, only 18% of teachers report being motivated by leaders to perform well. This report asserts that a teacher’s relationship with their principal is their “most important relationship at work” (p. 9). Given the critical influence of the teacher-

principal relationship, principals who intentionally develop positive relationships with teachers may improve well-being outcomes and perceptions of their effectiveness.

There is a dearth of research on how principals perceive their influence on well-being. Anecdotally, the commitment from principals to promoting well-being is strong. In a facilitated conversation with principal colleagues, we discussed actions that would promote well-being in schools (Facilitated conversation, October 5, 2022). The group talked about intentionally framing the work in schools in belonging and connection. They talked about wellness committees that shared wellness tips, organized treat days, and wellness activities such as colouring books. Also discussed were checking with staff, holding space for one-on-one conversations with teachers, and creating a sense of community among staff. Other strategies of importance identified by this group were clear communication and expectations, transparency, prioritizing goals and initiatives, and identifying what is within an individual's locus of control. It was agreed that a comprehensive, collaborative approach is necessary to ensure staff and students experience well-being. The principals agreed that including staff voice in decisions about school vision and operations was critical for supporting connection and belonging. Every participant in the conversation expressed positive intent to support the well-being of their schools for students, staff, and themselves. Although principals express concern about teacher burnout and stress and can list strategies to promote well-being, some teachers report an adverse effect of principal leadership on their well-being, engagement, and ability to flourish professionally and personally at work. Unfortunately, there is evidence of high levels of unwellness among teachers (ATA, 2021b). The state of teacher well-being may suggest a disconnect between how



principals perceive their effectiveness in supporting organizational well-being and the experience of teachers.

### **Perception of Leadership Effect**

Principals' actions are critical to organizational well-being, but the effects of these actions are not always positive. If this is the case, it is essential to explore why principal leadership practice does not always lead to the intended outcomes for teachers. Self-awareness is the understanding of oneself and one's impact on others (Carden et al., 2021; Eurich, 2018). Accurate interpersonal or external awareness can be challenging for leaders, partly due to barriers to accessing feedback from others (Carden et al., 2021). Eurich (2018) suggests that the skill of perspective-taking or imagining the thoughts and feelings of others is key to developing external awareness. An interesting line of research looks at a leader's effect by comparing self-perception with the perception of those impacted, in this case, teachers (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Devos et al., 2013; Fleenor et al., 2010). Research involving principal-teacher perceptual comparisons suggests that incongruence between the two can have a negative impact on teacher experience (Brezicha et al., 2020; Goff et al., 2013). These same studies support Atwater and Yammarino's (1992) claim that perceptual congruence can lead to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. Examining the relationship between the principal's self-perception of their leadership practice and teachers' perception of leadership effect may provide clarity for principals about how to foster well-being in their schools (Devos et al., 2013; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019).

Principals play a critical role in flourishing schools (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018), where students and staff thrive within a positive school culture. Although

educational leadership is well-studied, understanding how a principal fosters organizational well-being and whole school flourishing is complex. For principals, understanding their effectiveness is even more challenging as there are few mechanisms to receive accurate feedback about their impact. Added to this challenge is the inherent power dynamic between the principal and the teacher that may be a barrier to honest feedback. Therefore, opportunities for principals to understand how teachers experience their leadership are limited. Leadership is often studied from either the principal's or the teacher's perspective. Devos et al. (2013) suggest that including both perspectives is essential for a more accurate picture of how leaders influence their school communities. Increasing principals' understanding and awareness of their impact as perceived by teachers may improve individual and organizational outcomes.

### **Research Gap: A Need to Understand Congruence**

Over the last several decades, extensive research has been conducted on effective leadership practices. Likewise, research on teacher well-being is also plentiful. This study goes beyond the single constructs of leadership or well-being to further examine leadership's effect on organizational well-being by exploring this relationship through principal and teacher perceptions. Principal leadership is a factor in creating positive school cultures that support or deteriorate teacher well-being (Lambersky, 2016; Toprak et al., 2015). Cann et al. (2021) suggest further research into teacher well-being, which includes the principal's perspective on improving well-being. Including principal and teacher leadership perspectives provides a complete narrative of a principal's influence on school culture and teacher well-being outcomes (Devos et al., 2013). Including both

perspectives may help understand where the gap lies and potentially address the gap for better leadership and organizational and teacher outcomes (Devos et al., 2013).

When leaders self-rate, some have an inflated sense of effectiveness relative to the perceptions of their subordinates (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Devos et al., 2013). Therefore, there is an identified need for studies of principal effects that include both self and teacher ratings or perspectives (Devos et al., 2013; Leibowitz & Porter, 2019). Carden et al. (2021) suggest that understanding how to develop self-awareness is an area for further research. They also suggest further research, which might contribute to understanding the impact of barriers such as self-deception, self-serving bias, managing discrepancies between self-evaluation and feedback from others and understanding the levels of motivation or desire to explore self-awareness. This study adds to the body of information about leadership effectiveness from a unique stance of comparing the congruence of perspectives and examining how that relates to outcomes.

The findings of this study may be used by school and system administrators to understand how self-awareness impacts leadership effectiveness. More importantly, this study seeks to gather data on how principals understand their effect by exploring the actions of principals whose self-perceptions align with their teachers' perceptions in schools with a strong sense of organizational well-being. Principal-teacher perception data may help principals gather continued professional growth and self-awareness feedback. This study may also shed light on the congruence, or incongruence, between principal and teacher perceptions of effective leadership practices for flourishing schools.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to explore first how principals and teachers in urban public schools with small administrative teams of three or fewer perceived principal influence on organizational well-being. Then, to examine the relationship between principal's and teacher's perceptual congruence and organizational well-being outcomes of school culture and teacher professional well-being, across roles, for all participants and within school groups. Additionally, in schools characterized by principal-teacher perceptual congruence and reported positive organizational well-being, the study sought to understand how principals describe their leadership effect.

This study collected quantitative and qualitative data through an explanatory sequential mixed-method research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Survey data and open-ended written questions gathered principal and teacher perceptions. These same data were used at the school level to understand school-based principal-teacher group perceptual congruence and reported school culture and teacher well-being outcomes. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore how principals describe their leadership effect. Four research questions guided this study.

## **Research Questions**

1. To what extent are principals' and teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being congruent across roles?
2. To what extent are teacher and principal perceptions in agreement regarding leadership practices they have identified as influencing organizational well-being?

3. For school-based principal-teacher groups, what relationship, if any, exists between perceptual congruence about principal practices and reported levels of organizational well-being?
4. In schools with high perceptual congruence and high organizational outcomes, how do principals describe their actions in promoting organizational well-being?

### **Significance**

The main driver for this study is to understand principal awareness of their impact on school well-being outcomes. The study will add to the knowledge about the principal's impact on organizational well-being. Perhaps more importantly, the study will examine how principals and teachers perceive the principal's actions in support of organizational well-being. As Peterson et al. (2008) state, morale as a measure of group well-being is best assessed in challenging times. It is at these times that organizational well-being is most vital. The timing of this study, as we collectively emerge from years of uncertainty and instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic, provides a rich environment to measure the well-being of our schools and examine how effective principals lead their staff and schools through this time while maintaining well-being. As Pienaar and Nel (2017) assert in their theoretical paper, leadership self-awareness is critical for personal leadership growth. They acknowledge that a lack of awareness of impact limits one's ability to understand the experiences of those they lead, which plays a role in their effectiveness.

Principal behaviors and responses to the complex environments of schools directly impact organizational well-being, including whole school outcomes and the

ability of individual teachers to positively cope with the complexities of their roles (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2020; Marzano et al., 2005). Marzano et al. (2005) completed a now seminal synthesis of research to identify 21 principal responsibilities and the extent to which they impact student achievement. Of these 21 responsibilities, they identify optimizer, affirmation, ideals/beliefs, situational awareness, visibility, relationships, communication, culture, and input as required to “craft a purposeful community” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 115). Many meta-analysis studies have followed the work of Marzano et al., providing further evidence of the relationship between principal behaviors and student, teacher, and school outcomes (i.e., Grissom et al., 2021; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leibowitz & Porter, 2019; Leithwood, 2017). Various leadership models (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2017) provide comprehensive lists of what principals are expected to do to support teaching and learning. Leithwood et al. (2020) urge that future research should go beyond the ‘what’ of effective educational leadership to examine ‘how’ leaders apply known practices to improve organizational outcomes.

According to the recently implemented Alberta Leadership Quality Standards (LQS), “Quality leadership occurs when the leader’s ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students” (Alberta Education, 2020, p. 2). There is an implied notion of awareness required by principals to analyze and apply leadership knowledge and abilities. Eurich (2018) defines self-awareness as “the ability to see ourselves clearly - to understand who we are, how others see us, and how we fit into the world” (p. 3). Eurich refers to “internal self-awareness (seeing yourself clearly)”

and “external awareness (knowing how other people see you)” (p. 8). Interestingly, out of the 21 responsibilities Marzano et al. (2005) identified, situational awareness and flexibility showed the highest correlation with student achievement. Similarly, Cann et al. (2021), in their case study of 65 teachers in a large high school in New Zealand, identified “responding to contexts” as an essential skill for leaders to influence well-being. They define this as the principal’s understanding of how teachers perceive the context and how a principal then responds to the teachers’ needs. According to Eurich, those who develop internal and external self-awareness are more effective leaders who positively impact employee attitudes, professional relationships and organizational outcomes.

Atwater and Yammarino (1992) define self-awareness as self-other agreement (SOA). Leaders can be categorized based on the agreement of their self-perception and the perceptions of others as over-estimators, under-estimators, and in agreement (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Han et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2016). Atwater & Yammarino concluded that self-awareness positively relates to leadership effectiveness as determined by SOA. When a leader’s self-awareness includes understanding how others perceive them, they can adapt their behavior for better performance (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Han et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2016). This research suggests that principals who are aware of their effect on others may positively affect school culture and teacher well-being.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study used explanatory sequential mixed-method research to gather multiple data sets. The survey data and open-ended questions make this study accessible to large

groups of people. To ensure confidentiality, the data was cleaned of identifying information before the researcher had access and prior to analysis. The data from teachers and principals were matched with a random identifier to allow for comparison.

The relationship between the teacher and the principal is essential to the study's nature. Therefore, schools with newly appointed principals were delimited from the study. Similarly, teacher surveys where the teacher indicated they were newly assigned to the school were not included in the data analysis. Although a school community involves teachers, support, and custodial staff, only the teachers and principals were included in this study.

Data collected was bound to two urban school divisions within one city. Schools were chosen based on the size of the leadership team and were further bound to schools with an administrative team no larger than three. This was important for this study to ensure teacher perceptions were based on first-hand experience with the principal. In larger schools with a larger administrative team, this type of first-hand experience may not be substantial enough for this study. Also, of note, only teachers were included for other-rating data. This study was interested in the unique relationship between principals and teachers and the perceptual congruence between the two. For this reason, other school members were delimited.

### **Personal Significance**

In my 12 years as a principal in two different schools, I have experienced first-hand the complexity of how principals balance the many responsibilities and relationships to lead a resilient and innovative community—the culture of the school matters, as does the well-being of its members. In my experience, my principal



colleagues come to the job with the intent to lead well, yet I have learned that some teachers may not see their leadership as fulfilling that positive intent. Not all schools have a thriving school culture or high levels of teacher professional well-being. In these cases, there may be a lack of external awareness about their teachers' perceptions and experiences. It is challenging to gain this awareness. Our professional growth or improvement is most often based on self-reflection. As a principal and researcher, I am concerned that principals who lack awareness of their leadership effect risk creating negative cultures that compromise teacher well-being and student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020). I am curious about the principals who understand their effect and how they build external and situational awareness. As a researcher and, maybe more importantly, as a principal, this study serves to clarify how principals, myself included, can improve their practice for the betterment of their organization and the people they serve.

### **Key Terms**

For clarity, the following key terms that are relevant to understanding the study are defined below:

- **Authentic Leadership:** a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 25).
- **Organizational Well-Being:** occurs when organizational goals are obtained, members of the organization experience well-being, and there is a positive

interconnectedness of individual and organizational outcomes (Cojocaru, 2014; Coli & Risotto, 2013).

- **Personal Well-Being:** a personal sense of flourishing through positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement (PERMA) (Seligman, 2011).
- **Positive Organizational Scholarship:** extends the tenets of positive psychology to understanding flourishing “states and processes as they unfold in and between organizations” (Dutton & Glynn, 2008, p. 693).
- **Positive Psychology:** at the subjective level is about positive subjective experience: well-being and satisfaction (past); flow, joy, the sensual pleasures, and happiness (present); and constructive cognitions about the future - optimism, hope, and faith. For individuals, it is about personal traits... at the group level, it is about the civic virtues and institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship (Seligman, 2002, p. 3).
- **Self-Awareness:** consists of a range of components, which can be developed through focus, evaluation, and feedback, and provides an individual with an awareness of their internal state (emotions, cognitions, and physiological responses) that drives their behaviors (beliefs, values, and motivations) and an awareness of how this impacts and influences others (Carden et al., 2021, p. 25).
- **School Culture:** the shared beliefs of the people in the school (Grissom et al., 2021).
- **School Climate:** the behaviors and actions of the people in the school (Grissom et al., 2021).

- **Self-Other Agreement:** the degree of congruence between a leader's self-rating and the ratings of others (Fleenor et al., 2010, p.1005).
- **Teacher Professional Well-Being:** well-being refers to open, engaged, and healthy functioning as a teacher (Collie et al., 2015).

### **Summary**

Principals are critical to the well-being of schools. A healthy school is an organization that achieves goals and maintains a strong school culture in support of the individual and the collective. Teachers identify principal support as critical to their well-being. Although principals lead with the intent of organizational well-being, some teachers report that principal leadership is a detriment to their well-being. As described in this chapter, this study aims to explore levels of perceptual congruence between principals and teachers about principal influence on organizational well-being and how the levels of congruence relate to organizational outcomes.

Chapter two of this study will review literature highlighting several theoretical frameworks drawing from Positive Psychology, Positive Organizational Scholarship, and Well-being theories. Self-Determination Theory in the Workplace (Deci & Ryan, 2017) and the Self-Other Agreement model (Yammarino & Atwater, 1993) are reviewed as guiding models for this study. Also included is a review of the literature on frameworks of effective principal behavior and styles, followed by a review of individual and organizational well-being research. The review will also explore how leadership and well-being intersect. Finally, the literature review will discuss leadership self-awareness and mechanisms available to principals to enhance their external awareness of their leadership effectiveness.

Chapter three describes the methodology for the study, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design framed in a pragmatic paradigm. This study will use survey data, open-ended questions, and one-on-one interviews to explore self and other perceptions of the principal's impact on organizational well-being and how the levels of perceptual congruence relate to individual and organizational outcomes.

Chapter four includes the quantitative and qualitative analysis relative to each research question. The analysis includes the reporting of survey data from teachers and principals and interview findings from seven principals with positive organizational well-being outcomes and high perceptual congruence with their teachers. Chapter Five concludes this study with discussions of the findings as they relate to the identified themes woven through the four research questions, implications of the findings, and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) explores levels of perceptual congruence between principals and teachers about the principal's influence on organizational well-being in schools with small administrative teams of three or fewer and how the levels of congruence relate to organizational outcomes. Additionally, the study sought to understand how principals describe their leadership effect in schools with principal-teacher perceptual congruence and reported positive organizational well-being.

The literature review is organized into four sections. Initially, there is a discussion of relevant theoretical frameworks that guide the study. Then, there is an overview of research on the role of the school principal. How leadership has been studied in the past provides a foundation of knowledge and potential insights or questions about how leaders affect organizational well-being, including teacher well-being. Next is an exploration of teacher and organizational well-being intertwined with leadership effect. Understanding organizational well-being helps clarify specific individual and organizational outcomes that principals can influence to promote whole school well-being. Finally, the review explores understanding leadership impact by exploring self-awareness strategies and barriers and the idea of perceptual self-other agreements. Grounded in positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship, this review seeks to identify what works to support well-being in schools. Self-determination Theory is referenced throughout the literature review to frame leading for organizational well-being. The review will explore principal and teacher perceptions through the lens of self-awareness and self-other agreements. It will

explore the phenomenon of the perception gap between self and others and how that may play a role in healthy schools and healthy teachers.

### **Conceptual Framework**

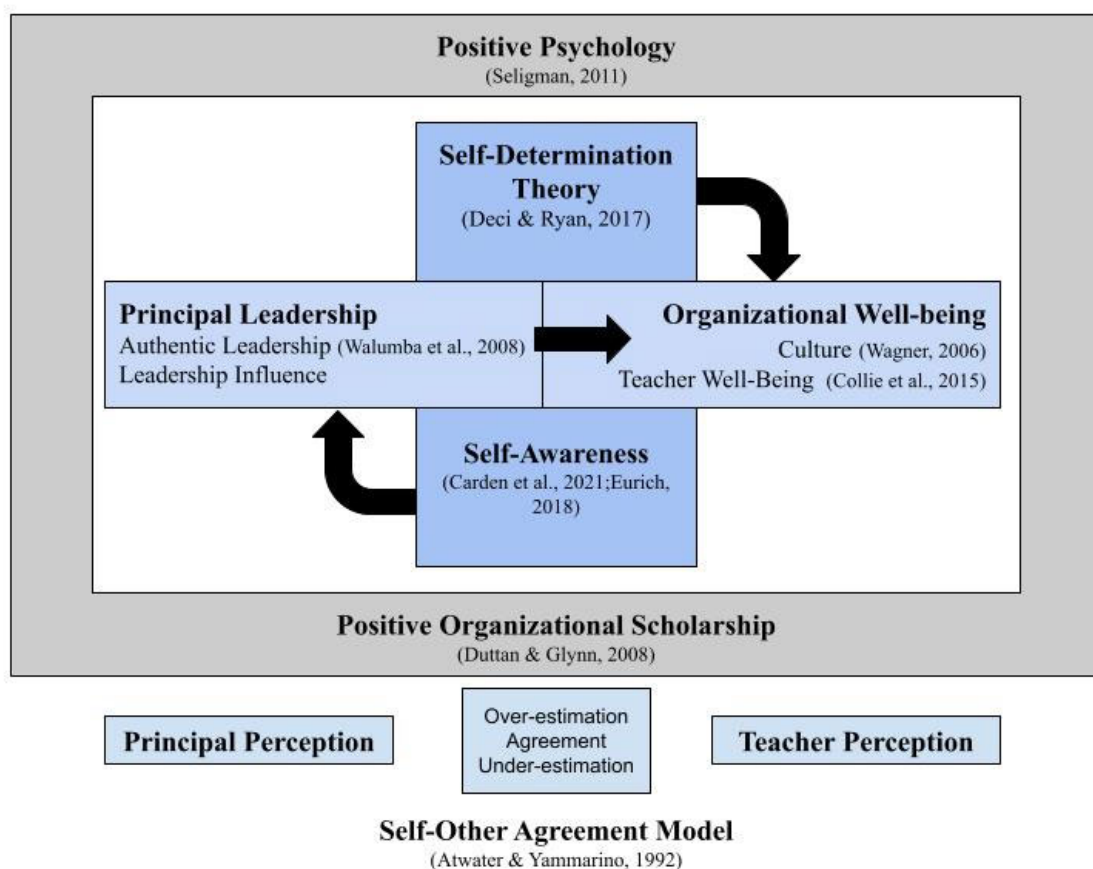
This study explores principal self-awareness by comparing principal self-perception with teacher perceptions and the potential relationship between congruence on organizational outcomes such as School Culture and Teacher Well-being. Much of the research on well-being in schools focuses on the individual, whether that be individual students or staff members (ATA, 2021b; Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Prilleltnesky et al., 2016). Kise and Holm (2022) suggest focusing on the “school’s well-being ecosystem,” where specific conditions are required for individuals to thrive. Similarly, Johnson (2022) suggests that individual efforts of self-care fall short and emphasizes the importance of a culture of organizational well-being that focuses on belonging, competence, and self-regulation. In their book, Kise and Holm (2022a) describe a symbiotic relationship between personal responsibility and learning community responsibility for well-being at work. In this model, leaders, they assert, “are responsible for creating an environment where everyone is energized, effective, efficient, and engaged” (Kise & Holm, 2022a, p. 38). Evidence suggests that leaders who intentionally create environments that support relationships, competence, and autonomy for their teachers lead to better outcomes such as work performance and well-being (Deci et al., 2017; Johnson, 2022; Kise & Holms, 2022a).

In this study, I look at the principal’s effect on organizational outcomes using a conceptual framework (Figure 1) where positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship, “what works” (Seligman, 2011, Dutton & Glynn, 2008),

frame the intersection of principal Authentic Leadership, including self-awareness, and Self-Determination Theory to explore the impact on School Culture and Teacher Well-being. Underpinning the framework is Atwater and Yammarino's (1992) Self-Other Agreement model, which describes how perceptual congruence might affect individual and organizational outcomes. This study explores the perceptual congruence between teachers and principals and the relationship to organizational well-being outcomes.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework*



## **Theoretical Frameworks**

Both positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) and positive organizational scholarship (Carson & Barling, 2008), which seek to understand “what works,” are foundational to the premise of this study. Seligman’s (2011) Theory of Well-being is an extension of positive psychology that frames the construct of personal well-being. Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017) is reflected in much of the research around well-being at work (i.e., Viac & Fraser, 2020). Atwater and Yammarino’s (1992) self-other agreement model is a reference for this study. This model theorizes how a leader’s self-perception and its congruence with the perception of others might impact individual and organizational outcomes. Seeking out the congruence or incongruence between principal and teacher perceptions may enhance the understanding of how principals can monitor their impact and improve their practice. The intersection of these theories positively frames the exploration of principal leadership effect on well-being outcomes as perceived by principals and teachers.

Of particular importance to this study is identifying what principal practices are effective and how aware principals are of what works as perceived by teachers. This understanding requires acknowledging what is not working but, more importantly, seeking a positive, strength-based understanding of the principal action that makes a difference. Avolio and Gardner (2005) describe Authentic Leadership as “a root construct underlying all positive forms of leadership and its development” (p. 315). Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT), which includes self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing of information, and an internalized moral perspective, has been positively correlated to healthy organizational outcomes such as



leader and follower well-being, organizational citizenship, and organizational performance (Gardner et al., 2021). ALT builds on positive psychology and is grounded in Self-determination theory (Gardner et al., 2021). It is the intent of the study to seek out principals who are perceived as effective by teachers and to measure a leader's self-awareness of their leadership and its impact. ALT aligns with this intent.

### ***Positive Psychology***

Positive psychology aims to shift perspectives from repairing to drawing on strengths and building what works (Seligman, 2002). Seligman suggests that positive psychology

“At the subjective level is about positive subjective experience: well-being and satisfaction (past); flow, joy, the sensual pleasures, and happiness (present); and constructive cognitions about the future - optimism, hope, and faith. For individuals, it is about personal traits... at the group level, it is about the civic virtues and institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship”  
(Seligman, 2002, p. 3).

Historically, psychology has focused on pathology rather than promoting achievement and fulfillment or nurturing strengths (Seligman, 2002). In contrast, a focus on positive psychology fosters qualities that promote individual and organizational flourishing.

Negative bias is compelling, and humans naturally tend to succumb to harmful and unhealthy patterns, further supporting skewed narratives about what is or is not possible in schools (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018). Teacher well-being is primarily

studied through a deficit lens of stress and burnout (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Roffey, 2012). Stress factors compromise teacher well-being; therefore, it is vital to understand the prevalence and cause of teacher stress. It is equally important to understand the promotion of teacher well-being through a positive lens. Cherkowski and Walker (2018) look to positive psychology and positive organizational studies to envision a model for whole-school flourishing. They propose a shift from deficit thinking to a focus on strengths for positive growth (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Seligman, 2011).

Positive psychology has an important role in creating healthy work environments. Turner et al. (2002) developed a model of healthy work that uses a positive psychology approach to creating a work environment that fosters a healthy work system. Healthy work systems include work practices of high autonomy, teams and work groups, and transformational leadership and psychological processes such as trust, organizational commitment, and felt belongingness that lead to healthy outcomes such as well-being, self-efficacy, and organizational citizenship. This model suggests reciprocal interactions between the components which influence psychological processes, which influence outcomes, with the reverse also being true. This connects back to the idea presented by Kise and Holm (2022, 2022a) of a school's well-being ecosystem, which includes symbiotic relationships between leaders, individuals, and the collective. Collective, intentional work within the ecosystem serves to prevent personal or collective negative outcomes by "systematically building competence" (Seligman, 2002) while building and promoting positive psychological states (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Deci et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2002). Evidence

suggests that leaders with a positive systems-orientated perspective create healthy work environments for individual and collective outcomes (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Kise & Holms, 2022, 2022a; Turner et al., 2002).

According to Seligman (2011), “the topic of positive psychology is well-being, the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing” (p. 13). He identifies well-being as a construct that can be measured through contributing factors such as positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishment (PERMA). This theory of well-being and flourishing through positive psychology is foundational for several models of flourishing schools (i.e., Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Swaner et al., 2021) that guide a positive, hopeful narrative of schools where members of the community thrive. These models guide principals to lead in ways that foster organizational well-being.

**Positive Organizational Scholarship.** Organizational well-being occurs when individual and organizational goals are achieved within a culture of well-being. Carson & Barling (2008), in their review of major theories related to workplace well-being, report a consensus that “negative workplace experiences do not necessarily lead to negative outcomes” (p. 679) in part due to organizational resources. They, too, advocate for a shift to looking at workplace well-being through positive psychology and how organizations can enable well-being, known as positive organizational scholarship (POS). Positive organizational scholarship sets out to identify factors that contribute to positive well-being, such as organizational climate, relationships, work-life balance (Carson & Barling, 2008), organizational purpose, professional efficacy

(Swaner et al., 2021), engagement, leadership, positive emotions (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018), morale (Hart et al., 2000), and autonomy (Deci et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2002). Three critical components of the POS framework are:

- 1) a concern with flourishing;
- 2) a focus on the development of strengths or capabilities; and
- 3) an emphasis on the generative, life-giving dynamics of organizing (Dutton & Glynn, 2008 in SHOB, p. 693).

Dutton and Glynn (2008) posit that POS extends the tenets of positive psychology to understanding flourishing “states and processes as they unfold in and between organizations” (p. 693). They further claim that POS leads to research that helps understand flourishing of individuals and the collectives within the organization. Using this lens creates a strength-based research framework that seeks out interconnectedness between individuals and the organization and the strong relationship between outcomes at both levels.

Positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship seek to understand what works rather than identify what is broken. It is a refreshing perspective in the current context of scrutiny of public education. This study examines how principals contribute to organizational well-being by examining teacher and principal perceptions of positive leadership effect on well-being constructs.

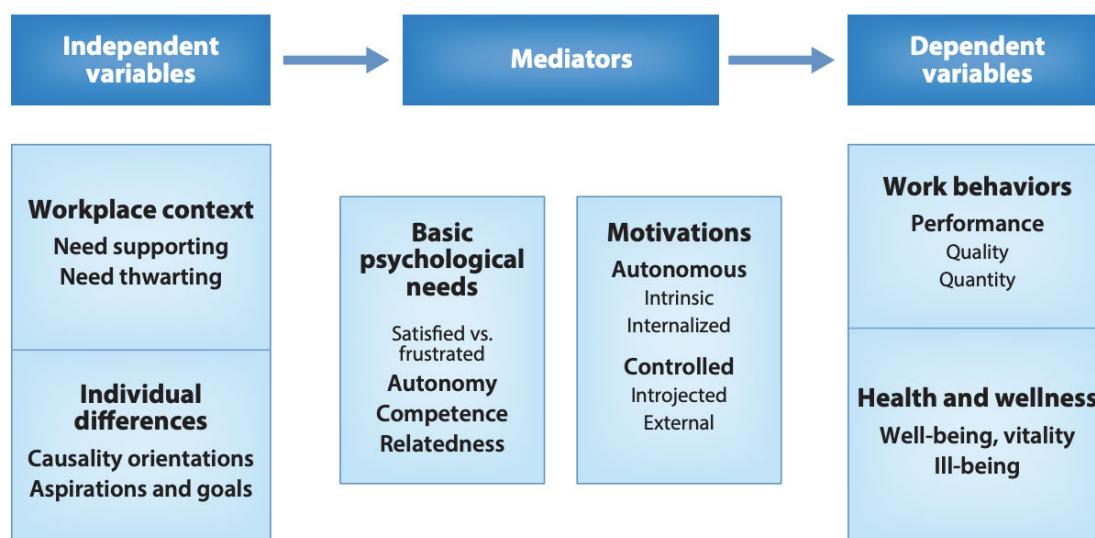
### ***Self-Determination Theory***

A complementary theory to PERMA is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Figure 2). SDT is a helpful framework when considering teacher well-being. SDT, as a theory of work motivation, addresses autonomous and controlled motivation. Deci et

al. (2017) argue that autonomous motivation leads to quality performance and well-being, whereas controlled motivation can be detrimental. Deci et al. highlight the importance of supporting the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness to impact employee performance and well-being. According to Deci et al., policies and practices implemented in an organization must be evaluated in terms of employee competency, autonomy, and relatedness to protect employee well-being. SDT contributes to understanding the influencing factors of well-being.

**Figure 2**

*The Basic Self-Determination Theory Model in the Workplace*



*Note.* Deci et al., 2017

Deci et al. (2017) assert that effective organizations maintain quality outcomes and performance while creating environments where employees are motivated and experience well-being. Deci et al. reviewed research on employees' perceptions of leaders' autonomous support or need support. They found that when leaders are perceived to be high in autonomy support or support of basic employee needs, the

employees reported more work satisfaction, motivation, and well-being. The opposite was evident in unsupportive leaders, leaving employees less motivated and displaying more characteristics of burnout, such as exhaustion, absenteeism, and disengagement. Principals who lead with awareness of SDT may better support well-being and performance outcomes for both individuals and the organization as a whole (Deci et al., 2017; Ebersold et al., 2018)

### ***Self-Other Agreement***

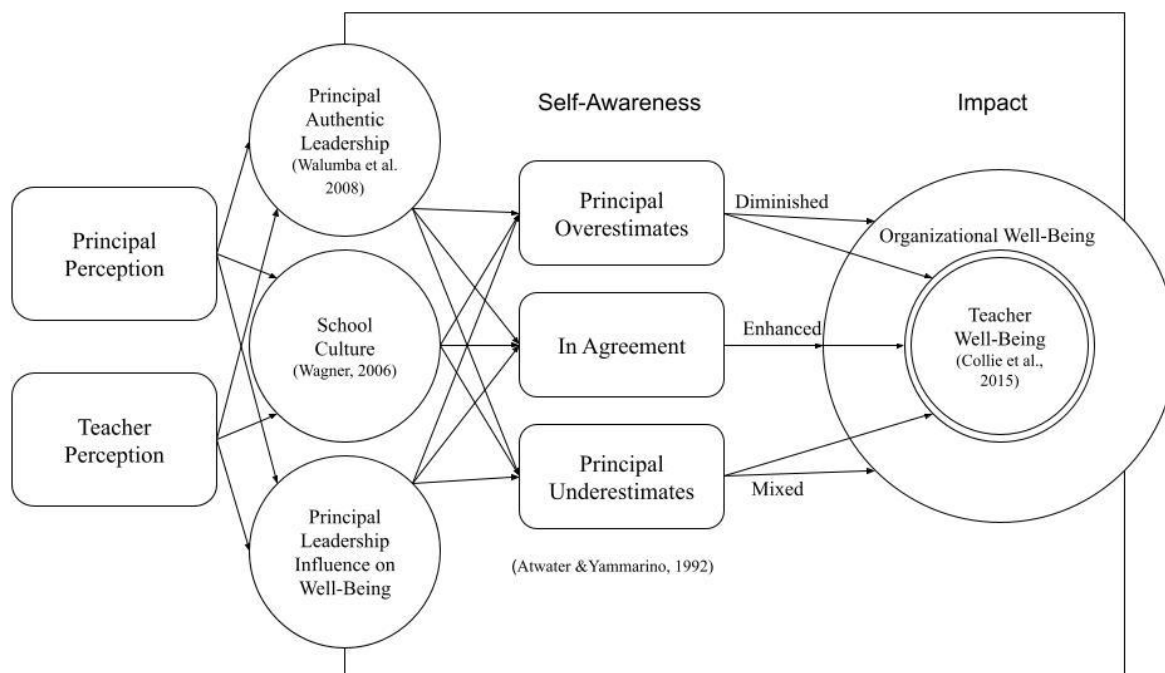
The relationship between principal self-ratings and the ratings of others about their leadership is an interesting perspective for developing leadership effectiveness. Research shows inconsistencies between principals' and teachers' perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Ebersold et al., 2019; Fleenor et al., 2010; Gurley et al., 2016). Atwater and Yammarino (1992) describe this phenomenon as self-other agreement (SOA). An agreed-upon definition of SOA is "the degree of congruence between a leader's self-rating and the ratings of others" (Fleenor et al., 2010, p.1005). Fleenor et al. (2010) suggest that exploring SOA may reflect leadership self-awareness and effectiveness.

An adapted SOA model (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992), which includes organizational and individual well-being outcomes, will guide this study (Figure 3). The study will explore principal and teacher perceptions of organizational well-being through positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship to determine 'what is working' with how principals lead for organizational well-being. As shown in the adapted SOA model (Figure 3), Yammarino and Atwater (1993) predict a

relationship between perceptual congruence and organizational and individual outcomes.

**Figure 3**

*Adapted Model of Self-Perception Accuracy*



*Note.* Adapted from Atwater & Yammarino, 1992

In the literature on SOA and perceptual congruence, it is noted that individuals may not be accurate judges of how others perceive them (Eurich, 2018; Fleenor et al., 2010). Some studies suggest that leaders inflate their competence relative to how others perceive it (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Fleenor et al., 2010; Goff et al., 2013), resulting in adverse effects on the organization and its members. Atwater and Yammarino (1992) observed three tendencies for self-rating: over-estimators, under-estimators, and those in agreement. Over-estimators tend to see no need for changes in their behavior. Those in agreement with others tend to use information from their

context and experience to adapt or modify their behavior, as do under-estimators (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992). There is value in this information that may help increase external awareness to ensure positive organizational and individual outcomes.

### **Effective Principal Leadership**

School leadership is complex. Responding to the complexity requires contextual understanding, relationships, and knowledge of the work of schools (Fullan, 2020; Grissom et al., 2021). A great leader creates conditions that empower followers to reach their potential individually and collectively to achieve positive organizational outcomes. Fullan (2020) emphasizes that “leading in a culture of change is about fulfillment and flourishing” (p. 152). Fullan proposes this is done within a framework of coherence – “the shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work” (p. 120). Effective principals lead with a strong sense of purpose, passion, and hope for their organizations (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Fullan, 2020). Current research on principal effect in schools emphasizes principals’ critical role in school success. Some recent studies suggest that principal impact has been underestimated, including their capacity to affect school organizational well-being in support of student outcomes (Grissom et al., 2021; Leibowitz & Porter, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020). Great principals understand leadership and apply this understanding with positive outcomes.

### ***Leadership Styles***

Multiple leadership styles, theories, or frameworks provide a foundation for leaders to improve their effectiveness. Referenced in the literature are several familiar leadership styles such as Transactional: setting goals and taking action, Servant: a



desire to help people, Situational: adapting to the context (Marzano et al., 2005), Transformational: focused on change, Instructional: supporting teaching and learning (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Marzano et al., 2005, Robinson et al., 2008), Distributed: sharing the leadership (Hitt & Tucker, 2016), Authentic: self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), Supportive: creating environments that consider individual employee's needs and goals (Ma et al., 2020), and Collegial leadership: empowerment through shared decision-making and shared leadership (Singh, 2005; Swaner et al., 2021; Wagner, 2006). Effective principals integrate leadership approaches and styles (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Fullan, 2020).

Effective leaders understand the complexity and nuance of leadership and adapt to the needs within their organization (Fullan, 2020). In reviewing the literature around effective leadership practices for student achievement, Hitt and Tucker (2016) outline the additive history of leadership research from focusing on instructional leadership to a more current understanding of transformational leadership. These are two of the more discussed leadership styles. This account (Hitt & Tucker, 2016) makes a case for integrated leadership, which blends shared instructional leadership with transformational leadership. Integrating leadership styles balances school results with attention to affective leadership domains, focusing on individuals and positive organizational culture. Likewise, several other studies advocate the integration of leadership styles or approaches to increase leader effectiveness (i.e., Marzano et al., 2005; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019; Leithwood, 2017; Robinson et al., 2008). The

literature review aims to examine how principals influence well-being in their schools and how they understand this impact relative to their teachers.

### *Authentic Leadership*

Authentic Leadership theory (ALT) is a theory of leadership that “draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development” (Walumba et al., 2008, p. 95). A critical piece to principal effectiveness is self-awareness which is a key component to ALT along with relational transparency, balanced processing, and an internalized moral perspective (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). According to Gardner and Karam (2021), authenticity in leadership occurs when one strives “to act in ways that reflect their core values and identities” (p. 2). ALT is grounded in SDT and therefore reflects the assumption that authenticity is achieved when the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Gardner et al., 2021). Authenticity, they suggest, helps one to be their best self at work. Underlying this theory is the assumption that positive psychological capacities, as referenced in SDT and positive ethical climates, support authentic leadership and positive outcomes for individuals and organizations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumba et al., 2008).

The four components of ALT encompass many agreed-upon effective leadership practices (Gardner et al., 2021). Self-awareness is the foundation for other components and is a leader’s understanding of their beliefs, values, strengths and weaknesses and awareness of their impact on others. Leaders who share this

awareness appropriately with followers contribute to the second component of ALT, relational transparency. Another aspect of relational transparency is seeking input into decisions and clearly communicating decision-making processes. Balanced processing goes beyond seeking input to include seeking and processing feedback, both positive and negative, to inform their leadership development and behaviors. The final component of ALT is internalized moral perspectives, which emphasize the need for leaders to be aware of and consider the ethical responsibilities associated with their role. ALT, as a positive form of leadership, is associated with positive outcomes (Adigüzel & Kuloglu, 2019; Shie & Chang, 2022).

Authentic leadership development is a dynamic process operating on multiple levels, including dyad, group and organizational. The leader's relationships with others are at the core of the theory, where the alignment of the leader's espoused values and beliefs are aligned with their actions building trust in their leadership. Shie and Chang (2022) surveyed 783 senior high/vocational school teachers in central Taiwan. They found that a principal's authentic leadership behaviors directly impacted teachers' organizational trust, identification, commitment, and citizenship behavior. Furthermore, their findings suggest that organizational trust, commitment, and citizenship behavior directly affected teachers' well-being. Similarly, Adigüzel and Kuloglu (2019) surveyed 498 public and private white-collar workers in Turkey and found that authentic leadership positively impacts emotional commitment, organizational identity, and organizational performance. Authentic leadership in practice is positively associated with professional relationships, leader and follower

well-being, and individual and organizational performance (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2021).

ALT is not without criticism. Alvesson and Einole (2019) list cautions in regard to the foundations of authentic leadership, theory development, practical applications, and general problems related to other new genre leadership theories” (p. 385). Critics posit ALT and other forms of ‘positive’ leadership, such as transformational or servant leadership, as overly positive with an unbalanced focus on the leader at the cost of organizational knowledge and leader-follower relations. (Alvesson & Einole, 2019). One challenge made to the practical effectiveness of ATL is the potential conflict between being authentic and working within an organization. The criticisms put forth by Alvesson and Einole focus on leader authenticity with a concern for leader spotlight and potential narcissism. Whereas, ALT, as described by Gardner and Karam (2021) in their response to Alvesson and Einole, is a relational concept between leader and followers. Gardner and Karam acknowledge some of the cautions proposed by Alvesson and Einole while providing a number of references to the associated benefits of ALT found in a number of studies (i.e., Fladerer & Braun, 2020; Gill & Gasa, 2018). Gardner and Karam propose that ALT is not a leadership style but foundational practice that supports different styles of leadership.

### ***Leadership Frameworks***

Multiple leadership frameworks and theories list skills, competencies, practices, and approaches to successful principal leadership (i.e., Grissom et al., 2021; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2017). Although different frameworks, theories, and styles present leadership in various ways, there is considerable overlap of agreed-upon

vital factors that contribute to principal effectiveness. Educational leaders improve student outcomes by influencing teachers, instruction, organizational structures and health (Grissom et al., 2021; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Grissom et al. (2021) synthesized two decades of research on how principals affect students and schools. They also assert that principals need skills and expertise in people, instruction and organization to be effective. Most leadership frameworks guide principals in their work in these three areas. Consistent is the emphasis on the need for principals to support organizational structures such as climate, culture, and community in support of people, instruction, and learning.

Understanding what successful principals do is foundational to improving school, teacher, and student outcomes. Marzano et al.'s (2005) now seminal meta-analysis identified 21 competencies or responsibilities of effective principals and their effects on student achievement. Compared to the findings of Grissom et al. (2021), the responsibilities identified by Marzano et al. can be organized as supporting people, instruction, and organization. Hitt and Tucker (2016) reviewed empirical research on how leaders influence student achievement to develop a unified model of effective leadership practices. This model builds on the work of Marzano et al. (2005) and reviewed three leadership frameworks, including the Ontario Leadership Framework, the Learning-Centered Leadership Framework and the Essential Supports Framework to inform their synthesis.

The unified framework identifies five domains from the review that enable leaders to support teachers and school organizations to affect student outcomes:  
Establishing and conveying the vision; Facilitating a high-quality learning experience

for children; building professional capacity; creating a supportive organization for learning; and connecting with external partners. Each domain encompasses several dimensions. The researchers found substantial overlap between the three models. Marzano et al.'s (2005) 21 responsibilities of a leader are reflected implicitly or explicitly in this unified framework. Based on their review, Hitt and Tucker (2016) conclude that effective school leaders demonstrate proficiency in multiple domains and greatly affect student outcomes through teachers by shaping a supportive school environment.

Woven in these many frameworks is the importance of principal attention to the school community to promote school outcomes. In their plan for effective school leadership, Marzano et al. (2005) assert that mastering all 21 responsibilities is beyond the capacity of the principal alone. Essential for principals are the nine responsibilities of optimizer, affirmation, ideals/beliefs, visibility, situational awareness, relationships, communication, culture, and input, which are the foundation for “crafting of a purposeful community” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 99). Similarly, Grissom et al. (2021) identified four key leadership behaviors, including “building a productive climate” and “facilitating collaboration and professional learning communities” (p. 59). Likewise, Leithwood et al. (2020) claim that principals’ effect on teaching and learning comes through their impact on organizational factors. These researchers agree that the school climate and community’s strength influence school outcomes. Evidence suggests the importance of using the strength and effectiveness of the school as an organization by building collective capacity to work toward agreed-upon goals.

Successful leaders understand what skills are effective and how to apply them in their unique contexts. Leithwood (2017), in an overview of research used to develop the Ontario Leadership Framework, suggests that leaders need practical guidance beyond the broad labels such as “instructional” or “transformational.” He proposes using leadership practices (a set of activities) rather than competencies (underlying individual characteristics) to support successful leadership. Leithwood asserts that leaders need to go beyond what needs to be done and identify how to do it. Successful educational leaders, specifically principals, bring knowledge of their specific context, problem-solving, and adaptability to apply the practices identified in the research (Leithwood, 2017).

Leadership practices in multiple domains are necessary to address the complexity of the principal role. The researchers posit a need for leaders to be fluent in the technical aspects of schools (curriculum knowledge, instructional practices, and organizational management) and the affective factors, such as how teachers perceive and experience the culture and conditions of the organization (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). “Teachers may open themselves to accepting leadership and influence from those they perceive to be credible in curriculum, instruction, and assessment and empathic and supportive of their realities” (Hitt & Tucker, 2016, p. 556). Likewise, Leithwood (2017) identifies three types of personal leadership resources - cognitive, social, and psychological - that support leader success. He suggests these leadership ‘traits’ are consistent across different contexts. Leithwood highlights the importance of social resources (perceiving and managing emotions and responding to their own and others’ emotions) in fostering a positive climate. Of note is the importance of a leader’s self-

awareness and understanding of how one's own emotions influence their actions and responses (Leithwood, 2017). Effective leaders are fluent with identified 'technical' leadership practices and affective factors to create positive school cultures and climates that, in turn, support teacher effectiveness and professional well-being (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2017).

### ***Leading the Organization***

Evidence suggests that principals have a high effect on group structures and processes. Leibowitz and Porter (2019) reviewed 51 studies of principal behaviors. They found direct evidence of a correlation between principal behaviors and student achievement, teacher well-being, teacher instructional practices and school organizational health. The largest effect size was found on school organizational health. Principal impact on outcomes often happens throughout the organization. For example, Grissom et al. (2021) assert that two out of four essential skills for principals are promoting a productive climate and facilitating collaboration and a professional learning community. Culture is one of the nine primary responsibilities listed by Marzano et al. (2005). As they say, culture is "implicit or explicit" (p. 47) in all leadership theories. Marzano et al. further assert that culture is the primary tool a principal has to affect change, specifically through: 1) promoting cohesion among staff; 2) promoting a sense of well-being among staff; 3) developing an understanding of purpose among staff, and 4) developing a shared vision of what the school could be like (p. 48). Evidence would suggest principals who focus on organizational well-being provide structures of support that allow individuals to thrive.



## **Understanding Organizational and Individual Well-being**

Organizational well-being is enhanced by individual well-being. The well-being of students matters and is getting much attention globally, especially as the world emerges from the uncertainty imposed on schools due to the pandemic. Attention to teacher and organizational well-being is also warranted. Teachers experience high-stress levels, and as will be discussed later, their ill-being comes with personal and organizational consequences. As Cherkowski and Walker (2018) assert, “learning happens best when teachers and their students are well and know that the aggregate or composite health of all teachers, staff, and students will determine the overall well-being of the learning community” (p. 2). They, along with others (i.e., Cann et al., 2021; Grissom et al., 2021; Marzano et al., 2005), suggest that creating an environment where teachers and students can flourish is a crucial responsibility for principals.

### ***Well-Being and Flourishing***

Well-being is the increase of flourishing, which Seligman (2011) says is grounded in positive psychology. Seligman’s (2011) Well-being Theory includes five measurable elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (PERMA). This theory asserts that well-being has both subjective and objective components. As Seligman (2011) proclaims in his book, *Flourish*, psychology historically has been about removing ill-being rather than the promotion of strengths and well-being. In schools, similar attention is given to stress and burnout for teachers and mental health challenges for students. Therefore, mitigation efforts are often reactive rather than proactive. Looking at well-being in the light of positive

psychology and frameworks such as PERMA enables principals to nurture conditions that build strength and promote flourishing for students, teachers, and the organization.

Models of occupational well-being help understand how aspects of Seligman's theory can be promoted in the school context for teachers. SDT looks at the need satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In PERMA, these could align with engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. Viac and Fraser (2020) introduce the *Conceptual Framework for Teachers' Occupational Well-being*. Viac and Fraser's (2020) framework names the influencing factors of well-being as the quality of the working environment, school characteristics and teacher characteristics. These influences affect four dimensions of teacher well-being: cognitive, subjective, physical and mental, and social well-being. Within these dimensions, similar to PERMA, they identify self-efficacy, job satisfaction, a sense of meaning and purpose, positive emotions, physical health, and supportive and trusting relationships with colleagues as contributing to occupational well-being. In the school setting, improving individual well-being may be outside the scope of the principal's responsibility, through creating favorable conditions in the organization, occupational well-being is within their influence.

### ***Organizational Well-Being***

Organizational well-being maximizes individual and organizational outcomes (Cojocaru, 2014). Through an analysis of subjective and organizational well-being research, Cojocaru suggests that organizational well-being considers both the welfare of its members and the vision for the organization. Likewise, Coli and Risotto (2013)

determined, through a series of employee focus groups involving 61 people in an organization, that organizational well-being is fostered through individual and organizational factors. Cherkowski and Walker (2018) promote a model of flourishing schools where “the well-being of everyone in the school setting is crucial to the school being a flourishing community” (p. 72). This idea of flourishing at both the individual and organizational levels creates an environment of high effectiveness. For schools, organizational well-being occurs when members of the school community, administration, staff members, and students experience well-being and success toward both individual goals and organizational goals. One way principals can promote organizational well-being is through the climate and culture of the school.

**School Climate & Culture.** School culture impacts every aspect of a school (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Wagner, 2006), including the members of the school and the organization’s continuous improvement and growth (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). A positive school culture improves effectiveness, collegiality, communication and problem-solving, promotes innovation, builds commitment, and “amplifies the energy, vitality, and trust of school staff members, students, and community” (Deal & Peterson, 2016, p.14) while clarifying shared values, visions and beliefs. Conversely, a toxic culture can overwhelm and discourage staff and foster mediocrity, distrust, dysfunction, hopelessness, and pessimism (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015), essentially halting improvement. Understanding school culture and intentionally fostering a positive culture creates an environment where all school members can flourish (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018).

Defining school culture helps leaders and team members understand its effects. Wagner (2006) frames the elements of school culture in three categories: professional collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and efficacy or self-determination. Similarly, Deal and Peterson (2016) observed that successful schools developed a sense of group efficacy, a sense of community, and an identity as a learning community framed within a professional culture. A healthy culture is highly collaborative, fosters relationships, empowers staff and students to improve, and celebrates success (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Healthy school culture includes shared mission and values, relationships based on trust, humor, openness, and respect, and a belief in the capacity for professional learning and student achievement (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Wagner, 2006). The elements of school culture influence how community members think, feel, and act (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

Adaptive school culture is critical to organizational success (Deal & Peterson, 2016). In a research-informed analysis of leadership during uncertainty, Drysdale and Gurr (2017) advocate for developing an adaptive culture that is sensitive to the environment or context, cohesion and identity, tolerant of new ways of thinking or acting, and manages its growth and evolution. Similarly, Cherkowski & Walker (2018) include the adaptive community as an essential aspect of a culture of well-being. In their research on teacher well-being, Cherkowski and Walker assert that a community supportive of open communication, risk-taking, and creativity builds resiliency in the school community. A resilient community adapts when needed within

a supportive environment. The work of these researchers further supports the importance of a school culture that values growth in support of organizational goals.

**Models of Flourishing Schools.** Research suggests that focusing on strategies to nurture teacher wellness will benefit teachers (Fernet et al., 2012), students, and the school culture (Gu, 2014; Hanson, 2013; Haydon et al., 2018; Herman et al., 2018). School environments that foster teacher resilience - the capacity to work through adversity while maintaining balance and agency (Gu & Day, 2013) - positively impact teacher satisfaction and effectiveness. Creating a collective school mindset focused on well-being is a strength-based model advocated by Cherkowski and Walker (2018). They draw on positive psychology theories, positive organizational scholarship, and school improvement to move from deficit to flourishing thinking (Cherkowski & Walter, 2018). By drawing on positive practices, Cherkowski and Walker encourage a shift to foster well-being “rather than trying to simply reduce or relieve misery” (p. 73).

Similarly, Laurie et al. (2019) propose the Positive Workplace Framework (PWF) as a “strength-based approach to optimizing staff and student well-being” (p.1). The PWF identifies Positive Leadership as one of the primary contributing components of positive work environments that support well-being, engagement, and performance (Laurie et al., 2019). Other conditions for a healthy workplace included in this model are resiliency practices or personal assets and mental fitness practices such as relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Focusing on well-being rather than ill-being is a proactive approach that draws on individual and organizational strengths.

Striving for a culture of well-being is optimal. Dimoff & Kelloway (2013) propose a “two-pronged approach” of prevention and intervention to foster healthy workplaces. Herman et al. (2018) agree that individual intervention balanced with ecological interventions is needed. Only focusing on the individual neglects “the broader social context that influences teacher adaptation and coping” (Herman et al., 2018, p. 97). There is consensus within the research for this balanced approach to teacher well-being (Dimoff & Kelloway, 2013; Gray et al., 2017; Haydon et al., 2018; Herman et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2014; Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Therefore, organizational well-being may be effective for ensuring individual well-being or flourishing.

Flourishing is a term that holds a unique meaning for each person or organization. Cherkowski and Walker’s (2018) *Conceptual Model for Flourishing in Schools* does not set out to create a single definition of flourishing but rather one that encompasses each teacher’s sense of joy, purpose, and fun in their work. This model is based on a “positive, strength-based, appreciative perspective” (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018, p. 7) and focuses on subjective well-being as it intersects with “Leaderful Mindsets” and “Adaptive Community.” The domain of “Adaptive Community” in this model refers to the team’s relationships, resilience, and dynamics whereby the community collectively moves towards ongoing improvement, focusing on nurturing positive relationships and well-being (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018). Building and valuing leadership capacity at all levels within a school is the premise of the “Leaderful Mindset” domain. In this model, autonomy, agency, and sharing leadership contribute to individual and group well-being. The final layer of

Cherkowski and Walker's model consists of three professional virtues: compassion, trust, and hope. These virtues add to the flourishing model of well-being by connecting community members to each other in ways that create caring and safe environments with a sense of shared vision for the future.

Similarly, Swaner et al. (2021) developed the Flourishing School Culture Model (FSCM), which consists of five domains of flourishing: Purpose; Well-being; Relationships; Teaching and Learning; and Expertise and Resources. Their model describes an inter-related culture where flourishing students are supported by flourishing educators that contribute to flourishing schools through the five domains. Swaner et al. categorize the five domains into three leadership practices foundational (purpose and well-being), relational (relationships), and strategic (teaching and learning, expertise and resources). They propose that principals engage in leader-specific (principal responsibility), leader-directed (capacity building), and leader shaping (culture building) practices—the five domains inter-relate with multiple layers of leadership building and empowerment to foster an environment of well-being. Like Cherkowski and Walker, the FSCM focuses on a whole school framework for flourishing that principals can draw upon to lead for well-being. Identifying factors that influence teacher well-being, both positively and negatively, helps school leaders create conditions to improve or nurture well-being. School principals have a pivotal role in ensuring schools are places where teachers can be well and flourish.

Of importance is the understanding that teacher well-being is a collective effort that must include the individual and the school environment in its entirety.

Normalizing personal and organizational well-being enables teachers to access the

support and resources they need for well-being. Addressing well-being with positive intent based on strengths is a shift in thinking. Taking care of our teachers ensures that they can care for our students. School leaders will foster a healthy school community by making teacher well-being a goal; as Cherkowski and Walker (2018) assert, “Teacher well-being matters” (p. 23). Stress is a regular and constant part of a teacher’s environment. What need not be constant are the adverse effects of stress. The identified models of school flourishing support meeting teacher’s need for relatedness, competence, and autonomy to enhance well-being, as identified in SDT. Principals, teachers, and system leaders share the responsibility of ensuring schools are places of flourishing.

### ***Teacher Well-Being***

To understand teacher wellness, one must also understand teacher unwellness. Stress is a complex and prevalent issue for teachers (Herman et al., 2018; Katz et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), with potentially adverse effects on teachers personally and professionally (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Researchers have identified several risk factors for high stress and potential protective factors that mitigate the feelings of stress in teachers (Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Schussler et al., 2018).

Prilleltensky et al. (2016), in a review of literature on teacher stress, posit that risk factors affect teachers at personal, interpersonal, and organizational levels and increase the likelihood of a negative outcome. Conversely, protective factors create conditions for a more positive effect. Risk and protective factors are thoroughly studied and consistently identified in the research (Collie et al., 2012; Ferguson et al.,



2012; Gray et al., 2017; Haydon et al., 2018; Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Understanding the positive impact of protective factors and the negative impact of stressors can inform strategies to create work environments that value teacher well-being (Gray et al., 2017). Analyzing these factors empowers teachers and system leaders with wellness strategies to ensure schools are healthy places for all.

**Risk Factors.** Stress is associated with adverse outcomes (Collie et al., 2015, Ferguson et al., 2012; Prilleltensky et al., 2016), and for teachers, risk factors can contribute to burnout, lack of motivation, psychosomatic symptoms, and a reduced sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, and commitment (Collie et al., 2015; Haydon et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). The research identifies both personal and environmental conditions as contributing factors to teacher wellness and unwellness (Collie et al., 2012; Collie et al., 2015; Ferguson et al., 2012; Gray et al., 2017; Haydon et al., 2018; Schussler et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016). These conditions affect teachers through different psychological pathways (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), and therefore, well-being must be examined through a multi-dimensional lens (Collie et al., 2015).

Why teachers experience stress is evident. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016), in their study of 523 Senior High teachers from Norway, identified seven potential stressors. Of these seven, they found that time pressure or workload, poor student motivation, lack of administrative support, and value conflicts were significantly related to self-efficacy and emotional stress and indirectly related to emotional exhaustion, engagement, and motivation to leave the profession. Similarly, Haydon et

al. (2018) found, in their study of 16 special education teachers, a lack of administrative support, student challenges, and peer interaction as stress sources. In examining teacher burnout, Fernet et al. (2012) identified four perceived environmental factors; overload, decision latitude, principal leadership behavior, and students' disruptive behavior. Identifying potential causes of negative stress enables appropriate mitigating responses.

***Workload.*** A frequently noted cause of teacher distress is pressure from workload or time constraints (Collie et al., 2012; Collie et al., 2015; Ferguson et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016). Collie et al.'s (2015) study of 664 teachers in British Columbia, Canada, revealed that workload stress negatively impacts job satisfaction. Ferguson et al. (2012) interviewed 274 teachers from Northern Ontario, Canada, and found that workload pressures were key predictors of anxiety and depression. Further, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) studied 523 Norwegian Senior High teachers and related time pressure to emotional stress. Workload and time constraints appear to be important considerations for teacher well-being.

***Student Challenges.*** Another risk factor that impacts teacher well-being is student challenges. Teachers shared concerns about low student motivation, student diversity, and classroom management challenges due to student behavior (Collie et al., 2012; Collie et al., 2015; Ferguson et al., 2012; Haydon et al., 2018; Schussler et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016) and can be linked to teacher stress, efficacy, and job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012). Interestingly, Collie et al. (2012) found that student stressors impact teachers to different degrees, depending on teachers' sense of efficacy and confidence in classroom management. In Schussler et al.'s (2018) qualitative

collective case study, three teachers participated in a mindfulness-based professional development program. All three teachers experienced stress from student challenges, but their responses were markedly different based on their self-reported efficacy. Competence and self-efficacy around supporting student diversity, behavior, and motivation factors are key to mitigating this stress. Administrators can support teachers with student challenges by creating an environment with clear expectations for students, considering classroom dynamics, and building teacher capacity for responding to complex student dynamics.

***Relationships.*** Teachers are influenced positively or negatively by their working relationships (Gu, 2014). Interaction with peers potentially contributes to a teacher's stress response (Collie et al., 2012; Haydon et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016; Schussler et al., 2018). The quality of the relationships with students, peers, and administrators determines the effect. Haydon et al. (2018) identified peer relations as a source of stress for teachers. Collaboration and teamwork with peers can be challenging due to conflict, lost autonomy, misalignment of values or philosophy, or general lack of support (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016). Some teachers perceive a loss of autonomy and voice when collaboration is expected (Fernet et al., 2012; Haydon et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). This perceived loss of self-determination and efficacy is particularly detrimental for teachers (Fernet et al., 2012). Peer relationships, and relationships with administrators, impact a teacher's sense of well-being at work.

**Protective Factors.** Also included in the research are factors that protect teachers from burnout and stress (Haydon et al., 2018). Frequently, protective factors

are similar to perceived stressors. For example, a lack of administrative support can be a stressor, whereas an effective administrator can be a protective factor (Fernet et al., 2012; Haydon et al., 2018). Schussler et al. (2018) frame protective factors as both “assets” within a person and “resources” from the environment. Protective factors align with the psychological needs proposed in SDT (Deci et al., 2017): competency through skills and self-efficacy; autonomy through purpose, self-awareness, and mindset; and relatedness through belonging and healthy relationships (Collie et al., 2012; Gray et al., 2017; Haydon et al., 2018). Both Gu (2014) and Schussler et al. identified teacher resilience as an outcome for teachers with access to multiple protective factors.

*External Protectors.* Gu (2014) drew upon the qualitative data analyses from interviews with 300 teachers in England and found that strong teacher-leader relationships, along with positive peer and student relationships, influenced teachers’ resilience. Through a single case study of a highly efficacious and well-adjusted teacher, Perry et al. (2015) confirmed Gu’s assertion of the importance of relationship support for dealing with risk factors. This teacher drew upon social support to deal with stress and exhaustion. In the same way, the work of Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2015) and Haydon et al. (2018) confirmed that teamwork, collaboration, and supportive peer interaction mitigate external stressors. Trusting relationships, including those with administrators, build resilience and contribute to teachers’ perceived capacity to cope with risk factors (Fernet et al., 2012; Gu, 2014; Haydon et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2015).

***Internal Protectors.*** Personal characteristics such as mindset, high efficacy for dealing with challenges, and awareness of individual locus of control (Haydon et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2015) help teachers cope with and adapt to potential stressors. In Perry et al.'s (2015) case study, the teacher expressed a strong sense of purpose and commitment that allowed him to persevere through challenges. Similarly, Gu's (2014) analysis confirmed the importance of personal satisfaction in student success and a collective sense of purpose. This sense of satisfaction, student enjoyment, and autonomy are protective factors against perceived stress (Perry et al., 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). The evidence suggests that these protective factors are critical in promoting teacher well-being.

**Teacher Response to Influencing Factors.** How teachers respond to stress varies. Herman et al. (2018), in their study of 121 elementary teachers in urban midwestern U.S., identified four profiles of teacher-reported levels of coping with stress. Their profile continuum includes four categories, as summarized in Figure 4. Herman et al. found that almost all teachers, 93%, reported high-stress levels, and only 7% of teachers were in the well-adjusted class characterized by low stress and high efficacy. This finding provides further evidence of the high-stress nature of teaching. The four profiles offer insight into the individual stress response and motivation to create school environments that help more teachers reach the well-adjusted profile.

**Figure 4***Four Profiles of Teacher Adaptability to Stress*

Low Coping High-Stress High Burnout	Moderate Coping High-Stress Moderate Burnout	High Coping High-Stress Low Burnout	Well-adjusted Low-Stress High efficacy
3%	30%	60%	7%

*Note.* Herman et al. (2018)

A teacher's stress response depends on a complex interplay of risk factors and existing protective factors framed within individual contexts and perspectives. Teachers interact with their environment from a personal perspective and foundation of support. External protective factors and internal protective factors impact the stress response. Belief in one's ability to address a challenge changes their mindset and response to the challenge, drawing on one's sense of efficacy and competence. In Collie et al.'s (2015) study, risk factors impacted teachers uniquely. Environmental stressors affected teachers' well-being and motivation, whereas the perception of student behavior and motivation potentially influenced the teachers' sense of efficacy and job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012). Individual teachers must be considered within the school community and culture dynamic to best nurture teacher well-being. When supported, teachers feel capable of handling the complexities of their position.

***Group Well-Being: Morale***

Morale may be an indicator of group well-being and reflective of school organizational well-being. Schools are people. How the members of the school

community work, learn and play together is important (Peterson et al., 2008). In their review of research on morale, Peterson et al. (2008) advocate for greater attention to morale and its positive effect on the well-being of the school. Their literature review determined that morale is a multi-dimensional construct including optimism, group efficacy, resilience, mutual respect and trust, a common purpose and leadership. In schools, they determined that morale is enhanced by many things that contribute to organizational and individual well-being, such as collegial relationships, achievement through student success, autonomy, opportunities for professional development, and recognition. This research framed morale in positive psychology with a focus on the positive outcomes attributed to positive morale. Morale is the state of the group within a particular context. Leaders who promote morale value and recognize group members, empower and develop individuals, share successes and struggles, foster open communication and establish a positive climate (Peterson et al., 2008). Supportive leadership can nurture positive morale, which may enhance organizational well-being.

### **The Role of the Principal in Supporting Well-being**

Principals have a critical role to play in the well-being of teachers and schools. In discussions about teacher stress, lack of administrative support is a frequently noted negative influence (Ferguson et al., 2012; Fernet et al., 2012; Haydon et al., 2018; Schussler et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016). Principal leadership behaviors are directly related to teacher self-efficacy changes (Fernet et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016) and emotional stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Without administrative support, teachers experience a loss of trust (Schussler et al.,

2018) and a conflict of values (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Lack of administrative support can result in lower self-efficacy due to a loss of autonomy or self-determination (Deci et al., 2017; Fernet et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016), which are predictors of burnout (Deci et al., 2017; Fernet et al., 2012). Principal support is essential in teacher stress response (Haydon et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016) and well-being promotion.

In the current environment where COVID-related circumstances are constantly impacting school operations, principals must continuously respond to complexity and uncertainty to ensure the well-being of both people and the organization. In their review of recent empirical research, Leithwood et al. (2020) identify four paths of leadership that influence student learning; rational (teaching and learning), emotional (affective states of teachers), organizational (structures), and family. Within the emotional and organizational paths, principal leadership directly influences teacher efficacy, commitment, trust, and relationships (Leithwood et al., 2020), thereby indirectly influencing student outcomes. Lambersky (2016), in a qualitative study of teacher perception of leadership, speaks to the need to acknowledge the emotional aspect of the principalship to support teacher well-being. Principals who adopt behaviors that influence teachers' emotions can "contribute to the optimal well-being of the faculty" (Lambersky, 2016, p.401). To lead for well-being, he promotes the development of "emotional savvy" leadership practices that allow principals to respond to the affective states of teachers and create a culture of well-being and improvement.



Principal behaviors that positively affect teacher well-being are “within the grasp of the average among us” (Lambersky, 2016, p. 400). Through interviews with 20 secondary teachers in Ontario, Canada, Lambersky (2016) identified several key principal behaviors influencing teacher morale, burnout, stress, commitment, and self and collective efficacy, such as respecting and encouraging teachers. Similarly, Lee and Li (2015), through a case study of an elementary school awarded for excellent teaching, found that a collaborative school culture shaped by the principal fosters teaching excellence. Studies indicate that teachers feel supported by principals who respect teachers, hold them professionally capable and honor their autonomy and voice in decision-making (Haydon et al., 2018; Lambersky, 2016; Lee & Li, 2015). Effective communication and articulating a clear vision with shared goals allow teachers to feel aligned with leadership and school missions (Haydon et al., 2018; Lambersky, 2016). Teachers perceive principals who provide authentic acknowledgement and feedback as supportive (Haydon et al., 2018; Lambersky, 2016; Lee & Li, 2015). Finally, teachers perceive the principal’s role as one of ‘protector’ (Lambersky, 2016), buffering them from additional stress such as workload, harassment, change, and other potentially damaging situations. The collective of these principal behaviors establishes trust between principals and teachers (Kutsyruba et al., 2016; Price, 2012), which is foundational to creating safe spaces that foster teacher well-being.

### ***Supportive leadership***

Principals can nurture well-being by attending to conditions that encourage teachers to thrive (Cann et al., 2020). Cann et al. (2020) conducted a case study of 65

teachers in a large high school in New Zealand with a focus on promoting teacher well-being. They explored how leadership practices influence teacher well-being through a positive psychology lens. Their findings are consistent with previously referenced research (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Deci et al., 2017; Fernet et al., 2012; Swaner et al., 2021). This study highlights three leadership actions that influence teacher well-being:

1. Ensuring teachers feel that their voice, work, and effort are valued;
2. Facilitating professional development that is meaningful to teachers;
3. Enabling teachers to have sufficient agency in decision-making and changes (Cann et al., 2020, p. 209).

These actions are grounded in foundational skills of relationship building, social and emotional competence and responding to context (Cann et al., 2020). Roffey (2012) and Fernet et al. (2012) confirm that when principals employ leadership practices that encourage autonomy, build competence, and foster relationships, as asserted in SDT, teachers experience more joy and satisfaction in their work.

### ***Relationships and Trust***

Principals influence a school's workings directly through its teachers (Price, 2012); therefore, it is vital to study the 'how' of principal effect through specific principal behaviors. Berkovich & Eyal (2017) examined multiple data sources from 69 Israeli elementary schools and found that principals with high emotional recognition ability affect teacher emotional reframing. An important finding in this study is the need to go beyond emotional recognition to practical actions to support teachers' emotional well-being (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017). Similarly, Pierce (2014) found a

positive correlation between principal emotional intelligence and collective teacher efficacy, implying a need for principals to understand the importance of leadership's emotional competencies.

Kutsyuruba et al. (2016), in their study of 177 Canadian school principals' reflections, found trust to be foundational for school environments that support well-being. Principal-teacher relationships grow stronger when teachers are respected and included in the school's decisions (Price, 2012). Highlighted throughout the research is the necessity for trust between the teacher and the principal (Hauserman et al., 2013; Kutsyuruba et al., 2016; Price, 2012). There is a reciprocity of trust in schools (Kutsyuruba et al., 2016), whereby when trust is given, trust is earned. Price (2012) suggests that trust also has a reciprocal benefit that positively influences both teacher and principal job satisfaction and commitment. Boies & Fiset (2019) collected data from principals and teachers in 33 Canadian elementary schools and found that teachers perceive trustworthy principals as effective. When principals engage in the critical behaviors associated with promoting teacher well-being, they contribute to trusting relationships and thus build a foundation in which all school community members can flourish (Cherkowski et al., 2020; Hauserman, 2013; Kutsyuruba et al., 2016; Price, 2012).

### ***Autonomy and Participative Decision-Making***

Agency, autonomy, and participative decision-making support teacher professional well-being and contribute to morale and organizational well-being. When teachers are trusted in the capacity to make decisions about teaching and learning, they report higher well-being. These considerations are in alignment with the components

of self-determination theory. Deci et al. (2017) identify three leadership practices to support teacher well-being and cultures of support. The first is understanding, acknowledging, and considering employee perspectives. Also beneficial is offering choice and facilitating employee initiative through decision-making and autonomy on how employees enact ideas. Finally, leaders can support employees by providing positive, informational or solution-oriented feedback rather than using negative or pressuring behavior or language. The tenets of Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017) are essential considerations for specific effective leadership practices for supporting teachers to be well and succeed in their work.

### ***Competence and Collective Efficacy***

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's capacity, is a component of Viac and Fraser's (2020) framework for teacher well-being. Self-efficacy relates to competence, a key component of SDT that Deci et al. (2017) identify as a basic need associated with employee well-being. Opportunities to build professional capacity, individually or collectively, through professional development can enhance morale in schools (Peterson et al., 2008). Herman et al. (2018) assert that a strong sense of professional capacity helps teachers mitigate stress. Drawing from Seligman's (2011) theory of personal well-being, PERMA, engagement and achievement contribute to well-being. Engagement and achievement at work are a result of self-efficacy and serve to build self-efficacy and competence. Li and Lee (2015) found principals who nurture a collaborative school culture support teaching excellence. This is echoed in the research of Deal and Peterson (2016), who posit that successful school leaders build group efficacy through a professional culture of collaboration. Teachers who have a

strong sense of efficacy in their teaching are better able to meet the demands of their role; therefore, principals can foster well-being by encouraging teachers to build professional competence and confidence.

### *Summary*

What principals can do to support professional well-being in schools is clear, including attending to relatedness, autonomy, and competence. As asserted by Cann et al. (2021), the identified leadership skills and practices are what leaders already claim to be doing. However, their research and that of others (i.e., Deci et al., 2017; Fernet et al., 2012; Schussler et al., 2018) highlighted that teachers do not always perceive a positive effect of leadership on their well-being. Argyris (1976) posits that all human action is based on theories, espoused or theories-in-use. To understand principal leadership for well-being, exploring the discrepancies between what principals claim to do, their espoused theories, and what they actually do may be illuminating.

### **Principals Understanding their Leadership Impact**

Research shows a consistent trend of perceptual gaps between principal and teacher reports of leadership impact across multiple leadership behaviors such as instructional (Park & Ham, 2016), transformational (Wiyono, 2018), autonomy support (Ebersold et al., 2019), and shared-decision making (Brezicha et al., 2020). Goff et al. (2013), in their survey of 76 principals and over 2100 teachers, found evidence of “large disparities” between teacher and principal perceptions of leaders. Although principals may believe they are leading well, teachers’ perceptions of what actually happens can differ. Evidence suggests that the discrepancy between espoused theories and theories in use is much more easily detected in others than in oneself

(Argyris, 1976). Argyris (1976) identifies two conditions contributing to this discrepancy: the degree to which factors such as interpersonal and organizational factors produce valid information for the leader and the individual's receptivity to corrective feedback. Decreasing the discrepancy between principals' believed effect and their teachers' experiences may lead to better outcomes for all.

In a study by the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA, 2019), which surveyed almost 1000 school leaders, "non-flourishing teachers" was identified as one of the constraints experienced by leaders stopping them from taking appropriate action. In the same survey, school leaders identified teachers' mental health and wellness as an area that should be researched in support of school leadership. Other research highlights that a lack of administrator support for some teachers contributes to their ill-being (Deci et al., 2017; Haladian & Sayadpour, 2018; Van der Vyver et al., 2020). The results from this body of research suggest that although many principals are concerned about teacher well-being, they are either unaware of their effect on well-being or unclear about how to support teachers for well-being. What may become clear is a possible misalignment between what principals believe they are doing and what teachers experience.

Each member of an organization holds a perception of an effective leader. Souba and Souba (2018) refer to this as "a mental model we are largely unaware of that represents what "good" leadership looks like and what it means to be an effective leader" (p. 195). They reference the work of Eden and Leviatan (1975) around Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) and suggest that these models or one's ILT or leadership schema may affect one's perception of leaders. Souba and Souba opine that a leader is

perceived as effective or not based on the alignment of observed leadership behaviors with the follower's perceptual constructs of leadership. Key to bridging this potential perceptual gap is awareness on the part of the leader. A master leader is one that can lead with awareness of their leadership in relation to a particular context (Souba & Souba, 2018).

### ***Teacher Perceptions of Leadership Supportive of Well-Being***

A key component for principals' improvement is understanding what teachers perceive as effective leadership behavior. Fernet et al. (2012) examined questionnaires from 806 Canadian teachers looking at perceptions of resources and demands and their effect on burnout. Principal leadership behaviors were identified as a resource. They found that teacher perception of principal leadership behaviors influences burnout through changes in self-efficacy—perception of support from the principal results in an increase in efficacy. The researchers suggest this supportive leadership encompasses communication clarity around roles and expectations, assistance and support, and acknowledgement and recognition.

Teachers consistently attribute the role of leader support as positively impacting their professional well-being. Gu (2014), through interviews with 300 teachers in England, explored teacher perceptions of relational aspects of their work. Collegial and administrator relationships were found to provide “organizational and social conditions for teachers' collective and collaborative learning and development” (Gu, 2014, p. 513), which further influences their well-being and effectiveness. The teachers in this study highlighted positive leadership as a support for their resilience and sense of efficacy. Leadership behaviors this study emphasized are support,

recognition, trust and care, community building, and developing a collective sense of vision or purpose (Gu, 2014). This research affirms the critical role of principals in creating a positive school culture in support of teacher effectiveness and resilience.

Teacher perception of principal support influences teacher professional well-being. In a qualitative study involving 20 secondary teachers in Ontario, Canada, Lambersky (2016) affirmed the influence of positive leadership on teachers. Like Gu (2014), Lambersky (2016) identified five key positive leadership behaviors perceived by teachers. The themes from this study are communicating a vision, demonstrating professional respect, acknowledgement and encouragement, providing appropriate protection, and allowing teacher voice. When teachers perceive principals as supportive, there is a positive influence on teacher outcomes.

When leadership is studied through the eyes of teachers, support matters. Ainsley et al. (2019), in their case study of teachers in a high-needs school, confirm that teachers' perception of their leader as supportive has a "tremendous influence" (p. 11) on job satisfaction. Similar to previous research cited, Ainsley et al. (2019) found that teachers desire visible, supportive leaders who communicate a clear vision and expectations, value and recognize input, prioritize trusting and caring relationships, and foster professional growth in a positive, orderly, collaborative environment. Crippen (2012), in a review of leader-follower relationships, asserts the importance of relationships in school communities. Teacher-administrator relationships based on a shared vision and trust contribute to a positive climate that supports all its members. Teachers are clear about how principals can support them. If this is clear, it is essential to know what mechanisms are available to ensure principals are aware of these needs.



### *Principal Self-Perceptions of Effectiveness*

How principals conceptualize their role is a mystery. There is a dearth of studies that solely seek out the self-perception of school principals about their effectiveness. As Leithwood (2017) asserts, there is a need to go beyond what practices are effective to understand how principals put these practices into action. So, although it is clear what principals should do, the question is, do they know how? And do they know when their actions have the desired effect? There are barriers for principals that make it difficult to answer these questions.

As noted, the principal role is complex, and researchers agree that attending to all aspects of school leadership is impossible for one person (Leithwood, 2020; Marzano et al., 2005). Devos and Bouckennooghe (2009) explored principal perceptions about their role in a case study of 46 primary principals in a Flemish school setting. They assert that understanding how principals perceive their role is dependent on what the principals choose to prioritize. The findings of this study identified three school leader profiles: 1. people-minded, 2. administrative-minded, and 3. Moderate-minded. Each of the profiles resulted in different sets of prioritized leadership behaviors, and these behaviors were reflected in various levels of school climate as measured by teacher survey responses. Although each of the principals in the study believed they prioritized important tasks and practices, the results varied in effect. Teachers in the people-minded principal's school reported a strong and productive climate, whereas the administrative-minded principal's school climate was weak. Devos and Bouckennooghe (2009) acknowledge the limitations of their study but suggest that how principals think may determine what they do. There are implications

when principals prioritize certain aspects of the principal role on teachers and school conditions.

Despite all the frameworks and research on effective leadership, some principals fall short of the positive outcomes they seek. They may or may not know how their actions play into these outcomes. Pienaar and Nel (2017) wrote a theoretical article about leaders' self-schemas, receiving feedback, and self-awareness. In their paper, they assert that leader "self-awareness could be considered an antidote to derailment" (p. 2). Self-awareness is defined as how people see themselves and understand how others perceive them (Eurich, 2018). Proposed are mechanisms of self-reflection for internal self-awareness and feedback as a way of developing external awareness of how one is perceived by others.

### ***Self-Awareness***

Self-awareness is a critical skill for principals and understanding their leadership. Eurich (2018), an organizational psychologist, claims that leaders that know themselves and how others see them are more effective and have more enthusiastic employees. She says, "for most people, it's easier to choose self-delusion - the antithesis of self-awareness - over the cold hard truth" (p. 5). She cautions that often, those with low competence have high confidence. Through an extensive literature review and research, Eurich (2018) defines two categories of self-awareness, internal and external. Internal awareness is how one sees and understands themselves, their values, passions, beliefs, behaviors, and impact on others. In comparison, external self-awareness is how one is seen by others. Understanding the perspective of others helps principals to determine their impact better.

Seeing clearly how one's behavior impacts others is especially important for leaders. Eurich (2018) explains that there is little relationship between internal and external awareness. One can be high in self-awareness but low in external awareness or vice versa. Someone with low external self-awareness may have difficulty receiving feedback from others as the feedback may contradict how they see themselves. Eurich suggests that how we think others perceive us is quite often wrong, and she proposes seeking feedback as a way to align internal and external awareness. Perspective-taking is another skill advocated by Eurich. As she suggests, "self-awareness isn't one truth" (p. 38). Incorporating the tools of self-reflection, feedback-seeking, and perspective-taking may help principals better understand themselves as leaders and their impact on others.

For principals, contextual awareness is a critical component of leading for well-being. Cann et al.'s (2021) model of positive school leadership identifies relationship building, contextual competence, and social and emotional competence as principal skills that influence teacher well-being. Part of these competencies is how well a principal understands the experience and perceptions of their teachers. By understanding how teachers perceive their context, principals can better respond to their needs. Marzano et al. (2005) list situational awareness as one of the 21 responsibilities of principals. In this awareness, principals seek out information that builds their understanding of relationships, issues, or perceptions within the building. The more a principal understands the workings of the school and their teachers' experiences, the better equipped they are to lead (Marzano et al., 2005). Gathering the information to build this awareness can be challenging. Although principals are

encouraged to engage in regular self-reflection, opportunities for principals to receive feedback are limited.

**Leadership Schemas and Feedback.** Asking for honest feedback requires a considerable amount of vulnerability and risk. Receiving feedback is even more challenging for principals. This researcher has experienced this personally. When one intentionally tries to make a difference, asks for feedback, and is exposed to a perspective that reveals a blind spot - the leader can choose to respond in various ways. Pienaar and Nel (2017) suggest that one's leadership self-schema affects how the feedback is received and the subsequent response. In their literature review, Pienaar and Nel (2017) reference the work of the Arbinger Institute (2008), which identified four types of individual perceptions - Type one: "I am better than," Type two: "I deserve," Type three: "I am worse than," and Type four: "I must be seen as." The researchers hypothesized that how one sees themselves as a leader influences how one receives feedback. In a simple summary, type one and two individuals view themselves in higher regard than others. In contrast, type three and four individuals view themselves as less than others. It would seem that self-perception influences what leaders choose to do and how they can receive information about their leadership.

Understanding how one is seen through the eyes of others is a rarity for principals. Aligned with the Arbinger Institute profiles, and referenced in the same paper, is the work of Yammarino and Atwater (1993) and the Self-other Agreement model. This model looks at the phenomenon of self-perception and other-perception of leaders and the impact on individual and organizational outcomes relative to the

congruence of the ratings. Leaders who over or under-estimate their effectiveness compared to the ratings of their followers run the risk of adverse outcomes for both the organization and individuals. The evidence suggests that a perceptual incongruence may lead to unintended or negative outcomes. An important component of effective leadership and leader growth is establishing mechanisms of feedback to increase the perceptual congruence between principals and their teachers.

### ***Barriers to accurate self-perception***

Finding out how others see us can be painful, but not knowing can lead to adverse effects for leaders and their followers (Eurich, 2018). Avoiding such truths can lead to two scenarios, never understanding what behaviors are holding one back or getting the truth in a shocking way or too late. Feedback is of value because it can be a more objective perspective than self-perception. Neither self-perception nor the other's perception paints a complete picture. Leaders need to be able to gather multiple perspectives and feedback and be receptive to using the feedback for their development and growth.

For principals, gathering honest feedback is a challenge in itself due to the evaluative components of their role. Teachers may be reluctant to speak their truth to a person in power. And yet, when feedback is sought anonymously, there is no opportunity for follow-up or clarification. Another barrier is the reluctance to seek out truthful feedback. This hesitancy can be due to a perceived lack of need or want. Other barriers for principals are knowing what feedback to seek, how to gather it, and from whom. Despite these barriers, Eurich (2018) asserts that seeking the right feedback is likely the most “powerful booster of external self-awareness” (p. 169). Understanding

the value of feedback may help principals identify ways to overcome barriers to receiving honest feedback.

Principal growth is primarily guided by self-reflection and is often void of feedback from others. Unfortunately, those who likely needed feedback are the least likely to know they need it. Crippen (2012) reminds us of the importance of the leader-follower relationship. She asserts that a leader-follower dynamic based on a foundation of trust allows for honesty. Without this reciprocity of trust, the power dynamic becomes a barrier that stops principals from receiving the information they need to ensure their actions have the intended effect. Principals themselves and system structures can potentially interfere with effective feedback structures. Although these barriers exist, principal growth and impact depend on this external perspective.

### ***Self-Other Agreement Model***

Leaders with knowledge of effective practices can be ‘roadblocked’ to success because they lack insight into how their behavior impacts those they lead (Eurich, 2018). It is generally agreed that some individuals are not good evaluators of their performance compared to others’ perceptions or objective criteria (Fleenor, 2010). Yammarino and Atwater (1993) developed the Self-Other Agreement model (SOA) as a conceptual model of self-perception accuracy. SOA is commonly “defined as the degree of congruence between a leader’s self-ratings and the ratings of others, usually coworkers” (Fleenor et al., 2010, p. 2005). Yammarino and Atwater (1993) theorized that self-perception accuracy, in relation to the perception of others, enhances individual and organizational outcomes. According to researchers, neither self nor others’ ratings of leadership performance are entirely accurate, but the level of

congruence may indicate self-awareness on the part of the leader (Fleenor et al., 2010). Leaders should consider the perceptions of subordinates. Levels of perceptual agreement may have practical implications for leader development, effectiveness, and organizational outcomes (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992).

**Levels of Agreement.** Some studies suggest that leaders inflate their competence in relation to the perceptions of others (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Fleenor et al., 2010; Goff et al., 2013), resulting in negative effects on the organization and members of the organization. Atwater and Yammarino (1992) observed three tendencies for self-rating: over-estimators, under-estimators, and those in agreement. Over-estimators tend to see no need for changes in their behavior. Those in agreement with others tend to use information from their context and experience to adapt or modify their behavior, as do under-estimators (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992). Atwater and Yammarino suggest that not all leaders are aware of how others perceive them.

Atwater and Yammarino (1992) originally proposed three levels of congruence. This was later revised (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997) to include four, expanding the agreement category to an agreement with high performance and agreement with low performance. Other researchers around that time included performance qualifiers to the categories for over and under-estimators for a total of six categories. Fleenor et al. (2010) identified little benefit for the expanded categories in understanding how perceptual congruence impacts outcomes. There is evidence, though, as the expanded categories suggest, that perceptual congruence is not a linear relationship where high congruence consistently leads to high performance (Fleenor et al., 2010).

Different levels of perceptual agreement equate to varied individual and organizational outcomes. Fleenor et al. (2010) conducted an extensive review of SOA literature, beginning with a seminal work of Atwater and Yammarino in 1997. Fleenor et al. (2010) concluded that leaders who overestimate their performance received the lowest ratings from subordinates compared to in-agreement and under-estimators. Although some studies revealed variation in the over-estimator category, that seems to indicate that not all over-estimators are ineffective leaders. Other studies found no connection between levels of perceptual congruence and leader performance. These studies stressed the importance of other ratings rather than congruence when understanding leadership performance (Fleenor et al., 2010). Although there are varying conclusions about the relationship between congruence and leader performance, some of this variance can be attributed to the complexities of operationalizing and measuring SOA. Despite the variance, Fleenor et al. conclude that this complex association may be worth exploring and generally, “direct report ratings are the most predictive of leadership and other important organizational outcomes” (Fleenor et al., 2010, p. 1028).

**Factors Affecting Ratings.** Several factors impact both self-ratings and other-ratings. When rating oneself, it was found that males and those in higher positions of authority tend to over-rate their leadership. Also included in the over-rater category were less educated people. Another interesting finding in Fleenor et al.’s (2010) review is that congruency improved over time with increased feedback. The literature review confirmed the earlier discussion on leadership schemas and how they influence perception.



Using a schema is an easier cognitive process when rating, as it involves looking for confirmation of perceived leadership effectiveness rather than using deliberate observation and attentional processes. Leadership schemas were found to influence both self and other ratings. For followers rating leaders, Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT), what one believes to be effective leadership, can influence their ratings similarly (Pienaar & Nel, 2017; Souba & Souba, 2018). ILT plays a role where the rating reflects the leader's behavior and the rater's ILT, which describes an effective leader. The ILT can affect how information is processed and can fill in gaps with assumptions. Rater motivation can also influence the rating process. The more motivated a rater is due to factors such as trust, commitment, and ease of the rating process, the more deliberate and controlled their rating process will be. Another factor is the interactions between the two people. Leader-member exchange Theory outlines different leader-member dyads, from single dyads to how the dyads interact within a group and the nature of the dyads (Cogliser et al., 2009). This theory describes relationships as being in-group, close to the leader, or out-group, more distanced. In-group relationships resulted in more positive ratings. When analyzing data for perceptual congruences, these factors may account for some discrepancies.

**Potential Implications.** Perceptual congruence may have implications for leader performance. A leader can rate themselves as low-performing and in-agreement with the other ratings indicating poor performance. This may indicate an unwillingness or inability to improve performance but leaves the possibility for future change. An over estimator is unlikely to believe they need to change. Leaders who have incongruent ratings potentially lack awareness of their skills and effectiveness.

In-agreement is preferred as it would suggest a level of self-awareness of at least an understanding of external awareness (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997).

More recent studies provide additional evidence of a connection between perceptual gaps, leader performance and follower and organizational outcomes (i.e., Brezicha et al., 2020; Devos et al., 2013). Brezicha et al. (2020) used data from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 to explore how principals and teachers perceive teacher involvement in school-level decision-making. The researchers then looked for associations between the perceptual gap, teacher collaboration, and job satisfaction. Their first finding was a "large and consistent gap in teachers' and principals' perceptions of how involved teachers were in decision-making" (Brezicha et al., 2020, p. 443). Their second finding was a statistically significant negative relationship between the perceptual gap and teachers' job satisfaction in 20 of the 29 countries included in the study. They concluded that principals might lack understanding of certain school conditions due to the large gap.

Similarly, Devos et al. (2013) used three independent Flemish studies on school policy to look at the categories of perceptual congruence in relation to leadership behavior, school culture, and change. They determined that principals who overestimate the leadership behavior had school indicators (teacher attitudes and school culture variables) at lower levels than under-estimating principals. Interestingly, this research found no significant differences between under-estimators and in-agreement/good or in-agreement/poor principals. The researchers theorize how leaders receive, and process feedback could play a role in the relationship to

perceptual congruence. Devos et al. encourage further investigation of the phenomenon.

### **Summary**

Principals have a critical role in promoting teacher well-being, group morale, and organizational well-being. Positive psychology promotes well-being (Seligman, 2011), and Positive Organizational Scholarship extends the focus of well-being to how organizational structures support individual and collective well-being (Dutton & Glynn, 2008). When principals lead from a positive stance, they build on strengths to achieve the goal of flourishing (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018, Dutton & Glynn, 2008). Principals may benefit by gaining clarity on how to lead from a positive stance to affect these constructs and understand the impact of their actions.

Within a positive framework, SDT outlines the importance of workplaces that satisfy the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in support of well-being and effectiveness. Building relationships, developing capacity, and engaging teachers in a shared process are vital strategies for effective principals (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood, 2017; Marzano et al., 2005). These behaviours were identified by all teachers as supportive leadership strategies that contribute to their well-being (Collie et al., 2012; Fernet et al., 2012). When teachers are valued and appreciated for their skills and accomplishments, they report higher levels of well-being. Principals who lead organizations that consider SDT contribute to healthy school cultures with cohesive, capable, and empowered teams (Deci et al., 2017).

The unwellness of teachers and schools is given considerable attention in current political and global pandemic contexts. Concern for teacher stress, burnout,

and unfavourable organizational conditions is high. There is an urgency to incorporate strategies to mitigate stress—Cherkowski and Walker (2018) advocate for a shift to well-being promotion rather than stress mitigation. Principals play a key role in the promotion of well-being. A key strategy is to take a supportive stance that begins with a strength-based approach built on a foundation of trust (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Kutsyuruba, 2016). Principals who build relationships with staff based on personal and professional trust encourage a culture of well-being. When teachers have a voice and sufficient agency, they are more equipped to flourish (Cann et al., 2020; Cherkowski & Walker, 2018).

Although strategies to promote well-being may be clear, not all principals successfully foster organizational well-being. Argyris (1976) identifies this as a discrepancy between espoused theories of action, what one says they do, and theories-in-use, what one actually does. Yammarino and Atwater (1993) conceptualized the SOA model, which outlines levels of agreement between self-perception ratings and the perceptual ratings from others. They posit that perceptual incongruence can negatively affect individuals and organizations. Discrepancies between our perception and that of others are challenging for leaders to recognize in themselves (Argyris, 1976; Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Eurich, 2018). Leaders who develop external awareness, how others see them, may have better alignment with their leadership intent and impact on those they lead (Eurich, 2018). This study explores levels of perceptual congruence between principals and teachers about principal influence on organizational well-being and how the levels of congruence relate to organizational outcomes.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The following chapter details the research design for this explanatory sequential mixed method study which looked at how principals and their teachers perceive leadership influence on organizational well-being. At the time of this study, schools were in their third year of operation within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic context adds complexity to the role of the principal in leading organizations, people, and instruction. Throughout the pandemic, surveys conducted in Alberta provided evidence of adverse effects on individual well-being (ATA, 2020, 2021). The timing of this study provides a unique point in history to explore the perceptions of leadership's effect on well-being outcomes in schools. The chapter describes the rationale for the methodology, the setting of the study, how participants were identified and recruited, and the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Ethical considerations and research standards are also discussed.

#### **Research Questions**

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) explored how principals and teachers in urban schools with small administrative teams of three or fewer, perceived principal influence on organizational well-being. Then, the study examined the relationship between principal's and teachers' perceptual congruence and organizational well-being outcomes of school culture and teacher professional well-being, across roles, for all participants and within school groups. Finally, in schools characterized by principal-teacher perceptual congruence and

reported positive organizational well-being, the study sought to understand how principals describe their leadership effect.

Three main questions will guide this study:

- To what extent are principals' and teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being congruent across roles?
- To what extent are principals' and teachers' perceptions regarding leadership practices they have identified as influencing organizational well-being?
- For school-based principal-teacher groups, what relationship, if any, exists between levels of perceptual congruence about principal practices and reported levels of organizational well-being?
- In schools with high perceptual congruence and positive organizational outcomes, how do principals understand their actions in promoting organizational well-being?

### **Pragmatic Paradigm**

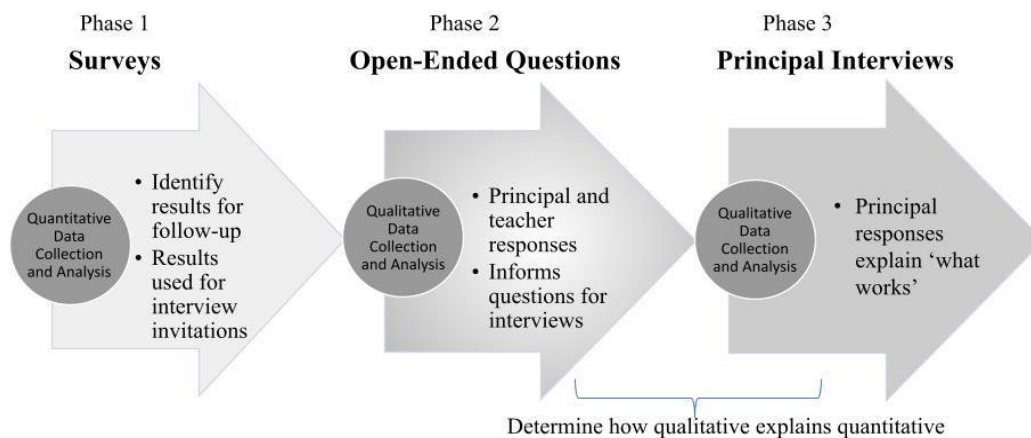
I have framed this study in the paradigm of pragmatism, which focuses on “the outcomes of the research – the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 26). In this paradigm, the focus is on the problem being studied to look for ‘what works.’ Within this worldview, the research methods chosen are designed to understand the problem and answer the questions posed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth, pragmatists “look to many approaches to collecting and analyzing data” (p. 27), which is critical in this study, which seeks multiple perspectives on one problem. The focus of this study is to draw on the

perspectives of teachers and principals to understand better ‘what works’ with principal leadership to support organizational well-being outcomes. The goal of this research is to provide insight into effective practices for nurturing organizational well-being for educational leaders and those who help build the capacity of those leaders.

### **Rationale for Methodology**

An explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was chosen for this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I chose to use an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, collecting and analyzing quantitative data followed by qualitative data “because the intent of the design is to follow up the quantitative results and explore the results in more depth” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 222). The follow-up portion is considered a strength of the design and is used to explain or determine the interaction between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study organized data collection into three targeted phases (Figure 6). Phase One involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data. Quantitative data included teacher and principal survey responses. Phase one data were gathered from three surveys chosen to explore organizational well-being outcomes of school culture and teacher well-being and self-ratings and teacher ratings of authentic leadership. As mentioned, the strength of this research design is the follow-up of the qualitative to explain quantitative data. Therefore, the data from phase one were analyzed to investigate perceptions of organizational well-being and leadership influence, and the analysis was used for the purposeful selection of candidates for principal interviews.

**Figure 5***Three-Phase Explanatory Sequential Design*

*Note.* Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 218

Phase two involved qualitative data from open-ended questions. These data were collected concurrently with the survey data and analyzed in Phase two. These qualitative findings from open-ended survey responses were compared to the quantitative data analysis results. Together, these data shaped the principal interviews in Phase three. The qualitative data gathered in Phase two and Phase three were analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of the Phase one quantitative survey data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Phase three was a continuation of qualitative data collection that included interviews with principals. Data from the quantitative Phase One and the qualitative Phase two were used to identify principals of schools with positive organizational well-being outcomes and high congruence of positive perception of principal leadership. These principals participated in one-on-one interviews to further



understand how they describe their leadership influence. In line with Positive Psychology and Positive Organizational Scholarship, the interviews were designed in the hopes of uncovering “what works” from a strength-based perspective.

This research was designed to help understand broad patterns of what is happening in schools, different perceptions of what is happening, and individual perceptions and experiences. Grissom et al. (2021) opine large benefits from studies which employ multiple data sources to provide a more “comprehensive and nuanced view of principals’ roles” (p. 87). This mixed-method data collection design included both principal and teacher perceptions to provide multiple data sources, as advocated by Grissom et al. (2021), to capture a more thorough understanding of what principals do and how they do it to achieve positive effects.

### **Setting**

The study took place in two publicly-funded school divisions located within the same city in Alberta, Canada. Both school divisions were invited to participate in the study. The first division is secular, commonly called the “Public” system. The second division is denoted by provincial legislation as the “Catholic” system. A resident student is identified by provincial legislation as having a right to access public education within either division. Both divisions are represented geographically with schools throughout the city; they serve similar demographics of students. The schools within the two systems are similar, but the structures guiding each division at the systems level have differences.

### ***Public School Division***

The first division in the study is known as the “Public” system. This school division includes over 200 schools serving approximately 110,000 students from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 and employs over 9,000 staff. The schools serve a culturally diverse population. The division is known as a ‘division of choice,’ offering various specialized and alternative programs to students.

Principals serve the division as a whole and, as such, can be designated to any school. Principals within the division have high levels of autonomy within a site-based decision-making model. Schools are organized in catchment groupings of 10 to 30 schools within the division, generally based on geography. Principals within catchments collaborate to set goals and plan professional learning for themselves, the catchment, and their schools.

This public division offers a variety of leadership modules and leadership development programs that principals can access to further their professional growth. Before receiving a continuous designation, principals new to the role receive survey feedback information about their leadership from their school community at the end of their second year. Once a principal is assigned under the continuous designation, however, there are few system mechanisms for principals to receive similar feedback. Annually, the divisions conduct a survey for parents, students, and teachers that includes one or two questions about leadership. Individual principals can seek out additional feedback, but there is no way to measure the prevalence of this practice.

### ***Catholic School Division***

The second division in this study, operating parallel to the public division in the same urban setting, is known as the “Catholic” system. This school division includes over 100 schools enrolling close to 45,000 students to serve primarily Catholic families from a culturally diverse population.

Like the public division, principals in the Catholic system serve their division and can be placed within any school. The path to the principalship is a bit different than in the public division. In this division, there are six training programs offered for those seeking leadership. To apply for a principal position within the division, applicants must have a minimum of one year towards a Master’s degree and have completed the division’s principal training program. If candidates are successful after a panel review and interviews, they are placed into a ‘pool’ of potential principal candidates. Principals, new or experienced, are placed at open schools based on their leadership profiles. APs are similarly placed into open positions. Unique to this division, every school has an AP. This is different from the public division, where the principal decides on the administrative makeup of their school based on budget decisions. In both divisions, principals have autonomy to make decisions in their schools.

### ***Professional Organization***

Teachers and principals in this division are part of a provincial professional association. The professional association has many roles, some guiding the certification and professional growth requirements of teachers and principals. Principals must complete a leadership certification process but are also considered a

part of the provincial teachers' association and bound by the same expectations. All members must complete an annual self-directed professional growth plan. Although members are encouraged to discuss their growth plans with superiors, the process is primarily self-reflective and self-evaluative. For new principals, most provincial school divisions have a process of evaluation to receive a permanent designation that covers the span of one or two years. Some include self-evaluation and other evaluations (families and staff) in this process. It is natural for teachers to receive feedback from principals, but outside of the process for new principal designations, principals rarely receive feedback from either their superiors or teachers and other faculty. Devos et al. (2013) suggest that self-reported data on leadership is not a reliable measure of effectiveness. They suggest that both self and other perception data are necessary for principal effectiveness (Devos et al., 2013).

### **Participants**

To understand the self-reported principal effect on organizational well-being compared to teacher perceptions of leadership impact, principals and teachers were included in the study. Participants for the study were chosen through multiple purposive sampling stages. The first stage of sampling was *typical case* sampling, where demographical data of schools was used to identify potential principal participants (Patton, 2002). Eligible principals ( $N = 146$ ) for this study had one or more years in their current school and worked with a small administrative team of no more than two additional formal school leaders. This *criterion* sampling was critical to ensure that perception data was based on evidence and relationships. The principals needed to have spent time working in their schools to allow them to self-report on

organizational well-being and their leadership impact. A small leadership team was critical for this study because teachers were asked to share perceptions of principal leadership impact. To gather reasonable perceptions, the teachers needed opportunities to experience leadership directly from their principal. Rater accuracy increases when the rater has more opportunity to observe the ratee and with greater familiarity between the two (Fleenor et al., 2010). For this reason, schools with a large administration team beyond the principal and two additional administrative personnel were excluded from the study.

Principals of schools meeting the criteria of a small administrative team were contacted initially by division-level personnel confirming approval of the research project. Schools that met these criteria are outlined in Table 1. In total, 146 schools were approved and invited to participate in this study.

**Table 1**

*Schools Invited to Participate*

Divisions	<i>N</i>	K - 6	K - 9	7 - 9	10 - 12	Specialized
Public	132	89	21	15	2	5
Catholic	14	11	1	1	0	1

*Note.* It was later noted that one approved school did not meet the criteria of a small admin team.

Principals of the approved schools were contacted by the researcher via email with an invitation to participate. Of the 132 principals approved for the study in the public division, 50 indicated an interest in participating, and 44 completed the full survey. In the Catholic division, 14 schools were approved for the study, and three principals completed a full survey. Eight principals started but did not complete the

survey. Table 2 shows the principals included in the study by school type and division. The principal response rate was 33% of the total eligible schools.

**Table 2**

*Principal Participants*

Divisions	<i>N</i>	K - 6	K - 9	7 - 9	10 - 12	Specialized
Public	44	36	3	4	1	1
Catholic	3	2	0	1	0	0

*Note.* No teacher responses from 8 - K-6 schools, 3 - 7-9 schools, and 1 - K-9 school

Further purposive sampling was used to identify teacher participants who had taught in their current school for at least one year. Teachers within the chosen schools were invited to respond to surveys about school culture, teacher well-being and principal leadership behavior prevalence and impact. As with principals, teachers included in the survey worked in the school, with this principal, for one or more years ( $N = 600 - 650$ ). In the literature on self-other agreement analysis (Fleenor et al., 2010), it is suggested that six ‘other’ responses are a reasonable sample for congruence analysis. In this study, cases for congruence analysis were bound to those schools with six teacher responses or a minimum of 4 responses representing at least 25% of teachers who met the participation criteria.

Once principals indicated a willingness to participate, they were asked to invite their teachers to participate or provide permission for me to invite teachers directly via email. In both school divisions, once a research project is approved at the division level, the decision to permit research in individual schools rests with the principal. As a result, there was a variation in response patterns. Some principals chose to complete the survey without sending it to their teachers. Others forwarded the teacher invitation

directly themselves, and some granted me permission to email teachers directly. Four principals indicated they were uncomfortable sending the survey to their teachers but completed the principal version of the survey. Eight additional schools had no teacher responses. It is unclear whether or not teachers in these eight schools were provided an opportunity to complete the survey.

Out of 48 participating schools, 37 schools had both teacher and principal responses. One school had teacher responses but no corresponding principal response. Upon analysis, one school did not meet the criteria of a small administrative team. This school was, therefore, included in the analysis of 'all teachers' and 'all principals' but not in the congruence analysis. In total, 147 teachers from the targeted demographic, based on self-reported data, completed all parts of the survey. Teachers new to the school were excluded from completing the survey based on the criteria of a minimum of one year working with their principals, as were teachers in their first year of teaching. Principals reported the total number of teachers who were not new to their school. Response rate percentages were based on these numbers. There was an overall average response rate of 31% in schools where teachers were potentially invited to participate. Based on the participation criteria of at least one year at the school, the response rate for teachers at individual schools ranged from 6% to 63%. Seventeen schools met the criteria of six or a minimum of 4 teacher responses representing 25% or more of eligible teachers ( $n = 246$ ). These schools were used for analyzing congruency between teacher and principal responses. The teacher response rate at these 17 schools ranged from 22% to 63% of eligible teachers, with an average teacher response rate at those schools of 41%.

The selection of principals ( $N = 7$ ) for the interviews was based on purposive *intensity* sampling (Patton, 2002) based on data analysis from the surveys. These data were analyzed by looking for two criteria for this invitation. First, the principals were from a school where the principal and teachers reported a positive perception of organizational well-being based on survey data measuring school culture and teacher well-being outcomes. Second, there was a high positive perceptual congruence of leadership impact on organizational well-being. After the initial survey analysis, seven principals whose schools met these criteria were invited and agreed to participate in a semi-structured qualitative interview.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I am a principal in my 32nd year in the division where this study was conducted. I served as a teacher for 16 years in three different schools within the same division. I was an assistant principal for three years. I am currently in my 12<sup>th</sup> year as principal at the second school I have served in this role. All of my professional experiences were in elementary schools, including my current role as principal. As a result of these experiences and my continued role, I have personal and professional relationships with many of the principals and some teacher participants of the study. Of critical importance to the study's design is ensuring the participants' confidentiality. I engaged a research assistant to ensure confidentiality. The surveys asked participants to identify their school, but it was explained that a research assistant would assign a random identifier to each school. This identifier allowed principal and teacher data matching but kept the school names confidential.



I have a deep understanding of the systemic workings of the division and understand the expectations, standards, and policies relating to how principals fulfill their obligations, due to my long-term experience within the predominant division in this study and in my role as a principal. The mixed-methods approach to this research provided both an etic and an emic perspective on leadership and the experiences of the teachers and the principals. The quantitative data provided an etic or an outsider perspective, whereas the qualitative data provided an emic or insider perspective through the voice of the participants. As a researcher, I am a member of the organization and hold the same role as the participants. This provides me with an insider perspective. This is both an asset to the study and a caution. I believe this was more of an asset in how I approached the interviews with principals, knowing the complexity of the role and the context globally and within the division and schools. The caution was that I needed to consciously bracket my experiences and assumptions to ensure I looked at the data from a fresh objective perspective (Creswell & Roth, 2018) because this work holds deep personal meaning to me.

As a principal, I intentionally focus on individual and organizational well-being in my practice. I also seek feedback about my effectiveness from individuals and anonymously from the whole faculty. According to Mills and Gay (2019), qualitative data can be interpreted in more than one way due to “researcher biases, personal interests, style, and interpretive focus” (p. 570). My experience and personal perspective create bias about principal behaviors that influence well-being and the critical nature of regular feedback. In addition to systematic analytic procedures, I engaged in a reflective journal at every data analysis stage. This allowed me to reflect

on my positionality, thoughts and emotions concerning the data. These steps established transparency throughout the process and enabled me to acknowledge my schemas about principal effectiveness to support the credibility and confirmability of the analysis and findings.

### **Data Collection**

Through self-reported data, this study examines the phenomenon of principal leadership for organizational and teacher well-being from both teachers' and principals' perspectives. This study includes data collected from surveys, open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews. The timeline for the study is shown in Appendix A.

Regular use of analytic memos throughout each phase of data analysis was critical due to the emic perspective of the researcher and the need for bracketing to ensure personal bias was acknowledged to allow for an objective view of the data.

### ***Surveys***

Surveys were used to gather large-scale data about organizational well-being and leadership. The survey and three open-ended questions collected data from both teachers and principals. The survey includes both rating scale items and open-ended items. The purpose of the survey data was to provide a large-scale understanding of organizational well-being and perception of leader's behavior prevalence and effectiveness. The survey includes data on both organizational well-being factors and leadership behaviors. These data were analyzed separately. By including qualitative data through open-ended written response questions, teachers and principals had the opportunity to describe their experiences and perspectives. The qualitative questions

expanded the depth of the data beyond the constructs of the surveys and through the participants' experiences. Appendix B includes the information provided to survey participants to gain informed consent.

**Demographic Data.** To understand participants' perceptions, a variety of demographic data was gathered. The demographic data questions included gender identity, education level, years of experience, and years at their current school. An additional question for principals included years of teaching experience before being a principal.

**Survey Instruments.** Information was gathered from both principals and teachers using three surveys: The Teacher Well-being Scale (TWBS) (Collie, 2015), School Culture Triage Survey (SCTS) (Wagner, 2006) and the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Avolio et al., 2007). Permission to administer the TWBS and the ALQ was received from the researchers who developed them. The SCTS is publicly available and permission was not required. As I reviewed the literature on organizational well-being it became clear that certain factors at the individual, group and system levels contribute to the organization's overall health. These three surveys were chosen to gather personal perspectives on teachers' well-being experiences within the organization. The individual experience of these factors becomes a foundation for the perspective of organizational well-being. This section provides descriptions of the surveys used in this study.

***The Teacher Well-being Scale.*** The Teacher Well-being Scale (TWBS; Collie et al., 2015) was used to identify perceptions of teacher well-being. Teachers completed this survey in phase one of the study. The TWBS consists of 16 items

relating to teachers' work experiences. The TWBS measures three components of teacher well-being; workload well-being (e.g., *Work I complete outside of school hours for teaching*), organizational well-being (e.g., *Support offered by school leadership*), and student interaction well-being (e.g., *Relations with students in my class*) (Collie et al., 2015). Teachers respond by rating their well-being by answering: *Currently, how do the following aspects of being a teacher affect your well-being as a teacher?* on a Likert scale of 1 (negatively) to 7 (positively). The scale was tested on Canadian teachers (Collie et al., 2015) and reliability analysis resulted in Cronbach alpha coefficients for the three subscales and the entire instrument that ranged from .82 - .89.

***School Culture Triage Survey.*** Both principals and teachers were asked to complete The School Culture Triage Survey (SCTS) (Wagner, 2006). This survey was developed and refined by Phillips in 1996. It has been refined and reviewed by Phillips and Wagner (2003) and Wagner and Masden-Copas (2002). According to Wagner (2006), the survey has been “used across the United States and Canada to quickly and accurately determine the present state of any school’s culture.” (p. 42). Wagner (2006) cites multiple studies (i.e., Cunningham, 2003; Melton-Shutt, 2002; Phillips, 1996) where the use of the SCTC was found to correlate school culture with student achievement, staff member satisfaction, parent engagement, and community support. The survey consists of 17 items measuring the presence of three “culture behaviors” of professional collaboration (e.g., *Teachers and staff discuss instructional strategies and curriculum issues*), affiliative and collegial relationships (e.g., *Teachers and staff tell stories of celebrations that support the school’s values*), and efficacy or self-

determination (e.g., *The school staff is empowered to make instructional decisions rather than waiting for supervisors to tell them what to do*) (Wagner, 2006). Shutt (2004) performed reliability analysis on the subscales of the SCTS and the entire instrument resulting in Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from .79 - .94.

***Authentic Leadership Questionnaire.*** The ALQ (Avolio et al., 2007) includes two scale versions, self and other rater. This is a 16-item questionnaire that seeks to measure four factors of Authentic Leadership: transparency, moral/ethical, balanced processing, and self-awareness. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale of 0 – Not at all to 4 – Frequently, if not always. Sample items include:

As a leader I...

Say exactly what I mean

Demonstrate beliefs that are consistent with actions

Solicit views that challenge my deeply held positions

Seek feedback to improve interactions with others

My leader...

Says exactly what he or she means

Demonstrates beliefs that are consistent with actions

Solicits views that challenge his or her deeply held positions

Seeks feedback to improve interactions with others

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The ALQ includes two versions to allow for both principal and teacher ratings. In a study to demonstrate the utility of a four-factor Authentic Leadership construct, (Walumba et al., 2008) the Cronbach's alpha for each of the measures, self-awareness,

relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing were at acceptable levels ranging from .76 to .92. A second study confirmed internal consistency reliability for each measure ranging from .70 to .73.

### ***Open-Ended Survey Questions***

Open-ended questions were included with the initial surveys to capture written qualitative data from all participants. Three open-ended questions elicited written responses to enhance the understanding of teachers' and principals' perceptions and experiences. The questions asked about strengths and issues related to organizational well-being, leadership behavior and practices that positively influence organizational well-being, and a final question about alignment between principals' and teachers' perceptions (Appendix D: Open-Ended Survey Questions). To pilot these items, teachers and principals who were not eligible to participate were asked to respond to the questions and review them for clarity. Additionally, the questions were reviewed by nine doctoral candidates in a leadership-focused program. This process confirmed that the questions were formed to elicit relevant responses.

### ***Administering the Survey***

Administration of the survey took place over the course of two months. The initial phase of survey distribution occurred with an invitation to approved principals in both school divisions through email. In this first email, I sent a brief description of my study and included a reply survey link to determine interest. The email included links to the full information about the study and a direct link to the survey. When principals indicated an interest in participating, I sent them an email designed for their teachers. This email could be forwarded by the principal, or with their permission, I

would send it to the teachers directly. One week later, another email was sent to principals as a gentle reminder. In this email, I provided an incentive for principals and their teachers. All surveys completed by principals were entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card. For schools with six or more teacher responses, the school was entered in a drawing for coffee and donuts. One week later, another email was sent to principals indicating the surveys were closing soon and asking them for one last consideration.

This initial data collection phase resulted in 47 completed principal surveys and 112 completed teacher surveys. A number of teachers new to their school began the survey but their responses were excluded based on this criterion. Initially, the window for data collection was to end after this first phase. Unfortunately, the timing of the survey administration was poor, especially for teachers, due to the ending of the first term and the demands of progress report writing.

I chose to reopen the survey to teachers after the Winter break. At this time, I sent an email to the principals who had completed a survey. I asked if I could send the teacher survey directly to their teachers. Twenty-one principals provided permission to reach out to their teachers directly. Four principals said they would forward the email themselves. The survey remained open for a week, during which I sent a reminder email. This garnered 35 additional completed teacher surveys. In total, 47 principal surveys and 147 teacher surveys were completed and included in the study.

### ***Semi-structured Qualitative Interviews***

Following the initial data analysis of the surveys and open-ended questions, select principals were invited to participate in a semi-structured one-on-one interview.

Principals were chosen based on two criteria: 1) positive organizational well-being and positive leadership reflected in both teacher and principal survey results, and 2) high levels of perceptual congruence between principals and teachers of organizational well-being and leadership effect. All principals who participated in the study indicated they would be willing to be interviewed. Based on the initial analysis of the survey data, seven principals were identified as meeting the two criteria. All agreed to the interviews. These interviews aimed to understand how these principals lead for well-being and how they gather information to understand their effect. Table 3 describes the principals that were chosen for the final interviews.

**Table 3**

*Principal Interview Demographics*

Pseudonym	Principal Experience	Level of School	School Population	Number of Schools as Principal	Leadership Team
Jane	12	K - 6	510	3	Principal + 2
Myka	6	K - 6	150	1	Principal
Susan	15	K - 6	220	2	Principal + 1
Leigh	3	7 - 9	210	1	Principal + 2
Rebecca	4	K - 6	340	1	Principal + 1
Louise	4	K - 6	150	1	Principal
Grace	2	K - 6	140	1	Principal

A semi-structured interview protocol was followed for the principal interviews. Specific interview questions emerged from the analysis of the quantitative data and the open-ended survey responses. (Appendix C: Interview Protocol). Still, the interviews were not strictly scripted, with opportunities to adapt questions in response to the



principal being interviewed (Yin, 2016). Questions were developed to address the following domains: organizational well-being, effective leadership, and understanding one's impact and were asked in order of the RQs. Information relative to the domains in the surveys and results from the coding process guided the development of the interview questions. Also considered were the levels of congruence between principal and teacher responses about levels of organizational well-being and effective leadership. The analysis of the data shaped the interview guiding questions based on patterns or issues that arose from the data.

According to Yin (2016), qualitative interviews allow for a more conversational approach that encourages participants to use their language in order “to depict a complex social world from a participant’s perspective” (p. 143). All interviews occurred virtually at a time that was convenient for each principal. Rapport was established easily with the participants despite the virtual format, as I work in the same school division as six. For the principal I had not met, I took a few minutes to establish rapport at the beginning. Interviews were recorded and transcribed electronically using Google-meet and backed up with Otter.ai, a web-based program. In addition to the transcripts, I took notes during the interview of points that stood out as important. These notes were later compared to the precoded transcripts.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed in three phases aligned with the survey design. Survey data were analyzed in Phase One. Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed first to understand levels of organizational well-being and the prevalence of leadership practices as perceived by principals and teachers and to determine levels of perceptual

congruence. Phase Two included data from the open-ended survey questions. Once the initial quantitative analysis was complete, the qualitative data from the open-ended questions were coded to identify additional leader behaviors that influence organizational well-being and further understand participant experiences. These data were compared to identify potential areas for further exploration in the principal interviews.

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative survey data informed the semi-structured interview protocol and questions posed to principals. Phase Three included principal interviews. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were deductively coded and themed before the final version of the interview questions was determined. Based on the survey and open-ended responses data analysis, select principals were interviewed to further explore leadership influence on organizational well-being. A sample of a possible interview protocol is included in Appendix C. Finally, principal interview results were analyzed.

Critical to this study was the exploration of congruence between principal and teacher perceptions. In Phase One, quantitative analysis, congruence was determined primarily through differential statistics such as independent *t*-tests and ANOVAs. In Phases Two and Three, I explored congruence in two ways. First, I compared the frequency of code application, or mention, counts across roles. Frequency of mention counts were determined through the iterative process of coding in the first and second cycle coding in Phases Two and Three. The final counts were made after the second cycle of coding analysis. A mention for code application varied between single words (i.e., collaboration) to phrases (i.e., we collaborate to support students). I then

compared frequency counts to expected counts based on the number of teachers and principal responses. For example, if there were 70 teacher responses and 30 principal responses, the expected frequency of mention counts would be 70% teachers and 30% principals, indicating congruence. These results are displayed in tables in Chapter Four. The second way of looking at congruence was by comparing how principal and teacher responses described the dimensions of each theme. These results are described in themes in Chapter Four.

### ***Phase One: Surveys***

To capture collective and individual aspects of organizational well-being, two surveys were chosen to answer RQ1. The SCTS measures aspects of school culture of collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy (Wagner, 2006). The survey approaches these constructs from a group perspective. The TWBS (Collie et al., 2015) looks at aspects of teacher professional well-being within three subsets of workload, organizational well-being, and student interaction. To answer RQ1, both surveys were analyzed with Excel and SPSS software using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and correlations, to understand relationships between teachers' and principals' self-reported levels of school culture and teachers' self-reported professional well-being. Data were disaggregated by role, gender, years of experience, and years at the school. Data were not disaggregated by school type as the majority of respondents were from elementary schools, and the sample sizes within the other school organizations were small. The following analyses were conducted: descriptive and frequency statistics, correlation coefficients and differential comparisons. Descriptive statistics were used to understand the components of the surveys within and across roles and within and

among schools. Information from the teacher surveys was analyzed to identify correlations between items on the Teacher Well-being Scale (TWBS) (Collie et al., 2015), the School Culture Triage Survey (SCTS) (Wagner, 2006), and the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Avolio et al., 2007) items within and across roles for all participants.

To understand perceptions of principal leadership, teachers and principals responded to the ALQ (Avolio et al., 2007) to address RQ2. I first looked at frequency and descriptive statistics of the ALQ responses using Excel and SPSS software. Responses were also analyzed to determine the frequency of responses to gather the prevalence of positive responses. Then, I analyzed information from the teacher and principal responses to identify correlations between the (TWBS) (Collie et al., 2015), SCTS (Wagner, 2006) and the ALQ by calculating correlation coefficients. Responses were analyzed to identify correlations between teacher and principal perceptions across roles, across schools, and within school units. All completed surveys ( $N = 194$ ) were included in quantitative analysis for RQ1 and RQ2 to determine general results based on what was reported by ‘all teachers’ and ‘all principals.’ Further analysis included demographic data correlations across and within schools to look for patterns and trends.

To address RQ3, which explores perceptual congruence between principals and teachers, I used all three surveys. First, I ran differential statistics such as independent *t*-tests and ANOVAs to determine differences between principal and teacher responses on the ALQ and the SCTS for all participants. Then, I analyzed the data for the 17 schools identified as meeting the criteria for congruence analysis. I first

ran descriptive statistics for each school, comparing principal responses to the mean score for teacher responses. Then, I used Pearson correlation coefficients between principal and teacher scores for the ALQ and between the ALQ and the two other surveys.

### ***Phase Two: Open-ended Questions***

Qualitative data coding and analysis occurred in three stages: precoding, first cycle coding, and second cycle coding, and included ongoing analytical memos and final summary statements (Saldaña, 2016). Data from the open-ended responses were analyzed using inductive and deductive methods through a naturalistic approach (Patton, 2002) by going back and forth between inductive and deductive analysis. Throughout the coding process, emerging themes and patterns were identified for each question, within school data, within and between participant groups (teachers and principals), and across schools and school divisions. I initially chose to code qualitative data from teacher and principal written responses together in first-cycle coding before analyzing for themes.

As data from open-ended questions were being organized and formatted, precoding occurred through highlighting or bolding passages or quotes that stood out as worthy of further attention (Saldaña, 2016). Analytical memos during this phase included jot notes of words, phrases or potential coding categories to be referenced in further cycles.

**First Cycle Coding.** First cycle coding involved multiple methods to capture individual perspectives and trends across participants. All open-ended written responses were uploaded to Dedoose, a coding software program. The responses were

first organized by RQ. Demographic data, including role, gender, years of experience, and years at school, were uploaded within the data set. During this first coding phase, I chose to keep myself open to different coding methods by taking what Saldaña (2016) calls a stance of pragmatic eclecticism. Initially, I used primarily In Vivo Coding (Saldaña, 2016) to ensure the analysis is rooted in the voice and perspective of the participants (Saldaña, 2016). This decision was made before the coding cycle began. As I began coding, I used a more eclectic approach, including Descriptive and Process codes. As the descriptive and process codes were applied, I began to use these codes repeatedly to “deliberately search for commonalities throughout the data and employ an evolving repertoire of established codes” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 79) This was an important strategy as there were almost 400 responses collected from the three open-ended written questions. First cycle coding included a series of coding and recoding.

Although inductive coding was critical to capture the participants’ perspectives, deductive categories were later used to help make sense of the data. Deductive codes based on survey factors, Well-being theoretical frameworks, and the literature review helped guide the initial coding. Initial inductive codes were organized using, but not limited to, the following keywords and categories: autonomy, competence, relatedness, communication, purpose/meaning, support, culture/climate, and achievement. Using the keywords helped me to synthesize the lengthy initial code list into categories. I used an iterative process, as recommended by Saldaña, to take the “full set of codes, which is then reorganized into a selected list of categories, and then condensed further into the study’s central themes or concepts” (p. 218).

**Second Cycle Coding.** Second cycle coding extended the recoding process through primarily Pattern coding (Saldaña, 2016). At this stage, Dedoose software was used to sort the inductive initial codes into identified patterns and categories. Dedoose was also used to help understand the frequency of codes to begin prioritizing responses. Theming of the data occurred as a part of the second cycle coding to bring further meaning to the coded data. Pattern Coding was used to identify emerging themes between and within data sets (contexts and participants). This study aimed to understand multiple perceptions of principal leadership and the levels of congruence between those perceptions; therefore, it was important to look for patterns of congruence or incongruence.

The first and second cycle coding refined the process with various coding techniques. This was an iterative process of coding and recoding using various coding methods. Final themes and frequency counts of the subcodes are shown in Appendices E - I. Responses were further analyzed to look for relationships between the surveys and the open-ended question responses to understand teacher and principal perceptions and the levels of congruence between these perceptions in relation to the SOA model (Yammarino & Atwater, 1993). A critical part of this phase was to use this analysis to identify principals to invite for the interviews based on positive organizational well-being and high levels of perceptual congruence between teachers and principals. The results from Phase One and Two analyses guided the initial question refinement for the one-on-one interviews.

### ***Phase Three: Principal Interviews***

As in Phase Two, qualitative data coding and analysis of the principal interviews occurred in three stages: precoding, first cycle coding, and second cycle coding, and included ongoing analytical memos and final summary statements (Saldaña, 2016). Precoding occurred while listening to audio recordings and reviewing the digital transcripts. Jot notes were made, and printed transcripts were highlighted during this process, including words, phrases, and potential coding categories to be referenced in future cycles and quotes. Individual interviews were precoded separately during this phase as each participant's interview transcript was reviewed. As in Phase two, Dedoose software was used to identify reoccurring words, phrases, and patterns in the interview transcripts.

**First Cycle Coding.** First cycle coding for the interview data used inductive coding In Vivo coding of words and phrases as they arose and deductive coding based on the categories and themes from the Phase two coding process. All participants included in the interviews were chosen based on the perceived strength of effective strategies based on positive organizational outcomes and high perceptual congruence. Therefore, there were outlying strategies used by these principals different from the responses in Phase two. In Vivo Coding was important in this phase to keep the participants' voices and perspectives at the forefront (Saldaña, 2016).

**Second Cycle Coding.** Second cycle coding of the interviews connected the data to the survey factors, theoretical frameworks, and literature review. The deductive codes used in Phase two helped to theme the data in this stage. Pattern Coding was used to determine themes between and within participants based on different



contextual factors. The goal of the principal interviews was to identify “what works” as guided by Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2011). The emerging themes from the principal interviews were compared to themes identified in Phase Two analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Approval for this study was requested from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Portland. IRB approval was granted on August 8, 2022. Permission was granted by the school divisions in October 2022. Each participant received an outline of the purpose and procedures for the study at the beginning of the digital survey. This information, along with a letter of consent, was embedded into the introduction of the digital survey. Before proceeding to the survey questions, consent was obtained digitally after reading the written information about the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were able to withdraw at any point prior to the stated date. Participants were informed that participation in the study would not affect their role within the school or the division.

Demographic data were collected, with identifying information removed. The data were cleaned of identifying information before analysis, electronically or by a research assistant before I received the data. A random identifier was assigned to connect principal and teacher data from individual schools to allow for comparative analysis. To further protect the anonymity of participants, identifying email data was not collected at the time of the survey. School identifiers were a part of the survey to match principals and teachers from each school; however, school-level data will be reported in the aggregate. This information was anonymized using numerically assigned codes by a research assistant who signed a confidentiality agreement. The

anonymized data was shared with the researcher. The original data was stored on a password-protected computer by the research assistant for six months following the completion of the final dissertation. At that time, the data will be deleted.

Audio or video recordings of the interviews were stored on a password-protected web-based system to ensure confidentiality at all stages of the study. Any written notes were stored in a locked filing cabinet. Interview participants were given the option to choose a pseudonym or have one provided by the researcher. All identifying information will be removed in the reporting of findings.

Adhering to these ethical considerations is necessary to ensure the study's validity and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Research Standards**

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) assert that studies must be rigorously conducted, add to the field of knowledge, and elicit confidence in the research and its results. This current study draws on the strategies presented by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) that promote recognized research standards. Table 4 (adapted from Cavanaugh, 2022) lists the suggested strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and alignment considerations for this study. The quantitative data in this study is collected using validated instruments. The data collected were analyzed using standard methods and scoring guides associated with these instruments to ensure reliability.

One primary strategy used in this study is triangulation. First, data were triangulated by source through surveys, written responses, and interviews. Data were collected from multiple schools and two school divisions to ensure a diverse data set. Finally, data were also gathered from teachers and principals to gain multiple

perspectives. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert, ensuring “themes are established based on converging several perspectives from participants adds validity to the study” (p. 200).

**Table 4**

*Strategies for Research Standards*

Strategy	Description	Current Study
1. Triangulation	Using multiple investigators, sources of data, or data collection methods to confirm emerging findings	Data were collected through surveys, open-ended questions, and interviews from multiple school sites and multiple divisions.
2. Member checks/respondent validation	Taking tentative interpretations/findings back to the people from whom they were derived and asking if they are plausible	Interviewees were asked to review interpretations for accuracy.
3. Adequate engagement in data collection	Adequate time spent collecting data such that the data become ‘saturated’; this may involve seeing discrepant or negative cases	A large sample of survey data was collected to gather data from multiple school contexts. Multiple opportunities were provided to engage potential participants.
4. Researcher’s position or reflexivity	Critical self-reflection by the researcher regarding assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation	Researcher kept a journal throughout the study to reflect on thoughts, emotions, and experiences related to the emerging data. These analytic memos served to bracket researcher bias throughout the study and to track analytical decisions.

5. Peer review/examination	Discussions with colleagues regarding the process of study, the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations	An iterative process of peer review and revision occurred throughout the study design, collection, and interpretation phases.
6. Audit Trail	A detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study	Included in the reflective journal/analytic memos, is an audit trail of decisions made throughout the study.
7. Rich, thick descriptions	Providing enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situations match the research context, and, hence, whether findings can be transferred	Thick descriptions of the setting of the study and the school sites chosen are included. Demographic data was collected to understand the schools and participants.
8. Maximum Variation	Purposefully seeking variation or diversity in sample selection to allow for a greater range of application of the findings by consumers of the research	An attempt was made to recruit a large sample of schools for the survey data. Participants from multiple school divisions were invited.

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*Note.* Adapted from Cavanaugh, 2022 based on Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p. 259

In addition to this list of strategies, participants were chosen with careful consideration of purposive sampling, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) state are important for transferability. Purposive sampling was employed at all stages of data collection for identifying schools and ensuring principals and teachers were chosen who could provide the sought-after perceptions, and finally, for identifying which principals would be invited to participate in interviews.

Another consideration, drawing on the work of Eisner (as described in Creswell & Roth, 2018) that adds to the credibility of this study is structural corroboration through the use of multiple data types, consensual validation by seeking feedback and opinions of others with competence in leadership and enlisting the

support of other researchers to code some of the data for consensus. This supports the strategies Merriam and Tisdell (2015) outlined, as noted in Table 5.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the purpose and rationale of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study to understand the levels of perceptual congruence between teachers and principals about the principal effect on organizational well-being. This study used quantitative and qualitative data through an explanatory sequential survey design, including purposive sampling. Following the data analysis of the survey data, the second stage of purposive intensity sampling was used to invite principals to participate in semi-structured qualitative interviews. This research design outlined a plan for coding qualitative data from open-ended written questions and interview data. The trustworthiness of the study is established through triangulation of data collection types and multiple sites and the inclusion of multiple perspectives. Reliability was established through participant checks of interpretations and a clearly defined coding process. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study to protect the confidentiality of all participants and maintain data security.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed-method study was to explore first how principals and teachers in urban public schools with small administrative teams of three or fewer perceived principal influence on organizational well-being. Then, to examine the relationship between principal's and teacher's perceptual congruence and organizational well-being outcomes of school culture and teacher professional well-being, across roles, for all participants and within school groups. Additionally, in schools characterized by principal-teacher perceptual congruence and reported positive organizational well-being, the study sought to understand how principals describe their leadership effect.

Survey data and open-ended written questions gathered principal and teacher perceptions for role comparisons. These same data were used at the site level to examine perceptual congruence on school culture and teacher well-being measures. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore how principals selected for high positive congruence with a group of their staff describe their leadership effect. Four research questions guided this study.

### **Research Questions**

- To what extent are principals' and teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being congruent across roles?

- To what extent are teacher and principal perceptions in agreement regarding leadership practices they have identified as influencing organizational well-being?
- For school-based principal-teacher groups, what relationship, if any, exists between levels of perceptual congruence about principal practices and reported levels of organizational well-being?
- In schools with high perceptual congruence and positive organizational outcomes, how do principals understand their actions in promoting organizational well-being?

In this chapter, following an analysis of the demographic data, the results will be presented relative to the research questions listed, with the exception of Research Question 4 (RQ4). Data to address RQ4 was collected through principal interviews. Some interview questions were directly related to Research Questions 1 and 2 and will be reported along with other results for those questions.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of data collected from the School Culture Triage Survey (SCTS), the Teacher Well-being Scale (TWBS), and open-ended and principal interview responses regarding perceived strengths and issues with OWB is presented to address Research Question 1 (RQ1) --understanding perceptions of organizational well-being (OWB) across roles. Next, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey, open-ended responses, and principal interview response data reflecting participants' perceptions of leadership effect address Research Question 2 (RQ2). Further exploration of the preceding data is used to analyze perceptual congruence between principals and their teachers within schools, addressing Research

Question 3 (RQ3). Finally, qualitative analysis of interview data will address Research Question 4 (RQ4) by exploring how principals in schools with perceptual congruence and positive OWB results understand their leadership effect. The chapter concludes with a summary and introduction of the main concepts discussed in Chapter five.

### **Demographics**

Demographic data are presented for the survey respondents and the interviewed principals. The interviewed principals completed the survey and were chosen based on analysis in Phase one and Phase two.

#### ***Survey Participant Demographics***

Demographic data were collected about respondents' gender, education levels, experience, and tenure at their current school. Table 5 outlines the gender and education profiles of all survey respondents. The survey asked participants how they identify with five options, she/her, he/him, they/them, or prefer not to say. The response rate was low for the last two options; therefore, these results were combined into a category labelled "other."

The majority of the respondents were female (77%), with teachers having a higher proportion of females (82%) than principals (60%). Of the 47 principal responses, most identified as female (60%). This percentage is similar to data obtained from the public school division principal demographics, where 63% of the division's principals are female. Detailed demographic data was unavailable for the Catholic division general teaching and principal population. Like principals, most teacher respondents identified as female (82%). This is also similar to larger-scale data.



**Table 5***Survey Participant Demographics*

Gender Identity	Total N (%)	Principals n (%)	Teacher n (%)
Total Participants	194	47	147
Female	149 (77)	28 (60)	121 (82)
Male	37 (19)	18 (38)	19 (13)
Other	8 (4)	1 (1)	7 (5)

*Note.* Rounding of percentages may not equal 100%.

Participants were asked to report on their tenure at their current school and years of teaching experience. Additionally, principals were asked to report their total years of administrative experience. Table 6 outlines teacher and principal experience, respectively. Of note is that 89% of principals reported being at their school for five years or less, with only 11% reportedly having six or more years at the school. At the time of this study, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted three years of school operations. Therefore, for 89% of principals surveyed, pandemic protocols were prevalent for 60% or more of their tenure at the school. For nine respondents, with 1 – 5 years as a principal, the pandemic impacted 60% or more of their time as a principal. Similarly, 78% of teachers were within their first five years at the school, and 20% were in their first five years of teaching. For most respondents, more of their experience at the school was during Pandemic times, than not. Considering this, years of experience and years at the school are both relevant to the current discussion of organizational well-being. These demographics provide context for the study and, at times, add to the understanding of the personal perception of organizational well-being.

**Table 6***Survey Participants Experience Profiles*

Experience	Total <i>n</i> (%)	Principals <i>n</i> (%)	Teacher <i>n</i> (%)
<b>Current School</b>			
1 - 5	156 (80)	42 (89)	114 (78)
6 - 10	38 (20)	5 (11)	15 (10)
11 - 20	12 (6)		12 (8)
21 +	6 (3)		6 (4)
<b>Teaching Experience</b>			
1 - 5	29 (15)		29 (20)
6 - 10	46 (24)	13 (28)	33 (22)
11 - 20	71 (37)	19 (40)	52 (35)
21 +	48 (25)	15 (32)	33 (22)
<b>Administrative Experience</b>			
1 - 5		9 (19)	
6 - 10		14 (30)	
11 - 20		20 (43)	
21 +		4 (9)	

*Note.* Rounding of percentages may not equal 100%. Total ( $N = 194$ ), Principals ( $n = 47$ ), Teachers ( $n = 147$ )

***Interview Participant Demographics***

From the quantitative data analysis during phase one, schools with both teacher and principal responses were identified. Within these schools, descriptive statistics were run to determine schools with positive OWB outcomes as measured by the SCTS, the TWBS, and positive perception of principal leadership as measured by the ALQ. Next, teacher responses were compared to principal responses to determine

congruence between their results. Seven schools were identified as having positive results on all three aspects of the survey. These seven principals were invited to participate in one on one interviews. Interviewing principals from the study who met these criteria was important to explore how effective principals understand their own leadership and how they are perceived by others. As the study is grounded in pragmatism, the goal is to discover what is working. Table 7 displays the seven female principals, identified by a pseudonym, and some information about their schools.

**Table 7**

*Principal Interview Demographics*

Pseudonym	Principal Experience	Level of School	School Population	Number of Schools as Principal	Leadership Team
Jane	12	K - 6	510	3	Principal + 2
Myka	6	K - 6	150	1	Principal
Susan	15	K - 6	220	2	Principal + 1
Leigh	3	7 - 9	210	1	Principal + 2
Rebecca	4	K - 6	340	1	Principal + 1
Louise	4	K - 6	150	1	Principal
Grace	2	K - 6	140	1	Principal

*Note.* Six participants from the Public Division and one from the Catholic Division

**Perceptions of Organizational Well-Being**

RQ1 required an exploration of principal and teacher perceptions of their school's organizational well-being, comparing responses across roles, to understand the extent of perceptual congruence between the two groups. In discussing these findings, "organizational well-being" is used when individual and collective well-

being are high, and the organization is making positive progress toward goals.

Quantitative data were analyzed to understand perceptions of OWB across roles and within roles by looking at school culture and teacher well-being and qualitative data from open-ended written response survey questions and principal interview responses to understand perceived strengths and challenges to OWB. Data were examined by describing all teacher responses and all principal responses. It was essential to look at data from all respondents to describe patterns within the responses first by role and then to analyze where these perceptions interrelate or diverge across roles.

### ***Quantitative Survey Analysis for Organizational Well-Being Perception***

Two surveys were chosen to capture collective and individual aspects of organizational well-being. The SCTS measures aspects of school culture defined as collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy (Wagner, 2006). The survey approaches these constructs from a group perspective. The TWBS (Collie et al., 2015) looks at aspects of teacher professional well-being within three subsets: workload, organizational well-being, and student interaction. To answer RQ1, both surveys were analyzed using SPSS software using descriptive frequencies and correlations to understand teachers' and principals' self-reported perceptions of school culture and teachers' self-reported professional well-being. Data were disaggregated by role, gender, years of experience, and years at the school. Data were not disaggregated by type of school (elementary, junior high, or high school) as most respondents were from elementary schools, and the sample sizes within the other types of schools were small.

**School Culture.** Table 8 displays SCTS means and standard deviations using whole survey scores for all participants and disaggregated by role. The mean score for

total School Culture principal and teacher combined responses was 65.97 ( $SD = 10.64$ ). This score falls within the “Monitor and maintains making positive adjustments” according to Wagner’s (2006) scoring guide. The difference between principal and teacher total SCTS is not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). According to Wagner’s description, scores in the  $> 60$  range would be considered positive. On the SCTS, there is a possible range of total scores from 17 – 85, based on 17 total items. In this study, the majority of participants have a positive perception of their school’s culture, where 72% of teachers responded with a  $> 60$  total score, as did 85% of principals.

**Table 8**

*School Culture Triage Total Score Results for All Surveyed Schools*

	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Median	% Positive
Total School Culture	194	65.97	10.64	66.50	75%
Teacher Responses	147	65.56	11.46	66	72%
Principal Responses	47	67.26	7.63	67	85%

*Note.* Likert scale 1-never to 5 – always or almost always.

The SCTS is divided into three subsets: Professional Collaboration, Affiliative Collegiality, and Self-determination/Efficacy. Table 9 displays means and standard deviations for all participants, principals and teachers for the total school culture score and each subset using the Likert scale. The mean score for Self-determination/Efficacy is 4.04 ( $SD = 0.66$ ) based on six variables. The mean score for Affiliative Collegiality is 3.77 ( $SD = 0.68$ ) based on six variables. The mean score for Professional Collaboration is 3.06 ( $SD = 0.59$ ) based on five variables. Of the three subsets, both Affiliative Collegiality and Self-determination/Efficacy total scores fall within the

category of “monitor and maintain making positive adjustments.” Notably, most teachers (76%) indicated positive responses on the subset of Self-determination/Efficacy. Professional Collaboration mean scores fall within “modifications and improvements are necessary” with a lower proportional total score. Principals reported higher scores on the total SCTS and each subset. An independent samples *t*-test revealed these differences were not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 9**

*Comparison of School Culture Means for Participant Roles*

	Mean	SD	Median
Total School Culture	3.88	0.63	3.91
Teacher Responses	3.86	0.67	3.88
Principal Responses	3.96	0.45	3.94
Professional Collaboration	3.06	0.59	3.00
Teacher Responses	3.05	0.64	3.00
Principal Responses	3.11	0.37	3.0
Affiliative Collegiality	3.77	0.68	3.83
Teacher Responses	3.74	0.72	3.83
Principal Responses	3.86	0.56	3.83
Self-Determination/Efficacy	4.04	0.66	4.00
Teacher Responses	4.03	0.70	4.00
Principal Responses	4.10	.50	4.17

*Note.* Total responses  $N = 194$ . Principal responses  $n = 47$ . Teacher responses  $n = 147$

Table 10 displays the SCTS total score and subset means and standard deviations by gender for both principals and teachers. Female teachers ( $n = 121$ ) reported higher ratings on all aspects of school culture than male teachers and “other”

identifying teachers. An analysis of variance showed that there was a statistically significant difference in school culture,  $F(2,144) = 5.96, p = .003$ , professional collaboration,  $F(2,144) = 5.70, p = .004$ , collegiality,  $F(2,144) = 4.40, p = .014$ , and efficacy/self-determination,  $F(2,144) = 6.06, p = .003$  by gender for teachers. Tukey post hoc tests revealed that teachers identifying as outside the binary or “other” rated lower school culture levels than female teachers ( $p = .002$ ) and male teachers ( $p = .025$ ) these differences were statistically significant. When male and female teacher responses were compared, there was not a statistically significant difference ( $p > .05$ ). Female principals reported higher ratings of all aspects of school culture compared to male principals. An analysis of variance showed that there was a statistically significant difference in school culture,  $F(2,44) = 3.75, p = .031$  and collegiality,  $F(2,44) = 3.31, p = .046$ ; however, the difference between female and male ratings of professional collaboration and efficacy/self-determination insignificant ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 10***Comparisons of School Culture Means for Participant Roles and Gender*

Role/Gender	<i>n</i>	School Culture		Collaboration		Collegiality		Efficacy	
		M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>
Principal									
Female	28	4.02*	.48	3.16	.43	3.92*	.55	4.17	.52
Male	18	3.80*	.32	3.02	.25	3.64*	.52	3.93	.39
Other	1	4.80	-	3.40	-	5.00	-	5.00	-
Teachers									
Female	121	3.91*	.66	3.11	.62	3.78	.69	4.09	.69
Male	19	3.80	.60	2.95	.55	3.73	.72	3.98	.58
Other	7	3.85*	.67	2.31*	.72	2.98*	.79	3.17*	.76

*Note.* Only one principal responded 'Other' for gender. No *SD* is calculated. \* $p < .05$

Further analysis of difference based on years of administrative experience for principals ( $p > .05$ ), years of teaching experience and years at the school for both teachers and principals were not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ) for all measures of school culture. Nor were there statistically significant differences in school culture ratings when analyzed by school type.

The majority of participants, 75%, rated school culture positively. There were no statistically significant differences between principal and teacher responses based on years of experience or years at school on the organizational well-being outcomes associated with school culture. A second aspect of organizational well-being is teacher professional well-being.

**Teacher Professional Well-Being.** To measure teacher professional well-being, teachers were asked to respond to The TWBS (Collie et al., 2015). In this study,



only teachers responded to the TWBS. Table 11 displays teacher self-ratings on TWBS based on the mean scores for the entire survey and each of the three subscales: workload well-being, organizational well-being, and student interaction well-being. The mean score for total teacher well-being responses was 4.68 ( $SD = 0.95$ ). Organizational well-being was reported as the highest of the three factors, with a mean score of 5.46 ( $SD = 1.12$ ) based on six variables. The mean score for Student Interaction well-being is 5.17 ( $SD = 1.12$ ) based on four variables. The mean score for Workload well-being is 3.56 ( $SD = 1.34$ ) based on six variables. The overall teacher well-being score falls in the “more positive than negative range” (5 – 7 on the Likert scale), with 39% of teachers rating teacher well-being in this range ( $n = 58$ ). Workload well-being overall scores indicate a more negative impact on well-being, with only 14% ( $n = 21$ ) of teachers choosing a positive response. In contrast, 57% ( $n = 84$ ) indicated a positive impact of student interactions on well-being, and 71% ( $n = 105$ ) rated organizational well-being as having a positive effect on their well-being.

**Table 11**

*The Teacher Well-Being Scale Teacher Results for All Teachers*

Variable	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Median	% Positive
Total Well-being Score	4.68	0.95	4.62	39
Workload Well-being	3.56	1.34	3.50	14
Organizational Well-being	5.46	1.12	5.67	71
Student Interaction Well-being	5.17	1.12	5.25	57

*Note.*  $N = 146-147$ . Likert scale of 1- negatively to 7 – positively.

Table 12 displays TWBS means and standard deviations for teacher gender and years of experience. An analysis of variance showed there was a statistically

significant difference in gender groups for Teacher Well-being,  $F(2,143) = .901, p = .038$ , and Organizational Well-being,  $F(2,143) = 10.36, p < .001$ . Tukey post hoc tests revealed that teachers who identified as “other” rated teacher well-being lower than females ( $p = .034$ ) and males ( $p = .043$ ).

**Table 12**

*Comparisons of Teacher Well-Being Means for Gender and Years of Experience*

Variables	<i>n</i>	Teacher Well-being		Workload		Organizational		Student Interaction	
		M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>
<b>Gender</b>									
Female	121	4.71	.93	3.59	1.35	5.55	1.00	5.13	1.17
Male	19	4.80	1.01	3.64	1.32	5.58	1.18	5.36	.93
Other	7	3.79*	.94	2.90	1.22	3.69**	1.59	5.25	.84
<b>Years of Experience</b>									
1 - 5	29	4.44	.85	3.32	1.01	5.46	1.00	4.59*	1.18
6 - 10	33	4.56	.93	3.43	1.45	5.35	1.11	5.05	1.05
11 - 20	52	4.75	1.04	3.60	1.41	5.40	1.28	5.49	1.02
21+	33	4.68	.92	3.84	1.28	5.65	.99	5.29	1.38

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

An analysis of variance showed there was a statistically significant difference in teacher ratings of student interaction effect on teacher well-being based on years of teaching experience,  $F(3,143) = 4.51, p = .005$ . Tukey post hoc tests revealed that teachers with 1 - 5 years of teaching experience statistically significantly reported less positive impact of student interaction on well-being than teachers with 11 - 20 years of experience ( $p = .003$ ). Further analysis of variance was performed, which showed no

statistically significant differences in teacher-reported well-being ratings based on years at the school or type of school ( $p = > .05$ ).

Table 13 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients for the mean scores for the TWBS and the SCTS total scores and subscales for each survey reported by teachers. There was a moderate positive correlation between total TWBS and total SCTS,  $r(145) = .46, p < .001$ . The TWBS subscale Organizational Well-being was strongly correlated to all measures of the SCTS, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 45% - 60% ( $p < .001$ ). There were weak positive correlations between Workload and all subscales and total score for the SCTS, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 4% to 6% ( $p < .001$ ). The Student Interactions and measures of the SCTS were not significantly correlated.

To further understand individual perceptions of organizational well-being, this study's survey included a linear scale response question followed by one open-ended question to address RQ1: *To what extent are principals' and teachers' perceptions of organizational well-being congruent across roles?* After completing the SCTS and the TWBS, principals and teachers rated their satisfaction with their school's organizational well-being on a linear scale (0 - 10). 87% of respondents rating their organizational well-being as positive as determined by a score of 6 or more ( $M = 7.42, SD = 1.85$ ). For principals, 91% rated organizational well-being as positive ( $M = 7.38, SD = 1.31$ ). Most teachers (85%) rated organizational well-being as positive ( $M = 7.44, SD = 2.00$ ). This difference in mean scores between principals and teachers was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). Overall, most participants rated organizational well-being as positive. An independent  $t$ -test revealed no significant difference

between total scores from the SCTS and the linear ratings of Organizational Well-being.

**Table 13**

*Correlation Coefficients for Teacher Mean Scores for Well-Being and School Culture*

Survey Scores	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	2	2.1	2.2
1.Total Well-being	-						
1.1. Workload	.86**	-					
1.2. Organizational	.75**	.39**	-				
1.3. Student Interaction	.74**	.55**	.36**	-			
2. Total School Culture	.50**	.24**	.78**	.09	-		
2.1. Collaboration	.46**	.25*	.70**	.08	.88**	-	
2.2. Collegiality	.41**	.20*	.67**	.02	.94**	.75**	-
2.3. Self-determination/ Efficacy	.48**	.21*	.78**	.09	.93**	.73**	.82**

*Note.*  $n = 146$  \*\* Correlation is significant ( $p < .01$ ). \* Correlation is significant ( $p < .05$ ).

### ***Qualitative Analysis for RQ1: Organizational Well-Being Perception***

Quantitative measures of organizational well-being were followed by an open-ended written response question which asked participants to explain their organizational well-being rating by identifying related strengths or issues. Of 194 survey participants, 145 (75%) responded to this question. This represented 70% of teacher respondents ( $n = 102$ ) and 91% of principal respondents ( $n = 43$ ) compared to the full sample. Of the 145 responses to this question, 70% were teachers, and 30%

were principals. Codes from this cycle were organized in the parent codes *Strengths* or *Challenges* of organizational well-being.

A frequency count of first-cycle codes assigned to RQ1 open-ended responses showed 402 codes assigned to RQ1: Organizational Well-being. Of those codes, 288 (72%) related to *Organizational Strengths*, defined as factors that contribute positively to organizational well-being, and 114 (28%) related to *Organizational Challenges*, defined as factors that negatively impact organizational well-being. Similar to survey data from the SCTS and the organizational well-being rating, the majority of respondent comments reflected a positive perception of the organizational well-being in their schools.

The first three questions of the principal interviews asked about organizational well-being (OWB). These questions were: *What are the indicators that a school has high organizational well-being? What do you pay attention to “keep a pulse” on individual and organizational well-being in your school? What signals indicate to you that tensions or stressors in the organization have moved beyond typical, requiring intervention?* The questions expanded on the written response questions that all survey participants were invited to answer. This section includes analysis of open-ended written response questions and principal interviews. The data are presented together to allow for comparisons.

**Strengths of Organizational Well-Being.** Through a process of iterative second-cycle coding, four themes were identified within the category of *Organizational Strengths*, based on coding of both principal and teacher open-ended written responses: Cohesive School Community, Leadership, Collegial Relationships,

and Focus on Students. Although there are four identified themes, it must be noted that they are connected and interrelated.

The qualitative code frequency counts included in the parent code *Organizational Strengths* are displayed in Table 14. This table represents the application of codes within all teacher and principal written responses for RQ1. The total frequency count applied to the *Strengths* category was 288. Out of the 288 code applications, 70% were applied to teacher responses and 30% to principal responses. When looking at the identified themes, I used this ratio of codes to determine an expected response rate by role. For example, the theme *Cohesive school community* accounted for 45 % ( $n = 130$ ) of the code applications, with 70% of the codes in the theme ( $n = 91$ ) applied to teacher responses and 30% to principal responses ( $n = 39$ ). This is in line with the total responses for the Strengths category with a 0% variance from the expected frequency counts based on response rates. Responses were examined within roles to determine how teachers and principals described each theme.

**Table 14**

*Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Strengths of Organizational Well-Being*

Organizational Strengths Themes (code frequency)	Counts in Teacher Responses	Counts in Principal Responses	Ratio of Mentions Teacher: Principal	% of Variance
Cohesive School Community (130)	91	39	70:30	0
Leadership (74)	65	9	88:12	18
Collegial Relationships (57)	41	16	72:28	2
Focus on Students (27)	14	13	52:48	18

*Note.* Total responses,  $N = 145$ : Teachers,  $n = 102$  and Principals,  $n = 43$ . The expected ratio of teacher-to-principal code frequencies is 70:30.

Table 15 reflects the themed principal interview responses. These themes closely align with the themes from the open-ended responses. A table with all subcategories and frequency of code application for the principal interviews can be found in Appendix H.

**Table 15**

*Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Indicators of Organizational Well-Being*

Indicators of OWB	Principal Responses
Collective or Organizational	5
Collegial Relationships	4
Focus on Students	4
Trust in Leadership	3

*Note.* Based on the interviews of seven principals.

***Cohesive School Community.*** The most common strength mentioned collectively by principals and teachers was *Cohesive School Community*. The theme of *Cohesive School Community* was sub-coded into four descriptors: a sense of community, collaboration, collective well-being, and common goals and processes. The frequency counts for the subcodes within *Cohesive School Community* can be seen in Table 16. These descriptors reflect factors that strengthen two aspects of OWB: organizational processes (communication and common goals and processes) and member interactions (sense of community, collective well-being, and collaboration).

**Table 16***Cohesive School Community: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Cohesive School Community	Community (32) Collaboration (25) Collective well-being (21) Common goals/processes (13)	Community (13) Collaboration (17) Collective Well-being (6) Common goals, processes (3)

When teacher respondents referred to *Community*, it most commonly referred to the connectedness of the team in building a positive school community. One teacher commented, “We work as a team to build community, connect with parents, support each other as teachers and ensure we use common language when problem solving with students.” Another teacher expressed a similar idea, “Staff work hard to ensure a positive community and safe environment for students.” There was a sense of respect and care for colleagues as expressed by this teacher comment, “It’s incredible just how much effort each teacher puts into the morale, school culture, and making the climate a positive, inclusive, and respectful place.” Another teacher expressed that a sense of community comes from “a supporting environment where staff works together to problem solve, where issues are worked through towards one common goal.” These quotes illustrate the value the teacher respondents have for the team’s commitment to building a positive and supportive community.

Principal respondents shared similar perspectives with teachers about the community as a support for OWB. As this principal noted, “...staff are committed to working together to meet our school goals around literacy and numeracy and



supporting the mental health of students and staff.” This principal praised the cohesiveness of their school,

This school is an amazing school that lives up to the motto “We’re all One Pack.” This is evident in conversations with students, and how when problem solving they talk about “being a pack” and working together. Parents also use this phrase in council meetings, and during pick up and drop off, and feel like they genuinely belong to the community, not just sending their children to an institution.

The principal respondents spoke primarily about staff to staff and staff to family and as will be seen in the next section, rarely referred to themselves directly as a contributing factor to OWB.

*Collaboration* is named as a strength for organizational well-being by many teacher respondents and most commonly refers to how teachers work together to support teaching and learning. As this teacher says, “We work towards continuing a highly collaborative community which emphasizes individual strengths and supports areas of growth.” This teacher had a similar perspective, “We are beginning to see that teachers are planning together, talking together and communicating far more than they did during previous years. The atmosphere feels supportive and connected.” The collaboration supports student outcomes. This teacher’s response supports this idea, “Most teachers collaborate a lot to identify how we can benefit each other’s classrooms and support with student needs as needed.” Another teacher expressed something similar, “We work well collaboratively to support each other in planning

and strategies to support student learning.” Teacher respondents value collaboration to improve their practice, to better support students, and to work towards common goals.

*Collective well-being*, also called morale, was another contributing factor to OWB. This can be seen in this teacher’s comment, “Staff/student morale is very high and the teachers genuinely respect each other.” Like collaboration and community, respondents emphasized the importance of working with their peers to support each other and their collective well-being. For example, a teacher shared, “There is a strong support network at X school that aims to make sure all staff and students are looked after.” In support of this idea, another teacher said, “We take care of each other because it takes all of us to work in this environment.” There is a need for intention when nurturing well-being. As one teacher shared, “...well-being is at the forefront of our minds, and I hear it in the conversation had with other teachers in the school.” The idea of a cohesive community in support of organizational well-being is clear in this teacher’s comment,

Our staff is solid, cohesive, and supportive. We are a strong group. We value the wellbeing of our staff and students highly. We make decisions that support the mental health of ourselves and others. We know that we need to feel our best to give our best to our kids.

When asked to identify strengths contributing to OWB, teacher respondents primarily emphasized the support they receive from their peers. It would seem the peer to peer relationships are critical to building a cohesive school community.

Commonly reflected in principal comments, not seen as frequently in teacher responses, a need to regain a cohesive community in post-COVID times. This idea is

reflected in this principal response, “The last few years have been difficult. Not being able to come together in person as a staff really affected the development of strong relationships.” Another principal supported this idea as well, noting that

Coming out of COVID, we have identified that there is a great deal of work we need to continue to do to move towards well-being. Teachers have long worked in isolation. We are working to shift the culture to one of a more collaborative nature and are confident this will positively impact well-being moving forward.

For some principal respondents, a cohesive community was seen as something they were striving towards in contrast to most teachers who spoke to this as a strength that already exists.

*Interviewed Principals: Collective or Organizational Indicators.* The interviewed principals also spoke of collective indicators of OWB. Mentioned in five of the seven interviews was school culture or climate. For example, Grace, a second-year elementary school principal, identified “a feeling of welcome and support” as an indicator of OWB. Similarly, Jane, an elementary school principal with twelve years of experience, said,

A huge indicator for me is when people literally go out of their way to tell you that they feel a warmth and an atmosphere in the school that is positive.

Louise, an elementary school principal in her fifth year, expressed something similar, “When people walk into the building, to have somebody come in and go ‘whoa! Something special is going on here,’ then I know something magical had happened here.” For Myka, a principal of a smaller elementary school, a “safe space where staff

can feel open and vulnerable” is an indicator of OWB. Rebecca, also an elementary school principal, stressed the importance of a “positive school culture.” These five principals, Grace, Louise, and Myka in small schools and Jane and Shannon in larger elementary schools, all acknowledged the importance of the atmosphere in their building - how it feels to those who work there and those who visit.

The principals spoke about the positive impact of teachers who are engaged and fulfilled by their work on the schools’ organizational well-being. These principals looked to collective purpose and joy in accomplishing goals as indicators of OWB. Five of the seven principals referenced common or shared goals or a collective vision. There was a sense of moving forward as an indicator of OWB that contributes to staff satisfaction. As Myka says, “working together for what’s best for kids. They [the teachers] are not selfish.” Leigh says, “wanting to feel that fulfillment at work” is important. She shared, “We are good at XX School at celebrating from the smallest to biggest pieces. When we see those successes, I think it speaks to our collective efficacy.” Jane noticed her staff, “collaborating on their professional growth plans together. There is a sense of excitement and positivity.” At Susan’s school, her staff “are engaged in that learning and participating.” Rebecca notices when staff are “collaborating and creating together and enjoying their work.” Teachers who are excited, work together, and celebrate success contribute to collective well-being.

Also included in this line of thinking was innovation or staff initiative. Susan appreciates when staff are “working with the data and using that data to drive their instruction, but also to use that data in determining our goals for the school.” Rebecca noted when staff are “moving forward in terms of instruction and connected to our

school goals.” Five principals described staff satisfaction from their collective work resulting in positive outcomes or goal achievement as an indicator of OWB.

All the principal interviewees referred to their staff, how staff relate to each other and how staff relate to the work, frequently as key indicators of OWB. Staff engagement was often the first thing they mentioned. For Leigh, a principal of a junior high school in her third year, an indicator of OWB is “collaboration happening even in those unintended spaces, connecting outside of the intentional collaboration and working together and excited about what they are doing.” Susan, an elementary school principal with fifteen years of experience, echoed Leigh’s thoughts about collaboration, “staff participation-- like how engaged and collaborative they are with each other and with myself.” Rebecca looked at engagement a bit differently. For her, “staff self-advocacy, a real sense of dialogue and staff that will share back and ask questions - willingness to try something new.” A sense of willingness and initiative were key indicators of OWB. Jane articulated, “I’m looking for people working together and talking to each other, and I also watch for those relationship pieces around engagement.” Engaging with the work is one piece of OWB, but many of the principal comments focused on how staff relate to each other as they work as another important indicator to monitor for OWB.

***Collegial Relationships.*** Another code applied to OWB strengths was *Collegial Relationships*. Teacher comments accounted for 72% of the codes applied to this theme, and 28% of the codes were applied to principal comments, as expected relative to the total codes applied. Where staff interactions coded in the theme of *Cohesive Community* focused on how teachers interact collectively as a team,

*Collegial Relationships* focused more on the interactions between staff members. Principals' and teachers' comments reflected two descriptors within this theme: collegiality and teachers supporting each other as seen in Table 17. One point of interest is that the comments rarely refer to the principal directly but focus primarily on staff-to-staff relationships.

**Table 17**

*Collegial Relationships: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Collegial Relationships	Collegiality (27) Supporting each other (14)	Collegiality (8) Supporting each other (8)

For teacher respondents, their school experience is improved because of their collegial relationships with their peers. Comments reflect the quality of interactions and the relationships they have with each other. This idea is supported by one teacher who says, "Working with this staff is like working with an extended family. I always look forward to going into work each day because of the interactions with the staff." Also expressed is a sense of care for colleagues, as this teacher noted, "The teachers have formed relationships with one another. They communicate and genuinely care for each other, personally and professionally." A school environment where teachers get along personally and professionally enhances OWB. This teacher's comment includes examples of how positive interactions strengthen OWB. Their response stated,

We plan events and activities to boost the overall morale. Staff meet outside of school hours to socialize. We plan lunches over the school lunch hour or PD days. We check in on each other and help where we can.

There were also comments that suggested the importance of psychological safety as expressed by this teacher, “We are a staff that care, support and encourage one another. We vent, laugh, and cry together.” Other teachers commented on how “most teachers seem to feel comfortable talking about their struggles and successes” and “staff trust each other.” Teacher respondents value the care and positive interaction found in trusting relationships with colleagues, which provides a solid level of support for individuals. As this teacher says, “We work with difficult students. We take care of each other because it takes all of us to work in this environment.” What stands out in these teacher responses is the reciprocal nature of peer-to-peer relationships.

Prevalent in the teacher responses were specific references to collegial support - with 25% of the teacher responses using the word ‘support’ relative to their colleagues. As this teacher says, “I love that I can count on my ‘pod-mates’ to support me.” Another teacher response reflects the same idea. “We have a strong school culture of staff supporting one another in many ways.” The comments suggest that although supportive leadership, as seen in future discussions, is critical, networks of teachers are equally important. This teacher’s response supports this idea, “Staff are always looking out for each other and willing to help each other if/when needed.” Again, the comments illustrate how teachers engage in a give-and-receive relationship with their peers, which is different than the descriptions of principal-teacher relationships.

At times, teachers are able to see what is needed when the administration may not, as is reflected in this comment, “Teachers really need to seek help when they need it and most often help comes from colleagues - not admin.” Another response alluded

to teachers rallying to support new teachers who needed more support than was being offered by the administration or the division. For many teachers, OWB is directly improved by their colleagues, as this teacher response states about an organization with strong well-being, “A supportive environment where staff works together to problem solve, where issues are worked through towards a common goal.” The teacher responses convey strength in their peer relationships and reflect an insight that principals may not have completely.

Principals responses also reflect the value in collegial relationships, which is evident in this principal’s response,

Teachers talk...really talk to each other about issues and help each other problem solve. The staff room is a comfortable place to be where staff share and laugh. Teachers are highly collaborative and are not afraid to be vulnerable and show each other their failures...in fact it is welcomed.

Interestingly, this one principal comment inserts themselves in the reciprocal relationship, “We support each other and are there for each other. Our staff care about each other...” Other principal comments speak to the reciprocal relationship from an observer stance, as seen here, “School staff are positive and supportive of one another, unlike any staff I have ever worked with” and “all staff know they can rely on each other...” It would seem that principals see the importance of a strong peer support network as contributing to OWB as they observe their teacher’s interactions.

As with other themes, principal responses around collegiality or peer support were seen through an improvement lens. This principal shared that “trust took a real



hit [due to COVID] and we are having to take time this year to build relationships and trust again.” In a similar sense, another principal reflected,

Our school has a rich history of interdependence and culture of collaboration, however, there have been some variables that have impacted our ability to continue in the manner as it once was.

Almost half the principals framed their response in this way. They talked about, “rebuilding,” “work to do,” “working on building” “making efforts to” or “we are trying to” improve relationships in a post-pandemic phase. This is a sentiment summarized in this comment, “As we work together to create and/or establish school-wide activities, celebrations, and traditions, we will find our stride and create a more cohesive school community.” There seems to be a difference between principal and teacher perspectives about staff collegial relationships. Where teacher respondents praise their peer relationships, principal respondents see a need for continuous improvement.

*Interviewed Principals: Collegial Relationships.* Beyond connecting to the work, the principals interviewed notice how staff connect to each other in a social sense. As Rebecca says, a good indicator of OWB is when she sees “staff gathering in the staff room, connecting in hallways - mixing and mingling - a general sense of connectedness.” This is important to Myka as well. She notices “The staffroom and what that sounds like, looks like, and feels like when you walk in.” Jane says, “This sounds superficial but it really isn’t - laughter, people coming together.” In addition to connecting in this way, Louise notices that her staff, “look out for each other.” Myka too says there is a “willingness to support and help each other, they’ve got their back.”

The principals interviewed acknowledge that strong personal connections between staff that lead to a positive social environment.

***Leadership.*** Although RQ1 did not ask participants about the principal, *Leadership* as support for OWB was identified by 52% of teachers ( $n = 53$ ). The teacher responses represent 88% of the total text coded under *Leadership*. Interestingly, principal responses represented only 12% of the code applications for *Leadership* as a strength of OWB, proportionately less than teacher responses. As with the previous two sub-codes, principal respondents rarely put themselves directly into the discussion about OWB and more frequently referred to leadership effect as shared or in the third person (i.e., “my teachers...” or “we build...”). When teacher respondents described leadership actions that support OWB, the comments focused on two main leadership actions: principal-to-teacher and principal-to-organization. The theme of leadership was coded into four descriptors, three were principal-to-teacher actions, and one was principal-to-organization actions as seen in Table 18. As will be confirmed in RQ2 discussion, teachers identify principal support, autonomy, organizational leadership, clarity, and affective leadership are positive principal actions supportive of organizational well-being. A full discussion of leadership influence on OWB will be included in the RQ2 analysis.

**Table 18***Leadership: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Leadership	Autonomy (25) Support to teachers (16) Leading the organization (14) Appreciated, valued, recognized (10)	Autonomy (6) Support (2) Leading the organization (1)

What was unique in the response to RQ1 was how principals described their role in OWB. In contrast to teachers, principals rarely referenced their own role in supporting organizational well-being. Nine principal responses referenced leadership as a strength to OWB, yet, only four of those responses reference principal actions directly. One of these stated, “I feel staff have many opportunities to provide input into school decisions - and as the principal, I am responsive to when needs change.” The other spoke of how administrative staff “is doing our best not to overload staff.” These principals acknowledge specific actions they take to support their teachers. Two other principals stated that staff know they have the support of their principal but did not reference any specific actions. Most of the principal responses (6) within the theme of *Leadership* were coded with the descriptor autonomy. The responses lacked ownership from principals and spoke in general terms, such as, “[in] general staff is content with the work and contributing to decision-making. This leads to staff feeling valued.” For most principal respondents, the focus was on their role as part of the collective and comments were framed in the idea of shared leadership, such as, “we build together...,” “school staff are involved in...,” and “we collaboratively...” What

is missing in most of the principal responses is their direct role. Most of the principals gave credit to the team, as seen in this principal comment, “This team is strong with many leaders within the organization.” Yet, when teacher respondents spoke about the collective work of the team, the principal was not referenced.

*Interviewed Principals: Trust in Leadership.* Interestingly, as with the survey responses, principals rarely mention leadership as a direct indicator of OWB. In the interviews, principals saw how staff interact with them as an indicator of trust in their leadership. Myka said, “If I wasn’t doing those things [to support teaching and learning], they wouldn’t come to me because they wouldn’t trust me.” Jane, too said,

I think the other indication of well-being is people come to you as a leader and just say, ‘I’m worried about this or can I confide in you?’ Personal or professional, when you have relationships with people there’s more organizational well-being.

Susan agrees, “Staff feel pretty safe coming and talking to me about whatever their concerns are whether they are work related or personal.” For these principals, having the trust of their staff is evidence of their effective leadership.

According to six of the principals, these relationships are important for monitoring well-being. “Knowing your people” is a key way that Leigh monitors organizational well-being. For Rebecca being aware of how people in the building are interacting with each other and their students helps her keep in touch with the OWB. Myka pays attention to “how often they are coming or how often they are not coming.” Five of the seven principals monitor these relationships by being visible in the school and in classrooms. For all, when irregularities in behaviors, performance,

engagement, emotions, or atmosphere are noted, this is an indication that they need to intervene to support individual or collective well-being.

***Focus on Students.*** Less frequently coded but still evident in teacher and principal survey responses was a *Focus on Students* as a strength for OWB. A higher number, proportionately by roles, of codes in this theme were applied to principal comments (48%). A lower portion of teacher respondents referred to students than principal respondents. Table 19 displays the sub-code frequencies for this theme.

**Table 19**

*Focus on Students: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Focus on Students	Meeting students' needs (14)	Meeting students' needs (8) Teaching and learning (5)

For teacher respondents, teamwork is reflected again in the accomplishment of meeting the needs of their students. For example, one teacher shared, “Staff collaborate and work well together to meet student needs.” This idea is reflected in this comment by another teacher, “We do a lot of work to support our students to ensure their social, emotional and academic needs are being met daily.” The collective effort to help students is seen as a strength of OWB, as is expressed by this teacher’s response, “I believe the majority of staff at our school are always striving towards making our students the best they can be.” As this participant acknowledged, “We have an inclusive environment and our students always come first.” The teachers’ responses included in this theme reflect the value of working together in the best interest of their students.

Principal responses reflected similar sentiments about collectively working to improve student outcomes. As one principal respondent shared, “All of our staff share and celebrate the smallest gains our students make which help(s) us with job satisfaction.” Another principal respondent commented that their staff always “put students first.” The idea of collective accomplishment is again supported in this principal response, “I feel most staff are happy, engaged, and collaborating to teach and learn together.” Three principal responses directly spoke about the benefit of building “teacher efficacy.” Principal respondents, as with teacher respondents, see staff working together to meet student needs as a strength.

***Interviewed Principals: Focus on Students.*** Three interviewed principals referenced student outcomes as an indicator of OWB. Leigh talked about “moving students forward.” For Rebecca, “engaged and happy students and families and student success” were measures of OWB. Louise said, “when you walk in to the classroom, every single one of those kids is loved. Everybody has what they need so that they can learn and be present.” Myka asserted the importance of how all the work of schools is to care and support the students.

**Challenges to Organizational Well-Being.** The open-ended written question asked respondents to reflect on issues and strengthening factors of OWB. Interesting to note, what some respondents identified as a strength, others viewed as a challenge or issue. Leadership is an example of this. In some responses, teacher participants viewed their leaders as supportive and caring, in others, leaders were seen as negatively affecting OWB. The same can be said for student interactions. As a result of the second-cycle coding, five themes were identified in the category of *Challenges*

*to Organizational Well-being* based on code application for principal and teacher responses: Leadership, Staff, External Pressures, Student Challenges, and Working Conditions.

The qualitative code frequency counts included in the category *Challenges to Organizational Well-being* are displayed in Table 20, as are the proportionate percentages of codes applied based on roles. This table represents the application of codes for all teacher and principal responses to the open-ended question for RQ1. A total of 145 responses were included in the analysis, 70% were teacher responses ( $n = 102$ ), and 30% were principal responses ( $n = 43$ ). Within the RQ1 open-ended responses, 116 code applications were identified as Challenges to Organizational Well-being. As can be seen, the theme of *Student Challenges* was applied close to as expected based on total responses (67% to teachers and 33% to principals). Whereas *External Pressures* and *Staff* themes were proportionately more prevalent in principal responses, with a variance of 15% less than expected applications to teacher responses. *Leadership* and *Working Conditions* were more present in teacher responses.

**Table 20***Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Challenges to Organizational Well-Being*

Challenges to OWB Themes (code frequency)	Counts in Teacher Responses	Counts in Principal Responses	Ratio of Counts Teacher: Principal	% of Variance
External Pressures (29)	16	13	55:45	15
Leadership (29)	28	1	97:3	27
Staff (29)	16	13	55:45	15
Student Challenges (16)	11	5	67:33	3
Working Conditions (13)	11	2	85:15	15

*Note.* Total responses,  $N = 145$ : Teachers,  $n = 102$ , Principals,  $n = 43$ . The expected ratio of teacher-to-principal code frequencies is 70:30.

**External Pressures.** Principal comments reflected the impact of external pressures at a higher rate than teacher comments proportionate to the total number of comments. The comments to which this code was applied reflect similar concerns for both teachers and principals. This theme was sub-coded by two descriptors: government or division expectations and COVID-19, as shown in Table 21.

**Table 21***External Pressures: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
External Pressures	Government or division expectations (8) COVID-19 (8)	Government or division expectations (3) COVID-19 (10)

A considerable impact mentioned by those in both roles was COVID. COVID was seen as a predominantly negative impact on well-being in schools in almost a quarter of the principal comments. Although less prevalent in the teacher responses,



when COVID was mentioned, the comments were similar to those of principals. As this principal respondent said, “The collective well-being took a real hit in COVID and we are working towards improvements.” Similarly, a teacher respondent commented, “I feel COVID has had an impact on the overall well-being of people.” Most of the references to COVID reflected interruptions to regular operations or the inability for staff members to come together.

Both principal responses and teacher responses referred to imposed initiatives or directives. As one teacher respondent said, “...sometimes the demands that come from outside of school, such as the government and district demands make our job feel overwhelming.” A principal respondent commented on staff “resentment” toward district initiatives imposed and the resulting extra work. This principal respondent shared their concerns about “...an influx of mandatory requirements” leading to a “feeling of something being done to staff.” A teacher respondent stated, “We are asked to do more and more every year with less support to be successful.” This teacher respondent expressed frustration in this comment, “We prioritize well-being, but circumstances out of our control have a huge impact.” The challenges expressed through external demands can be summed up in the following response from a principal, “I feel we are in an interesting time in Education. The ‘post-COVID’ world and political climate of our province have had negative impacts on our collective well-being.” This sentiment was echoed by this teacher’s response, “We are in a tough time as an organization from a provincial government standpoint. Their mismanagement of the education portfolio has definitely negatively affected morale.” Imposed

requirements or initiatives negatively affect well-being and are beyond the control of either the principal or the teacher.

**Leadership.** Negative comments about leadership were almost exclusively from teacher respondents as seen in Table 22. The one exception was a principal response that referred to changes made when they arrived that were challenging for staff.

**Table 22**

*Challenges to Organizational Well-Being: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Leadership	Don't feel heard (10) Lack of Clarity (9) Lack of accountability (8) Change (1)	Change (1)

When clear communication pathways are hindered, OWB is perceived to be at risk. For 10 teacher respondents, a lack of input into decisions threatened OWB at their school. One respondent stated, “No strengths, only burned out teachers with no input and seemingly no value to principal.” Another respondent stated there was “too much top down approach.” Another teacher respondent shared, “Staff are not always listened to/feel able to communicate regarding concerns.” The comments reflected frustration when decisions were made without consultation as is supported in this teacher’s response, “I don’t feel heard when it comes to programs/systems our school uses.” Along these lines was a sub-code of *lack of clarity*. This was seen in nine teacher comments. This teacher respondent shared, “I believe there is a lack of communication in our school that contributes to a culture of chaos and

misunderstanding.” Other teacher responses included a desire for more clarity. This idea was coded in comments like these, “Would like to have more discussions...” and “We do not always have honest, frank, open discussions about the efficacy of those resources.” At times, teacher respondents expressed frustration due to a lack of communication or clarity, and for others, there was a desire for more opportunities to provide input.

Another thread about the negative influence of leadership on OWB was a lack of accountability, as noted in eight teacher responses. One teacher respondent shared this idea in this statement, “There is a VERY slack culture at the school and the messaging that we are all doing ‘good enough,’ there are few expectations to improve our own practice as teachers and accountability for our work is incredibly low.” As seen in the organizational strength discussion, the majority of teacher respondents commented on the support of leadership, but for some, leadership behavior can threaten individual and organizational well-being.

***Staff Groups and Mindset.*** While more respondents identified colleagues and staff as a support for OWB, 23% of the *Challenge* codes were related to staff. These codes were more prevalent in principal comments, as seen in Table 23.

**Table 23**

*Staff: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Staff	Staff groups (10) Low morale (2) Lack of connection (2)	Staff groups (5) Low Morale (3) Negative staff (5)

Most noted across roles was the damaging effect of disconnected staff groups within a school. An example that supports this idea is a teacher response that said, “Staff group cliques affect the culture of our school.” Another teacher respondent wrote, “Our staff have some cliques which make others feel left out and ostracized.” One interesting perspective, not seen in *Strengths* comments, was the influence of the principal on staff connectedness. For two teacher respondents, the administration clearly had a negative effect in this area. This teacher respondent reflected on their situation, “I suppose it can be worse, but the individual well-being depends on if you are in the administrations’ in-group.” Another teacher respondent shared, “Some people are valued more than others.” The concern over a staff splintered by different groups was shared by eight principals, as supported in this principal response,

For the most part, I believe there is a fairly high sense of organizational well-being. The area for concern is collective well-being. Long-standing feuds between individual teachers and relationship cliques have prevented true synergy amongst the whole staff.

Two other principal respondents referred to the negative effects of “staff working in siloes” rather than as a whole team. One principal respondent wished the groups would work together more and a teacher respondent commented that, “My staff doesn’t feel cohesive to me.” Where a cohesive school community and a supportive staff strengthen OWB, these comments suggest the opposite can be detrimental and of concern to principals.

An additional concern for some teacher and principal participants was staff mindset and collective well-being, or morale, which can contribute to the splintering

of the community. As a teacher respondent claimed, “staff morale is extremely low due to burn out.” Low morale was a concern for two other teacher respondents. This teacher respondent also referred to stress response in that, “We tend to fall apart during stress and then staff tends to turtle [withdraw] and point fingers.” Two principal respondents made comments that reflect a negative mindset of their staff. Both these principals referred to a lack of desire by staff to take initiative or staff being hesitant to implement research-based practices. The resistance could be due to change resistance or other factors. Negativity was mentioned as a threat to staff cohesiveness. This teacher response explains, “As a staff, we can sometimes have a negative climate due to perceptions of some staff members who focus more on the negative.” A principal respondent expressed a similar view, “We have a variety of staffing groups, with respect to experience and mindset. A few of these folks are very negative, feel very hard done by and are generally unhappy.” A small number of principals indicated that although progress is being made in organizational well-being, staff, either individuals or small groups, can have a negative effect on collective well-being. As one principal noted:

I think we have a good organizational well-being. We are making good progress toward goals. We have succeeded well with goals. But there are toxic staff who work against this and do have an impact. Their personal lives have an impact.

There was a sense from the principal responses that organizational well-being is positively impacted when staff are aligned and supportive, yet, 28% ( $n = 13$ ) indicated a concern in the area of staff attitude or staff groups as an internal threat to overall

well-being. Principal and teacher comments would suggest that individuals within the group who have less personal well-being may impact the larger group.

***Student Challenges.*** Challenges to OWB related to students were noted by ~10% ( $n = 10$ ) of teacher respondents and ~12% ( $n = 5$ ) principal respondents.

Teacher responses included concerns about complex students and student behavior whereas principal respondents did not refer to student behavior as seen in Table 24.

**Table 24**

*Student Challenges: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Student Challenges	Diverse student needs (5) Student behavior (5)	Diverse student needs (5)

Teacher responses tagged with this code referenced challenging student behavior and complexity of needs. As this teacher respondent said, “Our students come from diverse backgrounds and are often very low academically. Teaching in our school requires extra work to meet each of our students where they are at.” Another teacher respondent shared concerns about their students, “Students have little access to mental health supports when needed.” These concerns were reflected in a small portion of principal responses. As this principal respondent shared, “We have more complex children than we have ever had.” Another principal respondent noted, “The mental health of our students continues to be a barrier to individual and collective student well-being.” As with external pressures, this code reflected a sense from teacher and principal respondents of being asked to do more without being given the needed resources.

Not mentioned by principals was student behavior. Yet, this was noted by five teacher respondents. As this teacher respondent said, “Behaviors are such that it is hard to create collective well-being when some students are unable to cooperate with direct adult support and guidance.” Other teacher responses referred to a lack of support when dealing with student behaviors rather than the behavior itself as a source of stress. That teacher shared, “Support for teachers when it comes to student behavior is inconsistent.” Another teacher respondent shared a similar thought, “Some student behaviors have been challenging at a variety of levels in recent years (in classrooms, hallways and outside at recess breaks) since rules and routines have not been re-established and reinforced.” Although student challenges are noted as an issue for OWB, this is often expressed as teachers needing more support to meet the students’ needs.

***Working Conditions.*** A small number of teacher respondents ( $n = 11$ ), as seen in Table 25, referred to negative working conditions such as “too large of class sizes without enough support,” being overwhelmed by excessive demands - “doing more and more with less support,” and a “lack of prep time.” One principal respondent acknowledges that “a few of our staff are struggling due to large (and increasing) class sizes.” Although others alluded to these challenges, most teacher respondents (as described above) framed them positively within a collective problem-solving or helping-each-other-lens. It would seem, a strong support network in a cohesive school community can mitigate some working condition challenges.

**Table 25***Working Conditions: Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Working conditions	Time pressures (4) Demands (4) Class sizes (3)	Class sizes (2)

***Summary of RQ1 Findings***

While principals and teachers identified similar strengthening factors for organizational well-being, there are differences in the types of comments made and the frequency of code applications across roles and within themes. When the code frequencies are analyzed according to representative responses of 70% of teachers and 30% of principals, Cohesive School Community and Relationships were identified as expected across roles. Whereas, Leadership was identified more frequently than expected by teachers (88%), and Focus on Students was identified less frequently than expected by teachers (52%). Teacher responses spoke about the collective group along with their relationships with the leader, their peers, the organization, and their students. There was a general sense of ‘we are better together.’ Teacher responses reflected a strong sense of the strength of the team and the value of leadership.

Principal respondents frequently referred to OWB as a work in progress, not yet achieved. Interestingly, principals rarely acknowledged their own role directly in OWB, positively or negatively. Principals had a stronger emphasis on school goals and student achievement as strengths of OWB, whereas teachers mentioned student challenges as a threat to well-being. Both principal and teacher respondents



commented on staff challenges as threats to OWB, specifically staff groups or individuals that were disconnected from the cohesive whole. There was also consensus about external demands, whether they be district or government, impacting OWB negatively.

### **Perception of Principal Leadership Influence on Organizational Well-Being**

To examine the perceived leadership influence of principals on organizational well-being, principal (self) ratings and teacher (other) ratings were gathered through responses to the Authentic Leadership Scale (ALQ) (Avolio et al., 2007) and one linear scale question which asked: *To what degree does your (principal's) leadership positively impact organizational well-being?* Qualitative data were collected in the form of written responses and responses from principal interviews. As with RQ1, data were analyzed on a large scale by looking at responses from all teachers and all principals without being bound by school context. This analysis sought to describe how teachers and principals perceive leadership in their schools related to OWB.

### ***Quantitative Survey Analysis for Perceptions of Principal Influence on OWB***

Teachers and principals responded to the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), which looks at four subscales of authentic leadership: transparency, moral/ethical considerations, balanced processing and self-awareness. The principal version of the ALQ is a self-rating scale, whereas the teacher version is an other-rating scale where teacher responses relate to their principal. Table 26 displays the mean scores of teachers' and principals' responses for all aspects of the ALQ. An independent *t*-test was used to compare means between teacher reports and principals'

self-reports for the total ALQ and for each subscale. The results showed no statistically significant differences in the comparisons ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 26**

*Comparison of Authentic Leadership Scale Means for Participant Roles*

	Mean	SD	Mode
Total ALQ			
Teacher Responses	3.24	.81	4.0
Principal Responses	3.34	.32	3.19 <sup>a</sup>
Transparency			
Teacher Responses	3.29	.82	4.0
Principal Responses	3.31	.39	3.40
Moral/Ethical			
Teacher Responses	3.40	.75	4.0
Principal Responses	3.59	.37	3.75
Balanced Processing			
Teacher Responses	3.11	.89	4.0
Principal Responses	3.31	.43	3.33
Self-Awareness			
Teacher Responses	3.07	.81	4.0
Principal Responses	3.16	.43	3.0

*Note.* Likert scale 0-not at all to 4-frequently, if not always. Total responses  $N = 194$ . Principal responses  $n = 47$ . Teacher responses  $n = 147$ .

**Leadership Ratings and Aspects of OWB.** This study seeks to understand how perceptions of principal leadership are related to organizational well-being. To support this goal, results from the ALQ were correlated with results from SCTS for both principals and teachers and with the TWB scores for teachers. Table 27 displays

the Pearson correlation coefficients for the mean scores for the TWBS, SCTS, and ALQ total scores, including principal and teacher responses. There was a positive, strong correlation between ALQ mean scores and SCTS mean scores,  $r(196) = .75, p < .001$ . Teacher well-being mean scores based on teacher responses were moderately correlated with school culture and authentic leadership.

**Table 27**

*Correlation Coefficients for Teacher Mean Scores for Well-Being and School Culture*

Survey Scores	School Culture	Teacher Well-being	Authentic Leadership
School Culture	-		
Teacher Well-being	.50**	-	
Authentic Leadership	.75**	.56**	-

*Note.*  $n = 146$  \*\* Correlation is significant ( $p < .01$ ).

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between teacher ratings of Authentic Leadership and teacher self-reported well-being. Table 28 shows the relationships between teacher-reported total mean scores on the ALQ and TWBS and the subscales of each survey. There was a moderate, positive correlation between ALQ and TWB,  $r = .56, p < .001$ . When looking at the specific variables within each survey, there were varying strengths of relationships. This is evident when subscales of the TWBS were compared to total ALQ scores and the individual subscales. For example, although total TWBS mean scores correlate moderately with total ALQ scores, “Student Interaction Well-being” was only weakly correlated with total ALQ scores  $r = .21, p < .005$ . Student interaction well-being showed no significant correlation with the subscales of ALQ

aside from “Balanced Processing,” where there was a weak positive correlation  $r = .30, p < .001$ . Similarly, “Workload Well-being” showed a weak, positive correlation to the ALQ  $r = .27, p < .001$ , with similar correlations to each of the subscales of the ALQ. Of note, there was a strong, positive correlation between the Organizational well-being subscale of the TWBS and total ALQ  $r = .80, p < .001$ , and all four subscales with  $R^2$  values ranging from 52% to 57%.

To further explore the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational well-being, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between ALQ and SCTS ratings disaggregated by role. Table 29 shows correlations between teacher responses on the ALQ, including subscales, and the SCTS and its subscales. A Pearson correlation coefficient for total scores on the ALQ and the SCTS and the corresponding subscales for each survey. There were strong, positive correlations between the total SCTS and all aspects of the ALQ, with  $R^2$  ranging from 49% to 61%. The same relationship was seen between the total ALQ scores and the subscales of the SCTS, with  $R^2$  values of 45% to 61%. The highest correlations are seen between all subscales of ALQ and the efficacy scale of the SCTS, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 52% to 61%. The subscales of ALQ were moderately correlated with professional collaboration as measured by the SCTS, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 36% to 41%. When looking at collegiality, the transparency and moral/ethical subscales of the ALQ are also moderately correlated with  $R^2$  values of 42%. Interestingly, balanced processing and self-awareness were strongly correlated with collegiality with  $R^2$  of 50% and 48%, respectively.

**Table 28***Correlation Coefficients for Teacher Mean Scores for Well-being and Teacher-reports of Authentic Leadership*

Survey Scores	Total ALQ	Transparency	Moral	Balanced	Self-Awareness	Total TWB	Workload	OWB
Total ALQ	-							
Transparency	.94**	-						
Moral/Ethical	.92**	.82**	-					
Balanced Processing	.94**	.83**	.82**	-				
Self-Awareness	.94**	.81**	.80**	.86**	-			
Total TWB	.56**	.52**	.46**	.57**	.51**	-		
Workload	.27**	.27*	.21*	.28**	.24**	.86**	-	
OWB	.80**	.73**	.72**	.78**	.75**	.75**	.39**	-
Student Interaction	.21*	.18	.11	.30**	.15	.74**	.55**	.56**

*Note.*  $n = 137 - 147$  \*\* Correlation is significant ( $p < .001$ ). \* Correlation is significant ( $p < .05$ )

**Table 29***Correlation Coefficients for Teacher Mean Scores for School Culture and Teacher-reports of Authentic Leadership*

Survey Scores	Total ALQ	Transparency	Moral/Ethical	Balanced	Self-Awareness	Total SCTS	Collaboration	Collegiality
Total ALQ	-							
Transparency	.94**	-						
Moral/Ethical	.92**	.82**	-					
Balanced Processing	.94**	.83**	.82**	-				
Self-Awareness	.94**	.81**	.80**	.86**	-			
Total SCTS	.78**	.72**	.72**	.71**	.75**	-		
Collaboration	.67**	.62**	.60**	.62**	.64**	.86**	-	
Collegiality	.70**	.64**	.64**	.71**	.69**	.75**	.39**	-
Efficacy	.78**	.72**	.73**	.73**	.73**	.74**	.55**	.56**

Note.  $n = 137 - 147$  \*\* Correlation is significant ( $p < .001$ ). \* Correlation is significant ( $p < .05$ )

Similar correlations run between principal self-reports of authentic leadership and school culture revealed different levels of correlations than with teacher reports, as shown in Table 30. All correlations, if any, between principal self-reports and principal-reported levels of school culture are weak to moderate, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 9% to 25%. These correlations were not as strong as those found between teacher-reported school culture and teacher ratings of authentic leadership. Interestingly in the principal-reported subscale scores for Transparency, the Pearson correlation coefficient revealed no significant correlation with any aspects of school culture ( $p > .05$ ). Of the four subscales of the ALQ, only Self-awareness was moderately correlated with all subscales of the SCTS, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 16% to 25%. Other moderate correlations were revealed between moral/ethical and balanced processing with collaboration and efficacy, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 14% to 18.

**Table 30***Correlation Coefficients for Principal Mean Scores for School Culture and Self-Reports of Authentic Leadership*

Survey Scores	Total ALQ	Transparency	Moral/Ethical	Balanced	Self-Awareness	Total SCTS	Collaboration	Collegiality
Total ALQ	-							
Transparency	.75**	-						
Moral/Ethical	.89**	.59**	-					
Balanced Processing	.82**	.42**	.68**	-				
Self-Awareness	.82**	.30*	.69**	.86**	-			
Total SCTS	.44**	.11	.45**	.40**	.50**	-		
Collaboration	.43**	.18	.42**	.41**	.42**	.74**	-	
Collegiality	.29	.03	.32*	.22	.40**	.90**	.53**	-
Efficacy	.38**	.06	.38**	.41**	.43**	.90**	.57**	.72**

Note.  $n = 46 - 47$  \*\* Correlation is significant ( $p < .001$ ). \* Correlation is significant ( $p < .05$ )



### ***Qualitative Analysis for Perception of Principal Influence on OWB***

To further answer RQ2, respondents answered an open-ended response question explaining their rating on the linear rating scale question, *To what degree does your (principal's) leadership positively influence organizational well-being?* Of the 194 participants, 69% ( $n = 134$ ) responded to this question. Of those, 93 were teachers, 63% of the total teacher survey participants, and 41 were principals, representing 87% of the total principal survey participants. Proportionately, 69% of the 134 responses to this question were teachers and 31% were principals. Data were initially coded, including all respondents, in order to capture a sense of how all participants perceive organizational well-being. In subsequent coding cycles, comments within the code categories were disaggregated by role to capture similarities or differences in perceptions within the codes.

A frequency count of first-cycle codes assigned to RQ2 open-ended responses showed 292 applied codes to Principal Leadership and Organizational Well-being. Of those codes, 255 (87%) related to “Positive Leadership Influences,” defined in second order coding as principal behaviors or attributes that contribute positively to organizational well-being, and 37 (13%) related to “Areas of Improvement,” defined in second order coding as teacher-identified or self-identified areas of growth to improve or identified barriers affecting leadership influence on organizational well-being. Similar to data previously shared about OWB, the majority of respondent comments reflected a positive perception of principal influence on organizational well-being in their schools. This was also reflected in the results from the linear rating scale question as displayed in Table 31, which shows the mean scores for responses

from teachers ( $M = 7.76$ ,  $SD = 2.14$ ) and from principals ( $M = 7.15$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ). An independent  $t$ -test showed no statistically significant difference between the teacher ratings and the principal self-ratings of principal positive leadership influence. Both teacher respondents and principal respondents appear to have a positive perception of leadership effect on OWB.

**Table 31**

*Participant Ratings of Principal Positive Influence on Organizational Well-Being*

	Mean	SD	Median	Mode
All Responses	7.61	2.07	8	8
Teacher Responses	7.76	2.14	8	9
Principal Responses	7.15	1.48	7	8

*Note.* Total responses  $N = 189$ . Principal responses  $n = 46$ . Teacher responses  $n = 143$ .

**Qualitative Analysis Principal Influence on OWB.** Through a process of iterative second-cycle coding, seven themes were identified within the category of *Positive Principal Influences* based on code application for all principal and teacher responses displayed in Table 32 with the qualitative code frequency counts. As in the previous analysis, often, a single response held pieces of one or more themes. I chose to organize the qualitative description by themes, but the themes are connected and interrelated. Overarching all the themes was a thread of *Awareness* that permeated both teacher and principal responses; this was not separately coded but will be discussed in the analysis of RQ4.

Appendix F shows a table of the sub-codes within each theme and their frequencies identified by role. The total frequency count applied to the *Strengths*

category was 255. *Supportive and in the Trenches* and *Teacher Voice and Autonomy* each represented 19% ( $n = 48$ ) of the total codes applied. There was a fairly even distribution of the codes within the themes, ranging from 9% - 19%, but there was variance in the distribution between teacher and principal responses. Responses were further examined within roles to determine how teachers and principals described each of the themes.

**Table 32**

*Qualitative Code Frequency Counts from Written Response: Principal Positive Influences on OWB*

Principal Positive Influences Themes (code frequency)	Counts in Teacher Responses	Counts in Principal Responses	Ratio of Counts Teachers: Principals	% of Variance
Supportive and In the Trenches (48)	35	13	73:27	4
Teacher Voice and Autonomy (48)	30	18	63:38	6
Affective Leadership (46)	28	18	61:39	7
Positive and Sets the Tone (33)	16	17	48:52	21
Clarity of Vision and Expectations (32)	19	13	59:41	10
Focus on Well-being (26)	19	7	73:27	4
Open and Approachable (22)	17	5	77:23	8

*Note.* Total Response,  $N = 134$ : Teachers,  $n = 93$ , Principals,  $n = 31$ . The expected ratio of teacher-to-principal code frequencies is 69:31.

The semi-structured interview asked the principals to reflect on their leadership influence on organizational well-being (OWB). These questions were: *What are three ways, as the principal, that you tend to the organizational well-being in your school? What are the key sources of information/evidence that you use to assess the effects of your leadership or the impact of your decisions?* The questions expanded on the written response questions that all survey participants were invited to answer. Table 33 displays the identified themes from the interview responses regarding self-identified behaviors that support OWB. A table with subcategories and frequency of code application can be found in Appendix E.

**Table 33**

*Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Principal Self-Perception of Influence on OWB*

Influencing Factors	Principal Responses
Supportive and In the Trenches	7
Relationships and Care	7
Open and Approachable	7
Focus on Well-being	5
Shared Leadership and Decision-making	4
Authenticity and Humility	4
Common Vision and Expectations	3

*Note.* Based on responses from seven principal interviews.

The themes from the principal interviews were similar to the themes identified from the survey open-ended written question about principal influence on OWB. Although the themes were the same (i.e., *Supportive and In the Trenches*) or similar (i.e., *Relationships and Care: Affective Leadership*) there were differences in how the

interviewed principals described their actions and their effect. For example, the theme of *Positive and Sets the Tone* from the survey open-ended responses was not explicitly stated in the interviews. There was an implied sense by all the principals that their actions matter in the greater community. An example of this is in Louise's statement, "I think it starts where I'm at, my own headspace. So, what are my visions? What I'd like the school year to look like and feel like." Most of the principals seemed to avoid focusing on themselves directly but emphasized their role in service to the staff, students and the organization. A difference, in addition to the missing theme, when compared with themes from the written responses, was a new theme of Authenticity and Humility.

***Supportive and In the Trenches.*** The most prevalent theme in teacher responses was the importance of principal support. The codes applied to teacher responses and principal responses were proportionally close to expected based on the number of responses for each role. Teacher responses had slightly more than the 69% expected; 73% of codes applied to teacher responses and 27% to principal responses. The responses from teachers and principal participants were similar. They revolved around three key descriptions: in the trenches, clearing a path, and has our back.

Some of the responses from teachers referred to principal support in a general sense, such as this comment from a teacher, "My principal shows genuine care for the staff and wants staff to feel supported." Another teacher respondent shared a similar sentiment, "A positive and supportive work environment is established by leadership on an ongoing basis." Other teacher respondents describe a more active version of support where the principal works alongside them. This idea is supported by this

comment from a teacher, “My principal is an incredible advocate for her staff and students. She goes out of her way to meet the needs of the people around her.”

Similarly, this teacher respondent values how their principal is “actively involved in my classroom regarding problem solving with particular students, follow-ups, support parent meetings, and asks how can I support you?” Principal respondents also acknowledged the importance of engaging in the work with teachers, as is supported in this response, “I am in the trenches with all the staff, supporting and helping whenever possible.” Another principal respondent explained, “I work on getting into classrooms, help manage behaviors and take things off their plates.” These comments reflect principal support as being present and actively engaged alongside their teachers.

Another form of support noted by teacher respondents is when principals clear a path by removing unnecessary tasks allowing teachers to focus on their core work. One teacher response expressed this idea, “She prioritizes the most important things to best support learning and students.” Another teacher respondent said, “My principal makes their best effort to take away as many administrivia type tasks from staff as possible, so staff can focus on student improvement.” Or, as this teacher respondent says, “He [the principal] also highly values our time by not inundating us with unnecessary tasks.” The value of this active support is acknowledged by this teacher respondent, “Our principal is a humble human. Many times, our principal will take on more to help relieve staff burden.” Principal respondents also acknowledged this part of their role, as is supported by this comment, “It’s my job to screen out the noise so

that students and teachers can focus on what is important.” Prioritizing the work of teaching that most affects students appears to be a valued part of principal support.

When principals are actively engaged in the work with teachers and committed to prioritizing teaching and learning, they are in a position to support teachers with what they need. A teacher respondent shared, “admin focuses on the work teachers want to accomplish and giving us enough time to get it done.” Or as this principal respondent expressed, it is important to “ensure staff have all the necessary tools to do their work well.” When principals assure teachers are supported to do the work, teacher respondents expressed confidence in this support. As this teacher respondent praised, “it is very clear that she will always have our back.”

***Interview Responses: Supportive and In the Trenches.*** Principals interviewed confirm a clear thread of ‘support’ and servant leadership in each principal interview. As Jane said, “I encourage people to ask what they need to be good at their job. My job is to help you get your job done.” The idea of ‘in service to’ the work of teachers, along with Relationships and Care were the most prevalent threads in the interviews. Every principal interviewed talked about intentionally asking teachers, “How can I support you?” Like Jane, Myka talked about “Ensuring they have the supports in place” to do their work. Grace discussed the allocation of resources and shared that her question to teachers is always, “Is it going to support your work? Then the answer is yes - if it’s going to make teaching and learning more effective.” These principals see supporting their teachers and the work of teaching and learning as a foundational piece of their work.

In addition to providing necessary resources and supports Myka, Jane, and Louise intentionally try to reduce teacher workload. Myka shared, “I want to take things off people’s plates.” Both Louise and Jane discussed giving people permission not to do something or to step away from something extra. As Jane says,

I’m at the stage in my career where there are just some things I don’t ask teachers to do because they are stupid. I just say, “I’m taking that off your plate.” That’s not behaving badly. I’m just saying “I’m giving you permission not to do that.”

For Louise, this permission is coupled with the reassurance that “We got this” Susan expressed the importance of teachers knowing they will promptly have the administration’s support when needed. She stresses the importance of “having that [administrative support] available to them, knowing they can reach out even in the middle of the day or a lesson when something is going on.” There was a consistent perception among the principals that their role is to provide the necessities so the teachers could focus on teaching.

In support of this, five principals referenced the work they do alongside their teachers. Leigh talked about the work she does directly with students who are dysregulated. Jane shared, “I appreciate how hands-on our whole [administrative] team is. They [teachers] appreciate that if we are short staff, one of us is coming to do the work.” These principals see the value of being present in teaching and learning spaces. Susan supports this by saying, “Making my presence known within the classrooms. I know my kids. I know what the needs are. I am like a learning coach as well - getting the students what they need.” For these principals, a critical part of how



they see their role is in supporting teachers with resources, time, and other supports, protecting teachers from extraneous demands, and working in service to teachers (in classrooms?).

***Teacher Voice and Autonomy.*** While principal support is critical for organizational well-being, teacher voice and professional autonomy were equally prevalent in the comments when looking at both teacher and principal survey responses. For teacher responses, this theme included three aspects: professional autonomy, having a voice in decision making and feeling heard. In this theme, 63% of the code applications were to teacher responses and 38% to principal respondents. Principal responses echoed similar ideas to teacher responses.

Teacher respondents value professional autonomy, being trusted and empowered to carry out tasks related to their role. As this teacher response reflects, “Having a principal who values your work, you as a person and teacher, trusts professional judgment is so important.” Another example of this found in the teacher responses is:

Our principal is a real principal of the people. She recognizes that we all have strengths and bring different experiences and will openly admit when she feels she is not the expert in an area. I am allowed to collaborate with my fellow specialized education teachers with her full support.

Or as this teacher expressed, “He also treats teachers like the professionals they are, and doesn’t micromanage us.” Valued is a leader who demonstrates respect and trust for the expertise in the school and empowers teachers as professionals.

Another aspect of autonomy important to teachers is having a voice in decision-making and feeling heard. One teacher shared, “Our opinion is valued, and we are given so much opportunity to collaborate and contribute to decision making.” Other teachers noted “leadership seeks for input from staff for new initiatives...” and “out of the box thinking is valued and appreciated.” For these teacher respondents, a principal who values their voice and ideas is a positive influence on OWB.

Professional autonomy is acknowledged directly in a few principal responses as expressed here, “Ensuring staff have autonomy to make decisions is important to me as well, this helps build a trusting relationship.” More often, principal comments prioritized opportunities for staff input in decision-making. As this principal respondent asserts, “I have a responsibility to ensure that every voice is heard and all viewpoints are considered.” Teacher respondents also frequently spoke about the value of input in to decision making and being heard. As this teacher respondent said, “My principal does her best to include the perspectives of all staff.” Another teacher respondent said the principal “trusts my judgment. Asks for my input when making decisions that may impact me.” Yet another teacher respondent says,

My principal definitely allows for staff to have their input in decision making instead of taking a top-down approach. I feel like our input is highly valued and even very non-traditional ideas are given consideration. I think this type of environment is very welcoming and supportive to school staff.

This comment is reflected in a similar principal response,

I have heard from many of our staff that being thoughtful in including them in decisions, being transparent for items they may not have input on and being supportive of their talents and endeavors creates a positive workplace.

Teacher and principal respondents agree that opportunities to give input and be heard are important aspects of leadership influence on organizational well-being.

***Interview Responses: Shared Leadership and Teacher Voice.*** Similarly, four of the interviewed principals explicitly spoke about gathering input from teachers as a positive leadership practice. Leigh says, “I’ve learned to delegate. I’d rather see what we can do together.” She values shared decision-making, listening to input, and being flexible in her leadership based on the input. Myka said, “I try very hard to not make decisions in isolation. I gain feedback from my design team.” Jane and Louise acknowledge the importance of putting their ego aside to empower others to lead or take ownership of the work.

***Affective Leadership.*** Affective leadership, as reflected in the responses, refers to a leader perceived as caring, compassionate, and connected. When a principal is perceived to have these qualities, teacher respondents acknowledged a positive impact on OWB. In the theme of affective leadership, 61% of the codes were applied to teacher comments and 39% to principal comments. As this teacher’s response asserts, their principal “really cares about her staff. That is obvious. The respect and trust she offers staff shows her confidence in us.” Another teacher response adds to this idea, “Our principal genuinely cares about the well-being of staff, students and families. She makes everyone feel heard and checks in very often.” Similarly, this principal respondent shared, “I wear my heart on my sleeve and I genuinely and authentically

care about my school community. This is reflected back at me with the kindness that is evident around our school.” Interesting in this comment is the reciprocal nature of the affective stance which has not been seen in other themes.

There were a couple of instances in teacher and principal comments referencing “treats,” such as this from a teacher, “My principal also provides treats throughout the year as a way to boost morale and to show they appreciate the work that happens in the school.” A principal respondent said they “try my best to do the little things - the thank you notes, coffee and muffins in the morning, etc.” More often, though, responses referred to traits of kindness and compassion rather than specific acts of giving. This is affirmed in these teacher comments, “Our principal is kind, efficient, sympathetic, understanding,” “Our principal is very kind and compassionate and always trying to find ways to increase our well-being,” or this reference by a teacher to their “exceptionally compassionate leader.” Principal respondents did not refer directly to these traits but spoke to the importance of relationships, as is evident in this comment, “I put relationships first and make time to honor the commitments of other staff. I make time to listen to their celebrations, concerns, and stories.” Another principal respondent expressed the same idea, “Fostering effective relationships is a strength of mine and one that I feel is crucial for all other elements to be in place to create an organizational structure where people feel valued and supported.” Although treats or other explicit acts of kindness have a positive effect, more often, teachers appreciate care and compassion as a way of being.

***Interview Responses: Relationships and Care.*** Relationships are critically important for the principals interviewed. Myka says, “I genuinely love these people,

big ones and little ones.” This sentiment is echoed by Louise, who says, “You create that [positive atmosphere] because you genuinely love on everybody.” All seven principals shared the importance of knowing their teachers professionally and personally. For Leigh, this means “Noticing people and knowing the things about them that matter both in the classroom and their lives.” Rebecca, too, values “building relationships and making sure that I’m maintaining those relationships, both professionally and personally.” Susan acknowledges the importance of “knowing your people and using their strengths and expertise.” Relationships build trust and a stronger team.

Because this group of principals is so connected to their staff, they know the work that is being done, acknowledging that work is an intentional practice described by five of the seven. Susan and Grace regularly write notes or publicly acknowledge specific things team members do beyond their obligations. Myka and Louise make a point to provide positive feedback about what is seen in the classrooms. And Jane shared,

I make up cards every year to say, ‘Have I told you lately that you amaze me?’

I have a list of all my staff and try to be intentional about making sure people are recognized.

Connecting and valuing the relationships is not left to chance by these seven principals.

Building relationships takes conscious effort on the part of the principal. All seven principals discussed purposeful and regular ‘check-ins’ with their staff. For some, like Grace, check-ins are part of their daily routine. For others, like Rebecca, it

is also because “they don’t always come to me, so doing those check-ins is important.”

Myka intentionally “checks in on those who may have a change in behavior.”

Checking in is a way of keeping a pulse on how staff are doing personally and, in their work, and determining what they need to be well in both areas. As Louise says, “I check in with them a lot. Lots of check-ins after school, sitting in each of their rooms, just casually talking with them, seeing how the kids are doing.” For these principals, maintaining relationships is a critical active part of their work.

*Positive and Sets the Tone.* Another theme evident in the survey response was how the principal can set the tone for the school through positive energy and behaviors. One teacher respondent described their principal in this way, “Leads by example spreading empowerment and positive energy and creative ideas. Supportive and pragmatic. Very real and very present.” Another teacher stated, “Our leadership team leads by example, making our school a safe and welcoming place for all.” This is echoed in this teacher response, “My principal sets the tone for the school that we are open, honest, and respectful.” For teachers, principals can influence the school environment through their actions.

Although 16 teacher respondents were tagged with this code, proportionately, more principal comments (52%) expressed this idea. This principal response reflects this idea, “Whatever tone the leader sets will be picked up by the staff and then by students.” Another principal respondent said it this way, “I think we as leaders set the tone of the building and create the culture.” For teacher responses, two subcodes were evident: leading by example and setting the tone. This teacher response captured both

of these, “I have taught with many principals and feel strongly that the leadership and example of the principal is what sets the tone for staff and parents and students.”

Principal respondents provided more detail about how they set the tone with their presence. For one principal respondent that is “Modelling a sense of calm, setting expectations to promote a safe and supportive learning environment, and accessing necessary resources are essential when it comes to the well-being of our organization.” Another principal respondent felt their “energy, disposition and diplomacy has a direct impact on the well-being of the community.” Principal respondents said that how they show up makes a difference and that “The principal role is foundational in setting the tone of a school.”

***Clarity of Vision and Expectations.*** Teacher respondents identified clear communication about school vision and expectations as a key factor to OWB. This theme applied to 19 teacher responses and 13 principal comments. In this theme, teachers and principals shared similar perspectives. As one teacher respondent said, “Clear communication, support, and a clear vision with expectations allows for everyone to know what is expected of them and that they are part of a team.” This comment was echoed by a principal respondent who said, “As a principal, it is important to me that ‘everyone is in’ when creating a positive school culture so we collaborate and work collectively when setting expectations.” This clear communication provides predictability and certainly for teachers, as expressed by this teacher respondent, “expectations are shared early enough that it removes the stress of not getting it done on time.” Another teacher participant shared this view, “I always feel like I know what is expected of me.” Supporting OWB with clear expectations is

understood by principals, as is evident in this statement, “I communicate well in advance and try to ensure that staff have what they need to do their job.” This principal respondent supports this idea, “As a principal, it is my duty to ensure that our school has a shared vision and that we work collaboratively to meet the goals set out in our school plan.” Understanding expectations and working towards a shared goal provides stability within the organization.

***Interview Responses: Common Vision and Expectations.*** Not as prevalent but still evident in three of the interviews is the importance of common school-wide practice. In the open-ended responses, teacher and principal respondents referenced clarity of vision and expectations as a strength of OWB. Grace and Rebecca commented on common messaging and clear, concise communication as practices they use to support OWB. Rebecca felt that long-term planning and clarity around structures and plans provided certainty for her staff. Louise shared, “It’s just being really intentional about expectations.” These principals believe clarity around communication, plans, and expectations provides a structure that supports OWB.

***Focus on Well-Being.*** According to 26 participants (19 teacher respondents and 7 principal respondents), personal and collective well-being does not happen by chance but requires intention. As this teacher respondent said, “Our principal is amazing at ensuring staff morale and well-being are front of mind.” Another teacher’s response reflected the same idea, “I believe that student and teacher well-being is always forefront on administrations’ mind.” Seven principal respondents shared similar views. This principal response echoes what teacher respondents said, “Wellness is a huge priority for me as a school leader and I talk about it fairly



consistently.” One teacher acknowledged two levels of well-being, “Very understanding and supportive of team and teacher wellbeing.” Whereas other teachers viewed this theme through a personal lens, as expressed in this teacher response, “It is clear that my principal values organizational well-being. They regularly communicate that staff should prioritize theirs and their family’s well-being when needed over being at work.” Two principal respondents spoke specifically about supporting staff work/life balance. These teacher respondents appreciate the intentional work of principals to attend to personal and collective well-being.

***Interview Responses: Focus on Well-Being.*** Supporting, building relationships, and being available all contribute to OWB, but the principals also acknowledge a need to make well-being a focus. Five principals discuss prioritizing the well-being of their staff, students, and the school community. Leigh ensures that “intentional acts of care” are a part of her daily routine. Like others, she brings in tangible items such as coffee and donuts to boost staff morale. Jane spoke about having a “presumption of hope and offering of support” as a critical leadership mindset that changes how she views her team. Like Leigh, she enjoys rewarding her team with tangible treats and likes to give them to teachers in front of students to “show students how incredible their teachers are.” Jane says:

I set up some really purposeful opportunities for us to gather that is purposeful work on our mental health and well-being. We check in with each other and have genuine, purposeful conversations and just really focus on the positive.

Susan is aware of her well-being and that of her staff. She says, “This year has been hard. I really encourage them to take care of themselves. If my own well-being isn’t in

place. I'm not even going to notice what's going on for staff, either." Each of these principals shared how they monitor morale and staff well-being and respond purposefully to boost when needed.

***Open and Approachable.*** A principal who is open and approachable was perceived as a positive factor to OWB by 17 teacher respondents representing 77% of the code applications for this theme. One teacher respondent expressed it this way, "A principal who hears and listens to staff and is approachable leads to a more positive climate for the entire staff." Another teacher respondent reflected on their principal, "She has an open-door policy and offers useful suggestions/solutions when problems arise." A principal who is open to suggestions and feedback is an asset to the school. This teacher response supports that idea, "She is always available to discuss things that can positively impact the school." As does this one, "Our principal is open and transparent with the staff and always welcomes feedback and support." Only a few principal respondents spoke to these specifically, but the responses reflect the teachers' as is seen in this principal comment, "I have begun work on culture in the building, try to model my talk and try to be open, approachable and responsive to problems."

***Interview Responses: Open and Approachable.*** All seven principals identified having an open-door policy. They talked about physically having their office door open and being open and available for conversations. Jane shared,

Being available to people also improves well-being. My door is primarily always open and I always tell people - people come first, come on in. Tell me how things are going. Being visible really helps.

Grace, Leigh, Rebecca, and Louise agree - their doors are always open. Susan stressed the importance of “making myself available when I’m at work.” In addition to availability, Jane and Louise emphasized the importance of being present and listening when teachers come to share. Louise says, “I really go in with the intention of just listening to see where they are at. What do you want to do, tell me and then we make it happen?” Jane expressed it this way, “Ask questions when something feels off. Listening is big. Just being really active listeners and listening for what you hear and what you don’t hear.” Acknowledged by all principals interviewed is being available for staff.

*Interview Responses: Authenticity and Humility.* This theme was present in six of the seven interviews but not explicitly coded in survey responses. Authenticity and humility refer to a sense of staying true to oneself and leading in a way that puts others at the center. Leigh said, “I try to be as authentic as possible.” Myka says, “I’m also free with apologies because boy, oh boy, I am not perfect and I screw up. I need them to know I’m authentic in that.” For Rebecca and Jane, being transparent contributes to authenticity. They both stressed the importance of sharing their thinking clearly and honestly. A commitment to values was important for all the principals interviewed. For most, that was a value of service. As Jane shared, “My messaging is very much around service. How can we make teachers’ lives better?”

Also prevalent in all principal responses was the commitment to making decisions based on what is best for the staff and the students. Leigh, for example, keeps a couple of guiding questions at the forefront that remind her to think of what kind of teaching and learning she would want if her own children were in these spaces.

Humility was coded in four principal responses. These four principals asserted that their role is not to know everything. Susan supported this idea by saying, “I’m very collaborative in how I work because I don’t feel like I have all the answers.” Leigh reflected, “Maybe it’s a little refreshing that I don’t ever pretend to have the answers.” In spite of all the evidence of their leadership effect, there was a sense in the interviews that these principals give most of the credit to their teachers. This is evident in the comment by Myka, “I don’t feel like I do anything big, at all.”

### ***Summary of Principal Leadership on OWB***

There were many consistencies between teacher and principal descriptions of positive leadership influence and for study participants, most view leadership positively. There are strong correlations between teacher perceptions of principal authentic leadership and school culture. There is also a strong positive correlation between principal leadership, as perceived by teachers and organizational well-being factor of teacher professional well-being. Principal self-reports of their authentic leadership were weakly correlated with school culture outcomes. Principal support is a key leadership behavior valued by teachers and acknowledged as important by principals. One distinct difference in principal responses is how they decentralize their role compared to their teacher perceptions of principal significance.

### **Perceptual Congruence and Organizational Well-Being**

RQ3 explores relationships between principal and teacher perceptions within school-based groups to determine *what relationship, if any, exists between the perceptual congruence of principal practices and reported levels of organizational*

*well-being*. To explore perceptual congruence at this level, schools with six teacher responses or schools with four or more teacher responses representing at least 25% of eligible teachers were identified. Nineteen schools met this criterion. Two schools were excluded, one due to an admin team larger than three and the other because the principal survey was incomplete. Therefore, seventeen schools were included in analyzing school-based perceptual congruence and related effects. Most of these schools were elementary ( $n = 14$ ), with one K - 9, one 7 - 9, and one 10-12 school. Most principals were female (83%), as were the teacher respondents (87%). Principal and teacher survey results were compared to explore perceptual congruence at the school level within school-based teams, principal.

### ***Quantitative Survey Analysis for Perceptual Congruence***

To address RQ3, each school's mean scores for total ALQ were separated based on roles. Appendix L displays the mean scores for all schools used in this analysis. For the purpose of this study, a mean score of 3 or higher on the ALQ was considered 'high.' Based on this criterion, 14/17 schools had teacher mean ALQ scores in the 'high' range. In three of the four schools with lower ALQ teacher mean scores, principals had a higher self-rating ALQ mean score, although this difference was not statistically significant. An independent  $t$ -test was used to compare ALQ mean scores between the principal and the teachers for each school. Two schools, School 10 ( $t(5) = -6.37, p < .01$ ) and School 47 ( $t(3) = -3.72, p = .03$ ), appear to show that these principals under-rated their ALQ by a statistically significant amount compared to their teachers. Further exploration using an independent samples  $t$ -test comparing the

subscales of the ALQ revealed School 10 ( $t(5) = -6.42, p < .01$ ) and School 24 ( $t(4) = -3.67, p = .02$ ) principals under-rated their levels of “Balanced Processing” compared to the teachers by a statistically significant amount. Looking at the “Transparency” subscale of the ALQ using an independent samples  $t$ -test, principals in School 28 ( $t(3) = -4.92, p = .02$ ), School 41 ( $t(5) = -3.92, p = .01$ ), and School 47 ( $t(3) = -3.72, p = .03$ ) appear to under-rate their levels by a statistically significant amount compared to their teachers’ ratings. Table 34 displays the means and standard deviations for teachers and principals in these schools. This analysis shows 87% of schools ( $n = 13$ ) showed no significant difference between teacher and principal ratings of the principal’s authentic leadership.

To further explore perceptual congruence at the school level, it was important to look at how teachers and principals rated the culture of their school as measured by the SCTS. When comparing total SCTS mean scores between principals and teachers, there were no statistically significant differences in any of the schools ( $p > .05$ ). When comparing subscales of the SCTS, two schools, School 22 ( $t(3) = 2.94, p = .03$ ) and School 41 ( $t(3) = -3.31, p = .02$ ), showed statistically significant differences between teacher-report and principal-reported mean scores of “Professional Collegiality.” These comparisons would suggest that in most schools, there was a high level of perceptual congruence between teachers and principals of school culture as measured by the SCTS.

**Table 34**

*Comparison of Authentic Leadership Mean Scores for Schools with Some Significant Differences*

School #		<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
10	Total ALQ	7	3.88	.20
	Teacher Responses	6	3.96	.08
	Principal Responses	1	3.43	-
24	Total ALQ	6	3.82	.25
	Teacher Responses	5	3.89	.22
	Principal Responses	1	3.50	-
28	Total ALQ	5	3.54	.31
	Teacher Responses	4	3.66	.19
	Principal Responses	1	3.06	-
41	Total ALQ	7	3.56	.31
	Teacher Responses	6	3.61	.30
	Principal Responses	1	3.25	-
47	Total ALQ	5	3.69	.42
	Teacher Responses	4	3.85	.21
	Principal Responses	1	3.00	-

Finally, RQ3 was looking to understand the relationship between perceptual congruence and levels of organizational well-being. For this study, organizational well-being is measured by the SCTS and the TWBS. The previous analysis showed high levels of congruence at most schools about authentic leadership and school culture. The next step is to look at the levels of organizational outcomes. Since the

perceptions were generally congruent, the next analysis looked at correlations between leadership perception levels and well-being outcomes for each school. For this study, results on the ALQ were considered positive at 3 or above, SCTS at 3.6 or above, and TWBS at 5 or higher. When looking at ALQ scores, 14 schools had mean scores of 3 or higher, and eight of those were 3.5 or higher. Using 3.6 as the baseline for the SCTS identified 13 schools with high school culture, and four were above 4.4, which Wagner (2006) labels high. There were eight schools with TWB mean scores of 5 or more. Three schools had mean scores on the ALQ, the SCTS, and the TWBS below “positive” baselines. These baseline scores were used to determine the positive effect.

No clear patterns emerged when looking at correlations between ALQ scores and scores from the SCTS. Schools 39, 42, and 50 had mean ALQ scores below the baseline and SCTS scores below the baseline. School 22 also had a mean score on the SCTS below 3.6 but had ALQ mean score above 3. For thirteen schools, the ALQ mean score and the SCTS mean score were both considered positive. Pearson correlation coefficients showed no significant correlation between mean ALQ scores and SCTS mean scores in six schools ( $p > .05$ ). These six schools all had ALQ mean scores and SCTS mean scores above the “positive” baseline. In seven schools, Pearson correlation coefficients between SCTS and ALQ were identified. These correlations were strong, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 62% to 95%. These seven schools included Schools 42 and 50, where SCTS mean scores were below the “positive” baseline. In the four remaining schools, positive correlations were found between ALQ mean scores and one or more subscales of the SCTS.



Similarly, when looking at ALQ and TWBS mean scores, there were no clear patterns of correlation. In five schools, Pearson correlation coefficients between mean ALQ and TWBS scores were found. All of the correlations in these schools were strong, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 82% to 95% ( $p < .05$ ). In other schools the relationship between ALQ and TWBS were less obvious.

Four other schools showed no significant correlation between these two measures. In one school, there was a very strong negative correlation between the mean ALQ score and mean TWBS score, with an  $R^2$  value of 93% ( $p = .04$ ). In three schools, where significant correlations were not found between mean ALQ scores and mean TWBS scores, significant positive correlations were found between subscales of the ALQ and the “Organizational well-being” subscale of the TWBS, with  $R^2$  values ranging from 73% to 94% ( $p < .05$ ). Because of the variance in correlation patterns, it would seem the context of the school plays a role in how leadership is perceived.

Once again, Schools 39, 42, and 50, the schools with below baseline scores for ALQ, had below baseline mean scores for TWBS. Although this is interesting, Pearson correlation coefficients showed no significant correlation between mean ALQ and TWBS scores in these schools.

### ***Qualitative Survey Analysis for Perceptual Congruence***

All survey respondents were asked: *to what degree do you think your perceptions of the principal's [your]role in influencing organizational well-being would match that of your principal [teachers]?* The response to this question was a rating on a 10-point linear scale. The rating scale was followed by an open-ended

written response opportunity for participants to explain their rating. The mean scores on this rating scale were positive for teachers ( $M = 7.76$ ,  $SD = 2.14$ ) and principals ( $M = 7.15$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ). An independent  $t$ -test showed no statistically significant difference between teacher ratings and principal ratings ( $p < .05$ ). An analysis of the comments provided a deeper understanding of how principals and teachers determine if they are in alignment. The comments were analyzed in two parts - first, all responses were coded to get a sense of all teachers and all principals; then, responses were isolated from the schools chosen which met the criteria for comparative analysis between principals and teachers.

#### **Written Response Analysis Perceptual Congruence for All Respondents.**

There were 75 teacher comments in response to the rating scale and 40 principal responses. The majority of the responses were positive, indicating that respondents perceived high levels of congruence between teachers and principals. For teachers, 77% ( $n = 58$ ) of responses indicated confidence in perceptual congruence, whereas 60% ( $n = 24$ ) of principal respondents were certain about the alignment with their teachers' perceptions. Some respondents stated that they were unsure about how to judge perceptual congruence or were unsure of the perception of others.

***Low Perceived Congruence.*** For those responses which were not positive, some were coded as "don't know" and the rest as "negative or incongruence." A few teachers ( $n = 6$ ) stated they did not understand the concept of perceptual congruence, and one other said they had no idea how they would know. Uncertainty about this question was seen in principal comments as well, with 8 principals commenting that this question was challenging for them. For example, one principal said, "This is a

difficult question. I would like to think our perceptions would match; however, I feel things are different now after the past two years. I cannot fully articulate exactly what is different, it just feels different.” Another principal simply said, “I have no idea how the staff would rate me.” Two others felt they might not have the full picture as seen in this comment, “I feel that this staff comes to me with challenges they are facing or honesty around well-being, but there may be some staff who do not feel confident sharing their truths with me.” Others responded with caution, such as “I hope we are aligned...” or “I suspect they will align...” Another acknowledged they “have a hard time acknowledging my strengths.”

There were 11 teachers and 7 principals who felt the perceptual congruence between teachers and principals would be low. It is important to note that the response rate from teachers for this question was only 51%, and 14% of those responses reflect a perception of low congruence. This is reflective of the quantitative rating scale, with a response rate of 97%, about perceptual congruence where 14% of teachers chose a rating of 5 or less. Some of these teachers attributed this to negative outcomes or actions such as “the morale of staff has decreased with recent leadership changes,” “it is quite clear that since this principal has been at our school that we have gone very much in a downward direction,” or “they are very intelligent and have really great aspirations for school improvement, but little action has been taken.” Another teacher shared that there was no perceived congruence around the principal’s role. Their comments in the previous written response questions provided more insight:

Staff have not been empowered to contribute in any decision-making areas and are always the last to know. When staff attempt to make suggestions or put

forward their ideas, they are always shut down, almost immediately. Staff feel as though the only way to get their messages, ideas, or points across is by pushing our admin into a corner until they listen.

For other teachers, the incongruence was more about a lack of principal awareness as this teacher response suggests, “I think she would be surprised to hear that people are quiet around her or are keeping opinions to themselves.” This same teacher had commented in the responses about principal leadership that, “There is a certain undercurrent of stress and “stay on her good side” from some members of the staff.” This comment provides a bit more insight into perceptions about trust in the relationship. Another said, “I’m not sure she realizes I don’t feel heard.” The idea of not feeling heard was echoed by four additional teachers. This teacher’s response also alludes to self-awareness, “based on what my principal verbalizes as their values and then what they demonstrate by their actions, there is a limited level of self-awareness.” When teacher respondents perceived low congruence, they based their judgment on principal actions, outcomes, or personal interactions with the principal.

For principal respondents who perceive low levels of perceptual congruence, the comments were mostly focused on teachers. This is evident in this comment, “I believe that teachers often don’t know all that happens behind the scenes.” This sentiment is also supported by this principal response, “Staff who have not taken advantage of opportunities may have a limited scope of understanding of these areas.” Other principal respondents acknowledged a lack of strength in the relationship between them and their teachers. For example, “Some staff don’t trust...” or “Staff may not know me as well...” The number of responses that reflect a perception of

low congruence are less frequent than ones that perceive high congruence. For principals, incongruence may be from teachers who lack contextual knowledge or are less engaged in school-based work, but, like teachers, principals seem to realize the importance of relationships and trust.

***High Perceived Congruence.*** Although the majority of participants believe there is high perceptual congruence between teachers and principals, there are differences in how principal respondents and teacher respondents come to understand each other's perceptions. Teachers primarily look to a principal's actions to determine if their own perceptions align with their leader. Whereas, principals primarily look to conversations and feedback as mechanisms for understanding how their leadership is perceived. Teacher respondents also valued conversations and feedback but to a lesser extent than principal respondents. Both teachers and principals provided evidence that authentic behaviors, such as transparency and humility, contribute to perceptual congruence.

For most teacher respondents, evidence of alignment comes primarily through the actions of their principals. The most common reason teacher respondents perceived high congruences (40% of respondents) was due to specific principal actions or how a principal's actions align with their perception of a strong leader. comments suggest that when a leader behaves in ways that align with a teacher respondent's "leadership schema" or their idea of a strong principal, there is high perceived congruence. This teacher response supports this statement, "The principal matches my perception of what principals should be like." Another teacher respondent expresses a similar idea, "My principal continues to exceed my perceptions of a principal's role in

influencing organizational well-being.” The teacher respondent said it this way, “I want a principal that views their staff as human. Mine does.” Or, simply put, “She is quite literally the dream principal.” Other teacher responses spoke specifically of principal actions as evidence of alignment. Responses supporting this list many behaviors such as, “Our principal acknowledges hard work and is supportive,” “Our principal provides tons of support...,” “My principal leads with compassion and integrity,” or they are “very involved, cares about staff, excellent leader.” Some teacher respondents just said, “They are doing a fantastic job.” When a principal behaves in a way that reflects what teacher respondents identified as positive influencing actions, there is a positive belief of perceptual congruence. Of interest to note is that only one principal spoke directly about specific leadership actions that teachers might see as evidence of their leadership.

For both teacher ( $n = 10$ ) and principal ( $n = 15$ ) respondents, conversations and feedback were another way of building perceptual congruence. Beyond actions, open communication is valued to ensure perceptual alignment. A higher percentage of principal respondents included this in their comments than teachers but the responses held similar ideas. One teacher respondent said, “I think our principal has a realistic idea of how others view her based on conversations we have had.” Another teacher respondent referred to “ongoing, open, frank, philosophical and practical discussion.” Five principal respondents referenced conversations as an intentional practice for understanding how their leadership is perceived. As this principal respondent shared, “I hope we are aligned. I work hard to engage in on-going conversations.” Other principal respondents referred to “explicit discussions” and “direct conversations.” For

other principal respondents, seeking input and feedback is valued. As this principal respondent said, “I’m not 100% certain that I am aware of what others perceive of me which is why I look for input and feedback periodically throughout the year.” Another principal respondent agreed, “I think I am self-reflective and in good communication with my leadership staff. I notice and receive feedback on issues that arise.” Outside of formal conversations and feedback, five respondents referred to paying attention to what people are saying. This is evident in this principal response, “We are most frequently congruent on these matters. When perceptions do not align, I double down on listening, more listening, and asking questions.”

Another factor which is perceived to support perceptual congruence is leadership authenticity, specifically humility and transparency. Authenticity was reflected in 11% of teacher comments and 18% of principal comments. All the principal comments coded under *Authentic* spoke about being transparent about their decisions or actions. As these principal respondents explain, “I take time to explain thinking behind decisions...” or “I try to be transparent as possible providing rationale for all decisions.” This trait is evident in teacher responses such as these, “He leans to open and transparent communication regarding school functioning, including the decisions being made” or “My principal shares her feelings and morals.” Almost all the teacher comments coded with authenticity spoke to their leader’s humility as expressed in this teacher response, “He is modest and not looking for credit.” Another teacher respondent shared a similar observation in that their principal “has her eyes open except she may be humble about this.” Another teacher respondent said, “I don’t

think she knows how amazing she is and how much of a positive impact she has on so many.”

**Qualitative Analysis Exploring Perceptual Congruence in School-based Principal-Teacher groups.** Comments were isolated for each open-ended written response for school-based groups with six teacher respondents or at least four teacher respondents representing 25% or more of eligible teachers. The written response questions between principals and teachers were very similar. Most of the comments were positive, although four schools each had one response of 3 or less on the rating scales that was followed by a negative comment. Lower reported scores were infrequent at the school level and among the whole data set. One challenge when interpreting responses is response rate. It is difficult to know if there is a positive response bias in that other voices of dissension did not respond. The less positive responses, although few, add an important perspective to the study.

***Perceptions of Organizational Well-Being.*** Teacher participants and their principals were most aligned in their perception of OWB at their schools. Comments from the teachers were very similar to those from the principal, as shown by these two excerpts from School 36 that had high perceptions (8+) of school culture. This teacher from School 36 responded, “Our school culture is EXTREMELY positive. Administration is always available to listen to positive/negative events and responds in a timely matter to all. We are truly supported.” The principal’s response from the same school reflects the teacher’s,

School staff are positive and supportive of one another, unlike any staff I have ever worked with before. While we have had restrictions due to covid and



therefore some limitations on what we can do together, we have managed to find ways around them. I feel most staff are happy, engaged, and collaborating to teach and learn together for our students!

In School 22, there was agreement in the moderate rating of OWB (6 - 7) between teachers and the principal and similarities in the responses. The principal of School 22 shared they felt OWB had been impacted by factors such as COVID-19, budget cuts, larger classes and more complex student needs. The principal also said, “We are digging into our culture and values this year, as a staff, and I expect the well-being to go up as we continue this work.” A teacher response from School 22 shared, “I chose 7 because the school is trying to make positive progress yet there are many factors that are out of the school’s control. For example: the consequences of COVID, budgeting...” Both responses referenced external factors and a positive effort to move forward.

In some schools, comments revealed some differences in perspective. This difference was evident in School 28, where teachers and the principal rated OWB as high (8+). In this case, the principal shared,

For the most part, I believe there is a fairly high sense of organizational well-being. The area for concern is collective well-being. Long standing feuds between individual teachers and relationship cliques have prevented true synergy amongst the whole staff.

In contrast, a teacher from this school wrote, “I would define our school as collectively stronger than our constituent parts. Respect is given and received as far as

I can reasonably perceive.” Where the principal expressed concern for collective well-being, the teacher praised the strength in the collective.

Another example of rating agreement between teachers and principals (moderate in this case of 7) and different perspectives on the strengths or issues was seen in School 48. The principal said, “Time given/created if possible” as a strength. One of the teacher responses included, “We are not given the time to do what we have to do,” as a challenge to OWB.

*Perceptions for Principal Influence on Organizational Well-Being.* Similar evidence is available for responses related to perceptions of principal influence on OWB. An example of alignment is at School 10, where leadership influence was rated high (8-10). The principal at School 10 had this to say about their leadership influence

I am intentional to ensure we are laughing, collaborating, celebrating, giving shout outs, sharing vulnerabilities with each other. I try to lead by example by doing the same things. I am in the trenches with all the staff, supporting and helping whenever possible. They know I am there to support and also hold accountable... and I want and need the same from them. I am clear with expectations they can have of me and those I have of them.

A teacher response at School 10 agreed, “She sets the standard and holds us accountable with reasonable expectations. She will offer support if required.” Another teacher respondent from School 10 said, “The principal sets the tone for the staff, students, and families.”

The reasons given about leadership influences in School 18, with high congruence ratings (8-9), were quite different between the principal and teachers. The

principal of School 18 shared they “believe that Staff are an important stakeholder, and I value stakeholder engagement in order to make informed decisions.” Whereas the teacher respondents for School 18 commented on how their principal cares for their personal and collective well-being as a positive influence. Although both the teachers and the principal felt their perceptions would be congruent, the responses chose to prioritize different aspects of positive leadership effect.

School 50 was a school where the principal rating (8) of their influence was higher than the mean teacher response ( $M = 6.6$ ). The principal response suggested that there were opportunities for staff engagement and collaboration. Teachers at the school responded a bit differently. One teacher respondent mentioned staff cliques, another referenced increased workload due to paperwork, and another teacher response said, “We are not often given the opportunity to integrate with one another since COVID-19 isolations.”

***Perceptual Congruence.*** It seemed difficult for some principals to respond to the third written response question: *To what degree do you think your perceptions of the principal’s role in influencing organizational well-being would match that of your principal?* At the same time, even when a principal had difficulty acknowledging their strengths, there was usually a degree of agreement with their teachers.

The difficulty in evaluating “match” is evident in the comments from School 3. The principal said, “It’s not me... it’s them. I just stay out of the way and allow them to do what they need to do.” One of the teacher participants at School 3 reflected in their response, “He is modest and not looking for credit.”

The principal at School 10 shifts the focus away from self-perception to looking to their teachers for evidence. Their response included, “I think my teachers know what good leadership looks like, sounds like, feels like.” They continued, “Many have expressed their appreciation for my leadership style - I believe in servant leadership, and I think it shows in how I “show up” in the building daily.” One of the teacher respondents at School 10 shared, “I don’t think she knows how amazing she is and how much of a positive impact she has on so many.” Another simply said, “She is magical!”

The principal of School 24 was also somewhat unsure, and yet, the ratings on this question were in agreement and very high (9+) of how perceptions would align. The principal shared,

I hope that we are aligned...I work hard to engage in on-going conversations and make every attempt to monitor teachers’ needs, concerns and to honour each one’s pathway to growth as a professional and ability to support the students they are currently working with.

Teachers at the school agreed with the hopes of the principal. One teacher respondent described the leaders as “very involved, cares about staff, excellent leader.” Another teacher from School 24 shared,

My principal does so much for the school in every respect that you start telling yourself, look at how hard she is working. I want to do that too so that I can help to the nth degree. She sees herself as a colleague rather than just the “boss.”

The teachers in the school seem to see and appreciate the intentional work the principal is doing.

The comments from School 28 revealed another interesting observation. In this school, the principal shared,

This is a tough question to answer. Often, I feel that teachers believe administrators are the leading reason if a school team is successful or not. Over the years, I have heard teachers complain that their school “culture” was impacted in a negative way by a principal or administrative team; without acknowledging other factors that have been involved. Although a leader(s) has a great deal of impact on organizational well-being, it is the responsibility of all members of the organization to find success.

One teacher response at this school reflected the principal’s challenge with responding to this question. This teacher response said

I think it [perceptions] matches almost perfectly. Everyone’s opinions are appreciated and heard. The only area where it differs is maintaining authority when needed. Yes, we are a team, but at times hard/difficult decisions should be made because the principal is the person in charge at the end of the day.

Whereas another teacher participant at the school shared, “I believe that he ‘knows himself’ and is open to make improvements.” The responses in this school are interesting. The principal response eludes to a stance of egalitarianism whereas the teacher response clearly expresses necessity of principal authority. This principal is de-emphasizing their impact.

The principal of School 39 shared that they feel they have a good perception of staff morale and well-being. The principal attributes this to regularly seeking input, being transparent, and staying connected. A teacher respondent from School 39 seems to agree with this statement, "I think our principal has a realistic idea of how others view her based on conversations we have had." School 39 was one of the schools with one negative response which was contrary to others who responded. In this case, this teacher voice of dissension shows some agreement that their principal seeks input in this response, "She has some information through formal feedback." Interesting with this teacher's response was it was not very critical and yet the rating given to how well they thought their perceptions would match that of their principal's was low (2). This teacher's response to the open-ended question about principal leadership influence was more direct, they said, "Leadership is very autocratic so I do not feel like I have a say in matters that affect my class." Yet, another teacher at the school said, "I feel heard and that my ideas and feedback matter." This school is a good example of how challenging it is to determine self-other agreement due to the unique dyadic relationships between a leader and a teacher.

### ***Summary of Congruence Analysis of School-Based Groups***

Overall, there was high perceptual congruence between school-based principal-teacher groups in the seventeen schools examined. The school teams' perceptions were mostly positive, with ratings between 6 - 10 on the three linear scale questions. Any differences between the ratings were not statistically significant. When seeking to understand how principals and teachers determine these ratings, there is more

similarity in their reasons than differences. At times, as shown in the examples, the expressed reasons were evidence of slightly different yet not opposing ideas.

### **Principal Awareness of Their Effect on Organizational Well-Being**

Principals chosen for the interviews had high congruence and positive outcomes. Looking at these “best case” scenarios may lead to an understanding of how principals develop awareness, both internal and external, of their leadership effect. The goal of the interviews was to understand how the interviewed principals describe their leadership influence on organizational well-being and how they gather evidence of their impact.

#### ***Qualitative Survey Analysis for Principal Self-Awareness: Principal Interviews***

The final portion of the interviews asked principals to reflect on how their self-perception aligns with their teachers’ perceptions of them. The questions asked were: *In your leadership experiences to date, think of a moment when you became aware that your perception and that of your staff were different. How did you learn about this difference? What approaches have you incorporated into your practice to ensure that there is a strong feedback loop in your school?*

The questions expanded on the written response questions that all survey participants were invited to answer. The responses to these interview questions focused on understanding how others perceive the principals’ leadership and how feedback supports this. Table 35 shows the code frequencies for this section of the interviews.

**Table 35***Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Mechanisms to Build Perceptual Congruence*

Responses	Sub-Categories	Principal Responses
Understanding Others' Perceptions	Self-Awareness	7
	Conversations and Feedback	7
Getting Feedback	Trusted Colleagues	7
	Anonymous Surveys	5
	Opportunities for Conversation	4
Responding to Feedback	Be Curious	5
	Appreciate the Growth Opportunity	5
	Offer Further Conversation	5
	Don't Take it Personally	5
	Reflect and Circle Back	5

*Note.* Based on responses from seven principal interviews.

**When Perceptions are Incongruent.** Principals were asked to reflect on a time when they became aware of perceptual incongruence between them and their teachers. This was a challenging question for some. Rebecca, for example, felt this was a hard question to answer. She reflected that a reason for incongruence in perspectives might be that “teachers come from a personal perspective, and the principal has a collective perspective.” Each principal had a different scenario where perceptions were incongruent. For three, it was a situation where their actions were received differently than intended. For two, it was a how a situation was interpreted compared to their teachers. For the remaining two, they described situations that they observed where someone else responded differently than they expected.

What was prevalent in the responses was the benefit of self-awareness. Grace shared an insight into her self-awareness, “things don't affect me the same way as they



affect other people, and I have to be conscious of that.” Susan emphasized that being self-aware helps to align perceptions. She explained, “When the feedback comes, I’m not terribly surprised. I know where my strengths are and what my challenges are. So, I ask for support to address those challenges.” For Jane, one situation added to her self-awareness as she explained, “Just that one little bit of feedback really motivated me to question my perceptions about what I think.” She has learned to be careful of her assumptions when she has not yet gained information from others. Louise shared, “I reflected on that [situation] for a while because I did not see at first what I was doing wrong.” Reflecting was a valuable mechanism the interviewed principals use to understand others’ perspectives and build awareness.

All the principals acknowledged that feedback from others helps to build self-awareness. Grace and Myka referenced the benefit of honest conversations with trusted colleagues that helped. Myka values “heart-opening conversations.” She said, “I value what my staff have to say and take it and process it and give it the time and attention it deserves.” Leigh was grateful that her administrative partner “came through and said” what she needed to be more aware of the situation. In each instance, the principals reflected on how their good intentions hold the potential for a negative response if they are missing information. As Leigh reflected, “I wanted to learn but was putting my team on the defense.” Jane reflected, “My assumptions sometimes get in the way.” Louise reflected, “I thought I was being helpful.” Seeking out feedback is important to understand how leadership actions are received by team members.

**Evidence of Leadership Effect.** There was consistency in the responses from the principals about gathering evidence of their leadership influence. One of the key

strategies all the principals use in various forms is to ask. Four of the principals talked about intentionally asking for input or feedback. Leigh says, it is important to “validate what people are experiencing. What do I need to know before we step into this work?” Louise uses a coach approach within most of her work, she often asks, “Tell me a little bit more about that.” All principals said they use surveys as an intentional part of their practice, both anonymous and not.

Another method of gathering evidence used by all the principals are formal “one-on-one meetings” with teachers one to three times a year. As Jane says, “One-on-one meetings are a powerful way for me to keep a pulse on well-being in the school because you learn some things. I ask for feedback, and I get it, and sometimes, I don’t like the feedback I get.” Susan also uses this strategy. She does “one-on-ones twice a year with our staff, and there are questions that would invite feedback.” Outside the formal meetings, every principal interviewed talked about the people on their team who come to them with feedback. Leigh values that she is “surrounded by people who are quite honest.” Louise says, “I want staff to come to me as well to have purposeful conversations.” For Myka, she would be concerned “if nobody was coming and talking and everybody was behind doors and having those conversations,” but she says,

I am confident enough in the relationships that I have with staff that they are willing to and able to come to me and know I would be receptive to their feedback.

These principals assert the value of establishing trusting relationships with staff, so they are comfortable having authentic conversations with them.

Interviewees identified outcome or results as sources of evidence of their leadership impact. For Grace, she watches staff engagement and behavior and improvements in student outcomes to gauge her leadership. Rebecca shared, “I would know when we’re working together and have crafted something as a group and that it’s implemented that we are moving forward.” In a similar sense, Louise looks to the overall functioning of the team, “When I know my whole school is, everybody is engaged and happy and doing exactly what they need to be doing, that feels good.” Susan gathers formal data through district and government-collected assessments and informal data by being in classrooms regularly to get a sense of what leadership is required. This group highly regarded feedback and other evidence to guide their work.

**Getting Feedback.** Even as they expressed the value of feedback, all acknowledged barriers to honest feedback when in a leadership position. All seven principals talked about “key people” or “trusted colleagues” that they relied on to get information or feedback. As Grace said, she has “two or three trusted colleagues that will give me honest feedback.” Myka values the “few key people that stop by all the time and ask, can I share something with you?”

A critical component for all the principals interviewed was trust and honesty. Building a culture based on these values opens the door to honest conversations. At times, teachers bring the conversation to them and at others, the principals shared that they seek out the conversations. Rebecca acknowledged that some “people don’t feel comfortable” providing feedback so she regularly communicates her open-door policy and invites people to share their thinking.

Another strategy used by six principals is anonymous surveys. Grace values the surveys because she says, “that’s one of the ways I can get feedback without people feeling judged.” The power dynamic and evaluative nature of the principal role was a reason for the use of surveys by each principal. For many, this was a way to get honest feedback about areas of improvement in their practice.

**Responding to Feedback.** Very evident in each principal’s response was a genuine desire to improve their practice. Each principal commented on the value of feedback as a key mechanism for their growth. As Grace shared, “When I know better, I’ll do better.” This sentiment is shared by Jane who appreciates, “The fact that someone is willing to give feedback to me. I really appreciate the honesty about how I can grow and improve.” Appreciation and a growth mindset set these principals up to welcome feedback from their team. Susan stressed that as a leader you must “be open to learning.”

Receiving feedback can be challenging. Louise said, “Does it hurt at first? Yeah! But you have to have courage to show vulnerability.” Taking the time to reflect on feedback is a learned strategy by five of the principals. Myka shared, “I have to take the time to listen and process. I cannot be reactive. I need to give myself time.” The principals interviewed talked about their commitment to their people and the organization. When feedback arrives in the midst of hard work and commitment, it can be painful. Jane shared, “I gave myself the time to have a pity party and then compartmentalized it and then do something about it.” A strategy Leigh shared is to “take your own feeling out of it, and try to see it from a different perspective.”

The seven principals agreed that being curious rather than defensive helped to leverage the learning opportunity in feedback. Rebecca phrased it this way, “In a sense, I need to be like a problem-solver - what do you need me to know right now?” Others shared the strategy of being curious and opening the door to further conversations with the person delivering the feedback. Myka uses her survey responses to circle back during one-on-ones. She shared, “that was an interesting process because it opened the door for some really interesting conversations.”

Another noted perspective was a sincere desire to acknowledge the other person’s perspective. In this sense the principals felt obligated to “circle back” either through conversations or actions to close the feedback loop. Rebecca said it was important to “support the other person in what they might need.” Louise looks for an “opportunity to have that person talk to you just really digging into - oh, that’s what you meant.” Jane summarized what many of the others said. She stressed the need to “take that feedback and really respond in some way, overtly or otherwise, just so people get the sense that they’re being heard.” For these principals, feedback was a valuable strategy for their personal growth and ensuring their team feels seen, valued, and heard.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented both quantitative and qualitative data from the survey as well as data that emerged from the analysis of the written responses and principal interview transcripts. Qualitative data for both the survey and the interviews was represented through a discussion of the four research questions: Understanding how principals and teachers perceive organizational well-being and the extent to which

these perceptions agree; Understanding how principals and teachers perceive principal leadership behavior which positively impacts organizational well-being and the extent to which these perceptions agree; Exploring perceptual congruence of organizational well-being and leadership influence between teachers and principals within school-based teams; and finally, understanding principal awareness of their own behaviors that positively influence organizational well-being. Chapter five explores findings derived from the data analysis and reflection on the literature that has informed this study. Chapter five also provides recommendations for enhancing principal awareness of leadership behaviors that might support organizational well-being based on the findings of this study.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to explore principal influence on organizational well-being, as perceived by principals and teachers, and to examine if perceptual congruence across roles relates to organizational outcomes of school culture and self-reported teacher professional well-being. Additionally, the study sought to understand how principals describe their leadership effect in schools with principal-teacher perceptual congruence and reported positive organizational well-being.

This chapter summarizes the key research findings and discusses limitations, implications for practice and possible future research. The chapter is organized sequentially by research question. Although the questions will be addressed individually, the findings are integrated and woven into the final discussion.

### **The Why and Logic Behind this Study**

This study came to be because of observations in my own practice where teachers experienced various degrees of professional well-being between school contexts. I became curious about the role of leadership in the well-being of teachers and in nurturing schools as places of well-being. As a principal, my experience is that my principal colleagues enter their role with the best intentions, and yet, some teachers struggle under some leaders.

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 outlined the study's conceptual framework, which drew upon the principles of Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2011), Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017), and Authentic Leadership Theory (Avolio et al., 2007) framed within the Self-Other Agreement Model (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992) to understand how principals and teachers perceive leadership

effect and whether the agreement between their perceptions matters for well-being outcomes.

When I was first exploring this topic, my focus was on teacher well-being. This was partly because of personal interactions with individual teachers experiencing a lack of professional wellness, but also due to reports of extreme teacher ill-being (ATA 2020, 2021a, 2021b). A pivotal point in my review of the literature was accessing research on flourishing school communities (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Swaner et al., 2021). The research on flourishing school communities shifted my focus away from preventing or responding to ill-being of individuals to understanding how to nurture well-being at the organizational level. This shift resulted in a study rooted in positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) to determine “what works” with principal leadership from a positive stance. In reviewing the literature, I became curious about the uplifting power of organizational structures, which led to seeking an understanding of how principals might focus on organizational well-being (OWB) as a way to support teachers’ professional well-being. Another key piece of research was Grissom et al.’s (2021) literature review of principal impact. This review highlighted three aspects of principal influence - instruction, people, and the organization. The work of Grissom et al., backed by key research on principal leadership (i.e., Leibowitz & Porter, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020; Marzano et al., 2005), emphasized the critical nature of organizational supports such as school culture, school climate, and collaboration in support of OWB. Drawn from this literature, the definition of OWB used in this study is when organizational goals are obtained, members of the



organization experience well-being, and there is a positive interconnectedness between individual and organizational outcomes (Cojocaru, 2014; Coli & Risotto, 2013).

It is important to circle back to my original curiosity about the varied experiences of teachers with different principals and the misalignment between principal intent and outcomes. The second part of this study's goal is to understand how principals develop an awareness of their leadership and its impact on others. This is what Eurich (2018) refers to as external awareness - understanding how one is perceived by others and how our actions impact others. Awareness is a critical part of leadership (Avolio et al., 2007; Eurich, 2018; Marzano et al., 2006). Self-awareness is one of the four key traits of Authentic Leadership Theory. Marzano et al. identify contextual awareness as a critical responsibility of effective leaders. Atwater and Yammarino (1992) developed the Self-Other Agreement (SOA) model, which suggests agreement between a leader's self-perception and the perceptions of others increases the chance of positive individual and organizational outcomes. Given the importance of OWB and a leader's accurate self-awareness, internal and external, the study sought to understand how teachers and leaders perceive OWB and the influencing factors of leadership on OWB and to understand if the self-other awareness of principal leadership has an impact on well-being outcomes. The aim of this study, in the end, was to explore how leaders support OWB and develop accurate self-awareness.

### **Significance of the Findings**

There is a plethora of research that shows the nurturing effect of a healthy, achieving, and positive school environment on teacher well-being (i.e., ATA, 2021a;

Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Grissom et al., 2021; Kise & Holms, 2022). Many researchers have identified responsibilities or strategies critical for effective leadership (i.e., Fullan, 2020; Marzano et al., 2005) or leadership frameworks (i.e., Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2017). Also, well represented in the research are studies on principal leadership and the effect of leadership behavior on school outcomes (i.e., Grissom et al., 2021; Leibowitz & Porter, 2019; Ozgencle & Aksu, 2020). What is hard to find in leadership research are studies related to how principals perceive their role and how they describe effective leadership. Pienaar and Nel (2017) assert that leadership self-awareness is critical for professional growth. When it comes to teacher well-being, Cann et al. (2021) suggest future studies that include the principal's perspective on improving well-being. Devos et al. (2013) assert the importance of including both teacher and principal perspectives to develop an accurate picture of principal influence on schools. Leithwood et al. (2020) also suggest that leadership research moves beyond 'what' to 'how.'

The findings of this study add to leadership research by providing descriptions of principal and teacher perceptions of how principals positively influence OWB. Additionally, the findings illuminate strategies principals use to build accurate self-awareness.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The research questions of the study offer a logical progression for understanding leadership effect on OWB and self-awareness. The first discussion will explore the findings related to OWB (RQ1). Next, findings related to principal leadership influences on OWB are discussed (RQ2). To understand perceptual

congruence, the measures of OWB and Principal leadership are examined at the school level, comparing principal data with that of their teachers (RQ3). Finally, principal self-awareness and strategies to develop awareness are explored through the rich data collected from seven interviews with principals (RQ4).

***Key Findings: Perceptions of Organizational Well-Being***

Two quantitative measures were used to examine OWB. First, all participants responded to the School Culture Triage Survey (SCTS) (Wagner, 2006). The SCTS examines school culture through the components of collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and self-determination or efficacy. This measure was chosen, in part, due to the alignment with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017), situating collaboration as a support for building competency, connecting affiliative collegiality to relatedness, and aligning self-determination/efficacy with autonomy and competence. Teacher professional well-being was measured using the Teacher Well-being Scale (Collie et al., 2015), which views teacher professional well-being through three subfactors of workload well-being, organizational well-being, and student interaction well-being. It is important to highlight that this study was not looking at personal well-being or ill-being factors. The focus was on professional well-being, which Collie et al. (2015) define as open, engaged, and healthy functioning as a teacher. In the study, only teachers responded to the TWBS.

Teachers and principals were given the opportunity to expand their thinking about OWB through an open-ended written response question following the survey questions. The definition of OWB was embedded in the survey to ensure participant

understanding. The resulting qualitative data contributed to a full understanding of teacher and principal perspectives on OWB.

**Quantitative Findings about OWB.** The first surprise of this study came from the positive results of the two surveys. Given the emphasis in recent surveys on concerns for teacher well-being in the province (e.g., ATA, 2021a; ATA, 2021b), I was expecting a great deal of variance in the reports on well-being outcomes. This was not the case. On the SCTS, 72% of teachers ( $M = 65.56$ ,  $SD = 11.46$ ) and 85% ( $M = 67.26$ ,  $SD = 7.63$ ) of principals reported positive perceptions of school culture. Wagner (2006) deems a total SCTS score of  $> 60$  to be positive. The results on the TWBS were not quite as high, with 39% of teachers reporting positive perceptions of well-being ( $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). For this study, a score of ‘positive’ was deemed as 5 or higher on the 7-level Likert scale for the TWBS. Interestingly, 71% of teachers reported positive results related to the OWB subscale on the TWBS ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). This number aligns strongly with the 72% of teachers reporting positive school culture. This speaks to the positive impact of organizational structures on teacher well-being.

***A Closer Look at School Culture.*** Although reports of school culture were positive from both teachers and principals, there were some areas to explore further. When examining school culture through a lens of gender, not all reported experiencing school culture in the same way. Female teacher respondents rated all aspects of school culture higher than their peers, although the difference was not statistically significant when compared to male teachers. Similarly, female principal respondents rated all aspects of school culture higher than their colleagues. The differences were

statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) on the total SCTS score and the subscale of collegiality. Of note are teachers who identify as *other*, meaning outside the binary of male or female. Caution should be taken with interpreting these findings as the number of teachers in this category was small ( $n = 7$ ), so generalization validity is weak. But, for these seven teachers, there were statistically significantly lower scores on all school culture measures when compared to male and female-identifying teachers ( $p < .05$ ). The lowest scores for this group were in the subscales of collaboration ( $M = 2.31, SD = .72$ ) and collegiality ( $M = 2.98, SD = .79$ ). Only one principal identified outside of the binary; their scores were more positive than their colleagues, but no generalization can be made. Analysis based on years of experience and years at the school showed no statistically significant differences for teachers or principals.

When examining results across roles, there were no statistically significant differences. How teachers and principals reported scores on subscales was aligned. Scores on professional collaboration were the lowest of the subscales for both teachers and principals, with self-determination/efficacy the highest of the subscales, although the differences in ratings between the subscales were not statistically significant.

The findings would suggest that for the self-selected respondents in this study, school culture perception is mostly positive. For both principals and teachers, females reported higher levels of school culture, and for female principals, this was significantly higher than their colleagues in the subscale of collegiality. The reported results on the SCTS are congruent between principal and teacher respondents. This result aligns with the predicted outcome of the SOA model (Yammarino & Atwater,

1993), which predicts perceptual congruence leads to positive organizational outcomes.

*A Closer Look at Teacher Well-Being.* When looking at the *all teacher* responses, the overall reported well-being mean score ( $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ) was approaching the positive benchmark of 5 on the Likert scale of 7, with 39% of teachers reporting positive well-being. The subscales illustrate differences in teachers' responses. Of the three subscales, organizational well-being had the most positive results, with 71% of teachers indicating positive organizational well-being. This subscale encompasses questions related to leadership (relationships, support, and recognition), autonomy (input into decisions), school procedures, and communication between staff. In contrast, only 14% of teachers reported workload well-being as positive. Student interaction was a positive influence on the well-being of 57% of teachers. Interestingly, when the TWBS results were disaggregated by years of experience, teachers with 1 - 5 years of experience reported statistically significantly lower student interaction well-being than their peers with 11 - 20 years of experience. This confirms the findings of Collie et al. (2015), who noticed similar differences in reported student interaction well-being based on teacher experience. This difference may be due in part to teacher experience affecting self-efficacy around student behavior or other factors such as time to develop relationships with students and parents.

When looking at gender and well-being, male teachers reported higher well-being than their colleagues, although these differences were not significant when compared to female teachers. For teachers who identify as *other*, their reported levels

of well-being were statistically significantly lower than their peers. For this group of teachers, the lowest levels of well-being were reported in the subscale of organizational well-being ( $M = 3.69, SD = 1.59$ ), which is on the negative side of the 7-point Likert scale. Conversely, for male ( $M = 5.58, SD = 1.18$ ) and female ( $M = 5.55, SD = 1.00$ ) teachers, the organizational well-being subscale reflected the highest reported levels of well-being. Interpretation of these results is made with caution, but it would seem the experience for teachers outside the male/female binary is different--and perhaps markedly so--than their peers.

For the majority of teacher respondents, organizational and student interaction well-being factors are positively related to overall well-being whereas workload had a more negative effect. These results align with existing research about teacher well-being which identifies workload as a risk factor for teacher well-being (Collie et al., 2015; Ferguson et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Although this same research identifies student challenges as a risk factor, studies by Gu (2014) and Perry et al. (2015) found positive student-teacher relationships contribute to well-being. In a literature review on morale, Peterson et al. (2008) outlined organizational factors such as group efficacy, relationships, leadership, and a common purpose that support collective well-being.

***The Relationship Between Teacher Well-Being and School Culture.*** When examining the relationship between reported teacher well-being and reported levels of school culture, there is a moderate positive correlation (with  $R^2 = 25\%$ ), as seen in Figure 6. When looking at the subscales of teacher well-being, organizational well-being was strongly correlated with ( $R^2 = 45\%$ ) with reported levels of school culture.

When examining school culture and teacher well-being based on gender, males report slightly higher levels of teacher well-being while females report slightly higher reports of school culture levels. For those who identify as “other,” this is an area that requires further investigation with a larger sample to determine how well-being outcomes can be nurtured to increase perceptions of relatedness to peers and the organization. The quantitative results show a strong case for organizational support for nurturing teacher well-being.

**Qualitative Findings About OWB.** All respondents were asked to identify strengths and issues with OWB. Interviewed principals were asked to discuss indicators of well-being. The results align with tenets of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci et al., 2017), which proposes that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs of relatedness, competency, and autonomy supports well-being and performance outcomes. Teacher and principal respondents discussed four themes related to OWB: *A Cohesive School Community, Leadership, Collegial Relationships, and a Focus on Students.*

For teachers, the two themes of *a cohesive community* and *collegial relationships* were mostly focused on the strength of the teacher team, which according to SDT, supports the need for relatedness (Deci et al., 2017). A key indicator of OWB for teachers was a strong collaborative peer support group. Teachers commented on collaboratively working together to improve their effectiveness and to achieve better outcomes for their students, both examples of support for competence as identified in SDT (Deci et al., 2017). Teachers spoke highly about a team of teachers who work together to support and collectively care for each other while



building a positive climate and culture. Principals, too, praised teachers as they worked together towards school goals. For principals and teachers, strong teacher-to-teacher relationships, personal and professional, strengthen OWB. Viac and Fraser (2020) identify teacher characteristics as one of three influencing that support professional well-being through the four well-being dimensions: cognitive, subjective, physical and mental, and social. Research confirms this finding that asserts the importance of strong connections with peers to build competence and relationships (Deci et al., 2017) in support of whole-school well-being (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Wagner, 2006).

Leadership as a support for OWB was almost exclusively reported by teachers. Comparatively, principals neglected to acknowledge their role in organizational well-being until directly asked in Research Question 2. Similar to teachers, principal respondents acknowledged organizational supports, such as community, collaboration, collective well-being and common goals. Interviewed principals expanded their reflections on collective indicators of well-being. They also praised the connectedness of teachers to each other and teacher commitment to the work of teaching and learning. For principals, seeing their teachers engaged in the school, connected with their peers, and satisfied with the work were strong indicators of organizational well-being. When looking at well-being research, responses from the open-ended questions provided examples of OWB strengths that support competence, autonomy, and relatedness as identified in SDT (Deci et al., 2017). Whereas responses from the principals interviewed had aspects of these, their thoughts on well-being were more connected to distinct yet related personal well-being theories such as PERMA

(purpose, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement) (Seligman, 2011). These findings about relationships as protective factors to well-being are consistent with research on teacher well-being (e.g., Hayden et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015).

*Observations of Differing Perspectives.* Although often, principal and teacher responses reflected similar strengths and indicators, there were two interesting observations affecting the alignment of their perspectives. One observation being the experiences of teachers and principals within the schools holding emic and etic perspectives of certain aspects of school culture. The second observation was how the two groups described the current state of organizational well-being of their schools.

Principals hold a unique perspective of the school organization compared to teachers both in the hierarchical nature and the responsibilities of their position. These two factors logically create barriers for principals to develop accurate external and contextual awareness. In reading the responses, I got the sense that teachers were speaking from an emic perspective, insider group information which may not be available to principals, especially about the power of peer relationships as sources of support. It was evident from the comments that principals and teachers ‘stand in different places’ in their observations and understandings of organizational well-being. Teacher respondents often spoke highly about the strong peer network in the school as seen in these comments – “solid, cohesive and supportive,” “care for each other,” “we check in on each other,” “help each other out,” “respect,” and “value each other.” While principals did acknowledge strengths such as ‘a strong dedicated team’ and “staff care for each other” their comments often lacked evidence of awareness of the

extent to which teachers rely on and support each other. In this sense, principals appear to have an etic perspective of the collegial relationships existing in their school.

This view may have contributed to a unique perspective predominantly held by principals rather than teachers. A number of principal responses reflected a need for improvement - a need to rebuild the community - which may reflect a lack of understanding about the strong interactions in place between teachers. Representative of this view are comments such as “we have work to do,” or “there is room to improve.” This sentiment of improvement was not reflected strongly in the teacher’s responses. This may reflect a lack of awareness by the principal in regards to the distinct community that exists between teachers – a community may not include principals in the same collegial way. Interesting to note in leadership research and literature is the role of the leader to affect change or ensure continuous improvement (Grissom et al., 2021; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Marzano et al., 2005). This urgency was not reflected in the teacher responses. As a principal, I feel the need to be constantly looking for improvements, perhaps this is felt by my colleagues too.

As I read the comments from teachers and principals, it was clear that although peer relationships were reciprocal and mutually beneficial, the relationship between teachers and principals was not described as reciprocal. Both teachers and principals spoke mainly about the support given by principals to teachers and school culture and climate. In the literature review, reciprocity in the administrator-teacher relationship was evident for building trust (Kutsyuruba et al., 2016). Trust is essential for strong principal-teacher relationships on both sides, but, as with the survey responses, the research most often talks about the support principals give to teachers (Fernet et al.,

2012; Hayden et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Principal leadership and its influence on organizational well-being will be explored further in the next section.

In line with research on teacher well-being, factors that contribute to well-being can also negatively impact well-being (Fernet et al., 2012; Haydon et al., 2018). This is reflected in comments from both principals and teachers. For teachers, *leadership* and *working conditions* were the most reported by teachers as negatively impacting well-being. Principals acknowledge the external pressures and classroom complexities which contribute to less desirable working conditions, but rarely talk about student behavior as a negative. Student behavior was present in teacher responses. Another threat to organizational well-being noted by respondents was *external pressures* from the division or government. Working conditions, including workload (Ferguson et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016), external pressures (Fernet et al., 2012), and student challenges (Hayden et al., 2018; Schussler et al., 2018) are threats to well-being frequently noted in previous research. Finally, as much as staff connectedness and teamwork are seen as strong support for OWB, teachers and principals acknowledge when the team is splintered, there is a negative effect on the school community. The research of Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015, 2016) corroborates this finding. Teacher stress increases when peer relationships are threatened due to conflict, misalignment of values, loss of autonomy or lack of support (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016).

***Key Findings: Perceptions of Leadership Influence on Organizational Well-Being***

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to explore the relationship between perceptions of leadership and well-being outcomes. Teachers and principals completed the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio et al., 2007). The results were compared to the well-being outcomes of school culture and teacher well-being. Respondents answered an open-ended question about positive leadership influence on organizational well-being. Interviewed principals responded to questions about how they monitor and tend to OWB.

**Quantitative Findings About Principal Influence on OWB.** Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT) is a leadership theory that draws on positive psychology and is rooted in Self-Determination Theory (Walumba et al., 2008). The researchers assert that ALT is not a leadership style but is foundational to leadership. Authentic Leadership Theory includes four components: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency (Walumba et al., 2008). Given the connection between ALT and positive psychology and SDT, there was a strong alignment to this study. To measure ALT, I included the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Avolio et al., 2007). The ALQ has two forms, a leader self-rate and an other-rater form. The two versions of the questionnaire enabled self and other rating comparisons. The questionnaire provided quantitative data about leadership perceptions which were compared to data gathered about well-being outcomes.

The results from the ALQ were predominantly positive. Principal mean scores were consistently higher for total ALQ scores ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = .32$ ) than teachers ( $M =$

3.24,  $SD = .81$ ), but the difference was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ). Mean scores for all components of the ALQ for teachers and principals were positive (for this study a mean score of 4 or higher was considered a high positive). There were significant correlations between authentic leadership and school culture and teacher well-being. Studies by Shie and Chang (2022) and Adigüzel and Kuloglu (2019) found that principal authentic leadership positively impacts teachers' organizational trust, identification, commitment and citizenship behavior. Of these, there was a connection between trust, commitment, and citizenship behavior on teacher well-being (Shie & Chang, 2022).

When comparing ALQ scores for all participants with SCTS scores for all, a Pearson correlation coefficient shows a strong positive correlation between the two ( $R^2 = 56\%$ ) and a moderate positive correlation between ALQ and TWBS ( $R^2 = 31\%$ ). When comparing ALQ to SCTS for all respondents, the highest correlations were found with all subscales of the ALQ and the teacher-reported levels of efficacy/self-determination subscale on the SCTS. When comparing the ALQ to the subscales of TWBS, there was a strong positive correlation between ALQ and the subscale of organizational well-being ( $R^2 = 64\%$ ) but weak correlations to workload and no significant correlation to student interaction well-being ( $p > .05$ ).

When teacher ratings of their principal's leadership were isolated, there were positive moderate correlations with TWBS ( $R^2 = 31\%$ ) and strong positive correlations with teacher-reported SCTS ( $R^2 = 60\%$ ), both were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). When principal ALQ scores were correlated with principal SCTS scores, there was a statistically significant positive moderate correlation ( $R^2 = 19\%$ ,  $p < .05$ ) – that was

not as strong as the correlations between teacher ratings and teacher-reported outcomes. Principal self-reports on the ALQ were not significantly correlated with TWBS outcomes ( $p > .05$ ). Although teacher ratings of principal leadership showed positive correlations between school culture and teacher well-being, principal self-ratings were moderately correlated with school culture but not with teacher well-being measures.

These results would suggest that teacher-perceived authentic leadership is correlated most strongly to organizational supports, commonly identified in research, for teacher well-being, such as administrator support, shared decision-making, communication and common goals and processes (Collie et al., 2015; Hayden et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), and school culture factors such as collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy/determination (Leibowitz & Porter, 2019; Leithwood, 2020). These findings align with previously established connections between authentic leadership and professional relationships, leader and follower well-being, and organizational performance (Avolio & Garner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2021).

#### **Qualitative Findings: Principal Influence on Organizational Well-being.**

Teachers and principals answered an open-ended question to explain their rating of satisfaction of principal leadership on well-being. Interviewed principals were asked to describe how they tend to organizational well-being in their schools. A key finding from this qualitative data was the high level of agreement between principals and teachers about principal supportive behaviors for well-being. As with perspectives about organizational well-being, the big themes were similar, but there were differences in how the themes were describes between teachers and principals.

There were seven themes evident from the open-ended written responses based on teacher and principal responses, there were also seven themes from the principal interviews. The survey responses identified *Positive and Sets the Tone*, which wasn't explicit in the principal interviews. The interviews had a theme of *Authenticity and Humility* that was not coded in the written responses. The remaining six themes have been consolidated as *Principal Support; Encouraging Autonomy; Affective Leadership; Common Visions and Expectations; A Focus on Well-being; and Open and Approachable*. Marzano et al. (2005) assert that culture is a primary tool to affect change which they say includes staff cohesion, staff well-being, and a shared understanding of collective purpose and vision.

Overwhelming in the responses and backed by research (Fernet et al., 2021; Gray et al., 2017; Gu, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015) is principal support. For teachers, this looks like principals “in the trenches” or working alongside them, prioritizing and protecting from workload and demands (Lambersky, 2016) and demonstrating reliability and trustworthiness (Hayden et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). An idea unique in the interview principal responses is ‘giving permission’ to teachers - releasing them from tasks or responsibilities while releasing them from the guilt and reassuring them that the principal has them covered. Researchers such as Lambersky (2016) and Leithwood (2020) might attribute this to the emotional aspects of the principalship.

The theme of *Affective Leadership* as a positive influence on well-being directly ties to the research on effective leadership (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Lambersky, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2017; Leithwood, 2020) Hitt and Tucker (2016) assert



principals need to attend to both technical (curriculum, instruction, management skills) as well as affective factors within a school. Affective leadership requires principals to be aware of the perceptions and experiences of teachers (Hitt & Tucker, 2016).

Leithwood (2017) agrees with the need for principals to be aware of the emotional side of leadership, their own and their teachers. A strong thread from all respondents in this survey is the value placed on strong relationships based on compassion, care, respect and trust. This was echoed by the interviewed principals, as illustrated when Myka and Jane each said they “genuinely love” their team. Respondents also spoke of the value of recognition and appreciation, personal and professional. Fernet et al. (2012) found that recognition contributes to teachers’ perceptions of their leader as supportive. For Gu (2014), recognition, trust, and care from leaders contributed to teacher resilience. As Devos and Bouckenooghe (2009) state, people-minded principals are shown to nurture a strong and productive climate.

Directly tied to SDT (Deci et al., 2017) and identified by survey respondents was support for autonomy, teacher voice and being heard. Teachers praised a principal who treated them as professionals and valued their input in decision-making. In a study on how leadership influences teacher well-being, Cann et al. (2020) identified three leadership actions with high impact; 1) ensuring teachers feel that their voice, work, and effort are valued; 2) facilitating meaningful professional development, and 3) enabling teachers to have agency in decision-making (p. 209). Respondents in this study value autonomy supportive leadership where teachers are treated as professional partners in the quest for organizational goals.

When principals work with teachers to build a common vision and purpose for their work, they provide clarity about goals and measures of achievement. A collective understanding of the school's mission is an often-identified domain in leadership research (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Lambersky, 2016; Marzano et al., 2005). Participants in this study, both teachers and principals, assert that clarity about vision, purpose, and expectations creates certainty in an organization and provides stability. Shared purpose leads to collective well-being and collective achievement, which are aspects of the well-being theory PERMA (Seligman, 2011). When teachers know the task, they can access professional learning to build their capacity for goal achievement (Grissom et al., 2021; Hitt & Tucker, 2016).

Organizational well-being does not happen by chance. The interviewed principals used the word "intention" frequently in discussing their support of well-being. Survey respondents similarly acknowledged principal intentions that put well-being at the forefront by making it a priority and supporting the priority with actions. The principals used contextual awareness and knowledge of their teachers to monitor and attend to well-being through "intentional acts of care" and "structures of support." Models of flourishing schools, as proposed by Cherkowski and Walker (2018) and Swaner et al. (2021), emphasize the importance of a hopeful, positive approach to leading schools that prioritizes flourishing. One of the three critical components of the Positive Organizational Scholarship framework (Dutton & Glynn, 2008) is a concern with flourishing. Traditional research on effective leadership acknowledges the importance of positive climates and cultures supporting people and instruction (Grissom et al., 202; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2020; Marzano et al., 2005).

For Swaner et al. (2021) foundational leadership practices include a focus on well-being. Leaders who focus on building cultures of well-being provide spaces that lead to whole school flourishing (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018; Swaner et al., 2021).

***Voices of Dissension.*** Not all respondents praised their principal. For a small number (between 6% to 20% depending on the measure), perception of school culture, teacher well-being, and leadership influence was negative. The voices of dissension reflect two aspects of SDT – frustration due to needs not being met and the negative effect of controlled motivation (Collie et al., 2015; Deci et al., 2017). Although representatively small, the opinions of these voices are critical to the conversation. Due to limitations with this study, it is difficult to know the degree to which the participants accurately represent the views of all teachers or principals in the divisions studied; therefore, these voices of dissension provide a potential window into other perspectives which may not be represented fully in this self-selected sample.

According to these voices, the negative aspects of leadership are reflected in actions not taken, such as a lack of support for autonomy, lack of clarity, few or low expectations, or feelings of not being heard. Working conditions were negatively impacted by increased classroom complexities, large class sizes, and student behavior. The identified factors that contribute to negative outcomes confirm research on risks to teacher well-being, such as workload, student interactions, lack of leader support (Fernet et al., 2012; Fernet et al., 2012), lack of input or loss of autonomy (Fernet et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016), and peer interactions (Hayden et al., 2018). For these respondents, these negative factors were often created or worsened by a lack of action or acknowledgement by the principal. Evidence from participants experiencing

a lack of well-being supports the assertion by Fernet et al. (2012) that protectors of well-being can, in their absences, risk the well-being of individuals and the organization.

***Key Findings: Perceptual Congruence between Teachers and Principals***

Perceptual congruence was explored on two levels, for ‘all principals’ and ‘all teachers.’ The congruence of perspectives based on all responses was discussed in previous sections and will be expanded upon here. A critical piece of understanding congruence was on a more personal level by comparing individual principal responses with their teachers within their schools. Respondents were asked if they felt there was perceptual congruence. Interviewed principals were also asked how they ensure their perceptions match their teachers.

**Quantitative Findings About Perceptual Congruence.** This study did not show significant differences between principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of principal leadership from the quantitative data. Qualitative data unveiled some differences, but these interpretations are made with caution. To understand perceptual congruence, I isolated the results at the school level for schools with a baseline teacher response of six teachers or a 25% response rate from teachers. 17 schools met this criterion. There were few statistically significant differences between principal and teacher responses in these schools.

As seen throughout this study, the results in these seventeen schools were mostly positive. Thirteen schools had high ratings of authentic leadership from teachers and principals. In most cases, the principal rating was slightly lower, although

not significantly. One school had a statistically significant difference between principal and teacher ratings of principal authentic leadership, with the principal self-rating as lower. Five schools had statistically significant discrepancies in the ‘transparency’ subscale of the ALQ, and three schools showed statistically significant discrepancies in the ‘balanced processing’ subscale. In each of these cases, the principal rating was lower. An interesting observation is in 3 of 4 schools where the principal ratings were below the ‘high’ benchmark, the principal self-rating was higher than the teachers. Although, the difference between principal and teacher ratings was not a statistically significant difference. With caution, these data would appear to support the predictions made by Atwater and Yammarino (1992) in their Self-other Agreement Model (SOA). The model suggests when leaders over-estimate their leadership effect compared to their followers the result is diminished individual and organizational outcomes. Whereas, when leaders accurately rate their leadership compared to followers, the result is enhanced outcomes. The model suggests when leaders under-estimate the results may be mixed – in this case, the results seemed to be positive.

Similarly, thirteen schools reported high results on the SCTS and eight schools had high TWBS. Five schools had strong positive correlations between authentic leadership and aspects of teacher well-being, more correlations were noticed between leadership and organizational well-being than other aspects of well-being. Seven schools had positive, statistically significant correlations between leadership and school culture, with collegiality being an area with more correlation than other subscales. These correlations were significant. This study could not conclusively

determine the effects of congruence through quantitative measures as there were generally high congruence and positive results which seems to support patterns proposed in the AOS model (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992). The small number of schools in this part of the study also limits the generalizability of the findings.

**Qualitative Findings About Perceptual Congruence.** When asked, 77% of teachers and 60% of principals felt there would be perceptual congruence between their ratings and those of the other role. Responses were sorted into low and high perceived congruence. Both teacher and principal respondents in the ‘low perceived congruence’ expressed that the other ‘does not know my experience.’ Another sentiment from principals is that the principals had no way of knowing their teachers’ perceptions. This discrepancy would fall into the affective skills of leadership as identified by Hitt and Tucker (2016) who assert that fluent affective leaders understand how teachers perceive and experience the conditions of the school. The phenomenon of ‘they don’t know’ is also aligned with the work of Argyris (1976). Argyris discusses espoused theories and theories in use – what we say we do and what we actually do. According to Argyris, there are two reasons why there may be a difference, one of which is the degree to which relationships and organizational evidence provide valid information to the leader. This could be reciprocal in that teachers are not receiving valid information about their leader. Another reason given by teachers of low perceived congruence is leadership actions that do not match the spoken values or negative organizational outcomes. Again, this is supported by the work of Argyris. Responses in the low perceived congruence thread were generally negative.

More positive were the responses from participants who perceived high congruence. This makes sense as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) identified value alignment as a protective factor of well-being. Teacher respondents who perceive high perceptual congruence often referred to how the principal's actions confirmed their views of an effective leader. Pienaar and Nel (2017) would suggest this is confirmation of a person's leadership schema. Souba and Souba (2018) concur and suggest that one's perception of an effective leader may influence their perception. Using a leadership schema is an easy process for comparison; this can lead to positive or negative perceptions depending on the alignment of the leader's actions with one's schema (Pienaar & Nel, 2017). It would appear that evidence of alignment between a leader's said values and their actions, in addition to how those actions align with a teacher's effective leader schema, can influence the perception of leadership effect.

***Key Findings: Principal Awareness of Their Effectiveness***

Leaders who know themselves and their impact are more effective and have more enthusiastic employees (Enrich, 2018). In this study, seven principals were interviewed based on high perceptual congruence with teachers on the staff and positive organizational outcome ratings. These 'unicorn' principals – amazing and rare within the sample – confirm the value of self-awareness about their leadership in service to their teachers. The interviews reflected evidence of authentic leadership traits such as self-awareness, transparency, moral perspectives, and balanced processing (Walumba et al., 2008). All these principals were humble in their responses and demonstrated strong values around service and care for their work. Consistent in

their responses was a people-minded leadership mindset (Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009) which was evident in the well-being outcomes reported by their staff. As we saw in the quantitative analysis, authentic leadership is often highly correlated with well-being outcomes. Devos and Bouckenooghe assert that people-minded leaders develop strong school cultures. Teacher responses, in general, and the schools of the interviewed principals say organizational well-being is a significant support for professional well-being.

The interview responses stressed the importance of relationships and care in support of teaching and learning but importantly, in support of the humans in their building. They place a strong emphasis on the intentional work of knowing their teachers, personally and professionally, and being engaged in the work with their teachers. The intentional actions of the interviewed principals to build and maintain relationships supports a culture of trust and care (Gu, 2014) which is critical for building awareness. Without the reciprocity of trust in relationships, the power dynamic between teachers and principals could be a barrier for principals in seeking and gaining feedback (Crippen, 2012).

Leaders who understand how they are perceived by their followers are more equipped to support well-being outcomes (Eurich, 2018). For the principals interviewed, seeking and valuing feedback are common practices in their leadership. Without formal structures of feedback, these principals rely on trusted colleagues to provide information and feedback. They seek out feedback through conversations, anonymous surveys, and regular check ins with their team. As Argyris (1976) posits, in addition to receiving valid information about their leadership, an individual's



receptivity to the feedback is critical to develop self-awareness. As Eurich says, seeking feedback along with self-reflection and perspective taking allow leaders to build external awareness. Cann et al. (2021) attribute effective, positive leadership to the skills of relationship building, contextual competence, and social emotional competence. The principals in high congruent schools with positive outcomes, intentionally seek feedback, appreciate the opportunity to grow from feedback, and use this feedback to further their development as leaders in service to their communities. They assert this work is intentional. As Eurich claims, ignoring the perceptions of others can be a barrier to leadership growth. For the leaders in this study, awareness of their leadership impact is not left to chance. As Fleenor et al. (2010) posit, neither self or other's rating hold the complete narrative, but congruence may reflect self- awareness.

### **Implications for Practice**

The results of this study add to current research about importance of principal awareness of their leadership influence on organizational well-being (Eurich, 2018; Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2017) and considerations for basic psychological need satisfaction of autonomy, relatedness, and competency (Deci et al., 2017). There are three areas of practical implication of the results of this study:

1. A systemic shift from focusing on ill-being to creating cultures of well-being;
2. Leadership development for principals which includes practices that positively influence teacher well-being through organizational structures;
3. Building an understanding of the importance of external awareness; and
4. Developing systemic feedback structures for principals.

This research may help principal become more aware of the need to support people, instruction and organization structures (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2017). Specifically, the importance of how organizational structures can contribute to individual and collective well-being. The results of this study would emphasize building social capital through professional collaboration and opportunities to build collegial relationships (Gu, 2014; Leithwood, 2017; Marzano et al., 2005; Wagner, 2006).

Another point of awareness that may improve principal leadership is an understanding of theories that impact well-being. The study provides evidence of practical applications of SDT, especially regarding need satisfaction and, conversely, need frustration and controlled motivation and internal motivation (Collie et al., 2016; Deci et al., 2017). The responses from teachers indicated that Relatedness and Autonomy support their perception of organizational well-being. Responses from teachers who reported a lack of support expressed need frustration in these same areas. Controlled motivation imposed--such as government or division requirements or COVID-19 responses in recent years--is detrimental to individual and organizational well-being. Understanding the interplay of SDT components may empower leaders to support their schools.

Principal internal and external awareness is critical for responsive leadership. An implication from the study is for systems to build feedback structures for principals. Currently, feedback is initiated by principals themselves, and there are barriers to gathering honest feedback. If there were systemic feedback structures in place for principals to access information about their leadership, it could help them

tune in to the needs of their school community. The responses in this study from principals and teachers alluded to issues arising from hierarchical structures and power dynamics inherent in the teacher-principal relationship. Both the hierarchical structures and power dynamics are potential barriers to teachers giving feedback to principals and principals accessing honest and meaningful information about their leadership.

A final recommendation is for school divisions, professional organizations, and principals. Currently, there is a large focus on the negative aspects of teacher well-being. Cherkowski and Walker (2018) propose a shift of that narrative to systems of flourishing. The results of this study support a recommendation to building cultures at a systemic level by applying the foundational principles of positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship. Looking at what works to nurture organizational well-being, may better support individual well-being. This would require a shift from the current focus on the pathology perspective of ‘fixing’ mental health to an organizational focus on nurturing structures of professional well-being.

### **Potential Paths of Future Research**

There are a number of different pathways for future research as the results of this study still leave questions unanswered.

#### ***Multiple Perspectives***

Researchers (Cann et al., 2021; Devos et al., 2013; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019) recommend pursuing studies that include multiple perspectives. In this study, although response rates did not allow conclusive findings, gender is an area that may warrant

further exploration. In particular, females relative to affective leadership or how those who identify as non-binary or other experience leadership and school culture. This study was also limited to the principal-teacher relationship. A more complete narrative of leadership effect could be achieved by expanding future studies to include perspectives from other members of the school community.

### ***Leadership Theories and Perceptions of Leadership***

Various theories referenced in the literature seem relevant for more exploration. An interesting thread to explore is with Implicit Leadership Theory and how leadership schemas which Pienaar and Nel (2017) opine influence perceptions and actions of leaders and followers. Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Cogliser et al., 2009) is a related theory that may add to the narrative about building perceptual congruence and further developing principal self-awareness through understanding the dynamics of the leader-follower relationship.

### ***Organizational Systems that Nurture Well-Being***

This study was framed in pragmatism and positive psychology to understand what works with principal leadership for well-being. Another line of potential research is the exploration of organizational systems that promote professional well-being. Many studies about teacher well-being focus on two things – the experiences of individual teachers (Hayden et al., 2018; Prilleltensky et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, 2016) and the pathology of presence of ill-being (ATA, 2022, 2021b; Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Particularly, recent research in Alberta focused on the prevalence of individual ill-being such as exhaustion and stress. This current study

recommends a shift to research that looks for pathways to wellness through effective organizational structures and supports.

### ***Principal Well-Being***

Finally, an under-researched area is principal well-being. Given the lack of reciprocity noted in this study in professional relationships for principals, there is a concern for their well-being. What supports are in place for principals? How can structures at the systemic level support principals in satisfying their own needs for Autonomy, Relatedness, and Competency? As Grissom et al., (2021) and others assert, investing in principals has the potential for high returns for schools. Understanding the conditions and supports necessary to ensure principal well-being will support staff, student, and organizational well-being.

### **Limitations**

Although care was taken to ensure research standards were considered in the planning of this study, limitations to the study must be acknowledged. There were several limitations that may impact the outcomes and findings.

### ***Participants: Response Rate, Potential Bias, and Self-Perceptions***

The first limitation rests in the participant pool. This study was bound to teachers and principals. A school is a dynamic organization including members beyond teachers and principals. Educational Assistance, Custodians, and other community members interact with the principal regularly, and both contribute to and are affected by the organizational well-being of a school. While these varied members of the school community hold the potential for deepening the narrative of principal

leadership influence on OWB, I chose to focus on the unique interaction and perspectives within the principal-teacher relationship.

The principal-teacher relationship was a critical component of understanding perceptual congruence. Because of this, I felt it was important to bind the study to schools with a small administrative team to ensure opportunities for meaningful interaction between the principal and their teachers. I determined that the study would focus on schools where the administrative team was no larger than the principal and two other administrators. This dynamic would still allow teachers to interact regularly with their principal. Therefore, larger schools were not included in the study, nor were schools that had a more complex administrative structure. The response rate for this study, for both principals and teachers, was just over 30%. As Price and Murnan (2004) state,

An inadequate return rate is of increasing concern the further it is from 100%. For example, if only 40% of potential respondents respond to a survey, this should cause the researchers to suspect that the much larger group (60%) that did not respond is in some way potentially different in its perceptions of the topic under study. If an attempt is not made to determine if respondents and nonrespondents are different in their perceptions, then a potential threat exists to the external validity of the results.

Due to this study's lower response rate, there is a potential for response bias. This survey was not mandatory and relied on the voluntary participation of teachers, which may have led to a response bias. For example, it is possible that only teachers experiencing well-being responded to the survey or had the time and desire to

complete it, leading to an overly positive response compared to the entire teacher population at the school and may not capture all the perspectives of the leader.

Another limitation of this study related to response rate is determining what is an appropriate number of teacher responses to provide a measure of congruence. Eurich (2108) suggests six responses is an appropriate number. This study aimed to get six but used the alternative baseline of four if four represented at least 25% of teachers.

The study is rooted in participant perceptions. Given that this study required teachers to share perceptions of their principal, there may be what Price and Murnan (2004) deem a threat to internal validity “when respondents do not respond truthfully to items on an instrument (e.g., answer in a socially desirable way)” (p. 67). One of the main reasons teachers may avoid answering honestly is due to the hierarchical relationship with an inherent power dynamic between teachers and administrators. Although it was made clear that confidentiality would be maintained throughout, teachers might still have felt a need to answer from a positive or neutral stance. Another potential limitation with self-perception data suggested by researchers is a tendency for leaders to overestimate their skills (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992, Devos, 2013, Eurich, 2018). Interestingly, this was not evident in the majority of this study’s principal respondents’ self-perceptions. Again, ensuring confidentiality was important for principals to increase the likelihood of an honest in their responses, especially when responding to a known peer. Due to my positionality as a principal in the main division being studied, I work directly and regularly as a peer with the principal respondents. In some cases, teacher respondents may have worked with me as well. Added to that is the complexity of perception data. Some influences on perception

data are personal context, leadership schemas, and leadership member exchange theory (Pienaar & Nel, 2017).

The findings of this study are limited to the experiences of principals and teachers in one urban community and predominantly in one school division. The findings are further limited to principals who chose their schools to participate. As a long-time employee of the predominant division in the study, my relationship or connection to the principals may have influenced who chose to respond. My strong connection to the community may have resulted in unconscious bias on my part. Additionally, I did not have direct access to the teachers; therefore, the study was limited to those schools where the principal was willing to participate. Again, this may have contributed to a potentially biased response and may limit generalization of the findings.

### ***Instrumentation***

There are limitations to the surveys used in this study. One caution put forth by Price and Murnan (2004) is the ability of participants to interpret the questions may lead to participants answering in a way that does not reflect the intent of the question. Collie et al. (2012) confirm that question interpretations are a limitation of self-reported survey research. Some of this interpretation may be mitigated through the open-ended questions, allowing participants to further explain their thinking (Price and Murnan). Another limitation specific to this study is the intent of the instruments. The surveys employed in this study were not designed for congruence studies. There are challenges with data analysis for perceptual congruence and determining what



constitutes congruence. Originally, SOA was analyzed using difference scores between raters (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997), but later recommendations have been made for polynomial or multivariate regression where self-and other ratings are kept separate, followed by further examination of the relationship between SOA and performance outcomes (Fleenor et al., 2010). This study uses difference scores to determine congruence between principal and teacher perceptions which may not be the most accurate method of analysis.

### ***Timing***

Finally, the timing of the study may have limited the findings in two ways. One at the school level, the primary data collection opportunity was in October and November. Because of the inclusion criteria specifying school size, most schools in this study were elementary schools. These two months are incredibly busy for teachers as it is progress reporting time which adds extra workload stress. On a larger scale, the study occurred following the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other studies conducted during this time (ATA, 2020, 2021a, 2021b) reported high levels of teacher stress. There is no way to determine if the findings of this study reflect perspectives from teachers and principals in more typical times, as in without COVID influences.

### **Conclusion**

This study sought to understand how principal actions positively influence organizational well-being by exploring principal and teacher perceptions. Another important part of the study was exploring the congruence between the perceptions and understanding if the levels of congruence are related to well-being outcomes. Keeping

with positive psychology principles, the study looked to successful principals to find out how they build self-awareness to ensure they behaving in a way that supports organizational well-being.

Leadership is a critical support for organizational well-being and principal influence on teacher well-being is perceived as positive through organizational structures. What the research and the results of this study appear to support is the importance of organizational well-being as a primary focus for principals. By understanding SDT and how organizational structures provide opportunities for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, principals nurture flourishing in their school communities. This corroborates other research of effective leadership. For example, Leibowitz & Porter (2019) found a strong correlation between principal actions on student achievement through instructional practices, teacher well-being, and organizational health. This research determined that organizational health had the largest effect size. Another finding is that organizational well-being is supportive of individual well-being.

For this study, perceptions between teachers and principals about organizational well-being and authentic leadership were mostly high and perceptions of well-being measures were predominantly positive. This supports the SOA model which suggests perceptual congruence leads to enhanced individual and organizational outcomes (Yammarino & Atwater, 1992). Where agreements are not congruent, the reasons mirror aspects of positive factors, and lead to negative perceptions of well-being outcomes. The voices of respondents with negative perceptions make it clear that identified supports for OWB can also be threats when not employed. Therefore, as

Souba and Souba (2018) opine, master leaders lead with awareness of their leadership relative to their unique context.

Leadership schemas, both held by teachers and self-schemas of principals, may affect perceptions. It then becomes critical for principals to employ pathways of feedback to develop internal and external awareness (Eurich, 2018). Understanding one's impact requires intentional work to gather feedback, respond to feedback which requires an environment of high trust and safety. Although there may be barriers to feedback pathways for principals due to power dynamics, successful principals look for and act on feedback from their team to improve their leadership effect.

The 'unicorn' principals in this study, principals who achieve positive perceptions, positive well-being outcomes, and strong agreement between their own leadership awareness and perceptions of their teachers, demonstrate intention around building positive school cultures that support individual and collective well-being. As Leithwood (2017) asserts it is necessary to move beyond 'what' principals should do to develop an understanding of 'how' principals lead to achieve positive outcomes. Given the critical role that principals play in supporting (or negating) flourishing school communities, this research may provide some clarity on how they can positively influence organizational well-being and understand their effect.

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## Appendix A: Data Collection Timeline

### *Data Collection Schedule*

Time	Activity
October 2022	Request for participation sent to principal candidates
October 2022	Request for participation and consents sent to teachers
October 14-November 10, 2022	Administration of survey and written open-ended questions to principals and teachers via Qualtrics. A reminder email will be sent on October 31, 2022.
November 2022	Phase one and two analysis of quantitative and qualitative survey data
November 2022	Invitations to principals to participate in a one-on-one interview
November and December 2022	Principal Interviews
November and December 2022	Transcribing and coding principal interview data. Continued analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.
January 2023	Teacher surveys were reopened to elicit more teacher responses from participating schools.

## **Appendix B: Information Required in the Informed Consent Process**

Dr. Julie Kalnin - Dissertation Chair

Sherri Humphrys - Doctoral Candidate

Title of Dissertation:

Exploring Principal Effect on Organizational Well-Being: Looking at Perceptual  
Congruence Between Self and Others

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included, here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and understand any accompanying information.

The University of Portland Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects will review this research as partial fulfillment for the Ed. D. program. The project will be submitted for review on July 21, 2022, with an expected approval date of July 27, 2022.

### **Purpose of this Mixed-Methods Case Study**

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study seeks to explore principal leadership effectiveness and the impacts on organizational well-being by exploring teacher and principal perceptual congruence.

The participants are principals and at least six of their teachers from schools in a large urban school division which have a small leadership team of themselves and no more than two other formal leaders. The principals and their teachers have worked together for at least one year.

For this study, it is necessary for both the principal and their teachers to complete the survey. The principal version of the survey includes two parts, an assessment of school organizational health and a self-assessment of their supportive leadership. For teachers, the survey will assess teachers' perception of school organizational health and their principals' supportive leadership. Both principal and teacher surveys take about 15 minutes to complete and should be completed in one session.

### **Written Information Included for the Online Anonymous Survey**

This survey is part of a research study conducted by Sherri Humphrys, as part of the UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND School of Education doctoral program. By exploring the possible relationship between the congruence of perspectives and organizational well-being, I hope to help principals improve the effectiveness of their

leadership through strategies that help them understand how others perceive their impact. If you agree to participate, please complete the survey below. If you do not want to participate, please do not complete this survey.

This is an anonymous survey and there are no anticipated risks to your participation in this survey, however, it is unlikely yet possible that a data breach could occur with the Qualtrics survey, and that the data may not be truly anonymous. Any potential identifying data will be anonymized prior to analysis. All data will be kept in a password-protected computer and will be reported in the aggregate.

Participating in this research will help us better understand the factors that impede or contribute to how principals influence organizational well-being and how they understand their impact. However, we cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research. Your participation is voluntary, and your decision whether to not to participate will not affect your relationship with the University of Portland or your school or school division. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at Sherri Humphrys, 780-905-5999, [humphrys21@up.edu](mailto:humphrys21@up.edu) or my faculty advisor Dr. Julie Kalnin, [Kalnin@up.edu](mailto:Kalnin@up.edu). If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB ([IRB@up.edu](mailto:IRB@up.edu)).

### **What Will I Be Asked to Do:**

Teachers:

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey, including three open-ended questions, about school organizational health and principal leadership. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to participate altogether, may refuse to participate in parts of the study, or may withdraw from the study without penalty. If you wish to withdraw from the program, please contact Sherri Humphrys by November 30, 2022 ([humphrys21@up.edu](mailto:humphrys21@up.edu)).

Principals:

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey, including three open-ended questions, about school organizational health and your leadership. The survey will include a question about your willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher to explore your perception of leading to promote organizational well-being and how you understand your leadership influence on this construct. If chosen for the interviews, you will be asked to engage in a personal interview, review transcribed records of your interview to ensure accuracy and provide feedback about a draft copy of the written analysis and findings. Details related to these activities can be found below.



Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to participate altogether, may refuse to participate in parts of the study, or may withdraw from the study without penalty. If you wish to withdraw from the program, please contact Sherri Humphrys by November 30, 2022 (humphrys21@up.edu).

Results from this survey will only be used for research purposes, not for any official evaluation of the school and the principal.

By preceding with this survey, you provide consent to participate.

### **What Type of Personal Information Will be Collected?**

Should you agree to participate in this study, the following personal information will be collected to provide a partial demographic profile of participants but will not be associated with any participant's name:

Demographic Data	Gender identity, Age, Education Level,
Work Experience	Years of Experience, Years at Current School, Years Working with Current Principal, Teaching Responsibilities (Grade, Subject)
Work Location	You will be asked to identify your school in order to match to your principal. This data will be anonymized prior to analysis and will not be associated with your name or your principal.

**Please read the following consent options carefully (for interview participants). Put a checkmark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission.**

I grant permission to be audio recorded:    Yes: \_\_\_    No: \_\_\_

The pseudonym I choose for myself is:    Yes: \_\_\_    No: \_\_\_

You may quote me using my pseudonym:    Yes: \_\_\_    No: \_\_\_

### **Are There Risks of Benefits If I Participate?**

This is an anonymous survey, and there are no anticipated risks to your participation in this survey. However, it is unlikely yet possible that a data breach could occur with the Qualtrics survey, and that the data may not be truly anonymous. Any potential identifying data will be anonymized prior to analysis. All data will be kept in a password-protected computer and will be reported in the aggregate.

There are no foreseeable risks or benefits related to participation in this study other than the benefits of the professional learning opportunities inherent in the interview research design.

### **What Happens to the Information I Provide?**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Personal information collected on the survey will only be accessible by the student-researcher or a research assistant. The research assistant will sign a confidentiality agreement prior to anonymizing the data. Within 30 days of the interview, a copy of the anonymized and transcribed interview will be provided to you for the verification of their accuracy and interpretation. The researcher requests that you review the data, findings, and interpretation within 14 days of receiving the information with recommended changes. The researcher will interpret your acceptance of the data, findings, and interpretation should you not respond within 14 days.

This research will be submitted for approval by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Portland on July 21, 2022. The research may be shared in an anonymous form beyond the limits of coursework. This sharing could include but is not limited to sharing with other professionals, course creators and vendors, publications and/or sharing at research conferences.

Your interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher or their assistant. Transcribed interviews will be anonymized using pseudonyms for your name and any other identifying information you share during the interview. If identifying information cannot be removed using a pseudonym, it will not be used in the study. Your anonymity cannot be assured if you share your pseudonym with others or reveal the content of your interview responses with anyone other than the researcher. The researcher will not use any identifying information you provide as an artifact.

Should you decide to withdraw from the research study at any time, all data, including interview responses, transcripts, and audio tapes collected to the date of withdrawal, will be removed from the study and destroyed. In any case, any identifying documents and all raw data collected in relation to this study will be kept on encrypted hard drives or in locked cabinets, accessible only by the researcher and then destroyed in its entirety on September 30, 2024. It must be understood that the anonymized data and findings used in the final research report remain the property of the researcher.

### **Signatures (written consent for interviews)**

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understood to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigator, sponsor, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions/Concerns:**

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact either:

Sherri Humphrys (Student Researcher)  
Student, School of Education, University of Portland  
780-905-5999 or email [humphrys21@up.edu](mailto:humphrys21@up.edu)

Dr. Julie Kalnin (Supervisor)  
Research Advisor, School of Education University of Portland  
e-mail: [kalnin@up.edu](mailto:kalnin@up.edu)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the University of Portland Institutional Review Board. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form

## Appendix C: Interview Protocol

### Interview Protocol Project:

Exploring Principal Effect on Organizational Well-Being: Looking at Perceptual Congruence Between Self and Other

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Position of Interviewee:

Reminders to Researcher: Prior to the start of the interview, remember to: Ensure that the interviewee received the informed consent form and has returned the signed form to participate in the study either in person or by email prior to participation in the study.

Open with script: Hi \_\_\_\_\_. You have agreed to participate in my capstone research study, which examines Principal and Teacher perceptions of the impact of leadership practice on organizational well-being. Thank you, I appreciate your time and participation in my study. Before we begin, I will summarize your rights as a study participant:

- I am asking you to respond to questions about our personal views or perceptions. This interview is not anticipated to last longer than 60 minutes. However, I might want to ask a few follow-up questions through a follow-up interview (via phone or technology) if something is unclear during my analysis.
- Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any questions or to withdraw from this study at any time without repercussions, and
- Participation in this study will present little to no risk to you. Your identity and the identity of your current school location will be kept confidential and will not be revealed in the results of this study.

Now that I have reviewed your rights, do you agree to participate in the study?

Thank you again for your participation.

I have prepared questions, but please feel free to add any comments that might add to my understanding of your views and experiences. I may ask questions that diverge from the prepared list to follow up, clarify, or expand your answers. With your permission, I would like to record this conversation to capture your responses accurately.

This study uses measures of organizational well-being as outcomes related to perceived leadership actions. Organizational well-being occurs when organizational goals are obtained, members of the organization experience well-being, and there is a positive interconnectedness of individual and organizational outcomes (Cojocaru, 2014; Coli & Risotto, 2013).

#### *Organizational Well-Being*

1. What are the indicators that a school has high organizational well-being?
2. What do you pay attention to “keep a pulse” on individual and organizational well-being in your school? (What are you watching for on an ongoing basis)
3. What signals indicate to you that tensions or stressors in the organization move beyond typical, requiring intervention?

#### *Leadership Influence*

4. What are three ways, as the principal, that you tend to the organizational well-being in your school? (What do you do as the leader?)
5. What are the key sources of information/evidence that you use to assess the effects of your leadership?
  - a. Or the impact of your decisions?

#### *Perceptual Congruence*

6. In your leadership experiences to date, think of a moment when you became aware that your perception and that of your staff were different. How did you learn about this difference? What did you do next?
  - a. What tactics do you use to confirm that your perceptions are accurate now?
7. Experienced principals know that getting honest feedback can be a challenge. What approaches have you incorporated into your practice to ensure that there is a strong feedback loop in your school?
  - a. How do you address the barriers that principals face in getting honest feedback?
  - b. When you receive feedback that might be surprising or negative - how do you work through that?

#### *Wrap up*

As you consider our conversation, is there anything else sitting with you that you feel is important?

## Appendix D: Open-Ended Questions Included in the Survey

**Open-Ended Question 1:** Principal and teachers answered the same question.

### Organizational Well-Being



Please explain your rating by identifying any strengths and or/issues that led to your response.

**Open-Ended Question 2:** Principal version was modified to say “your leadership.”

### Principal Leadership and Organizational Well-being



Please explain your rating by describing what led to your response.

**Open-Ended Question 3:** Principal version was modified to say “your role” and “that of your teachers?”

### Perception of Leadership Influence



Why do you think this?

### Appendix E: Code Application – Organizational Well-Being

#### *Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Supports for Organizational Well-Being*

Organizational Supports Child Code (frequency)	Teachers <i>n</i> (%)	Principals <i>n</i> (%)
Leadership (62)	53 (85)	9 (15)
Staff Collective Well-being (50)	44 (88)	6 (12)
Relationships (57)	41 (72)	16 (28)
Cohesive School Community/Culture (61)	45 (74)	16 (26)
Collaboration (42)	25 (60)	17 (40)
Focus on Students (27)	14 (52)	13 (48)

*Note.* Teachers *n* = 102 (70%), Principals *n* = 43 (29%)

### Appendix F: Code Application for RQ1 – Strengths

*Factors that Strengthen Organizational Well-being Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
Cohesive School Community	Community (32) Collaboration (25) Collective well-being (21) Common goals/processes (13)	Community (13) Collaboration (17) Collective Well-being (6) Common goals, processes (3)
Leadership	Autonomy (25) Support to teachers (16) Leading the organization (14) Appreciated, valued, recognized (10)	Autonomy (6) Support (2) Leading the organization (1)
Relationships	Collegiality (27) Supporting each other (14)	Collegiality (8) Supporting each other (8)
Focus on Students	Meeting students' needs (14)	Meeting students' needs (8) Teaching and learning (5)



### Appendix G: Code Application for RQ1 – Challenges

#### *Challenges to Organizational Well-being Code Frequencies Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principals Responses (code frequency)
External Pressures	Government or division expectations (8) COVID-19 (8)	Government or division expectations (3) COVID-19 (10)
Leadership	Lack of accountability (8) Lack of Clarity (9) Don't feel heard (10) Change (1)	Change (1)
Staff	Staff groups (10) Low morale (2) Lack of connection (2)	Staff groups (5) Low Morale (3) Negative staff (5)
Student Challenges	Diverse student needs (5) Student behaviour (5)	Diverse student needs (5)
Working conditions	Time pressures (4) Demands (4) Class sizes (3)	Class sizes (2)

## Appendix H: Interview Qualitative Code Frequencies – Indicators

### *Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Indicators of Organizational Well-Being*

Indicators of OWB	Sub-Categories	Principal Responses
Collective or Organizational	Overall Climate and Culture	5
	Staff Engagement	5
	Staff Fulfillment and Growth	5
	Collective Goals/vision	5
	School Improvement	4
Collegial Relationships	Personal Relationships	4
	Supporting Each other	4
Focus on Students	Meeting Students Needs	4
Trust in Leadership	Staff Come to Me	3

**Appendix I: Written Response Qualitative Code Frequencies (RQ2) - Principal Influence**

*Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Perception of Influence on OWB Across Roles*

Theme	Teacher Responses (code frequency)	Principal Responses (code frequency)
Supportive and In the Trenches (48)	Supportive (17) In the trenches (9) Clearing a path (5) Has our back (4)	Supportive (7) In the Trenches (4) Clearing a path (2)
Teacher Voice and Autonomy (48)	Autonomy - Trust (11) Input in decision-making (16) Values Feedback (3)	Autonomy - Trust (9) Listen and Seek Input (9)
Affective Leadership (46)	Caring, Compassionate, and Connected (21) Appreciation (7)	Care (4) Relationships (9) Celebrate/Acknowledge (5)
Positive and Sets the Tone (33)	Positive/Sets the tone (9) Leads by example (7)	Positive/Sets the tone (15) Authentic (2)
Clarity of Vision and Expectations (32)	Clear Communication (7) Shared Vision (7) Clear Expectations (5)	Communication (5) Shared Vision/Intention (8)
Focus on Well-being (26)	Well-being priority (12) Work/life Balance (7)	Well-being priority (5) Work/life Balance (2)
Open and Approachable (22)	Open and Approachable (12) Transparent (5)	Open and Approachable (3) Transparent (2)

## Appendix J: Interview Qualitative Code Frequencies - Principal Influence

*Qualitative Code Frequency Counts: Principal Self-Perception of Influence on Organizational Well-Being*

Influencing Factors	Sub-Categories	Principal Responses
Support and In the Trenches	Ask and offer	7
	Ensure they have what they need	5
	I've got their back	3
	In the trenches	5
	Clear the path	2
Relationships and Care	Check-ins	7
	Know your People	7
	Acknowledgement	5
	Lead from the Heart	3
	Encourage Conversations	3
Open Door	Open Door	7
	Be curious and listen	3
Focus on Well-being	Boosts when needed	5
	Intentional focus	5
Shared Leadership and Decision-making	Shared leadership	3
	Teacher Voice	4
Authenticity and Humility	Don't pretend to have the answers	4
	Grounded in values	3
	Transparency	4
Common Vision and Expectations	Consistent Practices	2
	Clear Communication	3
	Clear Expectations	2
	Vision and Purpose	1

*Note.* Principals Interviewed,  $N = 7$

### Appendix K: Schools Included in RQ3 Quantitative Analysis

#### *Schools Included in Perceptual Congruence Data Analysis*

School	Type	Number of Teacher Responses (% of eligible)
School 3	K - 6	4 (44)
School 10	K - 6	6 (60)
School 12	7 - 9	6 (55)
School 16	K - 6	5 (50)
School 18	K - 6	5 (31)
School 22	K - 6	6 (22)
School 24	K - 6	5 (29)
School 28	K - 6	4 (29)
School 36	K - 6	12 (63)
School 37	K - 9	5 (45)
School 39	Pre K - 6	4 (25)
School 41	K - 6	5 (63)
School 42	Pre K - 6	4 (31)
School 46	K - 6	9 (53)
School 47	K - 6	4 (44)
School 48	10 - 12	7 (30)
School 50	K - 6	6 (38)

*Note.* Criteria for inclusion was at least 6 teacher responses or 4 + representing at least 25% of eligible teachers. School numbers were randomly assigned.

### Appendix L: Mean Scores RQ3 Quantitative Analysis

*Scores for Principal and Teacher Respondents in Congruence Schools*

School	Role	n	ALQ		SCTS		TWBS	
			M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
3	Principal	1	4.43		3.64			
	Teacher	4	4.42	.62	3.66	.55	4.45	.53
10	Principal	1	4.43		4.18			
	Teacher	6	4.96*	.08	4.48	.36	4.83	.67
12	Principal	1	3.69		3.88			
	Teacher	6	4.11	.70	3.89	.65	4.19	.92
16	Principal	1	4.19		4.41			
	Teacher	6	4.51	.50	4.07	.31	4.20	.60
18	Principal	1	4.43		3.76			
	Teacher	5	4.41	.58	4.01	.36	5.06	1.04
22	Principal	1	4.38		4.06*			
	Teacher	6	4.03	.84	3.38	.39	4.55	.89
24	Principal	1	4.50		4.29			
	Teacher	5	4.89*	.22	4.34	.37	5.41	.69
28	Principal	1	4.06		3.65			
	Teacher	4	4.66*	.19	4.12	.72	5.02	.71
36	Principal	1	4.94		4.82			
	Teacher	12	4.90	.10	4.60	.33	5.28	1.04
37	Principal	1	4.31		5.00			
	Teacher	5	4.01	.64	3.85	.53	4.51	.83

School	Role	<i>n</i>	ALQ		SCTS		TWBS	
			M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>	M	<i>SD</i>
39	Principal	1	4.88		4.47			
	Teacher	4	3.56	1.57	3.10	.70	4.19	1.52
41	Principal	1	4.25		3.88			
	Teacher	6	4.61*	.30	4.49*	.26	4.33	.42
42	Principal	1	3.62		3.11			
	Teacher	4	3.75	.49	3.27	.62	4.59	1.09
46	Principal	1	4.50		3.23			
	Teacher	9	3.94	1.12	3.61	.88	5.04	1.17
47	Principal	1	4.00		3.94			
	Teacher	4	4.85*	.21	4.29	.55	5.06	.30
48	Principal	1	4.12		3.76			
	Teacher	6	4.07	1.08	3.82	1.00	5.06	1.53
50	Principal	1	3.94		3.64			
	Teacher	6	3.76	.81	3.45	.48	4.19	.76

*Note.* The teacher scores are the mean scores of all teachers from the individual schools. \* = statistical difference on total score or between subscale ( $p < .05$ )