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A Study of Middle School Principal Behaviors and Their Impact on Teacher Retention

Todd Martin
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A Study of Middle School Principal Behaviors and Their Impact on Teacher Retention

By
Todd Martin

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2011

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Todd Martin under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

A Study of Middle School Principal Behaviors and Their Impact on Teacher Retention.
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Behavior/Teacher Turnover/Teacher Working Conditions

This dissertation was designed to investigate the causes behind teacher turnover and the connection between principal behavior, teacher working conditions, and rates of teacher turnover. In particular, this study examined behaviors that teachers in three North Carolina middle schools felt their principals displayed that helped encourage them to continue teaching in their current schools. Teachers in three middle schools, one from each geographical region of the state, completed an online survey. Also, the researcher visited each middle school and interviewed the three principals and their supervisors to collect additional data concerning positive teacher working conditions and reduced rates of turnover. The data generated from middle school teachers who participated in this study indicated there were specific behaviors that positively impacted teacher working conditions and encouraged them to continue teaching in their current schools. Based on the data analysis, several suggestions for principals are included to help them improve teacher working conditions and reduce turnover in their schools. Principals should try to establish meaningful relationships with their teachers. Principals should behave ethically and refrain from showing favoritism. Also, principals should show their support of teachers. Principals should also try to create an atmosphere of cooperation and collegiality within their schools.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

According to data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) that has been collected since 1989, teachers, and especially those in their first 5 years of employment, have been leaving the teaching profession in high numbers. In a 2002 symposium of The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) state partners, former NCTAF chairman James Hunt and President Tom Carroll presented evidence that analysis of the NCES data has shown that roughly one-third of all teachers entering the teaching profession for the first time will leave it within their first 3 years of teaching and almost one half will leave within a 5-year period. In fact, according to the data from the NCES for the 1999-2000 school year presented by Hunt and Carroll, turnover for teachers is significantly higher than for other occupations (NCTAF, 2002, p. 4). Many school systems, despite their best efforts to recruit teachers each year, are ending up suffering a net loss. The NCES data shows that in 1999, schools and school systems hired 232,000 teachers who had not been teaching the year before. However, schools and school systems ended up losing more than 287,000 teachers that year. This resulted in a net loss of approximately 55,000 teachers, according to the NCES data. Former Chairman Hunt and President Carroll made the point that these are not symptoms of a teacher shortage but rather symptoms of a teacher retention crisis in America's schools (NCTAF, 2002, p. 3).

An examination of the NCES (2010) data from 2004 and 2008 concerning teacher attrition in the public schools shows roughly 8% of the total teaching force changes schools each year and approximately 8.2% leave the profession altogether (p. 6). For the

2008-2009 school year, the most recent year data are available, approximately 247,600 teachers changed schools and almost 261,000 left teaching. Of the 261,000 who left teaching, 52,600 were inexperienced teachers who had taught between 1 and 3 years (NCES, 2010, p. 7).

While less likely to leave than beginning teachers, experienced teachers are leaving the classroom as well, and for a variety of reasons according to Barbara Benham Tye and Lisa O'Brien (2002). In a study conducted by Tye and O'Brien (2002) at California's Chapman University, 114 experienced teachers (teachers with 5 or more years of experience) were selected at random to participate in a survey. Respondents were asked to provide handwritten comments to questions and to rank-order a list of reasons why they had left or were considering leaving the teaching profession. The respondents revealed they had left, or were leaving, the profession because of increased paperwork, student attitudes, no parent support, salary considerations, and unresponsive administration. While Tye and O'Brien's (2002) study was ultimately focused on the pressures of standardized testing, results from the surveys revealed that "it was the work environment itself that ultimately proved unbearable..." (para. 17).

The data from NCES (2010) confirms that experienced teachers are leaving the classroom. According to the NCES, at the conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year, 76,800 teachers who had been teaching between 4 and 9 years left the profession. For the category of teachers who had been teaching between 10 and 19 years, almost 40,000 left the profession at the conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year (NCES, 2010, p. 7).

It should be noted that teacher attrition, defined as teachers either resigning or retiring from positions, is only one type of teacher turnover. Cynthia D. Prince (2002), in her study of the uneven teacher distribution between high-achieving school districts and

districts with large numbers of poor and minority students, found that teacher migration is also an issue.

Teacher migration – teachers remaining in the profession but relocating to a different school – is also a significant problem, particularly in high-poverty, high-minority, low-achieving schools. As University of Pennsylvania sociologist Richard Ingersoll points out, teacher migration is often de-emphasized because it does not change the overall supply of teachers. However, high rates of teacher migration are disruptive and can adversely affect staff morale, community relationships and school performance. (Prince, 2002, p. 7)

According to Prince (2002), teacher migration frequently occurs with teachers who are experienced. Teachers who are just beginning their careers will often be assigned to teach or will take jobs teaching in low-achieving schools serving a majority of economically disadvantaged students or students of color for a few years, and after gaining experience, will migrate to better teaching situations. Prince (2002) examined situations in California, New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Hartford, Richmond, and other places where efforts had been made to alleviate the shortage of experienced teachers in hard to staff schools. She found that not only were experienced teachers migrating to other teaching positions, but also that when administrators tried to solve this problem by keeping teachers in place or reassigning experienced teachers to needy schools, political pressure was often brought to bear on the superintendents and principals not to make these moves. This pressure often came from teachers' and principals' unions, parents, and school board members.

The NCES data for 2008-2009 shows exactly how many teachers migrated to new schools. This data reveals that 76,720 teachers who had between 4 and 9 years of

experience changed schools prior to the start of the new school year. Additionally, of those with between 10 and 19 years of experience, almost 52,000 teachers migrated to other schools (NCES, 2010, p. 7).

Richard J. Murnane and Jennifer L. Steele (2007) studied how to provide effective teachers for all students and how to attract effective teachers to the teaching profession. Murnane and Steele (2007) examined teacher labor markets, supply and demand, teacher pay, and working conditions. Among their findings, in studying the problem of providing effective teachers for all students, was “the likely explanation for why well-educated, experienced teachers tend to avoid working in schools serving low-income children or children of color is that working conditions in these schools are especially difficult” (Murnane & Steele, 2007, para. 56). However, according to Prince’s (2002) research, these teachers are often attractive to principals who are hiring because they are experienced. Prince (2002) claimed,

The overwhelming majority of...principals are convinced that teacher experience matters. Seventy percent of those surveyed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals report that teachers in their school who have more experience are more knowledgeable about curriculum, assessment and instruction. (para. 6)

Why Are Teachers Leaving?

Researchers (Angelle, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2006; Liston, Whitcomb, & Borko, 2006; Otto & Arnold, 2005) pointed out that teachers leave the profession for a variety of reasons, but one reason that is given frequently by these teachers is lack of support from administration. According to Otto and Arnold (2005) in their study involving special education teachers’ perceptions of administrator support, “The literature on teacher

retention indicates ‘lack of administrative support’ as an important reason for leaving the profession” (p. 253). In their study, Otto and Arnold (2005) used a questionnaire to survey experienced (those with 5 years or more of teaching experience) Corpus Christi, Texas exceptional children’s teachers concerning their perceptions of administrative support. The respondents held a variety of positions, including self-contained, resource, and inclusion positions. The data were collected using a survey that was descriptive in nature. Responses were collected using a Likert scale. Once the data was collected, it was analyzed to see if administrative support played any role in efforts to retain special education teachers. What Otto and Arnold (2005) found was that experienced exceptional children’s teachers generally see their principals as supportive, which was in sharp contrast to the literature they reviewed on inexperienced exceptional children’s teachers, who in general felt administrative support was lacking. Otto and Arnold (2005) pointed out that it is very important that the reasons why exceptional children’s teachers leave due to perceived lack of support by the principal be examined.

Pamela Angelle (2006), in her study of whether or not brief and superficial monitoring by the principal is sufficient enough to encourage novice teachers to stay in their current jobs, also supports this idea in her work on the socialization process of new teachers. Angelle (2006) gathered data from four middle schools in a southern state by interviewing 19 teachers who had no more than 2 years of experience. Each teacher’s principal was also interviewed. Interview questions for principals focused on their monitoring role. The focus of the teacher interview questions was on their perceptions of support from the school and community. Angelle (2006) found that, for the most part, beginning teachers felt it important that their principals take an interest in what they were doing in the classroom. The majority of teachers liked the fact that their principals

stopped by and visited their classrooms frequently, and that they made efforts to talk to the teachers about what they saw during these visits. Angelle (2006) also noted that “Research has found that lack of support from the instructional leader was [a] primary reason for beginning teachers leaving the field” (p. 320). Angelle (2006) went on to recommend that principals should frequently monitor, provide feedback, and discuss professional practice with beginning teachers. This *instructional leadership* by the principal is “a vital part of the socialization experience” for beginning teachers (Angelle, 2006, p. 332).

Liston et al. (2006), in their review of the literature on why most beginning teachers find the first years of teaching difficult, identified several issues that the beginners face. These issues include a focus on theory in the teacher preparation programs, rather than preparation for the specific tasks of teaching; the stress and emotional intensity of the first years of teaching caused by the sheer amount of work, the uncertainty associated with teaching, and moments when teachers feel disillusioned with their chosen career; and schools where beginning teachers receive inadequate support. Liston et al. (2006) pointed out that some beginning teachers are fortunate enough to have principals who provide administrative support by acting as instructional leaders. These principals develop personal relationships with the teachers. They also attend to the working conditions in their schools by providing supplies in sufficient quantities, by being reasonable in using teachers’ time, and by having school-wide student behavior standards in place.

Liston et al. (2006) pointed out that many beginning teachers do not find themselves in such supportive environments:

They [beginning teachers] work to develop humane, yet efficient, routines

to manage the daily business of classroom and school life. They struggle to design engaging curriculum and to build knowledge of rigorous and fair standards for student work. They try to fend off fatigue, seeking to balance career demands with activities and connections that rejuvenate. They grapple with the absurdities and paradoxes of school bureaucracies, choosing when to critique and resist ill-framed policies and practices. They stumble in some interactions with colleagues, administrators, and parents. They wonder why their trying work and hard-won accomplishments are viewed with such low regard by the general public. (p. 351)

When beginning teachers do not feel supported in their endeavors, this becomes “a critical factor in whether they stay at a particular school or in teaching as a career” (Liston et al., 2006, p. 354).

In many cases, according to Joseph Blase and Jo Blase (2006), behavior on the part of principals goes beyond lack of administrative support and recognition to actions that border on being abusive. In their study on principal mistreatment of teachers, Blase and Blase (2006) found several levels of aggression that principals directed towards teachers. Blase and Blase (2006) contacted teachers and professors across the United States to get their help in identifying teachers who experienced long-term abuse by their principals.

In order to be considered for the study, teachers had to have been subjected to significant abuse by their principals that lasted anywhere from 6 months to 9 years. Blase and Blase (2006) then contacted teachers who had expressed interest in participating in the study. The final sample consisted of 50 teachers. There were five males and 45 females. Of the 50 teachers, 26 taught at the elementary level, 10 taught in middle school or junior high, and 14 taught high school. There were 44 tenured and six non-tenured

teachers. Fifteen teachers were currently working with abusive principals at the time of the study. The others had experienced the abuse in recent years of teaching.

Blase and Blase (2006) examined personal and official documents and reports from those who had worked with teachers in the study. From their examinations it was clear that most of these teachers were creative, dedicated, and were respected by their peers. In most cases the teachers had been recognized as being superior teachers, and several had been recognized at the state level.

The researchers conducted two to four telephone interviews with each participant. After the interviews were completed, the researchers examined the data looking for inconsistencies within and between the interviews. They also compared personal documents with the transcribed interviews.

After a thorough examination of all the data, Blase and Blase (2006) identified three levels of principal mistreatment. Level 1 mistreatment included behaviors that were indirect and moderately aggressive. Level 2 mistreatment was more severe in that the behaviors were direct and aggression escalated over time. Level 3 mistreatment included principal behavior towards teachers that was direct and severely aggressive.

Level 1 mistreatment, behaviors that were indirect and moderately aggressive, included findings of instances when principals ignored teachers, including failing to respond to written requests. Additionally, principals were insensitive towards teachers' personal matters, including deaths in their families. These principals were often unsupportive of their teachers and blamed them when problems arose. In some cases these principals showed marked favoritism to some teachers while punishing or neglecting other teachers.

Principals engaging in level 2 mistreatment spied on their teachers by listening in

on classes using the intercom system and by recruiting other teachers and parents as informants. These principals encouraged teachers not to help those teachers who had fallen out of favor. Some principals even stole from teachers. Additionally, level 2 principals made unreasonable demands, overloaded teachers with work, and in many cases had the teachers complete their (the principals') work. Finally, Blase and Blase (2006) found that many of these principals criticized teachers privately and publicly and would often do so in the office, hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, and parking lots.

Principals who sank to level 3 status engaged in a variety of behaviors that made the victims feel as if the principals intended harm or wanted to destroy them. These level 3 behaviors included blatant lying, loud verbal abuse and yelling, making direct threats, and slapping unnecessary written reprimands on teachers. Blase and Blase (2006) found that in some cases principals also gave unfair evaluations. Some teachers were forced out of jobs unfairly or were victims of sexual harassment. Other principals were identified as being racist.

According to Eric Hirsch, Scott Emerick, Keri Church, and Ed Fuller (2007), research has consistently shown that teachers make a greater difference in student achievement than any other factor associated with schools. However, many researchers (Graziano, 2005; Murnane & Steele, 2007; Prince, 2002) have shown that retaining teachers has been problematic over the years. This becomes especially evident when principals engage in some of the behaviors listed above. Blase and Blase (2006) found that teachers who were mistreated often withdrew from the events of their schools, only attending those activities that were considered mandatory. Teachers who were abused suffered "...shock, disorientation, humiliation, loneliness, injured self-esteem, chronic fear, anxiety, anger, depression, and a range of physical/psychological problems" (Blase

& Blase, 2006, para. 45). These teachers were only one step away from seeking a more favorable teaching climate in another school or simply leaving teaching altogether.

According to the research that has been reviewed, issues such as lack of principal support and behavior that borders on being abusive help undermine positive working conditions for teachers. Richard Ingersoll (2001) and Eric Hirsch and Scott Emerick (with Church and Fuller, 2007) have shown that working conditions impact teachers' decisions about whether to continue working in particular schools or to remain in the field of teaching period.

Richard Ingersoll (2001), from the University of Pennsylvania, used data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), to examine teacher turnover, teacher migration, and their causes. Ingersoll's study had two objectives. The first was to establish the role of teacher turnover in the hiring and staffing problems schools were facing. Secondly, and for the purposes of this research, most importantly, Ingersoll wanted to examine the role school characteristics and organizational conditions (working conditions) played in causing teacher turnover.

The United States Census Bureau (1998) collected the SASS data from school administrators and teachers for NCES. After 12 months, the same schools were contacted and those teachers who had been members of the original sample who had since left their positions, along with a representative sample of teachers who stayed, were given the TFS questionnaire. Ultimately, 6,733 teachers were surveyed. This included 3,343 teachers who continued to teach in their positions, 1,428 teachers who moved to other positions, and 1,962 who left teaching altogether.

Ingersoll (2001) divided his analysis into three stages. In the first stage, he established the overall extent of teacher turnover and the role this played in teacher

demand and school staffing. In the second stage, Ingersoll (2001) “conducted a multiple regression analysis of the effects of teacher characteristics, school characteristics, and organizational conditions on turnover” (p. 508). In the third stage, Ingersoll examined carefully the reasons teachers gave for leaving their positions or schools.

Among the many findings of this study, Ingersoll (2001) noted that school characteristics (or working conditions) impacted teachers’ decisions to stay or leave specific schools. Specifically, Ingersoll (2001) examined the level of administrative support, the amount and degree of conflict within schools, and the degree to which teachers were able to provide input into and have influence over organizational policies. To measure administrative support, Ingersoll (2001) used an index of the degree of support that was provided for new teachers. To measure the amount of conflict and strife, Ingersoll used an index of the level of student discipline problems. For the degree to which teachers were able to provide input and have influence on school policies, Ingersoll (2001) used an index of the degree of faculty classroom control as reported by the participating teachers.

Ingersoll’s (2001) analysis showed that in schools where there was more administrative support, there were also lower rates of teacher turnover. Additionally, in schools with lower levels of student discipline problems, turnover rates were significantly lower. In schools where higher levels of teacher decision making and teacher influence on policy decisions were found, lower turnover rates were also found.

Ingersoll (2001) also pointed out that two inter-related reasons for significant teacher turnover are tied to organizational, or working conditions.

Forty-two percent of all departures report as reasons job dissatisfaction or the desire to pursue a better job, another career, or to improve career opportunities in

or out of education. Dissatisfaction underlying migration is most often listed as being due to low salaries, lack of support from school administration, student discipline problems, and lack of teacher influence over decision-making.

Likewise, dissatisfaction underlying attrition is most often reported as being due to low salaries, lack of support from the school administration, lack of student motivation, and student discipline problems. (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 522)

In other words, teacher working conditions, and specifically lack of administrative support and student discipline problems, serve as underlying causes behind both teacher migration and attrition.

Additionally, Ingersoll (2001) put forth the idea that educators are using the wrong strategy when they try to address teacher turnover by seeking to increase the number of teachers. Rather, according to Ingersoll's (2001) analysis, school personnel should seek to address school staffing problems by decreasing the demand for new teachers. To accomplish this, teacher turnover must be decreased. Ingersoll (2001) wrote,

The data suggest that improvements in organizational [working] conditions, such as increased support from school administration, reduction of student discipline problems, and enhanced faculty input into school decision-making...would all contribute to lower rates of turnover, thus diminish school staffing problems, and ultimately aid the performance of schools. (p. 525)

Eric Hirsch and Scott Emerick, with the Center for Teaching Quality, along with Keri Church and Ed Fuller (2007), analyzed results from the 2006 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. More than 75,000 educators completed the survey and more than 85% of North Carolina's schools reached the minimum teacher response

rate (40%) needed to ensure that the data were valid.

Hirsch et al. (2007) pointed out that the survey results confirm what many people associated with public schools already knew, and what Ingersoll had written a few years earlier – teacher turnover has been a serious problem and working conditions are a possible means of addressing the issue. The 2006 survey showed “...that teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are much more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their conditions of work, particularly in the areas of leadership and empowerment” (Hirsch et al., 2007, p. 14). Additionally, teachers who indicated they wanted to continue teaching in their schools were far more likely to believe that their school leaders were working to address working conditions than those teachers who indicated they wanted to move. Approximately two-thirds of teachers who wanted to stay believed that their school leadership was addressing teacher empowerment and leadership issues, while less than 25% of those who were leaving or moving believed the same.

The connection to school leadership was shown to be critical by Hirsch et al.’s (2007) examination of the Teacher Working Conditions data. When teachers were asked to select which working conditions most influenced their decision to stay or leave, leadership was shown to be by far the most important factor. “While all working conditions were significantly correlated with teachers’ future employment plans, leadership had the strongest correlations with whether or not teachers intended to stay in their current schools at all school levels” (Hirsch et al., 2007, p. 15). At the elementary level, school level turnover was significantly correlated with both leadership and teacher empowerment. At the middle school level, teacher turnover was correlated with leadership, teacher empowerment, and facilities and resources. At the high school level,

school level turnover was significantly correlated with leadership only. However, the one constant at all three levels is leadership.

Also, the research conducted by Hirsch et al. (2007) indicates there is a relationship between the principal and the working conditions that are present in individual schools. Hirsch et al. identified the five categories of teacher working conditions that can all be determined by the principal. These included facilities and resources, professional development, use of time, empowerment of teachers, and leadership. Additionally, according to Hirsch et al., “Teachers were most positive about leadership on issues related to communicating clear expectations, holding teachers to high professional standards and handling teacher performance evaluations effectively” (p. 37).

Barbara J. Mallory and Teri D. Melton (2009) of Georgia Southern University focused their research on leadership dispositions of the principal since, in many cases the principal is the primary determinant of working conditions, and because of the relationship between working conditions and teacher retention. Mallory and Melton sought to identify the dispositions, or values and beliefs, that showed the relationship between creating positive teacher working conditions and teacher retention. Mallory and Melton (2009) wanted “to define dispositions, understand how dispositions are assessed in leadership preparation programs, and relate dispositions to leadership behaviors, especially as they impact school culture and working conditions” (p. 9).

To do this, Mallory and Melton (2009) surveyed 43 members of the National Council of Professors of Education Administration using a 13-item questionnaire that was designed to ask about different educational leadership programs’ definitions of dispositions and to identify how these dispositions were assessed. Some of the questions

were open-ended while others required making choices.

Mallory and Melton (2009) found several education leadership programs did assess their students' dispositions. Some did so only as part of the admission requirements or upon entry into the program while others assessed their candidates' leadership dispositions up to three times over the course of the program. There seemed to be little consistency in how education leadership candidates' dispositions were assessed but one of the major methods of assessing dispositions in the education leadership programs was through the use of checklists. Also, while no pattern of dispositions was identified, some respondents described dispositions necessary to education leadership as *integrity, courage, prepared, responsive and able to see multiple perspectives*.

Mallory and Melton (2009) also focused on the dispositions associated with principals' behaviors that helped lead to the creation of supportive teaching environments. From their review of several states' studies on working conditions and their relationship to teacher retention, the general finding was that principals who demonstrated effective leadership by empowering teachers in an environment where they were trusted and felt supported was a key ingredient to keeping teachers in their current schools. Mallory and Melton (2009) examined how the principals' dispositions led to behaviors that helped in the establishment of these positive working environments. They proposed that principals who possess dispositions found in the Theory Y approach to leadership have the best chance to reduce teacher migration and attrition.

According to Mallory and Melton (2009), Theory Y leadership has been described as facilitative and supportive of individuals. They pointed out that other researchers (Bennis, 2006; Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2009; McGregor, 1960) have identified certain themes of Theory Y leadership. These themes include active participation by all, concern

for individual dignity and worth, resolution of conflict between the needs of the individual and the needs of the organization, influence brought about by openness and confrontation and a willingness to work out differences, and the belief that growth is furthered in an environment where there is trust, feedback, and authentic relationships.

Using these themes, Mallory and Melton (2009) operationalized dispositions by turning them into belief-value statements associated with behaviors that could be exhibited by educational leaders to help establish a supportive learning and teaching environment. They identified three dispositions that are closely related to teacher working conditions.

The first of the leadership dispositions is a willingness to take risks and mediate conflict to promote what is ethical and right for individuals and for the common good of those associated with a school. In other words, principals who believe that education is done for the common good of providing students with "...economic, civic, and cultural purposes, and yet also believes in individual consideration, is likely to behave to mediate conflict and take risks, rather than take sides" (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 14).

The second disposition is holding unyielding and high expectations for student growth and for instructional leadership from those associated with the school. Principals who have this disposition "...will behave in a manner to support teaching and learning in all classrooms and across the school. He or she will seek support for teaching and learning outside the school from parents, community groups, and civic groups" (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 15).

The third disposition associated with the creation of positive teaching environments is a willingness to be transparent and honest. This provides an ethical dimension to leadership. According to Mallory and Melton (2009),

...authenticity is essential, not just in word or deeds, but in a pattern of how one speaks, one acts, and one consistently behaves, especially in challenging times. A leader must be open and honest in the manner of being transparent....

Transparency means that no one doubts that the leader has shown up in the right place, for the right reason, in the right way. (p. 16)

The researchers pointed out that this builds trust between teachers and principals and that there is a strong inverse correlation between trust and teacher turnover.

Finally, Mallory and Melton (2009) pointed out the need for more work to be done in trying to understand the dispositions of school leaders and how these dispositions are related to behaviors that help create positive working conditions for teachers.

Mallory and Melton (2009) felt that schools of education leadership should include dispositions in their standards because ultimately these leaders' dispositions will guide their behaviors. The researchers stated,

Even though it is a challenging and daunting task to develop a moral perspective and assessment system for dispositions, as so much of what school leaders do or choose not to do is determined by their belief system. Providing American schools with leaders who care about growth and achievement of all students and teachers is a moral activity that requires a values framework. America's schools deserve leaders who contribute to the sustainability of education by providing working conditions that are conducive to teacher retention. (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 17)

Based on the research mentioned above (Hirsch et al., 2007; Ingersoll, 2001; Mallory & Melton, 2009) the principal is the primary determinant of many of the teacher working conditions within individual schools (especially leadership) and these same

working conditions influence whether or not teachers continue teaching in their current schools. Further, Mallory and Melton (2009) pointed out that principals who provide teachers with a sense of empowerment and create an atmosphere where teachers feel supported had made major headway towards retaining teachers.

Additionally, in a report on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey results, Hirsch and Church (2009) emphasized how critical the conditions teachers face in their schools and classrooms are in terms of retaining teachers. Further, they point to the importance of school leadership in retaining teachers. Hirsch and Church (2009) reported that "...more than one-third (37%) of teachers indicate that School Leadership is the most important working condition influencing their decision about where to work. About twice as many teachers selected Leadership as Facilities and Resources and Time" (p. 1). Also, Hirsch and Church (2009) emphasized that the data from the 2008 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey shows that teachers who have "positive perceptions about their working conditions, especially in the areas of school leadership and teacher empowerment, are much more likely to want to stay at their current school" (p. 2). Also, support by leadership was shown to be very important to teachers. Seventy-eight percent of the teachers who indicated they wished to continue teaching in their current schools agreed that their leaders consistently supported teachers as compared to 47% of those who were leaving.

When Hirsch and Church (2009) looked at attrition factors, the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions data revealed four factors that showed the greatest differences between the highest and lowest turnover schools. First was the overall perception of a school being a good place to work; second, the effectiveness of the school improvement team impacted teacher retention; third, an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect

between teachers and the principal was necessary; and finally, the ability of leadership, and specifically the principal, to shield teachers from disruptions to their teaching.

Additionally, Hirsch and Church's (2009) statistical models show that if supportive school leadership is present, and is coupled with teachers being allowed to participate in the decision-making process and sufficient resources, these are significant factors in explaining teacher retention at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

According to an Issue Brief by the Alliance for Excellent Education (2005), there is great agreement between researchers and educators that the single most important factor affecting student achievement is the quality of teachers students have. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) went on to say that "...it is critical that efforts be concentrated on developing and retaining high-quality teachers in every community and at every grade level" (p. 1). Additionally, in the world of education and schools today there is greater parental and public access to information about school quality and teachers and principals are subjected to increased focuses on student achievement and educator accountability. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, school districts are required to provide annual reports that give information concerning student achievement at each of their schools. Local newspapers and other media often cover the release of results from state tests and there is a greater degree of scrutiny given to individual schools and their achievement test results by parents and citizens, local community organizations, and government.

In fact, according to West, Chingos, and Henderson (2010) in a study they did that determined how the public forms perceptions of their local schools, "...results [of the study] indicate that citizens' perceptions of the quality of their local schools do in fact reflect the schools' performance as measured by student proficiency rates in core

academic subjects” (p. 61). West et al. (2010) administered a survey to a nationally representative sample of 3,251 adults, including 948 from Florida. The Florida oversample was done so that perceptions about school quality could be linked to the large amount of school performance information that was available from that state. All survey respondents were asked to indicate which schools they considered to be theirs and to grade these schools with grades ranging from A to F.

To measure actual school quality, West et al. (2010) used the percentage of students who were considered proficient, under state standards, on state accountability reading and math tests. The data from the surveys and from the student achievement data from each state enabled the researchers to provide evidence on the extent to which survey respondents’ ratings of specific schools corresponded with the actual school performance data that was publicly available. The researchers found that the proficiency rates of students were a significant predictor of the survey respondents’ ratings of school quality. West et al. went on to point out that people’s assessments of different “schools are strongly related to objective measures of performance made available by state accountability systems” (p. 67). In other words, the public’s perception of how good or bad a school may be is based heavily on the reported standardized test scores.

In North Carolina, increased emphasis was given to student achievement and teacher accountability with the advent of the School-Based Management and Accountability Program, or the ABCs of Public Education as it was more commonly known, in the mid 1990s. This model was North Carolina’s school improvement effort to have public schools focus on three goals. In the 1996-1997 school year, ABCs implementation began for schools that contained any grades from kindergarten to eighth. The model included growth and performance composites and included end-of-grade tests

in reading and math. The ABCs of Public Education also had three goals. These goals included greater Accountability for teachers and schools, an emphasis on the Basics and increased educational standards, and giving North Carolina's public school districts as much local Control as possible. The rest of the United States followed a few years later with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act by Congress. This reauthorization became better known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This act was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001. While NCLB did not focus on local control, it has continued to serve as a roadmap towards increasing student achievement and educator accountability over the past decade.

NCLB has several major tenets. These include having highly qualified teachers working in all public education classrooms, with the term highly qualified meaning that a teacher has a bachelor's degree, a teaching license issued by the state, and has demonstrated competence in the subject which he or she teaches (Murname & Steele, 2007, para. 41); having students in Grades 3 through 8 complete standardized tests in reading and math; increased focus on historically underserved populations, including exceptional children and minorities; and ensuring that each student shows adequate growth at the conclusion of a year's worth of instruction (Education Commission of the States, <http://nclb2.ecs.org>, 2009).

A great deal of time and money has been spent recruiting and retaining quality teachers. According to the August 2005 issue brief by the Alliance for Excellent Education, a conservative estimate of the cost of recruiting and hiring teachers to replace those leaving the profession is \$2.2 billion annually. Murray and Osteen (1995) pointed out that "Teachers are the closest educators to students and therefore have the greatest influence upon them and the future of our society" (p. 35). In their study of 4,761

teachers' responses to the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-up Survey, Murray and Osteen (1995) identified characteristics of teachers likely to drop out of the teaching profession. They used this information to create a profile of teachers who were going to leave teaching. Also, they sought information from teachers who had left as to what would lead to greater retention. Among other things, better dialogue between administrators and teachers, giving teachers a greater voice and influence over school policy, and support for enforcing discipline policies were cited as ways to increase teacher retention by those involved in Murray and Osteen's study.

Additionally, John Johnston and Ric A. Hovda (2003), in their research on the problem of teacher turnover in urban schools, and particularly the Memphis City Schools, have shown that schools with high teacher turnover traditionally have lower student achievement than those schools where teacher retention is high. Johnston and Hovda reviewed the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future 2003 report entitled *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*. Johnston and Hovda pointed out that

The most damaging long-term effect of high teacher turnover is the impact on teaching quality and student achievement. Beginning teachers with less than two or three years of experience are often noticeably less effective than their senior colleagues... [additionally] an analysis of Tennessee Value Added Assessment data shows that children who had the least effective teachers three years in a row posted academic achievement gains that were 54.0% lower than the gains of children who had the most effective teachers three years in a row. Studies in Boston and Dallas have yielded comparable results. (p. 44)

Johnston and Hovda (2003) also found that high turnover can cause pockets or

high concentrations of inexperienced teachers in schools, as principals hire those new to the profession to replace those that leave for reasons other than retirement. Additionally, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future points out that teacher turnover can cause financial strain as well.

Concentrations of under-prepared teachers create a drain on schools' financial as well as human resources.... Schools with high turnover must continually pour money into recruitment efforts and professional support for new teachers, many of them untrained, without reaping student achievement dividends from these investments. (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002, p. 9)

As mentioned previously, the conservative estimated financial cost each year of teacher turnover and subsequent recruitment in the United States is \$2.2 billion. School systems and those who work there must advertise open positions, review applications, conduct criminal background checks on prospective employees, and provide orientation and training for those who are newly hired. Principals and others "must devote a great deal of their time and energy into the hiring process, draining much-needed human resources capacity" (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 666). These are but a few of the expenses school systems accrue when teachers leave. In North Carolina alone, the total teacher turnover cost, which includes teachers leaving the profession and teachers transferring to other schools, was approximately \$189 million. Johnston and Hovda (2003) pointed out that "districts with high turnover schools are caught in an endless cycle of funding recruitment and professional support for new teachers who often end up leaving the profession or moving to more desirable schools in affluent communities" (p. 43).

Johnston and Hovda (2003) also pointed out that high teacher turnover

undermines teacher quality. Solid educators are leaving the profession and are being replaced by “unqualified individuals...hired because state laws and district policies are ignored in the name of meeting immediate needs of schools that appear to face shortages” (Johnston & Hovda, 2003, p. 42).

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF, 2002) pointed out that high teacher turnover also seriously inhibits a school’s ability to establish professional learning communities. By having high turnover every school year, “the sense of community, continuity, and coherence that is the hallmark of strong schools” is inhibited and undermined (NCTAF, 2002, p. 9). Kathleen M. Brown and Susan R. Wynn (2007), looking at the elements of professional learning communities, examined how principals and beginning teachers saw their roles and those of their colleagues in supporting and retaining teachers new to the profession. Brown and Wynn (2007) chose a school district in a southeastern state where teacher turnover had been a problem (between 2000-2004 42% of beginning teachers left). Twelve schools were chosen from the school district to participate in the study. Each of the 12 schools (eight elementary, two middle, and two high schools) had low beginning teacher turnover rates. The 12 principals were interviewed in order to identify strategies and common characteristics that principals use to retain teachers. Additionally, focus group interviews were conducted with four to six new teachers at each participating school.

The researchers read and reread the interviews to identify common themes and to code the data to the themes. The data were analyzed according to the following elements of professional learning communities: collaboration, supportive conditions, supportive leadership, shared norms and values, and deprivatization of practice.

Brown and Wynn (2007) identified several things principals did to help beginning

teachers and to reduce turnover. They were proactive in offering assistance to beginners and in encouraging collaboration between teachers, while at the same time reducing competition. The principals also encouraged their teachers to be learners. They encouraged beginning teachers to share ideas and experienced teachers to be open to new ideas and strategies.

The principals in this study also gave a lot of thought to which teachers would work best with one another. Fit, or how well new teachers would support one another and work well with other teachers in the building, was stressed as being important. The principals chose new teachers who met this criteria. The principals also provided these teachers with the necessary textbooks, supplies, equipment, and technological tools.

All 12 principals identified support as the most important thing they did, and nine of the 12 stated lack of support as the primary reason teachers were leaving the profession. The teachers in the study also identified support as being important, whether it be with discipline issues, getting needed supplies, receiving clear communication and responses to questions and concerns from the principal, or encouragement.

In terms of leadership, the principals mentioned the importance of establishing relationships with teachers (seven out of 12 wanted to know their teachers personally) and of being fair, honest, and consistent. They also believed in open door policies and being available to teachers to share in the good and the bad. The principals did not believe so much in a top down leadership style. Rather, each principal described how many decisions were made by leadership or site-based management teams. Also, teachers revealed that they wanted their principals to know what they were doing and where they were taking their schools but also to involve teachers along the way.

Brown and Wynn (2007) concluded in their study that the principals provided the

conditions and the resources needed to give support to new teachers. They shared decision making and worked collaboratively with them. They kept their doors open in case teachers needed to see them. These principals encouraged collegiality and provided leadership and guidance. Brown and Wynn (2007) went on to say that even though the relationship between the elements of professional learning communities and teacher retention is complex, they are interrelated. Finally, the researchers pointed out that schools that lose teachers lose those teachers' "familiarity with school practices; experience with the school's curriculum; and involvement with students, parents, and colleagues" (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 667). Thus, high turnover schools that most need to initiate reforms are often unable to do so because they lack the continuity of staffing that other schools enjoy. The NCTAF (2002) pointed out that these schools never really have the opportunity or capacity to sustain school improvement because teachers leave each year.

As Ingersoll (2001) opined, contemporary theory concerning education holds that the inability of schools and systems to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers is one of the main causes behind low levels of student achievement. Therefore, it is more important than ever that principals and other school system leaders find ways to retain their quality teachers. Thus, in part to help reduce teacher turnover rates, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction created a new principal evaluation tool that was first used in the 2008-2009 school year. It has been mandated that principals will increase their focus on retaining quality teachers. Principals are required to set goals and meet with their evaluator three times over the course of the school year. Of the goals that principals set, at least one has to focus on teacher retention and reducing teacher turnover.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

Thus far, the researcher's examination of literature concerning teacher retention was inconclusive as to what behaviors on the part of the principal lead middle school teachers to remain in their current settings. A review of the literature has been done on the principal's role in new teacher induction and steps the principal must take to ensure beginning teacher retention. The literature has also been reviewed on the principal's role in establishing a collegial atmosphere and its relationship to teacher retention.

Additionally, research has been conducted concerning special education teachers and the factors that influence them to remain in their often challenging, often frustrating positions. Finally, the literature concerning experienced teachers leaving the profession and the effects of principal mistreatment on teachers and teacher retention has been reviewed. Certainly some of the findings in these areas of research can be applied to the middle school setting to facilitate teacher retention. The following researchers' results will be explained more fully in the review of literature in Chapter 2. However, for purposes of clarity, they are referenced here.

Inman and Marlow (2004) suggested that principals provide for novice teachers "positive experiences in support of the new ideas they bring with them from their teacher education programs" (p. 608). Inman and Marlow also advocated providing ongoing staff development opportunities in which novice teachers have time "to share ideas, learn ways of teaching which are similar, and become more familiar with the school curriculum" (p. 608).

Other researchers, including Carver (2003), and Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001) advocated the principal's provision of a collegial, cooperative atmosphere in which to work as a way to increase teacher retention. While this type of

atmosphere, in the eyes of the researchers, is elusive, it is necessary for teachers to be a part of this type of work environment because it leads to higher rates of teacher retention.

Some researchers, including Ax, Conderman, and Stephens (2001) and Gertsten, Keating, Yovanoff, and Harniss (2001), have focused on the principal's role in retaining teachers in the field of special education. Both sets of researchers note the difficulty in finding and retaining special education teachers. Ax et al. (2001) also noted the difficulties teachers of students with behavioral and emotional disabilities face.

Tye and O'Brien (2002) have focused their research on reasons why experienced teachers are leaving their chosen profession. These researchers reported that while most teachers who leave are inexperienced, there has been a steady supply of those with 5 or more years of experience who have simply had enough and are deciding to leave.

Finally, Blase and Blase (2006) have done extensive research on principal mistreatment and the effects this mistreatment has on teachers personally and professionally. They identified several levels of principal mistreatment and provided several examples of behaviors found at each level.

Thus far, no research has been found that focuses expressly on principal behaviors that impact middle school teachers' desires to remain in their current teacher settings. There is, however, a great deal of research concerning the retention of novice, and, to a certain degree, experienced, and exceptional children's teachers. As stated earlier, it is anticipated that findings regarding retention of novice, experienced, and special education teachers can possibly be applied to the middle school setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the specific behaviors that three middle school principals exhibit and the impact these behaviors have on working conditions and

teacher turnover or the teacher attrition rate. The researcher attempted to identify and categorize specific behaviors that other middle school principals can duplicate that might establish positive working conditions in their schools. By duplicating these behaviors and working to establish positive teacher working conditions, this could possibly help principals as they try to reduce the teacher turnover rates they currently face.

According to data obtained from www.ncreportcards.org, over the past 7 years until the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year, North Carolina's middle schools have had a statewide teacher turnover rate of 21% or higher. Table 1 shows the teacher turnover rate in North Carolina's middle schools from the 2000-01 school year to the 2007-2008 school year. As shown in Table 1, the middle school teacher turnover rate was highest at the conclusion of the 2001-02 school year when 25% of North Carolina's teachers resigned or retired. From 2001-2002 until the end of the 2006-2007 school year, the teacher turnover rate has been above 20% each year.

Table 1

Teacher Turnover Percentages for North Carolina's Middle Schools

School Year	Teacher Turnover Percentage
2000-2001	25
2001-2002	21
2002-2003	23
2003-2004	24
2004-2005	23
2005-2006	23
2006-2007	24
2007-2008	15

Note: Source – www.ncreportcards.org.

Therefore, North Carolina middle school principals have had to replace approximately

one-fifth of their teachers, or more, each year. As mentioned previously, this high teacher turnover is costly in monetary terms, professional support, continuity, and, probably most importantly in today's world, student achievement.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for use in this study. The researcher developed all definitions not cited.

ABCs. This is the model that guided North Carolina's school improvement effort to have public schools focus on three goals. These goals included greater Accountability for teachers and schools, an emphasis on the Basics and increased educational standards, and giving North Carolina's public school districts as much local Control as possible.

Administrative support. This is support given to teachers by the principal. This support can take many forms, including, but not limited to, help with student disciplinary issues, dealing with difficult parents, assistance with induction during the first years of teaching, provision of instructional funds to assist with equipping the classroom, and providing counseling and guidance when needed.

Highly qualified. The term used to describe teachers who have a bachelor's degree, a teaching license issued by the state, and demonstrated competence in the subject or subjects one wishes to teach.

Human capital theory. This theory says that a person will make a decision to stay in or leave a career based on how much he or she has invested in it. In other words, the more time one has spent working in a career the less likely he or she would be to leave it.

Opportunity costs. This term refers to what people must be willing to give up in order to teach. For example, the opportunity cost for a teacher certified to provide math

instruction is the highest wage he or she could have earned by entering another profession (Murnane & Steele, 2007).

Teacher attrition. This is one component of teacher turnover. This term refers to those teachers who have chosen or will choose to leave the teaching profession entirely through resignation or retirement.

Teacher retention. This term refers to teachers continuing to teach in their current assigned schools.

Title 1. This federal program provides funding to schools based on specific criteria. To be considered for federal Title 1 funding at least 40% of the students in a school's attendance area must be from low-income families. The percentage of low-income families is most often measured by the percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch. Title I funds must be used for programs designed to improve the academic achievement of these children from low-income households.

Summary

Chapter 1 provides a review of what current research says concerning the problem of high teacher turnover in America's schools. It has been shown that approximately one-third of new teachers entering teaching will leave the profession within 3 years and almost half will leave by the end of year 5. Additionally, experienced teachers are leaving the profession as well.

According to the research reviewed, teachers are leaving the profession for a variety of reasons, but one that is cited frequently is lack of administrator support. Additionally, despite the awareness of teacher retention issues, according to Blase and Blase (2006), many principals behave in ways that serve to drive teachers out the schoolhouse doors. They do this by engaging in behaviors that embarrass and/or demean

their teachers.

Research (Hirsch et al., 2007; Mallory & Melton, 2009) has shown that a relationship exists between principals and the working conditions that are present in their individual schools. Researchers (Hirsch et al., 2007; Ingersoll, 2001) have also shown a relationship between working conditions found in individual schools and these schools' teacher turnover rates. Additionally, researchers (Johnson & Hovda, 2003) have shown that schools with lower teacher turnover rates tend to have greater levels of student achievement.

Teacher turnover is also costly to states and their school districts. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, a conservative estimate puts the national cost of teacher turnover and recruitment to fill vacancies at \$2.2 billion each year. In North Carolina, this equates to approximately \$189 million annually.

Until recently, according to the North Carolina school report card website, www.ncreportcards.org, North Carolina's middle school principals were replacing approximately one-fifth of their teachers annually. As noted previously, this relatively high teacher turnover rate has been costly in monetary terms, continuity, and student achievement.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the specific behaviors that three middle school principals exhibited and the impact their behaviors had on working conditions and teacher turnover or the teacher attrition rate in the selected schools. The researcher attempted to identify and categorize specific behaviors that other middle school principals can duplicate that might establish positive working conditions in their schools. By duplicating these behaviors and working to establish positive teacher working conditions, this could possibly help principals as they try to reduce the teacher turnover rates they currently face.

Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics has shown that teachers, especially those in their first 5 years, are leaving the teaching profession at an alarming rate. Researchers (Angelle, 2006; Brock & Grady, 2000; Mallory & Melton, 2009; Otto & Arnold, 2005) pointed out that one of the reasons teachers most often cite for leaving the profession is lack of support by the principal. Also, researchers (Hirsch et al., 2007; Ingersoll, 2001) have determined that working conditions are a major factor in many teachers' decisions regarding whether to continue teaching in their current schools, transfer to other schools, or leave the profession altogether. Additionally, in many cases principals are the primary determinant of many of the teacher working conditions found in individual schools.

To conduct this research, one middle school was selected from each of the three geographical regions in North Carolina: the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont, and the Mountains. The three schools varied in size. The smallest school in the study had approximately 320 students and 25 teachers. The largest school had almost 670 students

and 43 teachers. To be considered for selection, at least 50% of teachers in each school had to indicate that they continued to teach in their current school because of leadership in the 2008 iteration of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey.

The 2008 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey was based on past models of the survey that were first created in North Carolina in 2001. The North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission (NCPTSC) examined the literature on the role of teacher working conditions in creating teacher dissatisfaction and teacher turnover. The work of the NCPTSC focused on areas that had been identified by teachers as conditions that impacted their satisfaction with their employment and their desire to remain or leave their current positions. The NCPTSC focused on five areas and 30 working conditions standards that fell within one of the five areas. The five areas were time, teacher empowerment (educator leadership), professional development, leadership (school leadership), and facilities and resources.

The 2008 survey used those 30 working conditions developed in 2001 as its foundation. Over time the survey was expanded from 39 questions on a paper and pencil survey rated on a 1 to 6 scale to a 72-item survey completed online using questions that had been re-scaled from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale. Many of the questions were taken from the National Center for Education Statistics School and Staffing Survey. To establish validity, a sample of teachers

was asked to rank the relevance and importance on an ordinal scale of each question on the 2004 instrument. Those questions were then compared to the factor analyses to verify the importance of a set of critical conditions in each area of the survey. The questions rated as most important also had the highest factor loads and most make up the battery of core questions still used in 2006 and 2008

in North Carolina.... The 2008 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey is based on the state's 2004 and 2006 instruments with minor revisions. The same general core constructs have been utilized since 2002.... (New Teacher Center, 2008, p. 2)

Additionally, to establish construct validity, the New Teacher Center conducted "a factor analysis of the data set...to determine if the items separated into five distinct factors or areas of focus" (New Teacher Center, 2008, p. 2). The results indicated that the survey questions reflected

the focus area of each major concept generated through factor analysis. There was, however, some overlap between items in the educator leadership and school leadership sections of the survey as constructed. This has occurred in previous iterations of the survey and is why the section previously titled "empowerment" was changed in 2008 to "educator leadership." (New Teacher Center, 2008, p. 2)

Reliability of the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey was also measured. To measure the reliability, or consistency, of the survey, the New Teacher Center conducted analyses

for measuring the presence of various components of teaching conditions.

Reliability was assessed for subscales within the survey on the five identified factors of the survey.

In order to test the internal consistency of the five major factors utilized in the North Carolina TWC report (leadership, professional development, facilities and resources, decision making, and time), Cronbach's alphas were run on teacher responses. An alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1 with higher coefficients indicating higher levels of instrument consistency. All five factors are reliable

with alphas above 0.8. The leadership factor had an excellent level (0.929) of internal consistency. The four remaining factors all had very good levels of reliability: professional development (0.866), facilities and resources (0.852), educator leadership (0.841), and time (0.810). (New Teacher Center, 2008, p. 4)

The middle schools in this study were selected after the researcher examined the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey results for middle schools in many North Carolina school systems. Additionally, teacher turnover percentages for the past 4 school years were taken from the North Carolina School Report Cards. In each selected school, the teacher turnover rate was low (less than 10%) in the 2007-2008 school year or the school had reduced its turnover rate significantly over the past 4 years. Additionally, all three schools operated on a traditional calendar and each of the three schools housed Grades 6 through 8.

The following literature review presents the research on reducing teacher attrition and teacher turnover through support among the ranks of teachers just entering the profession; the establishment of collegial atmospheres and relationships with and between teachers, both experienced and novice; special educators' views of what leads to teacher retention; sustaining and supporting experienced teachers so that they desire to remain in the classroom; and principal mistreatment that borders on being abusive. The establishment of positive teacher working conditions and the impact the working conditions have on teacher retention is also highlighted. While this specific research was not focused specifically on any individual group of teachers (i.e., beginning teachers, special education teachers, experienced teachers), it should be noted that there is considerable research on these groups.

Beginning Teachers

Statistics indicate that up to one-third of beginning teachers will leave within the first 3 years of teaching and up to 50% will leave by the time they have taught for 5 years. According to Inman and Marlow (2004), Prince (2002), and Otto and Arnold (2005), teachers, and especially beginning teachers, consistently cite lack of administrative support among other factors as a reason for leaving the profession.

Research has been done on the principal's role in new teacher placement and induction and steps the principal must take to ensure novice teacher retention. Cynthia Carver of Western Michigan University followed four elementary principals for 3 years. Each was the principal of a school that operated an effective and highly regarded new teacher induction program. Carver (2003) identified

...core tasks through which principals can support novice teachers. These include recruiting, hiring, and placing new teachers; providing orientation to the site and resource assistance; managing the school environment; building relationships between principals and teachers; providing leadership for instructional development through formative and summative evaluation; and facilitating a supportive school context...effective principals make sure to place them [beginning teachers] in their areas of expertise and licensure, provide them with adequate resources...and assign them only limited extra duties and responsibilities to optimize their chance of success" (p. 34).

According to Carver (2003) none of the four principals considered new teacher support to be an added responsibility. Additionally, based on her research, Carver pointed out that new teachers find it reassuring to know that their principal can be trusted to physically maintain the building and hold students accountable for acting in a

responsible manner. Principals who facilitate a disciplined and orderly school environment enable the new teacher to concentrate on teaching students, rather than just managing them. (p. 35)

Carver (2003) also said that principals need to facilitate the establishment of a professional relationship with novice teachers, as well as with other teachers. It should be pointed out that Carver, though she did not use the term working conditions, referenced working conditions when she mentioned “resource assistance,” “managing the school environment,” “building relationships between the principal and teachers,” and “facilitating a disciplined and orderly school” (p. 38).

Angelle (2006), whose research was highlighted in Chapter 1, built on this theme of beginning teachers when she wrote,

Beginning teachers are often given the most challenging students, have multiple course preparations, and are frequently the “floaters” if sufficient classroom space is unavailable. New teachers are required to enter their first year of teaching with the same teaching load and responsibilities as those many years their senior.

Professional socialization, the process whereby the novice learns about and becomes a part of the organization, influences teacher quality and longevity. This socialization leads to identification with the school organization, persuading the teacher to take on the school’s goals and missions. The job of teaching becomes an issue of loyalty to the workplace, resulting in intent to stay in the profession. (p. 318)

Liston et al. (2003), whose research is also highlighted in Chapter 1, advocated that principals be instructional leaders

who develop personal relationships with new teachers; they give new teachers

appropriate and reasonable assignments; they provide sufficient supplies and equipment to support student learning; they have reasonable and consistent policies and infrastructure; they use teachers' time well; they establish schoolwide standards for student behavior; they provide coordinated student support services; and they build bridges with parents. (p. 353)

Duane Inman and Leslie Marlow (2004) examined attitudes reported by beginning teachers in an effort to identify the beginning teachers' perceptions of positive aspects of teaching that might lead to greater teacher retention. Approximately 500 teachers from randomly selected schools in Georgia participated by completing the Professional Attitude Survey. The Professional Attitude Survey is a 10-item survey instrument that was designed to elicit information about teacher career stability. Participating teachers were asked to complete questions concerning demographics, their backgrounds, their reasons for continuing to teach, and job satisfaction. Of the 500 surveys that were returned, 40% were considered to be from beginning teachers. For the purposes of Inman and Marlow's (2004) research, the term *beginning teacher* meant a teacher in his or her first 10 years of teaching. Also, 38% of respondents were middle school teachers. Eleven percent were male and 89% were female.

Inman and Marlow (2004) further categorized respondents as Phase 1 and Phase 2 teachers. Phase 1 teachers were those who had from 0 to 3 years of experience. Phase 2 teachers had been teaching between 4 and 9 years.

Based on survey results, the researchers found that Phase 1 teachers were usually still hopeful of implementing ideas and practices they had learned in their university preparation programs. These teachers also believed strongly that what they were doing could change the world.

Phase 2 teachers were found to be seeking a balance between what they had learned in college and the ideas about teaching they had discovered when they entered actual teaching environments. These teachers were also better able to identify their ideology and what constituted better working conditions than Phase 1 teachers. This led to a more collegial and professional atmosphere for Phase 2 teachers than for those teachers still in Phase 1. Results from Inman and Marlow's (2004) research also indicated that beginning teachers reported they considered leaving, not because of salary considerations, but because of lack of professionalism, an absence of collegiality, and lack of support from their principals. To offset this, Inman and Marlow (2004) suggested that the positive aspects of teachers' jobs be emphasized. Additionally, principals should provide for novice teachers "positive experiences in support of the new ideas they bring with them from their teacher education programs" (Inman & Marlow, p. 608). Inman and Marlow (2004) also advocated providing ongoing staff development opportunities in which novice teachers have time "to share ideas, learn ways of teaching which are similar, and become more familiar with the school curriculum" (p. 608).

Collegial Atmosphere

Other researchers, such as Kardos et al. (2001), advocate the principal's provision of a collegial, cooperative atmosphere in which to work as a way to increase teacher retention. In their study, Kardos et al. (2001) collected interview data from 50 teachers in Massachusetts. These teachers taught in a variety of settings (urban and suburban) and levels (elementary, middle, and high). The sample of teachers was built purposively with a focus on balance between race, ethnicity, gender, and age.

Data was collected by interviewing each participant one time from anywhere between one and a half to two and a half hours. Multistage coding was used to analyze

the interview results. Additionally, the data were examined for common themes, especially in conceptualizing and identifying three types of professional cultures.

Kardos et al.'s (2001) analyses led them to identify "veteran-oriented professional cultures" where professional interactions were determined by the experienced teachers on staff (pp. 260-261). These cultures ranged from being friendly to being cold. However, in most cases, the expert teachers in this type of environment saw little necessity in trying to interact with new teachers. Little organized support for beginning teachers was found in this type of professional culture and beginning teachers felt ignored, excluded or overlooked. When beginning teachers had questions they often could not turn to their more experienced colleagues.

However, Kardos et al. (2001) found a different atmosphere in schools where a "novice-oriented professional culture" was present (p. 261). In this culture, inexperience and youth were common. Interaction between teachers was constant and intense. Even in this type of culture, however, little professional guidance was given on how to teach. Expert guidance was found to be in short supply in this type of culture because of a lack of experienced teachers on staff. The teachers found in this type of environment often had to develop curriculum themselves while at the same time trying to improve their teaching technique and fulfill their other school responsibilities, which were often inappropriate to their needs as beginning teachers. These teachers often found themselves simply trying to survive.

Teachers indicated that they were best served in an "integrated professional culture" (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 261). New teachers were given sustained support. No separation between beginning and experience teachers was found. The experienced teachers understood the importance of mentoring the beginning teachers and those with

experience often found that they also realized benefits by working so closely with novices. Beginning teachers found they could develop their teaching and there were clear expectations.

It should be noted that principals were regularly mentioned as central to providing guidance and support. While principals were not described as trying to build a place where new teachers felt important in the veteran-oriented or novice-oriented cultures, principals in integrated professional cultures were actively trying to build a culture in which new teachers felt a part. These principals understood the challenges faced by their beginning teachers and used their role as principal to shape a culture that addressed the needs of beginners. Survey respondents also indicated that principals in integrated professional cultures were responsive to their needs and they focused on instruction and provided support for professional growth. Additionally, these principals promoted teamwork as a way to bring about instructional improvement.

Kathleen Glaser (2003), who was a school principal for 19 years and now teaches at Maryland's St. Mary's College, has examined the same issue of what conditions principals need to supply for their teachers and concludes that principals should work to "build a positive school culture that supports teaching and learning..." (p. 153). According to Glaser, when she served as principal she sought to build a positive school culture that supported teaching and learning and encouraged teacher innovation. This allowed teachers to collaborate and led to greater staff morale and job satisfaction. Glaser also pointed out that creating opportunities for dialogue and sharing between teachers are important to a school's success. Additionally, this helps teachers to share with each other the difficulties and positive experiences of their work.

Brown and Wynn (2007), whose research was detailed in Chapter 1, pointed out

that

principals' support for mentoring and induction programs – particularly, those related to collegial support – also appear to play a prominent role in beginning teachers' decisions to quit or remain on the job. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that those who experience such support are less likely to leave teaching or change schools. (p. 668)

This type of atmosphere takes work to establish but it is necessary for teachers to be a part of this type of work environment because it leads to higher rates of teacher retention.

Exceptional Children's Teachers

Perhaps no group of students is more difficult to teach than those who have the exceptional child label. Many of these students face barriers that make learning more difficult for them. Bonnie Billingsley (2004), in her review of the literature on special education teacher retention, pointed out that student-related problems such as discipline issues, issues with student safety, and diversity of exceptional students' needs contribute to teacher turnover (p. 49). Additionally, there is required paperwork that must be completed for each child with an exceptional label. According to Billingsley (2004), the required paperwork "is a major contributor to role overload and conflict" (p. 47). This paperwork is often manifested in or combined with required forms, testing and scoring, report results, and scheduling meetings to discuss the results (Billingsley, 2004, p. 53). Therefore, it may be natural that the rate of teachers leaving exceptional children's classrooms is higher even than those who leave the regular classrooms. Also, it is important to note that this is one area of teaching, like math and science, where colleges and universities are not graduating enough teaching candidates to fill the vacant positions

(Billingsley, 2004). According to Billingsley (2004), “The shortage problem has serious and far-reaching implications for students with disabilities. The consequences of the shortage include inadequate educational experiences for students, reduced student achievement levels, and insufficient competence of graduates in the workplace” (p. 39).

Some researchers, including Ax et al. (2001) and Gertsten et al. (2001) have focused on the principal’s role in retaining teachers in the field of special education. Both sets of researchers note the difficulty in finding and retaining special education teachers. Ax et al. (2001) surveyed 237 behaviorally/emotionally disabled teachers chosen at random from the state of Wisconsin. The researchers wanted to know what drove these teachers to enter the special education field and to investigate reasons that might lead to them leaving teaching. Of those who completed the survey, 42% indicated that lack of support helped convince them to leave the teaching profession, and 25% specifically mentioned lack of administrative support. Other respondents indicated that burnout or stress, student violence, or excessive paperwork might cause them to seek employment elsewhere. The researchers went on to say that principals can delineate roles and responsibilities, seek input from, and provide time away from the classroom for staff development for exceptional children’s teachers. By doing these things, principals are showing support for the exceptional children’s teachers and reducing anxiety that is tied to the many demands faced by this group of educators.

Retaining such teachers also requires a complex and unique combination of information and support strategies beginning with the preservice program and continuing throughout the teacher’s career. A particularly important facet of support for teachers is the involvement of the principal.... (Ax et al., 2001, p. 69)

Gersten et al. (2001) studied special education teacher working conditions and

their impact on teacher retention. Gersten et al. (2001) distributed a questionnaire to all 887 special education teachers working in three large, urban school districts located in the western United States. In all, 81% of teachers returned the completed survey. The survey was designed to measure teachers' perceptions of their characteristics, behaviors, and working conditions. Gersten et al. (2001) found that the actions of the principal and teachers within the school influenced the level of support felt by the exceptional children's teachers. Additionally, the researchers found that principals were appreciated when they showed an understanding of the role the exceptional children's teacher plays in the school. Gersten et al. (2001) discovered that principals can increase exceptional children's teacher retention by providing relevant professional development and by working to establish a school culture that encourages support from other teachers. Additionally, principals need to help engage exceptional children's teachers in relevant conversation with regular education teachers.

Otto and Arnold (2005), whose research was chronicled in Chapter 1, also concluded that principal support is important in terms of retaining exceptional children's teachers. "When administrative support was perceived by the special education teacher to be present, it was considered an incentive for retention. The absence of administrative support was considered a cause for leaving the profession" (Otto & Arnold, 2005, p. 254).

Experienced Teachers

The data on teacher attrition from the National Center for Educational Statistics consistently shows that those who typically leave the profession are those in their first 3 to 5 years of teaching or those who have 30 plus years of service and are ready to retire. However, according to Tye and O'Brien (2002), whose research is covered in Chapter 1,

teachers who have 5 to 10 years of experience are increasingly leaving the profession. These teachers are good at what they have chosen to do and they are not complainers. Tye and O'Brien (2002) went on to point out that human capital theory says that a person will make a decision to stay in or leave a career based on how much he or she has invested in it. In other words, the more time one has spent working in a career, the less likely he or she would be to leave it. Additionally, teachers who have been teaching for several years make a decent salary. Also, they are not likely to leave for another district because they could possibly face a decrease in pay. Therefore, experienced teachers typically are motivated to stay put (Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

However, Tye and O'Brien (2002) maintained that experienced teachers are leaving the profession because they view the costs of staying as being too high. In their study of California teachers, Tye and O'Brien (2002) found that one of the main reasons experienced teachers listed for leaving was "unresponsive administration" (p. 26). "Apparently, it was the work environment itself that ultimately proved unbearable..." (Tye & O'Brien, 2002, p. 27). Tye and O'Brien (2002) also found that experienced teachers felt principals did not back them up, that administrators listened too much to the small percent of complainers rather than the large percent of parents that were satisfied, and that administrators did not want anyone to make waves. Finally, these teachers felt that principals wanted them to devote too much teaching time to test preparation. These factors, coupled with other issues, are driving experienced teachers from the classroom (Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

Principal Mistreatment

In times of high teacher attrition and turnover it should seem obvious that principals would avoid mistreating and abusing teachers. However, according to the

work of Blase and Blase (2002), whose research was covered in Chapter 1, this is not the case.

In their 2002 study, Blase and Blase found that principals engaged in varying levels of abusive behavior. The first level, Indirect and Moderately Aggressive, included behaviors such as ignoring teachers, showing insensitivity to personal matters such as a death in the family, nonsupport, withholding resources, and showing favoritism to others. The second level, Direct and Escalating Aggression, included principal behaviors such as spying on teachers, stealing teachers' food and equipment, making unreasonable demands, and publicly criticizing teachers in front of their peers. The third and most severe level was identified as Direct and Severely Aggressive by Blase and Blase. Behaviors that fall into this category include lying, explosive behavior directed at teachers, threats, unfair evaluations, forcing teachers out of their jobs, sexual harassment, and racism. Principals that engaged in these types of behaviors damaged teachers psychologically and emotionally. Additionally, Blase and Blase (2002) found that this type of behavior on the part of principals undermined collaboration and teacher involvement in the school environment.

Teacher Working Conditions

Perhaps nothing influences an individual teacher's intent to stay in or leave a school more than the working conditions at that school. There is a strong correlation between the working conditions found in schools and the teacher turnover rate in those same schools (Hirsch et al., 2007; Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher participation in decision making (empowerment), the individual school climate, and support by administration are all statistically associated with the teacher turnover rate (Ingersoll, 2001). Brown and Wynn (2007), whose research was cited earlier, pointed out that "the more difficult

working conditions found in hard-to-staff schools decrease the attractiveness of teaching relative to alternative occupations and activities that teachers might pursue” (p. 667).

Additionally, “Kelly (2004) found that undesirable working conditions...were related to increased attrition” (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 667). Also, according to Brown and Wynn (2007), Stockard and Lehman (2004) “found that new teachers reported lower rates of satisfaction with teaching when they felt as though they had less influence over their work, less support, and less effective leadership...” (p. 667). Conversely, the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) found in an assessment of teacher working conditions in several states that “effective leadership that...empowers teachers in a trusting environment where they feel supported is a key ingredient to retaining teachers” (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 5).

As defined previously, teacher working conditions have been shown to include teacher use of time, teacher empowerment, professional development, facilities and resources, and leadership. Also, the research is clear (Brown & Wynn, 2007; Mallory & Melton, 2009) that no one person has more influence on the working conditions within a school than the principal. “School leaders play an important role in shaping building-level factors that can affect new teachers’ attitudes toward the profession and their sense of efficacy as educators” (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 668). If one makes the association that working conditions impact a teacher’s intent to stay or leave certain schools, and that no one has greater control over working conditions than the principal, then it is logical to conclude that no one person impacts a teacher’s intention to stay or leave more than the principal. Mallory and Melton (2009) pointed this out in their 2009 work, and also pointed out the relationship between principal behaviors and teacher retention when they said “Principals were a key factor in teacher decisions to remain in the profession....

Behaviors of principals, viewed by teachers as administrative support, or lack thereof, were related to teacher retention and the principal's role in creating positive working conditions" (p. 5).

Brown and Wynn (2007) lend support to this line of thinking.

In general, research studies confirm that a number of working conditions...form the main factors predicting high teacher morale...[and] success in recruitment and retention. Lower levels of teacher attrition and migration have consistently been found in schools with more administrative support for teachers.... (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 667)

Brown and Wynn (2007) went on to point out that recent research done by the Charlotte Advocates for Education (2007) and Hirsch (2005) revealed that "a teacher's decision to stay at a school largely depends on the principal and his or her leadership in the school" (p. 668). They also pointed to a Massachusetts study that examined why teachers left schools. One of the main reasons teachers gave for leaving their schools was dissatisfaction with the principal. In this same study teachers reported that one of the keys to their satisfaction was receiving the respect and support of their principals. Teachers in North Carolina seem to agree with these findings, based on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey, where they cite working conditions and leadership as reasons for continuing to teach in their schools.

Additionally, Brown and Wynn (2007) pointed out that many principals seem to realize that their support is crucial to teacher retention. In Brown and Wynn's (2007) study that was covered earlier in this document, almost all principals the researchers interviewed identified lack of support on the part of principals as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession. These principals agreed with the teachers in the study

that it was important that they do what they can to help teachers with discipline, resources, dealing with parents, curriculum issues, organization, and other things that fall under the umbrella of support.

However, Mallory and Melton (2009) revealed that having principals simply perform leadership functions will not be enough to satisfy those teachers who need positive teacher working conditions to continue teaching in their schools. Teachers need more than this from their principals if they are to remain in the profession.

In one study of a focus group of principals who positively impacted the working conditions in their schools, the principals were described as confident, risk-taking, persistent, and driven to learn.... They believed in developing meaningful relationships with others, and they demonstrated a sense of humor. Although they performed skills and demonstrated knowledge as principals, what set them apart was authentic behavior informed by their belief and value systems. (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 13)

This has been referred to by some (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2009; Mallory & Melton, 2009; McGregor, 1960) as the Theory Y approach to leadership. Though first explored by McGregor in the 1960s, this leadership style is relevant to 21st century leadership. It has been described by Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009) as facilitative and supportive of subordinates' efforts "to...express themselves and act in the best interests" of their schools (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 14). Additionally, Theory Y leadership is based on certain propositions including active participation by all those involved; concern for individual worth, dignity, and growth; "resolution of the conflict between individual needs and organizational goals through effective interpersonal relationships between superiors and subordinates" (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 14); influence through

openness, confrontation, and ironing out differences; and the belief that growth is brought about by an environment where there is mutual trust and authentic relationships by all involved (Mallory & Melton, 2009).

All the leadership dispositions mentioned above help lead to behaviors on the part of principals that may impact the establishment of positive teacher working conditions. Conversely, working conditions that are a derivative of these leadership behaviors on the part of principals might help lead to reduced teacher turnover. With that in mind, the following research questions will drive this study into what behaviors on the part of principals lead to the establishment of positive teacher working conditions that will, in turn, reduce teacher turnover in middle schools.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the specific behaviors of middle school principals that might lead to high rates of teacher retention. To guide this study the researcher investigated the following questions by surveying teachers and interviewing principals and their supervisors:

1. In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors do the principals exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work?
2. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors make teachers feel supported?
3. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors encourage collegiality among faculty and staff?
4. What are school-based conditions that principals have created through their behavior that encourage teachers to remain at their current schools?

Summary

There is a great deal of literature that focuses on why teachers, both beginners and veterans, are leaving the teaching profession. The preceding literature review focused on some of these research findings, including some of the literature on beginning and experienced teachers, exceptional children's teachers, collegial teaching environments, and abusive behaviors exhibited by principals. In large part the literature that has been reviewed focuses on behaviors principals should avoid and not behaviors principals can model to increase teachers' likelihood to stay in their current teaching locations.

However, research has been conducted that shows some relationship between principal behavior and the establishment of positive teacher working conditions. The purpose of the following research was to identify specific behaviors on the part of principals that help lead to the establishment of positive teacher working conditions and reduced teacher turnover rates in a middle school setting.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the specific behaviors that three middle school principals exhibit and the impact these behaviors have on working conditions and teacher turnover or the teacher attrition rate. The researcher attempted to identify and categorize specific behaviors that other middle school principals can duplicate that might establish positive working conditions in their schools. By duplicating these behaviors and working to establish positive teacher working conditions, this could possibly help principals as they try to reduce the teacher turnover rates they currently face.

This study examined the specific behaviors of the three principals who led each of the schools during the 2007-2008 school year. The focus of the study was on the behaviors that may have helped lead to the establishment of positive working conditions which specifically lead teachers to want to remain in their current schools. These behaviors were identified through surveys of teachers, interviews with the three principals, and interviews with each principal's immediate supervisor. Conclusions from the data sources were analyzed to identify specific principal behaviors that were exhibited at all three middle school sites that help lead to teacher retention.

Problem to be Addressed

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (www.ncpublicschools.org), North Carolina's school systems follow the School-Based Management and Accountability Program, or as it is more commonly known, the ABCs of Public Education. First introduced in 1996, this model is North Carolina's school improvement effort to have public schools focus on three goals. These goals included greater Accountability for teachers and schools, an emphasis on the Basics and increased educational standards, and giving North Carolina's public school districts as much local

Control as possible. All students in Grades 3 through 8 take state end-of-grade standardized tests in reading and math. Additionally, students in Grades 5 and 8 take end-of-grade science tests. High school students take various end-of-course tests that are part of the ABCs Accountability System.

Also, North Carolina's school systems and public school systems nationwide are obligated to follow the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary School Act, more popularly known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act that was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001. This law has focused attention on raising student achievement, especially in historically underserved populations, having students in Grades 3 through 8 take standardized tests in reading and math, ensuring that students show a year's worth of growth for a year's worth of instruction, and ensuring that all teachers are deemed *highly qualified*. The term highly qualified is defined as having a bachelor's degree, a teaching license issued by the state, and demonstrated competence in the subject or subjects one wishes to teach.

According to West et al. (2010), people are focused on student achievement within individual schools, and their perceptions of how well these schools are doing are based on student proficiency rates on core subject standardized achievement tests. Additionally, with the public focus on educational accountability it is more important than ever for schools to have a stable, consistent teaching force to guide and educate students because research (Johnston & Hovda, 2003) has shown the strong correlation between low teacher turnover and higher levels of student achievement. However, according to data from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, which releases an annual report detailing the numbers of teachers leaving school systems across North Carolina and the reasons they leave, thousands of teachers will leave their schools

to move to other schools or will retire. Additionally, data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2007, 2010) show this to be a national problem, especially with teachers who are just beginning their careers. Based on “analysis of the most recent data from the National Center for Educational Statistics...approximately a third of America’s new teachers leave teaching sometime during their first three years of teaching; almost half may leave during the first five years” (Johnston & Hovda, 2003, para. 9).

However, it is not only inexperienced teachers that are leaving the profession. More and more, experienced teachers are leaving the education field according to Tye and O’Brien (2002). Additionally, some of these teachers have filled positions in difficult to staff areas such as math, science, and exceptional children. Murnane and Steele (2007) pointed out that there is often a revolving door into and out of the teaching profession. Further, math, science, and exceptional children’s teaching positions have historically been more difficult to fill because of the high opportunity costs associated with those positions. Opportunity costs are what people must be willing to sacrifice in order to have a career in teaching. For example, the opportunity cost for a teacher certified to provide math instruction is the highest wage he or she could have earned by entering another profession. Murnane and Steele (2007, para. 54) pointed out that because of the high opportunity costs, principals report having more difficulty filling these positions when teachers leave than they do when those employed teaching the humanities decide to leave the profession.

Several factors that contribute to teachers leaving the classroom have been identified in the research that has been conducted. However, one issue that is mentioned frequently in the research that causes greater teacher turnover is a lack of support by the principal. Tye and O’Brien (2002), Nickson (2009), Otto and Arnold (2005), Inman and

Marlow (2004), Angelle (2006), and others pointed out that this lack of administrative support helps drive teacher turnover rates. Conversely, Ax et al. (2001), Glaser (2003), Billingsley (2004), and Swars, Meyers, Mays, and Lack (2009) pointed out that administrative support on the part of the principal increases the likelihood of teachers to continue teaching in their current schools. It seems obvious that the actions on the part of principals help lead teachers to stay in education or resign and leave the field permanently.

Participants

Three middle schools, one from each of the three different geographic regions in North Carolina, were selected to participate in this study. Selection of the three schools was purposive and was based on information from the 2008 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and the 2008-2009 North Carolina School Report Cards. Schools were selected from different regions because it is difficult to find schools that meet the selection criteria for this study.

School 1 is located in the eastern Coastal Plain. Currently the school houses 321 students and 25 teachers. In 2008, 50% of its teachers indicated that they continued teaching at the school because of the leadership. The teacher turnover rate at the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year at School 1 was 11%. It should be noted that in the 2006-2007 and 2005-2006 school years this rate was 24% and 26%, respectively. Therefore, between the 2006-2007 and the 2007-2008 school years the teacher turnover rate decreased 13%.

School 2 is located in the central Piedmont region. At the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year it had a student population of 632 and there were 42 teachers. Fifty-nine percent of teachers indicated they continued teaching at School 2 because of the

leadership. Additionally, over the past 4 years the teacher turnover rate has been very low. At the conclusion of 2007-2008, the teacher turnover rate was 5%.

School 3 is located in the Mountain region of North Carolina. In 2008 School 3 had over 660 students and 51 teachers were employed there. At the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year, the teacher turnover rate was 6%. This was down from 15% the previous year.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine the specific behaviors of middle school principals that lead to high rates of teacher retention. Three North Carolina middle schools were selected as sites to conduct research for this study. One school from each of North Carolina's three geographic regions was chosen.

The following research questions were investigated to help provide further guidance for this study:

1. In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors do the principals exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work?
2. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors make teachers feel supported?
3. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors encourage collegiality among faculty and staff?
4. What are school-based conditions that principals have created through their behavior that encourage teachers to remain at their current schools?

Selection of the Schools

The three schools and principals were selected based on information from the 2008 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and the North Carolina School

Report Card. Middle schools in the three geographic regions of North Carolina were examined using results from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Specifically, in the selected schools 59% or more of the teachers indicated that the reason they continued teaching at their current sites was because of the leadership at the school. This information was then compared to the schools' teacher turnover results from the North Carolina School Report Cards. Turnover rates for the past 4 years were examined.

For a school to be considered it needed to have at least 50% of its teachers indicate that they continued teaching there because of the leadership, and the teacher turnover rate had to be less than 10% or it had to be significantly decreased over the past 4 years. Of the first 10 schools identified as meeting both criteria, three were chosen. To be chosen as one of the final participants, each school needed to have the same principal in the 2010-2011 school year as it did at the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year. This was important because, as mentioned above, data from the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey was used as one of the criteria when choosing possible schools for inclusion in this study. Therefore, for the data from this study to be reliable, it was necessary for these teachers to have the same leader as they did when they first completed the Working Conditions Survey in 2008. Additionally, another consideration when selecting the three final schools was what teachers had to say concerning leadership on the 2010 Teacher Working Conditions Survey. For a school to be chosen as a final participant, the percentage of teachers who indicated that leadership was the reason they continued teaching at their current school needed to be higher than for any other reason given. As mentioned previously, one school from each of North Carolina's three geographic regions was selected.

Procedures

The research design for this study combined aspects of both quantitative and qualitative research into a mixed-methods study. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) pointed out that qualitative and quantitative approaches to research can co-exist within the same study. Further, Gall et al. (2007) pointed out that “although quantitative and qualitative research generally are grounded in different and seemingly incompatible epistemologies, they both can be ‘true’ within the philosophy of pragmatism if their joint deployment in a mixed-methods study results in useful findings” (p. 33).

According to Creswell (2009), mixed-methods research is “an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms of research. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study” (p. 230). Creswell (2009) also pointed out that there are numerous strategies that can be used when conducting a mixed-methods study. The researcher chose to employ the concurrent triangulation strategy to mixed-methods research.

The concurrent triangulation approach involves collecting qualitative and quantitative data concurrently. The data from both collections are then compared to determine if one helps corroborate the other. By using this strategy, the researcher “...uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent in one strategy within one method with the strengths of the other” (Creswell, 2009, p. 213). Further, Creswell (2009) pointed out that though it is ideal to give each data set equal weight, typically greater weight is given to one data collection method over the other. The mixing of the different sets of data usually happens so that they can be compared. The concurrent triangulation approach is appropriate because it can result in

findings that are substantiated and validated.

The researcher focused on what specific behaviors demonstrated by three middle school principals might help lead to increased teacher retention and lowered teacher attrition or turnover rates. To do this, the researcher travelled to each of the three schools to interview each of the principals in person. The interview questions for principals are located in Appendix A. Interviewing is a typical component of qualitative research, as is collecting data in the natural setting. The researcher felt the qualitative design was appropriate because each of the three principals was observed and interviewed in their individual schools. It was anticipated that specific behavioral characteristics of the principals would emerge. However, prior to traveling to any of the three selected schools, the researcher contacted each principal directly by phone. The principal of each school granted permission for the researcher to visit his or her school.

Additionally, each school principal's direct supervisor was interviewed in person or by phone. Each supervisor either served as a superintendent or middle school director. Again, it was anticipated that specific behavioral characteristics demonstrated by the principal would emerge from the interview data that would help explain the reduced teacher turnover rate at the applicable school. The interview questions asked of the supervisors can be found in Appendix B.

A survey design was incorporated into this study. A survey is a typical component of quantitative research because the survey produced numerical data that represented the social environment of each school. Also, statistical methods, which will be explained later in this chapter, were used to analyze the data collected from the survey. The purpose of the survey, a copy of which can be found in Appendix C, was to identify generalizations that could be made from the survey results to other middle school

teachers and middle schools across the state. Specifically, the survey questions were focused on identifying teacher beliefs regarding what specific behaviors on the part of middle school principals lead to positive working conditions and encourage teachers to continue teaching in their schools.

The survey was designed by the researcher and was based in large part on the work of Barbara J. Mallory and Teri D. Melton (2009) of Georgia Southern University. Mallory and Melton (2009) sought to identify the dispositions, or values and beliefs, of principals that showed the relationship between creating positive teacher working conditions and teacher retention. Mallory and Melton (2009) also focused on the dispositions associated with principals' behaviors that helped lead to the creation of supportive teaching environments.

Using Theory Y themes found in the literature (Bennis, 2006; Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2009; McGregor, 1960), Mallory and Melton (2009) operationalized dispositions by turning them into belief-value statements associated with behaviors that could be exhibited by educational leaders to establish supportive learning and teaching environments. These leadership dispositions included a willingness to take risks and mediate conflict to promote what is ethical and right for those associated with the school, holding unyielding and high expectations for student growth and for instructional leadership, and a willingness to be honest and transparent.

The survey is also based heavily on the work of Kathleen M. Brown and Susan R. Wynn (2007) who identified strategies and characteristics principals shared that helped them retain teachers. The data from Brown and Wynn's study involving 12 schools were analyzed using elements found in professional learning communities. These elements included collaboration, supportive conditions, supportive leadership, shared norms and

values, and deprivatization of practice. Additionally, Brown and Wynn (2007) identified several things principals did to help beginning teachers and to reduce turnover. Some of these identified actions by the principals included encouraging collaboration, encouraging teachers to share ideas and to be open to new ideas and strategies, providing support, and providing necessary materials. Also, principals in Brown and Wynn's (2007) study identified the importance of establishing relationships with teachers, being accessible to teachers, allowing others' input when making decisions, and of being fair, honest, and consistent.

While the survey is based largely on Mallory and Melton (2009) and Brown and Wynn's (2007) work, other parts of the survey are based on researchers' work referenced previously concerning teacher retention and positive working conditions. These researchers included Angelle (2006) who studied monitoring of inexperienced teachers by principals, and Liston et al. (2006) who focused their research on identifying issues beginning teachers face.

Finally, the survey is based on the four research questions that have driven this study. These questions ask what specific behaviors do principals exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work, what specific behaviors make teachers feel supported, which specific behaviors encourage collegiality among faculty and staff, and which school-based conditions have principals created through their behavior that encourage teachers to remain at their current schools.

After reviewing the literature covered above, including Mallory and Melton (2009) and Brown and Wynn (2007), the survey questions were developed based on several identified categories. These categories included the establishment of positive relationships between principals and teachers, support of teachers by principals,

empowerment of teachers by principals, shared vision, and provision of necessary teaching resources including supplies.

The survey contained both closed form and open form items. The answers to the majority of the closed form items were designated by using the 5-point Likert scale responses of strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. To avoid having survey respondents respond to items about which they were unfamiliar, it was decided to include the response option of neither agree or disagree.

The survey was administered using the Internet and the web-based survey site www.zoomerang.com. To avoid having inappropriate personnel complete the survey, each participating teacher who signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the study received an email at his or her school email address that contained a personal link to the survey. A copy of the consent form, which was also signed by principals and their supervisors, can be found in Appendix D. By logging on, each teacher also recorded his or her consent to complete the survey.

The teachers who completed the survey responded to Likert scale items by clicking on radio buttons. The teachers also rank-ordered items by entering numbers and answered open form questions by typing responses in text boxes. After the survey was completed, teachers clicked the SUBMIT option. By doing this, the data was transmitted and saved to a database accessible to the researcher.

Pre-contact was made with the principal of each school. The researcher identified himself and discussed the purpose of the study being conducted. The researcher requested cooperation from each principal and sought permission to meet with all teachers to explain the background behind the research, the purpose of the study, why their particular school was selected as a research site, and the necessary steps to complete

the online survey. Permission was also requested to survey all teachers at each school who had taught at least 1 year at their respective sites. The researcher also informed the faculty at each school that they would have access to any data collected from their school.

As mentioned above, teachers were surveyed using an Internet-based online survey service. In this study, the longitudinal survey method was the preferred type of data collection procedure because it provided a reasonably quick turnaround while allowing for data collection to take place over a specified amount of time. Teachers were also able to complete the survey at times that were convenient for them. Additionally, because of the distance between the three schools in the study, the survey method enabled the researcher to compile data without spending great amounts of time traveling between schools to interview all teachers. While each principal and each principal's direct supervisor was interviewed, it would have been too time consuming to try to interview the approximately 110 teachers who worked in the three middle schools. Finally, the online research method was cost and time effective when compared to mailing surveys to teachers in each of the three schools.

Each of the three principals was interviewed, as was each principal's direct supervisor. The interviews were used as a comparative source with the survey results. The interviews were standardized and open-ended in nature. The researcher interviewed each principal and supervisor separately using questions that had been previously composed and that had a predetermined sequence. As stated above, the interview questions for principals and their supervisors can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher assured participants of complete confidentiality. The researcher explained that confidentiality would be maintained by

always referring to the participating schools, the teachers in the schools, the principals and their direct supervisors by using number designations. For example, there is a School 1, School 2, and School 3 referred to in this study. There is also a Principal 1, Principal 2, and Principal 3. The supervisors were also given number designations that correspond with the principal each supervised. The teachers are referred to as teachers in School 1, teachers in School 2, and teachers in School 3. The researcher also explained the potential benefits of the study for principals and teachers across the state.

Interview responses were recorded by the researcher using handwritten notes on an interview guide. The interviews were also recorded and transcribed. By recording the interview data in two ways, several advantages were realized. The handwritten data was immediately accessible and data analysis was facilitated quickly. The audio recordings provided complete verbal records which were able to be analyzed much more thoroughly than handwritten notes.

Instruments

The three principals of the selected schools were interviewed using questions (Appendix A) that were focused on specific exhibited behavioral characteristics of educational leaders. For example, principals were asked questions concerning accessibility to teachers, promotion of positive teacher working conditions, leadership, decision making, building trust, and establishing relationships. The interview questions for principals were also aligned with the study's research questions in that they addressed principal behaviors that lead to improved working conditions and large rates of teacher retention. The first research question asks which specific behaviors principals exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work. Principal interview questions 1, 5, 8, and 13 are aligned with this question. The second research question asks what

behaviors on the part of the principal make teachers feel supported. Principal interview questions 4, 11, and 12 are aligned with this research question. The third research question asks which behaviors on the part of the principal encourage collegiality among staff. Principal interview questions 9, 10, and 11 are aligned with this research question. Finally, Research Question 4 asks what school-based conditions principals have created through their behavior that encourage teachers to continue teaching at their current school. Principal interview questions 3, 5, 7, and 15 address this research question.

Online surveys (Appendix C) were administered to all willing teachers who had been teaching at least 1 year on staff at the three selected schools. The online survey was designed by the researcher. The survey questions were aligned with the research questions guiding this study in that they focused on the specific behaviors the selected principals exhibit that help lead to teachers wanting to continue teaching in their current schools.

The fixed interview questions for the three principals and the three central office supervisors (Appendix B) and the teacher survey instrument were reviewed by current doctoral students at Gardner-Webb University, by principals, and by central office administrators. The doctoral students, principals, and central office administrators checked grammar, content, and conventions and offered feedback to the researcher. The doctoral students, principals, and central office administrators also helped establish the face validity of both the interview questions and the teacher survey instrument by checking to ensure the instruments covered the beliefs of the teachers, principals, and their supervisors. The teacher survey instrument was then tested using participants from three middle schools in northwest North Carolina. The results were examined to ensure that the electronic survey method worked correctly and to ensure that it helped identify

specific behaviors on the part of the principal. Also, the answers to the survey questions were examined to ensure that there was general agreement by those teachers who completed the survey and that the responses by the test population were consistent.

This was a nonrandom survey in that teachers in each of the three schools who had taught at least 1 year were asked to complete the online survey. Initially it was desirable that approximately 100 teachers complete the survey. The teachers were able to easily access the survey online and complete it at times that were convenient to them. A single stage sampling design was used because it was possible to compile a list of those teachers who made up the population of teachers having taught in the selected schools for the past year or more. Additionally, the researcher was able to sample the people directly. According to Creswell (2009), single stage sampling can be used when a researcher has access to the names of those participating in the research.

The teacher survey had 28 questions. Some questions required teachers to elaborate using text. However, the majority of questions were attitudinal items. Teachers responded to the questions by using Likert scale responses that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The online survey service used to create the survey helped generate results. Descriptive statistics, or different ways to organize and summarize the data, and graphed information were provided by this service. Additional analysis of the survey results was conducted by calculating the percentage of each type of response to each question from each of the three school sites. The surveys were analyzed using frequency distribution tables to determine the central tendency of each question.

Answers also were analyzed for mean, median, and mode calculations and standard deviation. The mean was used to determine the average response to each

behavioral statement. For example, if a behavioral statement had a mean of 4.5643, then one could say that the majority of survey respondents answered that they either strongly agreed (5.0) or agreed (4.0) with the statement. For purposes of this research, a mean rating of 4.0 indicated the existence of perceived behaviors on the part of the principal by the teachers. The standard deviation was used to determine the variation of responses to each behavioral statement and as a measure of how much the scores in each distribution differed from their mean.

By examining the mode, one can see what response was given most frequently to each statement. A mode of 5.0 indicated that teachers most often indicated they strongly agreed with a statement. A mode of 4.0 indicated that teachers most often responded that they agreed with the statement. A mode of 3.0 indicated that teachers most often responded neither agree nor disagree; a mode of 2.0 indicated teachers disagreed; and a mode of 1.0 indicated teachers most often indicated they strongly disagreed with a statement.

Additionally, the data was analyzed using chi square. The chi square test was used to determine whether the frequency counts for the different samples were distributed differently from what one could expect by chance. A chi square analysis was run for each teacher survey question or statement in which respondents answered using a 5-point Likert scale. To calculate the chi square for each statement, the researcher had to establish expected frequencies of responses. Since the majority of teachers surveyed had indicated on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey that the main reason they continued teaching in their current schools was due to the principal's leadership, it was expected that the majority of respondents would agree or strongly agree with the statements. However, after visiting each school and meeting each teacher who could

potentially complete the online survey, the researcher was able to establish the expected number of responses in which teachers said they had no opinion or they disagreed. It was expected that at least one teacher in School 1 would have no opinion and at least one respondent would disagree or strongly disagree. It was also expected that at least two teachers in School 2 would have no opinion and at least two would disagree. Finally, it was expected that at least three teachers from School 3 would have no opinion and at least three would disagree with each statement.

According to Kay (2005),

If the observed and expected frequencies are close in value, then the chi-square statistic, χ^2 , will be close to zero. If there is a large difference between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies, the difference...will be large, resulting in a large value of χ^2 . (p. 278)

Once the values of χ^2 were determined for each statement, they were then compared to the appropriate Tail probability, or p value. The p value was determined by first determining the degrees of freedom. The degrees of freedom were determined by taking one less than the total number of schools and multiplying that number by one less than the number of categories. This yielded a sum of four. A table of χ^2 critical values (Kay, 2005) was consulted to determine the p value at the conventional significance level of .05. This yielded a critical value of 9.49.

Most of the teacher survey questions fell under one of several identified categories. Questions 1 and 2 were biographical in nature in that they asked for information about the teaching experience of those completing the survey. Questions 3, 6, 12, and 21 addressed positive relationships between the principal and teachers. Questions 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 19 all addressed principal support of teachers.

Questions 8 and 11 addressed empowerment. Question 22 addressed vision. Question 20 addressed teaching resources. Questions 14 and 17 were assigned to no specific category. These two questions were included to ensure that the persons completing the survey were reading the questions closely.

Questions 23 through 28 did not use Likert responses. Question 23 asked teachers to rank principal leadership behaviors that help contribute to their desire to continue teaching in their current school. Teachers had to rank each behavior as being critical, very important, important, slightly important or unimportant in terms of how important the behavior was to contributing to their desire to continue teaching in their current school. A frequency distribution table was used to analyze the data from this question. Question 24 asked if there are behaviors exhibited by the principal that are not addressed in question 23. Question 25 asked teachers how their principal encourages collegiality. Questions 26 and 27 inquired as to what school-based conditions encouraged teacher retention and of those, which ones were created by the principal. Question 28 was a summative question that asked if there were other things not mentioned previously in the survey that the principal did that helped contribute to low teacher turnover.

With the exceptions of questions 1 and 2, which were biographical in nature, and 14 and 17, which were included to ensure respondents were reading the survey closely, the teacher survey questions were closely connected to the four research questions that drove this study. Survey questions 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 23, and 24 were all connected to the first research question that asked what specific behaviors the principal exhibits that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work. Teacher survey questions 4, 5, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21 were connected to the second research question. The second research question concerned specific behaviors on the part of the principal that

made teachers feel supported. Teacher survey questions 11 and 25 shared a connection with the third research question that asked which specific behaviors on the part of the principal encouraged collegiality among staff. Finally, teacher survey questions 22, 26, 27, and 28 were connected to the fourth research question. The fourth research question concerned school-based conditions principals created through their behavior that encouraged teachers to remain at their current schools.

Inductive data analysis was used for questions 24-28. David R. Thomas (2003) pointed out that the

purposes of using an inductive approach are to (1) condense extensive and varied raw test data into a brief, summary format; (2) to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (3) to develop [a] model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the raw data. (p. 1)

The textual data provided by the teachers for questions 24-28 was condensed into a summary format. Additionally, it was desirable that clear links would be established between the textual data and the objectives of this research. To accomplish this, the raw text data was read closely to begin the process of identifying details and themes. The textual data was coded into the specific categories identified above. These categories included positive relationships between principal and teachers, principal support of teachers, empowerment, vision, and provision of necessary resources.

Additionally, the middle school director or superintendent to whom each principal reports was interviewed in person. By interviewing the middle school director or superintendent in each of the three school systems, the researcher desired a different perspective on what the principals in each system were doing behaviorally to keep

teachers working at their schools. Also, it was desirable that the interviews would add to the knowledge base of this study.

As mentioned previously, the teacher survey instrument was developed based on the work of Mallory and Melton (2009) who sought to identify the dispositions, or values and beliefs, of principals that showed the relationship between creating positive teacher working conditions and teacher retention. Mallory and Melton (2009) also focused on the dispositions associated with principals' behaviors that helped lead to the creation of supportive teaching environments.

The survey instrument was also based on the work of Brown and Wynn (2007) whose research focused on collaboration, supportive conditions, supportive leadership, shared norms and values, and deprivatization of practice. Additionally, Brown and Wynn (2007) identified several things principals did to help beginning teachers and to reduce turnover. Some of these identified actions by the principals included encouraging collaboration, encouraging teachers to share ideas and to be open to new ideas and strategies, providing support, and providing necessary materials. The interview questions for both principals and their immediate supervisors were developed to complement the teacher survey instrument. Both the fixed interview questions for principals and for their supervisors contained items that were aligned with questions from the teacher survey instrument. As stated earlier in this chapter, it was desirable that the interviews add to the knowledge base of this study.

Analyzing the Data

The majority of teacher survey questions incorporated Likert scale responses. The Likert scale responses were coded by assigning numerical values from one to five. For example, a response of strongly agree was coded as a five, while a response of

disagree was coded as a two. The range of responses was recorded and depicted for each school using frequency tables. The Likert scale data were also summarized using the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. The data were also analyzed using chi square. The chi square test was used to determine whether the frequency counts for the different samples were distributed differently.

Additionally, by using triangulation, the researcher sought corroboration by comparing results from the principal and associate superintendent interviews to the results from the teacher surveys to ensure there was no error or bias exhibited in data collection. As the data from the teacher survey instrument and the two interview instruments were analyzed and studied, it was determined whether the teacher results shared similarities with the results from the interviews. This was especially true with principal interview questions 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, and 13, which were worded almost exactly the same and shared categories with corresponding questions in the associate superintendent interviews and teacher survey.

The researcher also compared the categorical results from each school in order to see if the data could be generalized across the three schools in the study. This was done by examining the categorical results to see if they were present in all three schools. These categories included positive relationships between principal and teachers, principal support of teachers, empowerment, vision, and provision of necessary resources. If a category was highly present in all three schools, then it was noted as possibly being important in terms of helping reduce teacher turnover.

Ensuring the Quality of the Research

To ensure the quality of the research, various strategies were used to develop this research project. First, it was desirable that this research would be useful to readers and

especially to other middle school principals. The research was designed with the anticipation that it would be applicable to other middle school settings. Second, multiple sources of data collection were collected and analyzed. As mentioned above, it was anticipated that approximately 100 teachers would be given the opportunity to participate by completing online surveys. Ultimately, 75 teachers completed the survey.

Additionally, interviews were conducted with principals and their immediate supervisors. The data were examined to see if results from the teacher surveys compared favorably with what principals and their supervisors said in the interviews.

Anticipated Outcomes and Limitations

It was anticipated that this study would reveal specific behaviors that all three principals exhibit that help lead to positive teacher working conditions and reduced teacher turnover rates. Additionally, these behaviors possibly had a direct impact on characteristics of the school-based environment such as the establishment of a collegial atmosphere, willingness to indoctrinate beginners into the school belief system, mission, and culture, and a spirit of cooperation and camaraderie.

There were limitations to this study. The study involved only three middle schools. Therefore, it was difficult to generalize the results to other North Carolina middle schools. Additionally, because the study focused on specific behaviors of three principals, it was difficult to generalize those behaviors to other principals who have high rates of teacher retention in their schools.

However, generalization should not be ruled out because three schools, one from each of the three geographical regions of North Carolina, were being examined. This would possibly allow analytic generalizations to take place, especially if the research was replicated in other middle schools. Also, it is possible that any reader of this study could

generalize the research findings to his or her educational setting.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify specific principal behaviors that help lead to positive teacher working conditions and, as a result, lower teacher turnover rates. Three schools, each in a different geographic region of North Carolina, were selected. The principal of each selected school was interviewed in person. Every teacher who had been teaching at least 1 year at one of the selected schools was given the opportunity to complete the survey. Also, the middle school director or associate superintendent to whom each principal reports was interviewed in person. The data from the surveys and interviews was then analyzed to identify specific behaviors the three principals exhibited that lead to lower teacher turnover rates.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the specific behaviors that three middle school principals exhibit and the impact these behaviors have on working conditions and teacher turnover. The researcher attempted to identify and categorize specific behaviors that other middle school principals can duplicate that might establish positive working conditions in their schools. By duplicating these behaviors and working to establish positive teacher working conditions, this could possibly help principals as they try to reduce the teacher turnover rates they currently face.

This study examined the specific behaviors of the three principals who led each of the schools during the 2007-2008 school year. The focus of the study was on the behaviors that may have helped lead to the establishment of positive working conditions that specifically lead teachers to want to remain in their current schools. These behaviors were identified through surveys of teachers, interviews with the three principals, and interviews with each principal's immediate supervisor. Conclusions from the data sources were analyzed to identify specific principal behaviors that are exhibited at all three middle school sites that help lead to teacher retention.

The research design for this study combined aspects of both quantitative and qualitative research into a mixed-methods study. According to Gall et al. (2007),

There is a growing consensus among researchers that qualitative and quantitative research can complement each other.... As defined by R. Burke Johnson and Anthony Onwuegbuzie, mixed-methods research is "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study." (pp. 32-33)

The researcher focused on what specific behaviors demonstrated by three middle school principals might help lead to increased teacher retention and lowered teacher attrition rates. To do this, the researcher travelled to each of the three schools to interview each of the principals. Interviewing is a typical component of qualitative research, as is collecting data in the natural setting. The qualitative design was appropriate because each of the three principals was observed and interviewed in their individual schools. It was anticipated that specific behavioral characteristics of the principals would emerge.

Additionally, each school principal's direct supervisor was interviewed. Each supervisor either served as an associate superintendent or middle school director. Again, it was anticipated that specific behavioral characteristics demonstrated by the principal would emerge that would help explain the reduced teacher turnover rate at the applicable school.

A survey design was incorporated into this study. A survey is a typical component of quantitative research because the survey can produce data that can be generalized to a population as a whole. In this case, the teacher survey found in Appendix C produced numerical data that represented the social environment of each school. The purpose of the survey was to identify generalizations that could be made from the survey results to other middle school teachers and middle schools across the state. Specifically, the survey questions were constructed to help identify teacher beliefs regarding specific behaviors on the part of middle school principals that lead to positive working conditions and encourage teachers to continue teaching in their schools. The survey was designed by the researcher and is based in large part on the work of Barbara J. Mallory and Teri D. Melton (2009) of Georgia Southern University and Kathleen M.

Brown and Susan R. Wynn (2007).

Barbara J. Mallory and Teri D. Melton (2009) of Georgia Southern University focused their research on leadership dispositions of the principal. Mallory and Melton (2009) sought to identify the dispositions, or values and beliefs, that showed the relationship between creating positive teacher working conditions and teacher retention. Mallory and Melton (2009) wanted “to define dispositions, understand how dispositions are assessed in leadership preparation programs, and relate dispositions to leadership behaviors, especially as they impact school culture and working conditions” (p. 9).

To do this, Mallory and Melton (2009) surveyed 43 members of the National Council of Professors of Education Administration using a 13-item questionnaire that was designed to ask about different educational leadership programs’ definitions of dispositions and to identify how these dispositions were assessed. Some of the questions were open-ended while others required making choices.

Mallory and Melton (2009) also focused on the dispositions associated with principals’ behaviors that helped lead to the creation of supportive teaching environments. From their review of several states’ studies on working conditions and their relationship to teacher retention, the general finding was that principals who demonstrated effective leadership by empowering teachers in an environment where they were trusted and felt supported was a key ingredient to keeping teachers in their current schools. Mallory and Melton (2009) examined how the principals’ dispositions led to behaviors that helped in the establishment of these positive working environments.

Mallory and Melton (2009) operationalized dispositions by turning them into belief-value statements associated with behaviors that could be exhibited by educational leaders to help establish a supportive learning and teaching environment. They identified

three dispositions that are closely related to teacher working conditions.

The first of the leadership dispositions is a willingness to take risks and mediate conflict to promote what is ethical and right for individuals and for the common good of those associated with a school. In other words, principals who believe that education is done for the common good of providing students with "...economic, civic, and cultural purposes, and yet also believes in individual consideration, is likely to behave to mediate conflict and take risks, rather than take sides" (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 14).

The second disposition is holding unyielding and high expectations for student growth and for instructional leadership from those associated with the school. Principals who have this disposition "...will behave in a manner to support teaching and learning in all classrooms and across the school. He or she will seek support for teaching and learning outside the school from parents, community groups, and civic groups" (Mallory & Melton, 2009, p. 15).

The third disposition associated with the creation of positive teaching environments is a willingness to be transparent and honest. This provides an ethical dimension to leadership. According to Mallory and Melton (2009),

...authenticity is essential, not just in word or deeds, but in a pattern of how one speaks, one acts, and one consistently behaves, especially in challenging times. A leader must be open and honest in the manner of being transparent....

Transparency means that no one doubts that the leader has shown up in the right place, for the right reason, in the right way. (p. 16)

The researchers pointed out that this builds trust between teachers and principals and that there is a strong inverse correlation between trust and teacher turnover.

Kathleen M. Brown and Susan R. Wynn (2007), looking at the elements of

professional learning communities, examined how principals and beginning teachers saw their roles and those of their colleagues in supporting and retaining teachers new to the profession. Brown and Wynn (2007) identified several things principals did to help beginning teachers and to reduce turnover. They were proactive in offering assistance to beginners and in encouraging collaboration between teachers while at the same time reducing competition. The principals also encouraged their teachers to be learners. They encouraged beginning teachers to share ideas, and experienced teachers to be open to new ideas and strategies.

The principals in this study also gave a lot of thought to which teachers would work best with one another. Fit, or how well new teachers would support one another and work well with other teachers in the building, was stressed as being important. The principals chose new teachers who met this criteria. The principals also provided these teachers with the necessary textbooks, supplies, equipment, and technological tools.

All 12 principals identified support as the most important thing they did, and nine of the 12 stated lack of support as the primary reason teachers were leaving the profession. The teachers in the study also identified support as being important, whether it be with discipline issues, getting needed supplies, receiving clear communication and responses to questions and concerns from the principal, or encouragement.

In terms of leadership, the principals mentioned the importance of establishing relationships with teachers (seven out of 12 wanted to know their teachers personally) and of being fair, honest, and consistent. They also believed in open door policies and being available to teachers to share in the good and the bad. The principals did not believe so much in a top down leadership style. Rather, each principal described how many decisions were made by leadership or site-based management teams. Also,

teachers revealed that they wanted their principals to know what they were doing and where they were taking their schools, but who involved teachers along the way.

Brown and Wynn (2007) concluded in their study that the principals provided the conditions and the resources needed to give support to new teachers. They shared decision making and worked collaboratively with them. They kept their doors open in case teachers needed to see them. These principals encouraged collegiality and provided leadership and guidance. Brown and Wynn (2007) went on to say that even though the relationship between the elements of professional learning communities and teacher retention is complex, the two are interrelated.

The teacher survey developed by the researcher had as a foundation several different elements from Mallory and Melton's (2009) and Brown and Wynn's (2007) research. The teacher survey contained questions concerning the principal's willingness to take risks, hold others to high expectations, be honest, offer assistance, encourage collaboration and collegiality, provide necessary resources such as textbooks and technology, provide support, establish personal relationships, and have open door policies. Each of these dispositions or behaviors was identified through the work of either Mallory and Melton (2009) or Brown and Wynn (2007).

This research study was designed to answer the following research questions in regards to specific behaviors exhibited by the middle school principals:

1. In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors does the principal exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work?
2. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors make teachers feel supported?
3. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors encourage

collegiality among faculty and staff?

4. What are school-based conditions that principals have created through their behavior that encourage teachers to remain at their current schools?

The researcher answered all four research questions by collecting data with the teacher survey instrument found in Appendix C. Additionally, each of the three principals was interviewed, as was each principal's direct supervisor. The interviews were used as a comparative source with the survey results. The interviews were standardized and open-ended in nature. The researcher interviewed each principal and supervisor separately using questions that had been previously composed and that had a predetermined sequence.

The teacher survey contained 28 questions. The majority of the teacher survey consisted of statements that were addressed using the 5-point Likert scale responses of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Teachers who completed the survey were also asked to answer open-ended questions or provide additional information by typing responses in text boxes. Finally, teachers were asked to rank a list of several behaviors that were exhibited by principals in terms of how important these behaviors were in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools. Teachers could rank each principal behavior as being critical, very important, important, slightly important, or unimportant to encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools.

Most of the teacher survey questions fell under one of several identified categories. Teacher survey questions 1 and 2 were biographical in nature in that they asked for information about the years of teaching experience of those completing the survey. Teacher survey questions 3, 6, 12, and 21 addressed positive relationships

between the principal and teachers. These questions were used to help answer Research Question 1. Additionally, teacher survey questions 7, 8, 13, 23, and 24 were used to answer this research question as well. Teacher survey questions 4, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21 all addressed principal support of teachers and specifically helped address Research Question 2. Survey questions 8 and 11 addressed empowerment. Survey question 22 addressed vision. Survey question 20 addressed teaching resources. Questions 14 and 17 were assigned to no specific category. These two questions were included to ensure that the persons completing the survey were reading the questions closely.

Questions 23 through 28 do not use Likert responses. Question 23 asked teachers to rank principal leadership behaviors that help contribute to their desire to continue teaching in their current school. Question 24 asks if there are behaviors exhibited by the principal that are not addressed in question 23. Question 25 asks teachers how their principal encourages collegiality and specifically addresses Research Question 3. Questions 26 and 27 inquire as to what school-based conditions encourage teacher retention and of these, which were created by the principal. These two questions specifically address Research Question 4. Question 28 is a summative question that asks if there are other things not mentioned previously in the survey that the principal does that help contribute to low teacher turnover.

Descriptive statistics (different ways to organize and summarize the data) and graphed information were provided by the website service used to administer the teacher survey. Additional analysis of the survey results was conducted by calculating the percentage of each type of response to each question from each of the three school sites. The survey results were analyzed using frequency distribution tables to determine the

central tendency of each question. Answers also were analyzed for mean, median, and mode calculations and standard deviation.

A chi square analysis of the data was completed. The chi square test was used to determine whether the frequency counts for the different samples were distributed differently. The chi square calculations for the teacher survey questions that used Likert scale responses were based on the determinations of observed frequencies and expected frequencies. Additionally, the chi square analysis was used to help determine if the three groups of teachers completing the teacher survey shared the same opinions concerning their principals and how their behavior impacted teacher turnover or if they had markedly different opinions.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asks what specific behaviors the principal exhibits that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work. To answer this question, the researcher used results from teacher survey questions 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 23, and 24. Teachers completing survey questions 3, 6, 8, 12, and 13 used Likert scale responses to respond. For survey questions 7 and 24, the teachers were asked to answer using text. For teacher survey question 23, teachers were asked to rank each behavior in a list of principal behaviors on a scale that ranged from *unimportant* to *critical* in terms of how important each was to encouraging teachers to continue teaching in their current schools. The data from question 23 will be summarized later in this chapter.

Table 2 details the five teacher survey questions that were answered using Likert scale responses that specifically address behaviors principals exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work. These survey questions were designed to help answer Research Question 1. Additionally, Table 2 shows the mean, median, mode, and

standard deviation for each behavioral statement.

Table 2

Measures of Principal Behaviors That Promote an Atmosphere Where Teachers Want to Work

Statement	Respondent	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
My principal has established a meaningful relationship with me.	School 1	11	4.5455	5.0	5.0	.68755
	School 2	26	4.5769	5.0	5.0	.57779
	School 3	38	4.6316	5.0	5.0	.54132
My principal seeks to build trust with those who work in the school.	School 1	11	4.4545	5.0	5.0	.68755
	School 2	26	4.6154	5.0	5.0	.57110
	School 3	37	4.6486	5.0	5.0	.53832
My principal gives me freedom to try or experiment with new teaching strategies.	School 1	11	4.8182	5.0	5.0	.40452
	School 2	26	4.5385	5.0	5.0	.81146
	School 3	38	4.7105	5.0	5.0	.45961
My principal holds others accountable.	School 1	11	4.2727	4.0	4.0	.64667
	School 2	26	4.0000	4.0	4.0	.80000
	School 3	38	4.4737	4.5	5.0	.55687
My principal is uncompromising on what is right for our school and our students.	School 1	10	3.9000	3.9	4.0	.73786
	School 2	26	4.3462	5.0	5.0	.79711
	School 3	38	4.1316	4.0	4.0	1.04419

The researcher examined the descriptive statistics seeking to define the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of the principal behaviors that contribute to a school's atmosphere. For purposes of this research, a mean rating of 4.0 indicated the existence of perceived behaviors on the part of the principal by the teachers. The data in Table 2 indicated that teachers in all three schools felt that their principals had established meaningful relationships, sought to build trust with teachers, gave teachers the freedom to

experiment with new teaching strategies, held others accountable, and were uncompromising on what was right for students and the schools. The average mean was 4.0 or higher for all perceived behaviors associated with school atmosphere. The only exception came in the area of the principal being “uncompromising on what is right for our school and our students.” School 1 produced a mean rating of 3.900 in this area.

By examining the mode in Table 2 above, one can see what response was given most frequently to each statement. A mode of 5.0 indicated that teachers most often indicated that they strongly agreed with a statement; a mode of 4.0 indicated that teachers most often responded that they agreed with the statement; a mode of 3.0 indicated that teachers most often responded neither agree nor disagree; a mode of 2.0 indicated teachers disagreed; and a mode of 1.0 indicated teachers most often indicated they strongly disagreed with a statement.

For the statement “My principal has established a meaningful relationship with me,” teachers in all three schools most often responded that they strongly agreed. The same was true of the statements “My principal seeks to build trust with those who work in the school” and “My principal gives me freedom to try or experiment with new teaching strategies.” For the statement “My principal holds others accountable,” teachers in both School 1 and School 2 most often responded that they agreed. Only teachers in School 3 indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement. For the statement “My principal is uncompromising on what is right for our school and our students,” teachers in School 1 and School 3 agreed, while only School 2’s teachers indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement. It should also be noted that the standard deviation for School 3’s responses to the statement about the principal being uncompromising indicated a greater variation of responses than at the other two schools. While the standard deviation

was highest for all three schools relative to this statement as compared to the other statements, only School 3 had a standard deviation of greater than 1.0. School 3 had a standard deviation of 1.04419 while Schools 1 and 2 had standard deviations of .73786 and .79711, respectively.

Additionally, a chi square analysis was run for each teacher survey question or statement in which respondents answered using a 5-point Likert scale. The chi square statistic was used to determine if the observed frequencies to each statement differed greatly from what one would expect by chance. To calculate the chi square for each statement, the researcher had to establish expected frequencies of responses. Since the majority of teachers surveyed had indicated on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey that the main reason they continued teaching in their current schools was due to the principal's leadership, it was expected that the majority of respondents would agree or strongly agree with the statements. However, it was also expected that at least one teacher in School 1 would have no opinion and at least one respondent would disagree or strongly disagree. It was also expected that at least two teachers in School 2 would have no opinion and at least two would disagree. Finally, it was expected that at least three teachers from School 3 would have no opinion and at least three would disagree with each statement.

According to Kay (2005),

If the observed and expected frequencies are close in value, then the chi-square statistic, χ^2 , will be close to zero. If there is a large difference between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies, the difference...will be large, resulting in a large value of χ^2 . (p. 278)

Once the values of χ^2 were determined for each statement, they were then

compared to the appropriate Tail probability, or p value. The p value was determined by first determining the degrees of freedom. The degrees of freedom were determined by taking one less than the total number of schools and multiplying that number by one less than the number of categories. This yielded a sum of four. A table of χ^2 critical values (Kay, 2005) was consulted to determine the p value at the conventional significance level of .05. This yielded a critical value of 9.49.

The chi square data for the teacher survey questions used to answer Research Question 1 is summarized in Table 3. This table contains the number of teachers expected to agree with each statement, the number expected to have no opinion, and the number of teachers expected to disagree. Additionally, Table 3 contains the observed number of teachers who agreed, had no opinion, or disagreed with each behavioral statement.

Table 3

Comparison of Observed and Expected Frequencies of Responses for Research Question 1

Statement	Expected Agree	Observed Agree	Expected Neither	Observed Neither	Expected Disagree	Observed Disagree	χ^2
My principal has established a meaningful relationship with me.	63	73	6	2	6	0	11.1452
My principal seeks to build trust with those in the school.	62	71	6	3	6	0	9.159987
My principal gives me freedom to try or experiment with new teaching techniques.	63	72	6	2	6	1	10.1149
My principal holds others accountable.	63	67	6	7	6	1	11.40751
My principal is uncompromising on what is right for our school and our students.	61	59	6	11	6	3	11.67045

With the exception of the statement that reads “My principal seeks to build trust with those who work in the school,” each of the statements used to address Research Question 1 had a χ^2 value greater than 9.49. In each of these statements where the value was greater than 9.49, this would indicate that the frequency of responses did not correspond with expected values.

An examination of the data for two of the statements in Table 3 that had χ^2 values

greater than 9.49 reveals that a greater number of teachers agreed than was anticipated. For the statement “My principal has established a meaningful relationship with me,” 73 teachers indicated they agreed with this statement. It was anticipated that approximately 63 teachers would agree. For the statement “My principal gives me freedom to try or experiment with new teaching techniques,” nine more teachers agreed than were predicted.

It should be noted for the statement that read “My principal is uncompromising on what is right for our school and students,” only two more teachers agreed than were expected. However, 11 teachers indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. This was five more than were expected.

In question 7 of the teacher survey, respondents were asked how their principal built trust with them. Teachers were asked to respond by typing answers into text boxes. There were 59 total responses from the teachers who completed the survey. As the responses were examined, different behaviors were mentioned consistently in the data. Seven different respondents said their principal built trust by always following through on anything he said he was going to do. A teacher from School 1 said of her principal, “If he says he is going to do something, he carries it out. Responsibilities are taken seriously.” Another teacher said of this principal that “He does what he says he is going to do and takes the children’s best interests to heart.” A teacher in School 2 said of her principal, “He builds trust through his actions. He does what he says he will do.”

Another behavior exhibited by all three principals that teachers felt helped build trust was a willingness to keep things confidential. Again, seven different teachers mentioned confidentiality as an important component to building trust between teachers and the principal. A teacher at School 3 had this to say about the principal; “I feel I can

speak with him about anything and it will stay within the walls of his office if I ask him to do so. He doesn't go around trying to stir things up amongst the faculty and staff."

Another teacher at School 3 said that "He is confidential and does not entertain gossip...." Teachers in Schools 1 and 2 echoed these sentiments. Additionally, each of the three principals indicated in their interviews that maintaining confidentiality was an important component in building trust. Principal 1 explained that teachers needed to know that anything that was talked about with him in his office "stayed there."

Honesty was mentioned by seven different respondents in terms of building trust. A teacher in School 2 said "Mr. [name omitted] is consistent with the staff and the students. He is honest with us." The principal of School 2 echoed this sentiment when he said that a principal "can't talk out of both sides of his mouth." A teacher in School 1 said of her principal, "He is a just and honest man." One teacher in School 3 said of her principal that "He is forthcoming and honest with his subordinates...." Another teacher from this school said that Principal 3 is "...open and honest with us."

Teachers in the schools also said that principals built trust by communicating with them. Seven teachers mentioned communicating from the principal to the teachers as a behavior that built trust. Teachers in School 3 said that "He confides in teachers and explains what is expected," "He shares information from central office and other sources with staff...", and "He is never too busy to speak, he looks you in the face when he passes you in the hall and calls you by name and smiles when he speaks. He is approachable and friendly." Principal 3 addressed using communication to build trust with his teachers when he said he tried to explain things to his teachers so that they could hear it from him. A teacher in School 1 said the principal builds trust 'by communicating." A teacher in School 2 echoed this when he said the principal builds

trust “by communicating with the faculty.”

Another behavior on the part of principals that was mentioned consistently by teachers at two of the three schools was putting trust in teachers to do their jobs. Five teachers said that their principals built trust by trusting them to do their jobs and take on responsibilities. A teacher in School 2 said the principal “first trusts you [and] this builds trust between both parties.” Another teacher at School 2 said “[The principal] puts a lot of trust in his staff. He enables us to work in a positive environment. We trust him because he respects and trusts us.” Another teacher said “He trusts us to do our job to the best of our ability without telling us ‘how’ to do it. We are allowed space to ‘work it out’ how we see best.” A teacher in School 3 said of her principal, “He trusts our opinions and ideas – individually and collectively.” Another teacher said that Principal 3 is “willing to support my ideas even if he does not always agree.”

A final behavior mentioned multiple times by the teachers in response to teacher survey question 7 was listening. Six different teachers responded that their principals built trust by listening to them. A teacher in School 3 said her principal built trust by having “one-on-one meetings and just by listening to any questions or concerns we might have.” Another teacher said the principal “would rather hear your worries than for you to stay quiet and go with the flow.” A teacher in School 2 said the principal “listens to us (as long as you have on walking shoes) and does not dismiss our concerns as trivial.” Principal 3 addressed listening to teachers as a way to build trust. He was asked how he built trust and he explained that one way he did so was to “listen and be accessible.”

Other behaviors that principals exhibited that built trust were mentioned multiple times by the teachers in the three schools. These behaviors included being fair (mentioned twice), allowing input from others (mentioned four times), and

communicating appreciation (mentioned three times). Providing support was mentioned most often (eight times).

Each principal's supervisor was asked how the principal built trust. Supervisor 1 said his principal built trust by interacting daily with the teachers. Supervisor 2 said her principal built trust by not sharing confidential information and being "protective of his teachers." Additionally, Supervisor 2 said that Principal 2 was "one of the few principals who maintains such a high level of confidentiality." Finally, Supervisor 3 said that teachers at School 3 had learned that Principal 3 "will not betray their confidences. They know they can count on him and that he will react the very same each time" they come to him.

Teacher survey question 23 asked respondents to rank specific principal behaviors considered by researchers to be critical to teacher retention. The behaviors on the list were taken from the literature on teacher retention. For example, several researchers (Angelle, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2006; Liston et al., 2006; Otto & Arnold, 2005) have studied the importance of administrative support. Ingersoll (2001) stressed the importance of allowing faculty input into decision making (shared leadership) to combat teacher turnover. Liston et al. (2006), Mallory and Melton (2009), Brown and Wynn (2007) and Carver (2003) all pointed out the importance of establishing relationships between principals and teachers. Hirsch and Church (2009) and Liston et al. (2003) all felt protecting teachers' time was important. Brown and Wynn (2007) pointed out the importance of the principal being accessible to his or her teachers.

However, the majority of the descriptive terms or behaviors found in Question 23 are based on the work of Mallory and Melton (2009). Their research touched on the importance of principals demonstrating persistence, holding others accountable, being

driven to learn, carefully taking risks, being considered trustworthy, displaying trust in their teachers, displaying confidence, being considered ethical, and having a sense of humor.

The teachers who completed question 23 were asked to rank each behavior listed as being critical, very important, important, slightly important, or unimportant in terms of how important each was in contributing to a desire to continue teaching in their current schools. Table 4 provides a summary of the data from question 23. The first column lists the principal descriptive term or behavior. The second column lists the percentage of teachers who ranked the behavior as either critical or very important in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools. The descriptive terms/behaviors are listed in descending order based on how important teachers considered them to be in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools.

Table 4

Percentage of Respondents Who Say Specific Principal Behaviors Are Critical or Very Important in Terms of Encouraging Them to Remain in Their Current Schools

Principal Behavior	Critical	Very Important	Total Percentage
Honest	83	16	99
Makes Good Decisions	65	33	98
Supportive	85	12	97
Trustworthy	79	17	96
Ethical	80	15	95
Trusting of Teachers	75	20	95
Accessible to Teachers	65	29	94
Establishes Relationships	68	24	92
Holds Others Accountable	45	47	92
Self-Motivated	52	39	91
Protects Teachers' Time	51	40	91
Solves Problems	60	29	89
Confident	41	48	89
Displays Sense of Humor	51	35	86
Shares Leadership	41	45	86
Driven to Learn	43	39	82
Visionary	36	41	77
Persistent	29	44	73
Carefully Takes Risks	20	43	63
Values Research and Data	11	52	63

An examination of the total percentage column in Table 3 above reveals that teachers in all three schools considered it critical or very important that principals be honest, have good decision-making ability, be supportive, be trustworthy, and act

ethically. Additionally, teachers indicated they felt it important that principals trust them, be accessible to them, and establish relationships with them.

Behaviors or behavioral characteristics that fell in the middle of the teacher rankings included holding others accountable, being self-motivated, being protective of teachers' time, and being able to solve problems. Also, teachers considered it less important for principals to display confidence and to display a sense of humor.

Teachers in each of the three schools indicated it was less important to them that principals be driven to learn, that they be visionary, and that they be persistent. Also, teachers indicated that the two behaviors they considered least important, in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools, were carefully taking risks and valuing research and data.

The three principals agreed, for the most part, with what their teachers had to say. Each of the three principals indicated that they were honest, had good decision-making ability, were supportive, trustworthy, and acted ethically. Additionally, each of the three principals described themselves as being self-motivated (one said very much so), protective of teachers' time, and able to solve problems. Each principal also said he was willing to hold others accountable.

Teachers indicated that the principal being a visionary was not as important as many of the others. However, two of the principals described themselves as being "visionary" while one said he fell on the "middle of the scale." Teachers also indicated they did not view being persistent as very important. One principal said he was "very persistent," another said he felt he could be persistent but was "not the type to keep asking but would rather sit down and talk about it," and another said he was "not stubborn."

The descriptive term or behavior teachers indicated was least important in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools was valuing research and data. The three principals, when asked if they valued research and data, had somewhat varying answers. The principal at School 1 said he valued research and data, but “not as much as I should.” The principal at School 2 said he valued research and data “more than I used to.” He also said he tried to “enjoy the people more than the data and statistics.” The principal at School 3 indicated he valued research and data, but that he was still building on his knowledge of data.

The three supervisors also indicated many of the same things the principals and teachers did. Each of the three supervisors indicated his or her principal was honest, had good decision-making ability, was supportive, trustworthy, and acted ethically. Also, the three supervisors all said their principals were trusting of teachers, accessible to teachers, and that they established meaningful relationships with teachers. Additionally, they also indicated their principals held others accountable, were protective of teachers’ time, and able to solve problems.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asks which specific behaviors on the part of the principal make teachers feel supported. To answer this question, the researcher used responses from teacher survey questions 4, 5, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21. The teacher survey questions address areas the research literature (Angelle, 2006; Brown & Wynn, 2007; Hirsch & Church, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; Liston et al., 2006; Mallory & Melton, 2009) identify as ways principals support teachers. These areas include being accessible to teachers, responding with affirmation when requests are made, providing increased attention to beginning teachers including, but not limited to, a strong induction program,

and providing effective feedback concerning job performance. All of these questions, with the exception of question 5, were answered using the Likert scale responses of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Question 5 was answered by respondents using text.

Table 5 details the nine teacher survey questions that were answered using Likert scale responses that specifically address behaviors principals exhibit that make teachers feel supported. These survey questions were designed to help answer Research Question 2. Additionally, Table 5 contains the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation data for each behavioral statement.

Table 5

Measures of Behaviors Principals Exhibit That Make Teachers Feel Supported

Statement	Respondent	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
My principal is supportive of me.	School 1	11	4.8182	5.0	5.0	.40452
	School 2	26	4.6538	5.0	5.0	.62880
	School 3	38	4.7895	5.0	5.0	.41315
My principal is accessible when I need to see him.	School 1	11	4.3636	4.0	4.0	.50452
	School 2	26	4.6923	5.0	5.0	.47068
	School 3	38	4.3684	4.5	5.0	.85174
It is easy for my principal to say “yes” when I make a request.	School 1	10	4.2000	4.0	4.0	.78881
	School 2	26	4.1538	4.0	4.0	.88056
	School 3	38	4.1579	4.0	4.0	.82286
My principal gives increased attention to beginning teachers as compared to experienced teachers.	School 1	10	3.9000	3.9	4.0	.56765
	School 2	26	3.7308	4.0	3.0	.87442
	School 3	38	3.2895	3.0	4.0	.92730
We have a strong induction program at our school for new teachers.	School 1	11	3.5455	4.0	4.0	.93420
	School 2	26	3.6923	4.0	4.0	.88405
	School 3	38	3.7105	4.0	4.0	.65380
My principal ensures I receive effective feedback about my job performance.	School 1	11	4.5455	5.0	5.0	.52223
	School 2	26	4.5000	5.0	5.0	.58310
	School 3	38	4.3947	4.0	4.0	.54720
My principal is effective at reducing duties that interfere with teaching responsibilities.	School 1	11	3.7273	4.0	4.0	1.10371
	School 2	26	4.1154	4.5	5.0	1.10732
	School 3	38	4.3947	4.0	4.0	.54720
My principal is committed to ensuring I have the necessary supplies needed to teach effectively.	School 1	11	3.9091	4.0	4.0	.70065
	School 2	26	4.3846	4.0	4.0	.49614
	School 3	38	4.5263	5.0	5.0	.76182
Having access to my principal is important.	School 1	11	4.4545	4.0	4.0	.52223
	School 2	26	4.7308	5.0	5.0	.53349
	School 3	38	4.8378	5.0	5.0	.37368

The researcher examined the descriptive statistics seeking to define the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of the principal behaviors that contribute to a school's atmosphere. Again, for purposes of this research, a mean rating of 4.0 indicated

the existence of perceived behaviors on the part of the principal or the perceived existence of conditions within the school by the teachers. The data in Table 5 indicated that teachers in all three schools felt that their principals were supportive of them. Additionally, the data indicated teachers felt that having access to their principals was important and that their principals were accessible. Table 5 data also showed that principals easily said yes to teacher requests, that teachers felt they received effective feedback about job performance, and that, for the most part, the principals were effective at reducing duties that interfered with teaching. School 1 was the only school where the mean was below 4.0 for the statement concerning reducing duties that interfered with teaching. School 1 had a mean of 3.7273 for this statement. There was also a greater variation in responses to this statement when compared to the others. The standard deviation for both Schools 1 and 2 in regards to the principal effectively reducing duties that interfered with teaching was above 1.10.

Teachers in Schools 2 and 3 also indicated that they felt their principals were committed to ensuring they had the necessary supplies to teach effectively. Again, School 1 had a mean of less than 4.0, though only slightly. The mean for School 1 for the statement about ensuring teachers had necessary supplies was 3.9091.

There were two statements concerning beginning teachers in Table 5. The first statement that teachers responded to was “My principal gives increased attention to beginning teachers as compared to experienced teachers.” For this statement all three schools had a mean of less than 4.0. The closest school to a mean of 4.0 was School 1 which had a mean of 3.9000. The second statement read “We have a strong induction program at our school for new teachers.” Again, each of the three schools in the study had a mean of less than 4.0. For this statement, School 1 had a mean response of 3.5455,

School 2 had a mean response of 3.6923, and School 3 had a mean response of 3.7105.

This would indicate teachers tended towards neither agreeing nor disagreeing and agreeing with this statement. It should be pointed out that for Schools 1 and 2 the standard deviation approached 1.0 for the statement concerning the school having a strong induction program for beginning teachers. For Schools 1 and 2, the standard deviations were .93420 and .88405, indicating some degrees of variability in responses to this statement.

By examining the mode for each school and each statement in Table 5 above, one can see what response was given most frequently to each statement. A mode of 5.0 indicated that teachers most often indicated they strongly agree with a statement; a mode of 4.0 indicated that teachers most often responded that they agree with the statement; a mode of 3.0 indicated that teachers most often responded neither agree nor disagree; a mode of 2.0 indicated teachers disagree; and a mode of 1.0 indicated teachers most often indicated they strongly disagree with a statement.

By examining the mode in Table 5 one can see that the statement "My principal is supportive of me" was the only statement where the most common response in all three schools was strongly agree. For the statement "My principal is accessible when I need to see him," teachers in both Schools 2 and 3 most often replied that they strongly agree, while teachers in School 1 replied most often that they agree. Teachers in all three schools most often replied that they agree with the statement "It is easy for my principal to say 'yes' when I make a request." Teachers in Schools 1 and 2 most often replied that they strongly agree with the statement "My principal ensures I received effective feedback about my job performance," while teachers in School 3 most often replied they agree.

For the statement “My principal is effective at reducing duties that interfere with teaching responsibilities,” teachers in Schools 1 and 3 most often indicated they agreed, while teachers in School 2 indicated they strongly agreed with this statement. Teachers in Schools 1 and 2 most often indicated they agreed with the statement that read “My principal is committed to ensuring I have the necessary supplies needed to teach effectively,” while teachers in School 3 indicated they strongly agreed.

Two statements addressed accessibility on the part of the principal. The first statement read “My principal is accessible when I need to see him.” The second statement read “Having access to my principal is important.” For both of these statements the modes for each school were the same. Teachers in Schools 2 and 3 most often indicated they strongly agreed with these two statements while teachers in School 1 most often indicated they agreed.

As with Research Question 1, a chi square analysis was run for each teacher survey question or statement addressing Research Question 2 in which respondents answered using a 5-point Likert scale. Since the majority of teachers surveyed had indicated on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey that the main reason they continued teaching in their current schools was due to the principal’s leadership, it was expected that the majority of respondents would agree or strongly agree with the statements. However, it was also expected that at least one teacher in School 1 would have no opinion and at least one respondent would disagree or strongly disagree. It was also expected that at least two teachers in School 2 would have no opinion and at least two would disagree. Finally, it was expected that at least three teachers from School 3 would have no opinion and at least three would disagree with each statement. Table 6 shows the number of expected and observed response totals for all schools to each

behavioral statement. Table 6 also summarizes the chi square data for the teacher survey questions used to answer Research Question 2.

Table 6

Comparison of Observed and Expected Frequencies of Responses for Research Question 2

Statement	Expected Agree	Observed Agree	Expected Neither	Observed Neither	Expected Disagree	Observed Disagree	χ^2
My principal is supportive of me.	63	73	6	2	6	0	11.75126
My principal is accessible when I need to see him or her.	62	72	6	1	6	1	10.37302
It is very easy for my principal to say yes when I make a request.	63	62	6	8	6	4	2.714286
My principal gives increased attention to beginning teachers as compared to experienced teachers.	62	40	6	35	6	9	87.36742
We have a strong induction program for new teachers.	63	47	6	23	6	5	59.0363
My principal ensures I receive effective feedback about my job performance.	63	73	6	2	6	0	10.46812
My principal is effective at reducing duties that interfere with teaching responsibilities.	63	64	6	5	6	6	9.740846
My principal is committed to ensuring I have the necessary supplies needed to teach effectively.	62	70	6	4	6	0	14.97817
Having access to my principal is important.	62	73	6	1	6	0	12.51483

A critical value of 9.49 was used. With the exception of the statement that read “It is very easy for my principal to say ‘yes’ when I make a request,” each of the statements used to address Research Question 2 had a χ^2 value greater than 9.49. In each of these statements where the value was greater than 9.49, this would indicate that the frequency of responses did not correspond with expected values.

An examination of the data for two of the statements in Table 6 reveals that there were eight statements that yielded χ^2 values greater than 9.49. For the statement “My principal is supportive of me,” 73 teachers indicated that they agreed with this statement. It was anticipated that approximately 63 teachers would agree. For the statement “My principal is accessible when I need to see him or her,” which yielded a value of 10.37302, 10 more teachers agreed than was predicted.

Two statements produced considerably higher values than were anticipated. It was expected that approximately 62 teachers would agree with the statement that read, “My principal gives increased attention to beginning teachers as compared to experienced teachers.” However, only 40 teachers indicated that they agreed with this statement, while 35 indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed, and nine indicated they disagreed. Also, it was expected that 63 teachers would agree with the statement “We have a strong induction program for new teachers.” However, only 47 teachers agreed, while 23 neither agreed nor disagreed.

Three of the final four statements all yielded values above 9.4. The first, “My principal ensures I receive effective feedback,” yielded a value of 10.46812. The statement “My principal is committed to ensuring I have the necessary supplies needed to teach effectively” yielded a value of 14.97817. The statement “Having access to my principal is important” yielded a value of 12.51483. With each of these statements, more

teachers agreed and fewer teachers disagreed than was expected.

It should be noted that for the statement that read “My principal is effective at reducing duties that interfere with teaching responsibilities,” the observed responses were almost exactly what was expected. Only one more teacher agreed with the statement and one less indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed than was anticipated. This statement yielded a value of 9.740846, only slightly above the critical value of 9.49.

Question 5 of the teacher survey asks specifically how the principal demonstrates support for teachers. Fifty-nine teachers provided responses to this question, and in some cases teachers submitted multiple responses. As the responses were examined, different behaviors were mentioned consistently in the data.

Behaviors on the part of principals that made teachers feel supported that were mentioned multiple times included saying thank you to teachers (mentioned twice), lightening the workload (mentioned three times), and providing needed materials for teaching (mentioned three times). Seven teachers indicated their principals provided encouragement and praise. Eight teachers said that their principals listened to them when there were problems and helped to provide guidance on how to solve the problems. Eight teachers also said their principals talked to them and sought out their thinking and feedback on issues.

Ten teachers indicated that their principals had an open door policy or made themselves accessible to the teachers. One teacher said of the principal at School 3, “He is accessible and listens to my concerns. He is present.” Another said, “My principal is very approachable. He treats us like intelligent professionals.” A teacher in School 2 said, “My principal maintains an ‘open door policy.’ This means he allows us to come into his office at any time and voice any concerns or problems I am having.” A teacher

in School 1 said the principal is "...very approachable and he laughs and smiles."

Another teacher in School 1 said, "He has an open door policy."

Along with being accessible or approachable, 18 teachers indicated their principals listened to them and addressed questions and concerns. A teacher in School 1 said the principal showed support "by listening to suggestions and providing critical feedback." Another teacher said,

I feel I can talk with my principal about anything A-Z. If I have a problem needing a solution I can discuss the situation with my principal and seek out guidance from him. If I have good news I want to share or excitement about something that has happened in class or otherwise, I can share it with my principal.

One teacher in School 2 said, "I had a problem with a class last semester and he [the principal] listened to my concerns and helped me deal with it." Another teacher in School 2 said, "He is willing to listen to all concerns and allows me to be involved in the decision making process for my subject area." A teacher in School 3 said the principal "always listens, and carefully helps me come up with a solution to any problem that I may have." Another teacher said the principal "demonstrates his support by listening to my ideas, thoughts, and comments. He asks for our opinions concerning school policies that our school controls.... We know he cares and his actions prove it...." Another teacher in School 3 said, "We may not always agree, but he does listen and validate." Finally, one teacher said the principal "listens to my concerns. My concerns become his concerns. He uses wisdom beyond his age."

Ten teachers indicated their principal demonstrated support by showing interest in them personally. A teacher in School 1 said the principal "interacts with us on a personal

level and is there and supportive when we need [it].” A teacher from School 3 said, “Mr. [name omitted] is always asking how we are doing in our daily life and our professional life. He is aware of who we are as teachers, our strengths and weaknesses, as well as who we are as individuals outside the school setting.” Another said, “He is understanding of occasional personal needs.” Teachers from School 2 also said their principal demonstrated support by showing interest in them personally. A teacher from School 2 said the principal

was also very supportive when there was a health issue in my family this year. I was out more than usual and he was extremely understanding and always asked how things were going. He even came to visit my daughter in the hospital. That meant a lot!

Another teacher from School 2 said,

Not only does he support me in school with behavior issues and teaching but he is very supportive with my family. He knows my family and if I am going through something personal he always asks if there is anything he can do.

A teacher from School 2 also said the principal shows support in our personal and professional lives. When I won Teacher of the Year and made it to the semi-finals – I think he got as teary eyed as I did. He also constantly asks about our kids and makes sure that he offers help in any way he can.

A final area that multiple teachers indicated as a way principals supported teachers was in dealing with student discipline and with parents. Twenty-four teachers submitted comments that fell under this category of demonstrating support. Teachers in School 1 said their principal was “very helpful in dealing with children who are

disrespectful” and “he supports me when discipline problems arise.” A teacher in School 2 said, “He [the principal] backs me with students and parents. [However] if I am wrong, he tells me in a very professional manner.... He offers suggestions in a nonthreatening manner.” Another said, “Discipline referrals are handled appropriately. My principal tries to ensure I am not the cause of the discipline problem.” Another teacher from School 2 said,

I have full confidence that any incident in my classroom that disrupts the education of others or any disrespect from a student will be dealt with if I bring it to [the principal’s] attention. Students don’t like having to face him when they are wrong. If I make a mistake, [the principal] may talk with me about it, but not in a derogatory manner. One time a student refused to write sentences for chewing gum. I had him scrape gum from under desks. The parents were not happy about that, thinking it was unsanitary. They were right. I was wrong. I am very conscientious and [the principal’s] demeanor made me feel like it wasn’t the end of the world.

Teachers in School 3 also said their principal demonstrated support by helping them deal with discipline issues and with parents. The teachers said their principal “supports my discipline decisions in the classroom” and “he backs me up in student decisions and with parents.” Other teachers from School 3 said, “[The principal] backs my classroom management and discipline” and “he is always willing to help, particularly in the area of discipline.”

Principals were asked how they supported their teachers. Principal 1 said he tried to demonstrate support by ensuring teachers had all the resources they needed. He also said that beginning teachers needed help with classroom management and that he tried to

help them learn how to effectively manage students. Principal 1 said, “I try to be a caring leader. I try to be understanding, especially if they are out [of school].... I visit new teachers’ classrooms more and provide them with a mentor. I have also helped them find housing.” Principal 2 said he showed support by not allowing small issues go unresolved because they can get bigger. Principal 2 felt it was important to talk through problems and issues and to communicate with others. He also said he tried to show support by being understanding when a teacher had a sick child at home, was having marital problems, or had suffered the death of a loved one. Principal 2 said he needed to show support to his teachers “24/7.” Principal 3 said that when he first came to the school teachers needed support with classroom management and discipline. However, since all students now have laptops, Principal 3 said the support he provided had shifted to technology rather than discipline.

The supervisors echoed some of what the principals said about support. Supervisor 1 said his principal shows support by backing teachers with student discipline and by providing them the materials they need. Supervisor 2 said Principal 2 gets out of the office and talks with teachers. He listens and gives feedback. He shows excitement for what the teachers are doing. Also, he is very visible in the school. Supervisor 3 said her principal backs teachers “but not to a fault.” He also does nice things for them and communicates with them. He provides them with the needed materials and supplies. According to Supervisor 3, the teachers “don’t need Teacher Appreciation Week to know they are appreciated.”

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asks what specific behaviors on the part of principals encourage collegiality among faculty and staff. To answer this question, the researcher

used responses from teacher survey questions 11 and 25. Teacher survey question 11 was answered using the Likert scale responses of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Question 25 was answered by respondents using text. These survey questions were designed to help answer Research Question 3.

Teacher survey item 11 states, “My principal shares leadership with others in the school.” This statement was used in the teacher survey to address collegiality because research (Brown & Wynn, 2007) has shown that shared leadership and collegiality go hand in hand. Additionally, Michael D. Kocolowski (2010), in his research on shared leadership, pointed out that teams often work better together when leadership is shared. Table 7 shows by school the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation data generated from the responses to survey question 11 that specifically addressed the sharing of leadership by the principal.

Table 7

Measures of the Principal Sharing Leadership with Others

Statement	Respondent	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
My principal shares leadership with others in the school.	School 1	11	4.4545	4.0	4.0	.52223
	School 2	26	4.8462	5.0	5.0	.36795
	School 3	38	4.4737	4.5	5.0	.55687

For purposes of this research, a mean of 4.0 or greater indicated the perception on the part of the teachers completing the survey that leadership was shared by the principal. Based on an examination of the mean for each school detailed in Table 7, the data indicate that teachers believe that their principals share leadership with others in the schools. Each of the three schools had a mean of well over 4.0, with School 2 having the

highest mean of almost 5.0. A mean between 4.0 and 5.0 would indicate that the majority of teachers' responses fell between stating they agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, with the statement "My principal shares leadership with others in the school."

Additionally, by examining the mode for each school in Table 7, one can see the most common responses for this statement. A mode of 5.0 indicated that teachers most often indicated they strongly agreed with a statement. A mode of 4.0 indicated that teachers most often responded that they agreed with the statement. The most common response from the teachers at Schools 2 and 3 was 5.0, or strongly agreed. For School 1 the most common response was 4.0 or agree. Also, the standard deviation for each school in response to the statement about principals sharing leadership was .55687 or less. This would indicate that there was not a great deal of variation between responses to this statement by the teachers at the three schools.

There was only one statement addressing shared leadership on the Teacher Survey Instrument that was answered using Likert scale responses. However, as with Research Questions 1 and 2, a chi square analysis was run for this teacher survey question or statement addressing Research Question 3. Since the majority of teachers surveyed had indicated on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey that the main reason they continued teaching in their current schools was due to the principal's leadership, it was expected that the majority of respondents would agree or strongly agree with the statement. However, it was also expected that at least one teacher in School 1 would have no opinion and at least one respondent would disagree or strongly disagree. It was also expected that at least two teachers in School 2 would have no opinion and at least two would disagree. Finally, it was expected that at least three teachers from School 3 would have no opinion and at least three would disagree with each statement. The

number of expected and observed response totals for all three schools is included in Table 8. This table also summarizes the chi square data for teacher survey question 11 which was used to answer Research Question 3, “In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors encourage collegiality among faculty and staff.” A critical value of 9.49 was used.

Table 8

Comparison of Observed and Expected Frequencies of Responses for Research Question 3

Statement	Expected Agree	Observed Agree	Expected Neither	Observed Neither	Expected Disagree	Observed Disagree	χ^2
My principal shares leadership with others in the school.	63	74	6	1	6	0	12.2863

An examination of the data in Table 8 shows that 11 more teachers than were anticipated agreed that their principal shared leadership with others in the school. Conversely, only one teacher indicated he or she neither agreed nor disagreed and no teacher indicated disagreement with this statement. Because the observed frequencies did not match the expected frequencies, this statement yielded a χ^2 value of 12.2863.

Principals were also asked about how important shared leadership was in promoting teacher retention. Principal 1 said that not all the decisions made about the school were made by the principal. He pointed out that in his school there is a school leadership team that helps make decisions. They also have grade level teams and professional learning communities established within the school. Additionally, Principal 1 said he tries to provide leadership opportunities for the teachers. Principal 2 said that

shared “ownership and leadership are extremely important. I place great value on it.” Principal 2 did point out that he has to watch out “for jealousies” and that he “reminds others whenever you have power you have responsibility.” Principal 3 said that shared leadership is “huge but it’s been a struggle. It was a weakness and it has been tough to let go of the control. The last 2 years I have really concentrated on sharing leadership.”

Question 25 of the teacher survey asks specifically how the principal encourages collegiality among teachers. Fifty-three teachers provided responses to this question, and in some cases teachers submitted multiple responses. As the responses were examined, different behaviors were mentioned consistently in the data.

For example, three teachers responded that their principal treats members of the staff like family. Three others said the principal provides duty free lunch, which allows the teachers time to eat and plan together. Five teachers said their principal treated everyone fairly and that no one was treated as the favorite. This in turn reduced competition between teachers and led to greater collegiality between staff.

Six teachers responded by saying that the principal grouped teachers into teaching teams. According to these six teachers, being able to work together in teaching teams led to greater collegiality. A teacher in School 2 said, “We team together, we plan together, eat lunch together. That builds strong teams.” Another teacher in School 2 said, “We are placed in teams for a group of students and this promotes a sense of connection.”

Another six teachers indicated that the principal promoted professional learning communities, or PLCs. A teacher in School 3 said her principal encouraged collegiality by “promoting PLCs. The demeanor of our meetings...is smooth [and] he [the principal] makes sure that our questions are answered.” A teacher in School 1 said “PLC meetings are a time when the team members get together and [we] can discuss situations...we have

a chance to communicate ideas.”

Twelve teachers indicated the principal encouraged collegiality by arranging or attending social gatherings for those working in the school. According to a teacher at School 1, the principal “...cooks for us” at staff meetings. A teacher in School 2 said, [The principal] and [the assistant principal] have attended weddings, showers, birthdays, baptisms, etc. When a social event happens at this school, most of the school is invited. We enjoy spending time with each other at school and after school. We also celebrate birthdays at school. These are placed on the faculty calendar so we don’t forget. Showers are held in the media center after school and everyone participates from custodial staff to office staff.

Teachers in School 3 said their principal “offers social times and goodie days for teachers” and “we have ‘bring goodies to eat’ opportunities.” Another teacher from School 3 said “He helps make sure we have some ‘social’ time after school. Sometimes this is to celebrate a holiday or an accomplishment for our school. Sometimes it is just for fun.”

Thirteen different teachers said that their principal encouraged collegiality by giving teachers time to meet by subject area or by grade. A teacher in School 3 said, We are encouraged to meet together within our subject areas, teaming areas, and grade areas. One of the most effective ways [the principal] has made these meetings meaningful is that they have an agenda or purpose that we know about in advance and usually he is always present at these meetings or sends...the assistant principal to lead the meetings.

Another teacher echoed this by saying collegiality is encouraged in School 3; the principal was “giving time for collaboration within grade levels and subject areas.” A

teacher in School 2 stated that the principal “gives us time to meet.” Another teacher pointed out that the principal of School 2 provides common planning time to work together.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asks what are some school-based conditions created by principals through their behavior that encourage teachers to remain at their current schools. To answer this question, the researcher used responses from teacher survey questions 22, 26, 27, and 28. Teacher survey question 22 was answered using the Likert scale responses of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Questions 26, 27, and 28 were answered by respondents using text. These survey questions were designed to help answer Research Question 4.

Teacher survey item 22 states, “My principal talks to teachers about what we want the school to be like.” This statement was used in the teacher survey to address school-based conditions created by principals because research (Ingersoll, 2001) has shown that in schools where higher levels of teacher decision making and teacher influence on policy decisions were found, lower turnover rates were also found. Ingersoll (2001) wrote,

The data suggest that improvements in organizational (working) conditions, such as increased support from school administration, reduction of student discipline problems, and enhanced faculty input into school decision-making...would all contribute to lower rates of turnover, thus diminish school staffing problems, and ultimately aid the performance of schools. (p. 525)

Mallory and Melton (2009) also showed that the principal is the primary determinant of working conditions within schools. Additionally, principals who provide teachers with a sense of empowerment by talking to them about their school and how things are done

made major headway in reducing the teacher turnover rate.

Table 9 details survey question 22 that specifically addressed the principal discussing with teachers what they wish for the school to be like. The data in Table 9 show the number of respondents from each of the three schools. This table also shows that mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for the data from each school.

Table 9

Measures of the Principal Talking With Teachers About The School

Statement	Respondent	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.
My principal talks to teachers about what we want the school to be like.	School 1	11	4.1818	4.0	4.0	.75076
	School 2	26	4.3846	4.0	4.0	.63730
	School 3	38	4.4737	5.0	5.0	.95115

For purposes of this research, a mean of 4.0 or greater indicated the perception on the part of the teachers completing the survey that the principal talked to them about what they wanted their school to be like. Based on an examination of the mean for each school in Table 4, the data indicate that teachers believe that their principals do talk with them about how they (the teachers) would want to see their schools operate. Each of the three schools had a mean of over 4.0, with School 3 having the highest mean of 4.4737. A mean between 4.0 and 5.0 would indicate that the majority of teachers' responses fell between stating they agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, with the statement "My principal talks to teachers about what we want the school to be like."

Additionally, by examining the mode for each school in Table 9, one can see the most common responses for this statement. A mode of 5.0 indicated that teachers most often indicated they strongly agreed with a statement. A mode of 4.0 indicated that

teachers most often responded that they agreed with the statement. The most common response from the teachers at Schools 1 and 2 was 4.0, or strongly agree. For School 3 the most common response was 5.0 or agree. Also, the standard deviation for each school in response to the statement about principals sharing leadership was less than 1.0000. This would indicate that there was not a great deal of variation between responses to this statement by the teachers at the three schools.

Only one statement on the Teacher Survey Instrument that was answered using Likert scale responses was used to help answer Research Question 4. However, as with Research Questions 1, 2, and 3, a chi square analysis was run for this teacher survey question or statement addressing Research Question 4. Since the majority of teachers surveyed had indicated on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey that the main reason they continued teaching in their current schools was due to the principal's leadership, it was expected that the majority of respondents would agree or strongly agree with the statement. However, it was also expected that at least one teacher in School 1 would have no opinion and at least one respondent would disagree or strongly disagree. It was also expected that at least two teachers in School 2 would have no opinion and at least two would disagree. Finally, it was expected that at least three teachers from School 3 would have no opinion and at least three would disagree with each statement. The number of expected and observed response totals for all schools is shown in Table 10. Table 10 also summarizes the chi square data for teacher survey question 22 which was used to answer Research Question 4, "What are school-based conditions that principals have created through their behavior that encourage teachers to remain at their current schools?"

Table 10

Observed and Expected Frequencies of Responses to Research Question 4

Statement	Expected Agree	Observed Agree	Expected Neither	Observed Neither	Expected Disagree	Observed Disagree	χ^2
My principal talks to teachers about what we want the school to be like.	63	69	6	3	6	3	6.015152

An examination of the data in Table 10 shows that six more teachers than were anticipated agreed that their principal talked to teachers about what they wanted their school to be like. Conversely, three teachers indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed and three indicated disagreement with this statement. Because the observed frequencies were approximately matched with the expected frequencies, this statement yielded a χ^2 value of 6.015152.

Questions 26 and 27 of the teacher survey instrument were also used to collect data about school-based conditions created by the principal that possibly help lead to reduced teacher turnover. Fifty-eight teachers provided responses to question 26 and 51 teachers provided responses for question 27. As the responses were examined, different behaviors were mentioned consistently in the data.

Question 26 asked, “Are there school-based conditions that encourage teachers to remain and continue teaching at this school?” Four teachers from School 2 said that the students were the reason they continued teaching in their current schools. One teacher wrote, “We have some great kids! But those who are challenged in the area of following the rules are helped along in this area.”

Five more teachers commented that the facilities were the reason they wanted to continue teaching at their current schools. It should be noted that four of those who indicated facilities taught at School 3, which was opened only 10 years ago. However, one teacher from School 2 remarked that while the school itself was old, they did try to keep it clean.

Three teachers indicated they continued teaching because of the disciplined environments in their schools. Another three teachers credited the surrounding communities and the support they received from community members as the reason they continued teaching at their current schools.

Overwhelmingly, the school-based condition that contributed to teachers wanting to continue teaching in their current schools was the other faculty members on staff. This was mentioned 20 different times by teachers at all three schools. A teacher at School 1 said, “The staff members at this school are like a family.” Another teacher from School 1 said, “the other teachers at our school – we are like a family.” A teacher from School 2 said that they had a “close knit faculty and staff.” Another teacher in School 2 said,

Our staff is supportive of each other and we often spend time outside of work together. If anyone is having a personal crisis we know we can count on each other. We go beyond just sending a card or flowers. If a member of our staff has an ill family member we often provide meals for the family or take up money to help out for daily expenses for things like hospital stays. I think our staff responds to a crisis among the staff more like members of a church than just people who work together. When my husband died suddenly last year they brought so much food that I had to tell them not to send any more and they worked together to make sure that my sub had lessons so that I did not have to

worry about lesson plans. I was out for four weeks and was never pressured to come back sooner.

A teacher from School 3 said, “The one thing I love about this school is that every teacher on every hall works together to ensure our students receive every opportunity. [The principal] has been an example to doing things this way.” Another teacher said, “Teachers have close relationships. They are not complainers and do not mind taking a chance on new ideas.” Finally, one teacher said of her fellow teachers, “We are all like a family here. Every teacher in this building will allow you to use anything they have.”

Question 27 of the teacher survey was designed to elicit feedback from teachers about what school-based conditions created by the principal they believed helped lead to lower teacher turnover rates. Question 27 asked, “Of the school-based conditions you mentioned in your previous answer, which ones did your principal create?” Several individual conditions were mentioned by teachers, including up-to-date technology, a climate of respect, a caring and warm environment, and an orderly environment. However, there were some conditions that were mentioned multiple times by teachers at each of the three schools. Four teachers said their principal had created an atmosphere of openness and honesty in the school. Another four teachers said their principal encouraged collaboration and sought an environment where teachers worked together.

The condition that generated the most comments was the atmosphere at the school. Six teachers said their principal created a positive environment or atmosphere. A teacher from School 3 said the principal had “created an environment where everyone feels important and needed in the educational process. Teachers, custodians, administrators, office workers, etc. function as a family.” Another teacher from School 3 said, “He [the principal] helped create the environment which encourages the faculty to

be helpful, positive, and supportive of each other.” A teacher from School 2 said the principal “has a tremendous relationship with the custodial and cafeteria staff and encourages us to do the same. He created this atmosphere of working together for the good of all concerned.” Another teacher said,

[The principal] controls the climate of this school. He is not perfect – none of us are – but for a principal, he and [the assistant principal] are pretty close. A teacher asks for a climate where they [are allowed to] have a say, are respected, and are allowed to teach as they see fit. They [the principal and assistant principal] allow us to do that every day.

Other Thoughts and Data

During the interviews, principals were asked what strategies they personally used to retain teachers. Each of the principals offered varying thoughts about things they did to encourage teachers to continue teaching in their schools. Principal 1 pointed out that he tried to be a “caring leader...I try to be understanding, especially if they [the teachers] have to be out. I haven’t had too many to leave except through retirement.” Principal 2 said he hires the best teachers he can find. Also, he has an open door policy. Principal 2 said he tries to treat everyone the same and also lets them know their families are the most important thing. Principal 3 said he promotes teacher retention by empowering teachers and sharing leadership (even though it is difficult for him personally). According to Principal 3, the teachers in the building “really buy into shared leadership...and they don’t feel overworked.... We also buy them what they need.”

Question 28 was the final question in the teacher survey and was designed to seek feedback on anything not covered previously in the survey. Question 28 asked, “Are there other things your principal does that contribute to the low teacher turnover in your

school that have not been mentioned previously in this survey?” Many descriptors were mentioned by teachers, including the principal “being real,” being a happy person, rarely mad, upset, or sad, welcoming, interested in the faculty members, appreciative, good listener, caring, sensitive to the personal needs of the faculty, and good at communicating. However, there were three areas that drew numerous comments.

Five teachers said their principal allowed them to teach and did not micromanage. A teacher in School 2 said, “He is not a micromanager and lets us be the professionals we were trained to be.” Another teacher said, “He doesn’t micromanage. He lets us do what we are good at. And as long as there isn’t a problem, he leaves us to it.” A teacher in School 3 said, “...The successful principal knows what he has when he comes into our school and allows the teachers to do what we do best.”

Seven teachers said their principal was a genuinely nice or good person and that this contributed to teachers wanting to continue teaching in their schools. A teacher from School 2 described her principal as a good man with strong values and morals. A teacher from School 3 said, “He is personable, approachable, and friendly with everyone in the building.” Another teacher from School 3 said, “He is [a] kind, caring man who understands what teachers are going through and [he] lets you know that.” A teacher from School 1 said, “...he is a nice guy...he is pleasant and nice and that is much better than other principals we have had in the past.”

Seven teachers indicated that the principal treats people with respect and this contributes to the low turnover rate. A teacher in School 3, in response to Question 28, said, “He [the principal] treats everyone with respect...” A teacher in School 1 said “He is a good man that is not mean or hurtful to anyone. He is strong and firm with the children. He tells us when he likes what he sees – teaching and learning.” A teacher in

School 2 said, “[The principal] is just a great guy. He isn’t perfect and I don’t always agree with him, but I respect him. He has earned my respect and I feel respected by him. He treats us as professionals and holds us accountable as professionals.” Finally, another teacher from School 2 said,

I think this covers everything. I know of other middle schools in our county in which teachers are very unhappy and it does stem from the top – administration. I truly hope that this survey can be shared with other principals and possibly make a difference, because the leader of the school does make THE difference. If he/she can develop a rapport of mutual respect with his/her faculty then everyone benefits! It’s the key to a successful school.

Summary

The research design for this study combined aspects of both quantitative and qualitative research into a mixed-methods study. The researcher focused on specific behaviors exhibited by principals that might help lead to positive teacher working conditions and decreased teacher turnover. A significant amount of data was generated by using a teacher survey instrument and by conducting interviews with principals and their supervisors. In total, 75 different teachers from the three participating schools completed the teacher survey. Additionally, data from six different principal and supervisor interviews were collected.

The teacher survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency distribution tables, mean, median, mode, and chi square. Interview data was analyzed by comparing responses from principals and their supervisors to the teacher data generated by the survey. The researcher examined the interview data looking for commonalities that corresponded closely with what teachers said in their survey responses.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the data and a discussion of the results. Additionally, Chapter 5 provides recommendations for all middle school principals who wish to create positive teacher working conditions and reduce teacher turnover in their schools. These recommendations are based on the data collected from the teacher survey instrument and the interviews.

Chapter 5: Study Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In recent years school districts across the United States have faced large rates of teacher turnover according to data from the National Center of Educational Statistics. This has been true in North Carolina as well, and especially in the state's middle schools. Middle schools in North Carolina faced teacher turnover rates approaching 25% each year until the conclusion of the 2007-08 school year (Source - www.ncreportcards.org). Researchers (Angelle, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2006; Liston et al., 2006; Otto & Arnold, 2005) have pointed out that teachers have given varied reasons for vacating their positions but two that were cited frequently were lack of support by the principal and poor working conditions within individual schools.

This study involved examining three middle school principals' behaviors in an effort to pinpoint specific behaviors teachers felt contributed to positive working conditions and to their desire to continue teaching in their current schools. This chapter provides a summary of the findings of this study.

Problem

As recently as 2009, teachers were leaving the teaching profession in large numbers. The data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2010) confirms that teachers, even those who are experienced, are leaving the classroom. According to the NCES (2010), at the conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year, 76,800 teachers who had been teaching between 4 and 9 years left the profession. For the category of teachers who had been teaching between 10 and 19 years, almost 40,000 left the profession at the conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year (NCES, 2010, p. 7).

Teacher migration, defined as teachers transferring or moving from one school to another, is also an issue. Cynthia D. Prince (2002), in her study of the uneven teacher

distribution between high-achieving school districts and districts with large numbers of poor and minority students, pointed out that

Teacher migration – teachers remaining in the profession but relocating to a different school – is also a significant problem, particularly in high-poverty, high-minority, low-achieving schools. As University of Pennsylvania sociologist Richard Ingersoll points out, teacher migration is often de-emphasized because it does not change the overall supply of teachers. However, high rates of teacher migration are disruptive and can adversely affect staff morale, community relationships and school performance. (p. 7)

Teacher turnover causes various issues for school districts. First, teacher turnover is costly. According to the August 2005 issue brief by the Alliance for Excellent Education, a conservative estimate of the cost of recruiting and hiring teachers to replace those leaving the profession is \$2.2 billion annually. As recently as 2008, the cost of teacher turnover in North Carolina approached \$189 million. Second, schools that have high rates of teacher turnover typically have lower student achievement than schools where teacher turnover rates are low (Johnston & Hovda, 2003). Johnston and Hovda (2003) also pointed out that high teacher turnover undermines teacher quality. Solid educators are leaving the profession and are being replaced by “unqualified individuals...hired because state laws and district policies are ignored in the name of meeting immediate needs of schools that appear to face shortages” (p. 42).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the specific behaviors that three middle school principals exhibit and the impact these behaviors have on working conditions and teacher turnover or the teacher attrition rate. The researcher attempted to identify and

categorize specific behaviors that other middle school principals can duplicate that might establish positive working conditions in their schools. By duplicating these behaviors and working to establish positive teacher working conditions, this could possibly help principals as they try to reduce the teacher turnover rates they currently face.

This research study was designed to answer the following questions in regards to the specific behaviors demonstrated by middle school principals that might lead to greater teacher retention:

1. In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors do the principals exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work?
2. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors make teachers feel supported?
3. In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors encourage collegiality among faculty and staff?
4. What are school-based conditions that principals have created through their behavior that encourage teachers to remain at their current schools?

Overview of the Study

The literature review for this study focused on the research on reducing teacher attrition through support among the ranks of teachers just entering the profession; the establishment of collegial atmospheres and relationships with and between teachers, both experienced and novice; special educators' views of what leads to teacher retention; sustaining and supporting experienced teachers so that they desire to remain in the classroom; and principal mistreatment that borders on being abusive. The establishment of positive teacher working conditions and the impact the working conditions have on teacher retention was also highlighted.

The literature review showed that high rates of teacher turnover exist, and especially among beginning teachers (those in their first 5 years of teaching). Additionally, across the wide range of literature concerning teacher turnover, evidence exists that principals are not taking the necessary steps to address the teacher turnover issues their schools are facing. In fact, in many cases, principals are behaving in ways that serve to drive teachers out of schools and out of the profession. Conversely, literature was also reviewed that showed the necessity of sustaining teachers and providing them with support. Also, according to the literature reviewed by the researcher, one way to reduce teacher turnover is to address the working conditions found in individual schools, specifically in regards to the establishment of a collegial atmosphere and positive relationships.

There was no shortage of literature concerning the relationship between school working conditions and teacher turnover. In fact, there is a strong correlation between the working conditions found in schools and the teacher turnover rate in those same schools (Hirsch et al., 2007; Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher participation in decision making (empowerment), the individual school climate, and support by administration, all important components of teacher working conditions, are each statistically associated with the teacher turnover rate (Ingersoll, 2001).

The literature review also established that the one person in an individual school who has the most control over the working conditions in that school is the principal. Mallory and Melton pointed this out in their 2009 work, and also pointed out the relationship between principal behaviors and teacher retention when they wrote, “Principals were a key factor in teacher decisions to remain in the profession.... Behaviors of principals, viewed by teachers as administrative support, or lack thereof,

were related to teacher retention and the principal's role in creating positive working conditions" (p. 5). Teachers in North Carolina seem to agree with these findings, based on the 2008 Teacher Working Conditions Survey, where they cite working conditions and leadership as reasons for continuing to teach in their schools.

This study was designed to examine the behaviors of three North Carolina middle school principals. The three principals and their schools were identified by using data from the 2008 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (available at www.ncteachingconditions.org/08/) and the North Carolina School Report Cards (available at www.ncreportcards.org). To qualify for the study, at least 50% of teachers in the school had to indicate that the reason they continued teaching was because of the school leadership, and specifically the leadership on the part of the principal. Additionally, in order to qualify for the study, the teacher turnover rate in the school had to be 10% or less at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, or it had to be significantly decreased over the previous 4 years.

One school meeting both of the criteria above was selected from each of the three geographic regions of North Carolina. The researcher traveled to each of the three schools to interview the principals. Also, the researcher met with teachers in each school to ask them to participate in the study by completing a 28 question, online survey. Finally, each principal's immediate supervisor, whether it be a middle school director or superintendent, was interviewed. The instrumentation and the data analysis procedures were detailed in Chapters 3 and 4 by the researcher.

Summary and Discussion of Results

To answer the four research questions that guided this study, the researcher conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data that was collected by teachers

completing electronic surveys and through interviews with the principals and their direct supervisors. The findings reveal some things one might expect about principals who are successful in establishing positive teacher working conditions that encourage teachers to continue teaching in their schools. The findings also reveal behaviors that teachers notice and think are important, yet these are things that many principals probably take for granted.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, “In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors does the principal exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work?” In addressing a school atmosphere that contained positive working conditions and promoted teacher retention, the great majority of teachers in each of the three schools felt that their principals had established meaningful relationships, sought to build trust with teachers, gave teachers the freedom to experiment with new teaching strategies, held others accountable, and were uncompromising on what was right for students and the schools. It was expected that a few more teachers would disagree that their principals had done these things. However, the data showed strong agreement amongst teachers in all three schools that their principals behaved in such a way that the teachers felt positively about the strength of relationships, trust, and accountability within the schools.

Several behaviors teachers felt principals displayed emerged from the data from all three schools that helped address Research Question 1. Teachers indicated that their principals followed through on things they (the principals) said they were going to do. Teachers also believed that their principals were able to maintain confidentiality. Teachers in each of the three schools indicated their principals were honest individuals who communicated well with them. Finally, teachers indicated that their principals were

good listeners who would take the time to hear teachers' concerns.

Teachers were also asked to rank specific principal behaviors or behavioral characteristics in terms of how important each was to contributing to a desire to continue teaching in their current schools. Of the 20 behaviors teachers were asked to rank, 12 had rankings where at least 90% of teachers indicated the behaviors were critical or very important in terms of creating a desire to remain at their schools. Teachers indicated that principals, to encourage teachers to continue teaching in their schools, needed to be honest, make good decisions, be supportive of them, be trustworthy, behave ethically, trust them (the teachers) to do their jobs, be accessible to the teachers, establish relationships with the teachers, hold people accountable, be self-motivated, and protect the teachers' time.

It should be pointed out that of the 12 behaviors or behavior characteristics that had at least 90% of teachers say were critical or very important, three of them were related to what is generally considered to be ethical behavior (honesty, trustworthiness, trust in teachers). The teachers indicated they want principals who can be trusted and who can put trust in the teachers to do their jobs.

The five principal behaviors or behavioral characteristics teachers considered to be least important (based on the percentage who said they were critical or very important) in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools were being driven to learn, being visionary, being persistent, carefully taking risks, and valuing research and data. While teachers felt it important that principals display these behaviors, they were not considered to be as important as several other behaviors in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools.

The two behaviors in the bottom five that were most surprising to the researcher

were being visionary and valuing research and data. Principals are often expected to create or have a vision for their schools. In many cases, they are encouraged to work with stakeholders to create their vision. However, a major stakeholder (the teachers) indicated that the principal being visionary is not all that important in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools. This is not to say that the principal having a vision for the school is not important – it simply means that teachers who participated in this study do not feel being visionary is all that necessary to contributing to their desire to remain in their schools.

Also, it was established earlier by reviewing the literature that parents and others base their perceptions of how good or poor schools are on their standardized test scores. It also seems that when discussing how well or how poorly schools are performing, the major determinant in North Carolina is end-of-grade and end-of-course test results. However, teachers in this study said that having their principal value research and data was just not that important in comparison to the other behaviors. Again, this is not to say that valuing research and data is unimportant. Rather, the teachers who participated in this study are saying that a principal valuing research and data is not nearly as important as other things when teachers consider the factors that cause them to want to continue teaching in their current schools.

One behavior that fell just outside of the bottom five behaviors on the list was the sharing of leadership. The review of literature established that teachers feel it is very important, in terms of positive working conditions, that the principal be willing to share leadership. However, the teachers who completed this survey indicated that sharing leadership, while important, was not as important as several other behaviors in terms of encouraging them to continue teaching in their current schools.

Therefore, in answering Research Question 1, which asked, “In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors does the principal exhibit that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work,” the data say the following things. Teachers, when selecting behaviors that promote an atmosphere where teachers want to work, want principals whose behavior they consider to be ethical and honest. They also want to feel supported by their principals. Teachers want their principal to be accessible to them. They want the principal to be trustworthy and willing to put his trust in teachers to do their jobs. Teachers in this study want their time protected and they want their principal to hold others accountable. Teachers in this study also want their principal to establish relationships with them.

Conversely, teachers who participated in this study do not find it as important if their principals are not driven to learn. These teachers also do not find it as important if their principals are not visionary and do not value research and data. Again, this is not to say these teachers do not find these behaviors important – they just do not find them as important as others.

Research Question 2

As mentioned above, one of the things teachers in this study felt was important in terms of encouraging them to stay in their current schools was support by their principal. Also, the literature reviewed earlier by the researcher established that teachers who left their teaching positions, or who left teaching altogether (beginning and experienced teachers alike), often said they did so because they did not feel their principals supported them adequately. Therefore, to try to identify the principal behaviors that teachers feel indicated support, part of the teacher survey was designed to answer Research Question 2, which asked, “In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors make teachers

feel supported?”

Teachers in each of the three schools in this study indicated that their principals were supportive of them. When asked if their principal was supportive, the large majority of teachers in each school either indicated they either agreed or strongly agreed.

There was also strong agreement among teachers in each school that their principals did things that showed support for teachers. The teachers who completed the survey indicated the following about their principals: The principals were accessible to them; the principals easily gave affirmation when teachers made requests; the principals were effective at giving them feedback; overall, the principals were effective at reducing duties that interfere with teaching responsibilities; and the principals were committed to ensuring teachers had needed supplies.

There were two areas that were somewhat surprising. Based on the review of literature, it was expected that each of the three schools would have a strong induction program for its new teachers and that new teachers would get increased support compared to the amount of support more experienced teachers might receive from the principal. These things are common components of the *socialization process* or professional socialization (Angelle, 2006, p. 318) that is so important to beginning teachers. Researchers (Angelle, 2006; Carver, 2003; Liston et al., 2003) pointed to the need for there to be a socialization process for new teachers in which principals seek to build relationships between themselves and the new teachers and the new teachers and more experienced teachers on staff. Through this socialization process, beginning teachers learn about their new organization and they become part of it.

However, teachers in each of the three schools in this study only marginally agreed that their schools had strong induction programs for beginning teachers.

Additionally, teachers again only marginally agreed that the principals gave increased attention to beginning teachers compared to more experienced teachers. One factor that may explain the low levels of agreement concerning strong induction programs and increased amounts of principal attention given to beginning teachers is the number of beginning teachers who completed the survey. Of the 75 teachers completing the survey, only 12 teachers, or 16%, were in their first 5 years of teaching.

Teachers were also asked to provide specific examples of ways their principals provided them with support. In examining the data from each of the three schools, several common behaviors all three principals engaged in emerged. Teachers in each of the three schools said their principals showed support by providing encouragement and praise, by listening to them, and by providing guidance when problems emerged. Also, teachers said their principals talked with them and sought them out to get their feedback or thoughts on issues.

Teachers from each of the three schools agreed that the principals were accessible to them. Teachers used different terms such as *open door policy* and *approachable* to describe their principals' accessibility. Teachers also agreed that their principals listened to them and addressed problems or concerns. Teachers said the principals were always willing to help them out by talking with them about their concerns and working through issues to come up with solutions.

Teachers in each of the three schools talked about how their principals showed support by showing an interest in them personally or outside of school. Teachers described how their principals worked with them and never made them feel guilty if they needed to be out of school because of a sickness or death in their families. They gave examples of principals asking about and showing an interest in teachers' individual

family members, coming to visit sick family members in the hospital, or being proud and excited when teachers achieved individual honors.

The area of support that was mentioned most frequently was in the handling of disciplinary issues and backing teachers when they had issues with parents.

Approximately one-third of teachers who completed the survey commented on this area of support. Teachers pointed out that their principals provided this support both when they (the teachers) disciplined students in class and when student disciplinary incidents were referred to the principal. Teachers in this study indicated that they believed that if students were referred to the office then the principals would handle the situations appropriately. Additionally, teachers indicated principals supported them if there were issues with parents. The teachers talked about how the principals were willing to help them in their dealings with parents and how, even if the teachers were wrong in particular situations, the principals would work with them (the teachers) to resolve the issues.

In answering Research Question 2, “In regards to principal behavior, what specific behaviors make teachers feel supported,” teachers in this study indicated they felt supported when principals provided them with encouragement or praise. They also said they felt supported when principals were accessible to them. The teachers felt principal support when the principals listened to and addressed any concerns teachers had or helped them create solutions to problems the teachers were facing. Teachers felt supported by principals when the principals asked their opinions or thoughts on issues. They also felt supported when principals showed an interest in their families or lives outside of the school day and when the principals worked with them by allowing them to miss school when there was sickness or death of a loved one. Finally, teachers in this study indicated they felt supported when principals worked with them to resolve student

disciplinary issues and backed them when there were issues with parents.

Research Question 3

The review of literature helped show the relationship between the importance of establishing a collegial atmosphere and teacher retention, especially those teachers just beginning their careers. Researchers such as Kardos et al. (2001), Glaser (2003), and Brown and Wynn (2007) all wrote about the importance of establishing an atmosphere of collegial support where all teachers feel a part of the organization and are allowed to collaborate. Additionally, Brown and Wynn (2007) pointed out that shared leadership and collegiality in a school often go hand in hand. To determine levels of shared leadership and collegiality, the researcher wanted to answer Research Question 3 which asked, “In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors encourage collegiality among faculty and staff?”

Teachers in each of the three schools in this study agreed that their principals shared leadership with them. The majority of teachers either indicated they strongly agreed or agreed that their principal shared leadership. In fact, a greater number of teachers than expected agreed their principals shared leadership. Each of the three principals also said they were willing to share leadership with teachers in their schools and each gave specific examples of how leadership was shared. One principal did point out that being willing to let go and share leadership had initially been a struggle for him but was not as difficult as it once was.

Teachers were asked specific ways their principal encouraged collegiality. In examining the data from each of the three schools, several common behaviors all three principals engaged in emerged. Teachers indicated their principals treated everyone fairly and that they did not show favoritism. According to teachers, this helped reduce

competition between teachers and led to greater collegiality. Teachers also said principals grouped them into teaching teams and required them to work and plan together. This in turn helped encourage collegiality. Teachers said that their principals also promoted working together in professional learning communities.

The behavior by principals that helped build collegiality that more teachers mentioned than any other was arranging or attending social gatherings during or after school. Teachers in this study mentioned that their principals arranged or attended wedding or baby showers, birthday parties, holiday celebrations, and other events where teachers were able to sit down together, eat, and socialize with one another.

In answering Research Question 3 which asked, “In regards to principal behavior, which specific behaviors encourage collegiality among faculty and staff,” teachers said their principals encouraged collegiality by creating situations where they worked and socialized together. By working together on academic teams or through PLCs, bonds were formed by teachers. These bonds were also strengthened by participating in celebrations or by sharing meals together. Finally, principals built collegiality by treating everyone fairly and by not showing favoritism to certain teachers.

Research Question 4

It was expected that, while the principals and their behaviors helped contribute to a desire on the part of teachers to continue teaching in their current schools, principals would not be the sole reason many teachers chose to stay. It was expected that in each of the schools in this study there would be school-based conditions that teachers would find appealing. It was anticipated that certain school-based conditions would help encourage teachers to continue teaching at their present schools. To that end, data was collected to help determine which school-based conditions were present that encouraged teachers to

stay, and of these conditions, which ones were created by the principals. Research Question 4 asked, “What school-based conditions have principals created through their behavior that encourage teachers to continue teaching at their schools?”

Researchers (Ingersoll, 2001; Mallory & Melton, 2009) have shown that teacher decision making and input impact the organization or working conditions within schools. Additionally, by talking with teachers about their desires for the school or by including them in decision making, this positively impacts teacher turnover. The great majority of teachers surveyed indicated their principals did talk with them about what they wanted their school to be like. In fact, more teachers than were anticipated indicated their principals talked with them about this topic.

Additionally, teachers in this study pointed out several other school-based conditions that encouraged them to continue teaching in their current schools. Some teachers said they liked their students a great deal, while others said the communities where the schools were located were a reason to stay. However, the school-based condition that generated the most comments was that teachers enjoyed working with the other teachers in the building. Teachers in each of the three participating schools said the other faculty members on staff were one of the reasons they stayed. Teachers in all three schools described their faculties as being “like a family.” They talked about how much they enjoyed working together and how much support faculty members gave one another in good times and in bad.

Several teachers gave their principal credit for the family-like atmosphere or for the general atmosphere within the school. The teachers pointed out that principals encouraged them to work together and to collaborate. The teachers also talked about how their principals treated everyone with respect and made them feel a part of the school,

including the custodians, cafeteria workers, and secretaries. Teachers said their principals created an atmosphere of mutual respect in which everyone is helpful, attitudes are positive, and faculty and staff are supportive of each other.

In answering Research Question 4 which asked, “What school-based conditions have principals created through their behavior that encourage teachers to continue teaching at their schools,” it seems that the principal has a great amount of impact on the general atmosphere of the school. The principal can encourage teachers to respect one another and work together for the good of the students. Also, the principal can encourage everyone, including custodians, cafeteria workers, and office staff, to be a part of the *family* that makes up a school.

Conclusions

Generally, the data from the teacher survey instrument, the interviews with principals, and the interviews with the principals’ direct supervisors indicate there are things these principals do or behaviors they exhibit that lead teachers to want to continue teaching in their schools. Each of these principals has been successful at maintaining a low rate of teacher turnover as compared to the other state’s middle schools or they have, over the past few years, reduced the teacher turnover rate within their schools. It can be concluded that these principals exhibit certain behaviors, based on the analyzed data, that teachers appreciate and that impact several teachers’ decision making in terms of staying or leaving.

It cannot be discounted that several teachers who participated in this study seem to continue teaching in these three schools, not because of the principal or his behaviors, but because of other factors. According to the teachers, these factors include positive relationships with or positive feelings about the students in the school, a positive

viewpoint concerning the community surrounding the school, and especially feelings of goodwill towards and strong relationships with other teachers on staff. Other teachers indicated they had grown up in the communities where their schools are located.

However, many teachers who took part in this study indicated that their principals do exhibit behaviors that positively impact the school working conditions. According to the teachers, this creates in them a desire to want to continue teaching in their current schools. The following section details recommendations for practice for principals who wish to decrease teacher turnover in their school.

Recommendations for Practice

The data revealed that teachers from three different middle schools, each located in a different geographical region of the state, agree that their principals exhibit certain behaviors that lead them to want to continue teaching in their current settings. The data also reveal that there are certain things these principals do or behaviors they exhibit that possibly lead to improved teacher working conditions and reduced rates of teacher turnover. This section contains recommendations for other principals who may want to address working conditions and teacher turnover within their schools. These recommendations are based on what was learned from the three principals who participated in this study.

1. It is recommended that principals seek to establish meaningful relationships with their teachers. Principals should take an interest in their teachers personally. Teachers who participated in the study talked a great deal about the strength of the relationships with their principals and the fact that their principals demonstrated care and concern when it came to teachers dealing with difficult situations in their lives.

2. It is recommended that principals behave ethically. Principals need to treat

teachers fairly and refrain from showing favoritism. They need to communicate honestly with teachers, even when what is being communicated is not necessarily positive.

Principals need to behave ethically by maintaining confidentiality. This builds trust with teachers. Additionally, principals need to show that they trust teachers to do their jobs and should not micromanage them.

3. It is recommended that principals show their support of teachers. Lack of support by the principal has proven to be one of the main reasons teachers leave.

Principals need to take steps to ensure teachers have the necessary supplies needed to teach. They need to protect teachers' time. It is also recommended that principals not question teachers when they need to be out with a sick family member or because of a death in the family. In fact, principals need to inquire about the sick family member or attend a funeral service for an immediate family member of a teacher if possible. To show support, principals especially need to provide appropriate discipline when students are referred to the office and they need to back teachers when the teachers discipline students within the classroom setting. This support should extend to interactions with parents. Support with discipline and when dealing with parents was mentioned most often by teachers completing the survey.

4. It is recommended that principals pay attention to the atmosphere within their schools. Principals need to encourage an atmosphere of cooperation and collegiality by having teachers work and plan together. Respect is an important component of atmosphere according to teachers who participated in this study. Therefore, principals should treat everyone with a due amount of respect, including custodians, cafeteria workers, and office staff. Principals should also attend special events and celebrations in their schools. The three schools in this study all had special events and holiday

celebrations and it was noticed by the teachers that the principals always attended and participated in these occasions. This was especially true of birthday parties and wedding and baby showers. Teachers in this study also saw this as a way the principals showed support for their teachers.

5. It is recommended that principals pay attention to things like data and creating a vision that have been trumpeted as being so important, but not at the expense of the recommendations above. There is a place for all of these things and principals should give each due diligence. While data and vision are important to the operation and improvement of a school, to the teachers who participated in this study there were other things that took greater precedence.

Limitations

This research and its findings were limited by certain factors. The study involved only three middle schools. Two of the three schools were located in rural areas and the other school was located in a small town. Participants were limited to only teachers who taught in these three schools and only to the three principals of these schools and the principals' immediate supervisors. Another limitation to this study was the teacher sample size. Seventy-five teachers chose to participate in this study. School 1 only had 11 teachers who participated out of 17 who completed the consent form. Finally, the data used as criteria for school selection were from the 2008 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and from the 2008 North Carolina School Report Cards.

Implications for Future Research

This study suggests that there are certain behaviors principals can exhibit that lead to the establishment of positive teacher working conditions and reduced rates of teacher turnover. However, these behaviors alone do not, in and of themselves, lead to or create

positive teacher working conditions, and as a byproduct, reduced teacher turnover. There are probably other behaviors that have not been addressed in this study that positively impact working conditions and teacher retention. Future research should focus on other things principals can do to improve working conditions and reduce turnover.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to study teachers from across the state, or even conduct a national study of the impact of principal behaviors on teacher turnover.

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey has become a bi-annual event in North Carolina's public schools. Principals are encouraged to use the results to improve working conditions in their schools. As a result, professional development for principals should be linked to the Working Conditions Survey results and provided for principals. Thus, professional development related to improving teacher working conditions needs to be studied.

Additionally, the North Carolina State Board of Education has now made reducing teacher turnover one of the criteria on the annual principal's evaluation that all North Carolina principals are subject to yearly. Principals are required to establish an annual goal related to decreasing teacher turnover. Thus, it could be beneficial for a longitudinal study to be conducted to determine if having principals establish a goal on the annual principal evaluation instrument actually has any impact on reducing turnover rates in North Carolina's public schools.

Summary

Until recently, teacher turnover has been a large problem, especially in North Carolina's middle schools (Source – www.ncreportcards.org). School officials have encouraged the university system to produce more qualified teaching candidates and principals have most often taken the tact of trying to find and hire more qualified teachers

to fill vacancies created when teachers have had enough and choose to leave. However, in recent years many principals and others have focused their attention on trying to keep the teachers they have on staff rather than trying to encourage the university system to turn out more teachers to replace those who have left. This is an important shift in strategy in the effort to reduce turnover rates.

It has been shown that school working conditions impact teachers' intents to stay or leave. It has also been shown that no one in a school impacts the working conditions as much as the principal. In essence, principals can behave in such a way as to create positive or negative working conditions for teachers. This behavior, whether positive or negative, impacts teacher turnover rates.

This study has attempted to identify specific principal behaviors teachers felt led to positive working conditions and reduced rates of teacher turnover. As North Carolina continues to work towards reducing teacher turnover rates, principals need to pay attention to how they behave and how they treat teachers. Principal behavior seems to be one of the key elements to establishing positive teacher working conditions and reducing teacher turnover.

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Appendix A
Principal Interview Questions

Principal Interview Questions

The following questions were asked of the three individual principals.

1. How do you describe your leadership style? How would your teachers describe your leadership style?
2. What do you do or strategies do you use to retain teachers? What is your role in retaining new teachers?
3. How important is being accessible to teachers?
4. In what areas do your teachers need your support and how do you support them?
5. What strategies do you use to promote positive teacher working conditions?
6. What expectations do you have for your teachers? How does holding teachers to those expectations affect teacher working conditions?
7. Why do you think some teachers leave the profession?
8. What behaviors do you exhibit that lead to greater teacher retention in your school?
9. How important is shared leadership in promoting teacher retention?
10. How are decisions made in this school?
11. How do you build trust with your teachers?
12. How do you establish personal, yet professional, relationships with your teachers?
13. Which of the following would you use to describe yourself?

Visionary
 Cautiously Takes Risks
 Makes Good Decisions
 Values Research and Data
 Solves Problems
 Confident
 Persistent
 Accessible
 Self-motivated
 Honest
 Trustworthy

Ethical
Establishes Meaningful Relationships
Supportive
Provides Effective Feedback
Holds Others Accountable
Protects Time
Shares Leadership
Driven to Learn
Trusting
Sense of humor

14. Are there other terms you would use to describe yourself?

15. Are there other things you have to say about retaining teachers?

Appendix B

Associate Superintendent/Middle School Director Interview Questions

Associate Superintendent/Middle School Director Interview Questions

The following questions were asked of the associate superintendent or middle school director who supervises each of the principals in the study.

1. How would you describe your principal's style of leadership?
2. What does your principal do to retain teachers?
3. How does your principal support the teachers?
4. What does your principal do to create and support positive teacher working conditions?
5. How does your principal build collegiality among faculty and staff?
6. How does your principal build trust with the teachers?
7. Does your principal share decision-making responsibilities?
8. How does your principal establish personal, yet professional relationships with teachers?
9. Which of the following attributes would you use to describe your principal?

Visionary
 Cautiously Takes Risks
 Makes Good Decisions
 Values Research and Data
 Solves Problems
 Confident
 Persistent
 Accessible
 Self-motivated
 Honest
 Trustworthy
 Ethical
 Establishes Meaningful Relationships
 Supportive
 Provides Effective
 Feedback
 Holds Others Accountable
 Protects Time
 Shares Leadership

Driven to Learn
Trusting
Sense of humor

10. Are there school-based conditions created by the principal that encourage teacher retention?
11. What expectations does your principal have for his teachers? How does holding teachers to those expectations affect teacher working conditions?
12. Is there anything you would like to add about your principal?

Appendix C
Teacher Survey

Teacher Survey

The following questions were posted on www.zoomerang.com. All teachers in the three middle schools in the study were asked to complete the questions.

1. I have taught for a total of

- a. 1-5 years
- b. 6-10 years
- c. 11-15 years
- d. 16-20 years
- e. 21-25 years
- f. 26-30 years
- g. 30 plus years

2. I have taught at this particular school for

- a. 1-5 years
- b. 6-10 years
- c. 11-15 years
- d. 16-20 years
- e. 21-25 years
- f. 26-30 years
- g. 30 plus years

3. My principal has established a meaningful relationship with me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. My principal is supportive of me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. If you agreed that your principal is supportive of you, how does he/she demonstrate this support? (Will use a text box for respondents to record their answers)

6. My principal seeks to build trust with those who work in the school.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

7. How does your principal build trust? (a text box will be used to record responses)

8. My principal gives me freedom to try or experiment with new teaching strategies.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

9. My principal is accessible when I need to see him/her.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

10. It is easy for my principal to say yes to me when I make a request.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

11. My principal shares leadership with others in the school.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

12. My principal holds others accountable.

Strongly agree

Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

13. My principal is uncompromising on what is right for our school and students.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

14. My principal views beginning teachers as “finished products” who know enough and do not need additional assistance.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

15. My principal gives increased attention to beginning teachers as compared to experienced teachers.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

16. We have a strong induction program at our school for new teachers.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

17. My principal views end-of-grade test preparation as the most important thing we do.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

18. My principal ensures I receive effective feedback about my job performance.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

19. My principal is effective at reducing duties that interfere with teaching responsibilities.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

20. My principal is committed to ensuring I have the necessary supplies (paper, markers, technology, textbooks, etc.) needed to teach effectively.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

21. Having access to my principal is important.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

22. My principal talks to teachers about what we want the school to be like.

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

23. Rank the following principal behaviors from “Critical” to “Unimportant” in terms of how much they contribute to your desire to continue teaching in this school.

Visionary
 Cautiously Takes Risks
 Makes Good Decisions
 Values Research and Data
 Solves Problems
 Confident
 Persistent
 Accessible
 Self-motivated
 Honest
 Trustworthy
 Ethical
 Establishes Meaningful Relationships
 Supportive
 Provides Effective
 Feedback
 Holds Others Accountable
 Protects Time
 Shares Leadership
 Driven to Learn
 Trusting
 Sense of humor

24. Are there other behaviors your principal exhibits that encourage teachers to continue teaching in this school?
25. How does your principal encourage collegiality among the faculty and staff at your school? (text box)
26. Are there school-based conditions that encourage teachers to remain and continue teaching at this school? (text box)
27. Of the school-based conditions you mentioned in your previous answer, which ones did your principal create?
28. Are there other things your principal does that contribute to the low teacher turnover in your school that have not been mentioned previously in this survey?

Appendix D

Consent Form

A Study of Middle School Principal Behaviors and Their Impact on Teacher Retention
Informed Consent Form
Researcher – Todd Martin
Gardner-Webb University

My signature below indicates that I am giving my consent to participate in the above named study. By agreeing to participation, I understand that I will either be asked to complete an electronic survey or be interviewed by the researcher.

My signature below also indicates that the research project has been fully explained to me by the researcher. I understand the research procedures, and have had the opportunity to ask and have answered any questions I have regarding the research, the results, and the reporting of results. I understand that the research is focused on identifying specific behaviors on the part of the school principal that positively impact teacher working conditions and that lead to greater teacher retention. I understand that the results will be reported in the researcher's dissertation, and that one copy of the completed dissertation will be provided to each participating principal. Additionally, if school personnel desire, the researcher will return to the school to debrief everyone involved at the conclusion of the research.

Teachers

If I am completing an electronic survey, I am certifying by my signature below that its purpose has been explained to me. I also certify that I understand that the survey will be done anonymously, and that no identifying information will be included other than the school where I am currently employed and my years of experience. I also understand that when the research is reported, my school will not be designated by name, but rather will be given a number designation (ex. School 1). I also certify that I am completing the electronic survey of my own free will, and that I do not have to complete the survey should I choose not participate in this research.

Principals/Supervisors

If I am being interviewed, I am certifying by my signature below that its purpose has been explained to me. I certify that I understand that my name will not be used. I also understand that my school will be given a numerical designation (ex. School 2), and that I will be given a numerical designation (ex. Principal 1, Supervisor 3) when research results are reported. I further certify that I am completing this interview of my own free will, and that I do not have to complete the interview should I choose not to participate in this research.

Participant Signature

Date