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Superintendents' Perceptions of Readiness in Regard to Transitioning to the Missouri
Educator Evaluation System to Fulfill the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Request

by

Stacy Hollingsworth

November 1, 2013


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

Superintendents' Perceptions of Readiness in Regard to Transitioning to the Missouri
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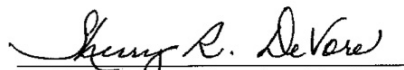
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This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
Lindenwood University, School of Education



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Date




Dr. Terry Reid, Committee Member

November 1, 2013
Date

Declaration of Originality

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

Full Legal Name: Stacy Hollingsworth

Signature  Date: 11/5/13

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As I have often wondered why I decided to pursue this degree, I have been growing. I now know who I am, what I am capable of achieving, and how fortunate I am. I want to thank God for wisdom, peace, and guidance. I wish to thank Dr. Sherry DeVore for her patience and guidance. I would like to also thank Dr. Trey Moeller for his input and ideas, and Dr. Terry Reid for offering this program in my region. To my study buddy and cheerleader, Bobbie Augspurger, thank you; we DID it! A heart felt thank you to each of the Southwest Missouri superintendents who participated in the study; without each of you none of this would have been possible. Perseverance paid off with the help of my many prayer warriors past and present; thanks to each of you. Likewise, thank you to my many editors: Josh Beecham, Andrea Beecham, Sadie Aronson, Camie Schultz, Kathy Hoffman, Mandy Eggleston, Michelle O'Banion, and Angela Resa. To my staff, I am appreciative for the support and encouragement. Lastly, I wish to thank my family for enduring the loss of their mother and wife for many, many months. To my husband Eric, I thank you for your assistance, patience, and love. To my son, Brayden, and my daughter, Brynlee, thank you for your encouragement and understanding. To my parents, Melvin and Glenda, thank you for all the extras you do to help me whenever it is needed. I am truly blessed to have such an amazing family!

Abstract

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has begun the transition to the Missouri Educator Evaluation System devised of seven Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. This study considered superintendents' perceptions of readiness levels for each essential principle in order to understand continued needs to assist the transition. A web-based survey was electronically sent to 92 superintendents in the Southwest Missouri region. Descriptive statistics methods of mode, mean (*M*), and frequency distributions were utilized, determining the two essential principles receiving readiness levels of developing processes and documents were differentiated levels of educator performance and use of measures of student growth. The other five essential principles, implemented with fidelity, were research-based, clear expectations; probationary period; meaningful feedback; evaluator training; and use of evaluation results. Contrasting readiness levels were discovered within many survey statements, implying these principles may not be implemented as consistently as perceived by the mode. These varied readiness levels within the survey statements confirmed the need for additional professional development within each essential principle except probationary periods and meaningful feedback; however, the research emphasized effective feedback was lacking in evaluation systems. Each district should review the feedback to confirm it is effective in promoting teacher growth. The lowest readiness level of incorporating measures of student growth determined by total mean (*M*) rank order needs the most attention with professional development and district planning for the developing of processes and documents for successful implementation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In *A Blueprint for Reform*, President Barack Obama (2010) noted, “We know that from the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents—it is the teacher standing at the front of the classroom,” (p. 5). This emphasis on the value of high-quality teachers reinforced earlier legislation, the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act that stressed the need to help every child be successful in school.

Clearly, NCLB has been a catalyst behind national reforms focusing on teacher quality and accountability over a decade (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Unfortunately, states across the nation have realized that the NCLB mandates were too focused on test results as the only measure for school success (Jennings & Rentner, 2006). NCLB “failed to recognize or reward growth in student learning and did little to elevate the teaching profession or recognize effective teachers” (Duncan, 2011a, para. 2). Effective teachers are vital in every classroom. United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2011b) summarized the need for effective teacher evaluation saying, “We must ensure that every classroom in every school is a place of high expectations and high performance” (para. 4).

The need for reform of NCLB sparked many debates on measurements of teacher effectiveness. Jennings and Rentner (2006) agreed that “the qualifications of teachers are coming under greater scrutiny” (p. 113) due to the effects of NCLB. The Department of Education partnered with states to provide flexibility to help better measure school success. With the additional requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request, school districts around the country were able to continue

the pursuit of school reform with some additional flexibility to allow for local decisions (U. S. Department of Education, 2013a).

In fact, one requirement of the ESEA Flexibility Request was for states to examine current evaluation systems in order to provide fair evaluations that are based on multiple measures. The flexibility request was established to help districts better highlight the student growth generated by the reform efforts that the NCLB did not consider (U. S. Department of Education, 2013d). States were working on improving their teacher evaluation systems to better account for the student and teacher growth measured annually by considering multiple measures.

Missouri superintendents have begun transitioning to a more effective evaluation system. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) (2012b) the system consists of:

research-based practices, clearly defined levels of performance and measuring growth, a probationary period for new educators which provides accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data, measures of student growth in learning, meaningful and timely feedback to educators, standardized and periodic training for evaluators, and evaluation results informing employment decisions.

p. 1)

As a result of Missouri superintendents leading their districts through this transition, changes in educator evaluation have begun. This study investigated perceived readiness levels of superintendents in school districts located in one geographical region in Missouri, determining implementation levels of the essential principles of effective evaluation.

Provided in this chapter were the background and introduction to the research questions and the basis from which each were addressed. This chapter also included definitions of terms as applied to the research questions of this study. Additionally outlined in the conceptual framework, the principles necessary for the most current trends in educator evaluation were considered.

Background of the Study

State educational departments throughout the United States are under intense pressure to confirm that both students and teachers grow in their learning. The beginning assurances were provided through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, wherein the ESEA provided equal access to public education for all children no matter race, gender, ability level, or social economic status (State of Washington, 2013). The original goal to improve educational equity remained the focus, and throughout the years the ESEA has been revised, reauthorized, or renewed by Congress seven times, with the latest being NCLB in 2001 (State of Washington, 2013).

NCLB brought about many changes to education, and the most significant changes were in regard to accountability. One measure of accountability focused on the expectation that each state, school district, and school would move all students to the proficient grade level in both math and reading as measured by the particular state-approved standardized test by the year 2014 (U. S. Department of Education, 2004). This goal allowed states to develop their benchmarks annually to make sure every child was learning (U. S. Department of Education, 2004). These benchmark targets became increasingly challenging as the required scores from the single standardized test moved

closer to the 2014 goal of 100% student proficiency, leaving many schools and districts below the required score (U. S. Department of Education, 2004).

If individual school districts or schools were unable to make the state determined targets, specific accountability measures were predetermined. Schools that failed to meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two consecutive years were determined to need school improvement. After two consecutive years the district not making AYP created school improvement plans that required at least 10% of federal funds to be allocated for professional development (U. S. Department of Education, 2004). The requirements continued to grow in severity as the years of not making AYP continued (New America Foundation, 2013). Unfortunately AYP functioned “as a pass-fail test for the whole school” even if it followed the requirement of the law by making a two-year plan for improvement (Chapman, 2007, p. 26). The mandate did not reach its intended goal with many schools being labeled as needing substantial corrections.

Another change in accountability fostered by NCLB involved teachers. Due to the mandates of NCLB, teachers of core academic subjects were expected to have a bachelor’s degree, full state certification as defined by the state, and to demonstrate competency as defined by the state (U. S. Department of Education, 2004). The reasoning behind this mandate was noble: make sure low-income and minority schools had qualified teachers at the same rate as other schools. This requirement added additional stress and burdens on rural and poverty-stricken school districts (Jennings & Rentner, 2006). Additionally, each state had some flexibility to determine exactly what characteristics a quality teacher possessed (U. S. Department of Education, 2013a). The

mandate did not meet its intended goal, but it did produce the catalyst necessary for continued school reform for teacher quality (U. S. Department of Education, 2010).

Nationally, the NCLB law emphasized the need to close achievement gaps and increased accountability measures to ensure all students had success in public education; however, NCLB fell short of certain considerations that resulted in many struggles for schools, districts, and even states. The “one-size-fits-all prescriptive provisions” (Taber, 2013, para. 3) failed students, teachers, schools, districts and states. The rigorous progression of student achievement annually caused many states to change the standard of measurement from the state standardized test, often lowering the standards for student success in an attempt to keep up with the new mandates. Even though states, districts, and schools worked diligently under the NCLB measures, many schools were unable to keep up with the rigorous, required student achievement scores dictated solely from the standardized test forcing them to not meet AYP (Jennings & Rentner, 2006).

Another unintended issue arose from the high stakes measurement of one standardized test score—schools narrowed their curriculum. Oftentimes schools increased the amount of time allotted for the teaching of math and reading in a scheduled day, resulting in fewer scheduled breaks, decreased social science and science curriculum, and less exposure to fine arts (Chapman, 2007). Likewise, the emphasis of the test score created the focus of the teacher, school, and district to shift. No longer was the focus on the actual student but on a single test score. The NCLB mandate did not consider the individual ability of the student, the learning growth of the student for the year, or even the learning gains the student achieved as a result of the teacher’s efforts;

only one standardized test score mattered at the end of the entire year's efforts (Chapman, 2007).

After a decade of NCLB, many politicians and educators alike were calling for relief from the unobtainable mandates. Congress was not getting further than discussions, states were receiving more labeled schools, and teachers continued to help students learn. Finally, four years after NCLB was due to be rewritten, a plan was released. Even President Barrack Obama expressed the need for relief from the mandates by introducing the plan saying:

To help states, districts and schools that are ready to move forward with education reform, our administration will provide flexibility from the law in exchange for a real commitment to undertake change. The purpose is not to give states and districts a reprieve from accountability, but rather to unleash energy to improve our schools at the local level. (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2011, para. 3)

Thus the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request was announced to the nation.

The ESEA Flexibility Request offered an alternative to some of the mandates of NCLB. If states were willing to continue down the path of true educational reform to support effective classroom instruction and school leadership, this waiver would replace the law. The schools, districts, and states were still expected to close achievement gaps (U. S. Department of Education, 2013a). Likewise the ESEA Flexibility Request required assurances that all students be college or career ready upon graduation from high school (U. S. Department of Education, 2013c). Finally, states had to agree to transition

to a newly developed differentiated accountability system (U. S. Department of Education, 2013a). Hence, the need emerged for states to develop a more effective teacher evaluation system.

Conceptual Framework

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) considered many bodies of research and theory to determine effective evaluation principles (MODESE, 2012d). This research distinguished the essential principles for effective evaluation: research-based practices, clearly differentiated levels of performance that measures growth, a probationary period for new educators, measures of student growth in learning, meaningful feedback for educator growth, standardized training for evaluators, and evaluation results informing employment decisions (MODESE, 2012b). In fact throughout the recent history of teacher evaluation, the process of the evaluation has evolved based upon current research and best practices. Midway through the twentieth century a researcher actually asked teachers about evaluation practices. In the article, “Teacher Look at Supervision,” Whitehead (1952) explained teacher perceptions of six broad areas of the evaluation process. Whitehead (1952) expressed a concern that “administrators should pay more attention to the chief aim of education—effective teaching” (p. 1106), thus begun the pursuit of an evaluation tool that would effectively evaluate the observation of the practice of teaching.

A model based on classroom observations and supervisory practices in hospitals emerged. In *Clinical Supervision: Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* Goldhammer (1969) developed a five-phase process to engage both teachers and the supervisor in reflective discussions about job performance. The five-phases

Goldhammer (1969) developed were preobservation conference, classroom observation, supervision conference, analysis, supervision conference, and analysis of the analysis. Unfortunately, Goldhammer's (1969) model that was meant for observing interactions between teacher and student for reflective conversations were reduced to mere steps to follow in a process. The need for reflection and meaningful conversations about observations were two issues considered then and still currently addressed in evaluation systems.

In the 1980s, Hunter emerged, influencing not only lesson design but also processes for evaluation. To begin with, Hunter (1980) highlighted the need for a process of common language for instruction. In order for this common language to be understood by all stakeholders, professional development had to be designed. Hunter (1980) also identified many reasons for conferencing, including the following:

- To identify, label, and explain instructional behaviors related to research
- To encourage teachers to consider alternative approaches that are aligned to their style of teaching
- To help teachers identify components of lessons that were not as effective as they hoped
- To identify and describe less effective aspects of teaching that were not evident to the teacher
- To promote the continued growth of excellent teachers
- To evaluate what has occurred in and resulted from a series of instructional conferences supportable by objective evidence rather than based on subjective opinion (pp. 409- 412)

The reasons for conferencing Hunter expressed are still valid; many of these conferences focused on developing and growing the teacher, which is a current focus for evaluation systems.

Additional researchers continued to focus on teacher needs. Glickman (2002) expressed the need for development in supervision, expressing the goal of supervision was to foster collaboration and teacher control. Likewise Glatthorn (1997) believed that differentiated supervision was necessary to best support the professionalism of teachers. Glatthorn (1997) defined differentiated supervision as a process that “provides teachers with options about the kinds of supervisory and evaluative services they receive” (p. 3). Glatthorn (1997) expressed the need for control and choice within the process of evaluation for teachers. This need was deemed relevant for teacher collaboration, teacher choice, teacher growth, and teacher control in professional development.

In the 1990s, the work of Danielson and her work with the Educational Testing Service contributed to the relevance of teacher evaluation in order to develop a framework of teaching. Danielson (2007) focused on measuring teacher competence, utilizing 76 elements of quality teaching divided into four domains. This framework for teaching was “based on important assumptions about what is important for students to learn, the nature of learning and how to promote it, the purposeful nature of teaching, and the nature of professionalism” (Danielson, 2007, p. 25). Student learning, professionalism, and purpose were important focuses of a quality evaluation system based on Danielson’s findings.

With specified teacher qualities to be evaluated, many evaluation systems focused on performance-based standards. In Missouri, the Performance-Based Teacher

Evaluation (PBTE) was created for use in 1999 (MODESE, 2012f) in response to the Missouri statute 168.128 RSMo. This statute required a comprehensive performance-based system to be adopted but left Missouri districts with the flexibility to create their own evaluation system while offering suggestions for procedures. The following suggestions were stated in Section 168.128:

The board of education of each school district shall maintain records showing periods of service, dates of appointment, and other necessary information for the enforcement of section 168.102 to 168.130. In addition, the board of education of each school district shall cause a comprehensive performance-based evaluation for each teacher employed by the district. Such evaluation shall be ongoing and of sufficient specificity and frequency to provide for demonstrated standards of competency and academic ability. All evaluations shall be maintained in the teacher's personnel file at the office of the board of education. A copy of each evaluation shall be provided to the teacher and appropriate administrator. The State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall provide suggested procedures for such an evaluation. (L. 1969 p.2 75§1 68.114, A.L. 1983 H.B. 38 & 783)

Likewise, the principal evaluation, Performance-Based Principal Evaluation (PBPE), was created in 2003 (MODESE, 2012f) in response to the statute.

Nevertheless, teacher evaluation continued to be evaluated for quality. The Widget Effect study explored teacher evaluation, explaining (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009):

The failure of evaluation systems to provide accurate and credible information about individual teacher's instructional performance sustains and reinforces a phenomenon that we have come to call the Widget Effect. The Widget Effect describes the tendency of school districts to assume classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher. This decades-old fallacy fosters an environment in which teachers cease to be understood as individual professionals, but rather as interchangeable parts. In its denial of individual strengths and weaknesses, it is deeply disrespectful to teachers; in its indifference to instructional effectiveness, it gambles with the lives of students. (p. 4)

Although The Widget Effect highlighted flaws in the teacher evaluation system, it emphasized the desire for an evaluation system to provide accurate information about teachers. This desire for accurate information for all individual teachers embodied the movement toward the development of new evaluation systems.

In the development of the Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES), the MODESE considered the work of Marzano, Hattie, and Lemov in order to help teachers improve student learning. Reference resources were developed that linked the importance of each researcher's work with the MEES. Consequently, Marzano (2007) focused on the instructional strategies that produce the largest student gains. These strategies were included within the MEES in order for teacher choice to promote student learning. Likewise, Hattie (2009) considered the factors that improve learning and ranked them. The most important factors Hattie (2009) identified were feedback, a student's prior cognitive ability, and trust of the teacher. Each of these factors were embedded into the MEES as a tool to help teachers. Lastly, the work of Lemov (2010)

concentrated on the techniques that successful teachers utilize in the classroom. Each of the 49 techniques that great teachers used was also referenced within the MEES to help teachers grow in the profession.

Statement of the Problem

With the creation of the ESEA in 1965, Congress had begun the process of school reform in order to help reach all students. Throughout the years the ESEA had been revised seven times; the latest reauthorization being the NCLB Act (U. S. Department of Education, 2013c). Unfortunately, this revision's good intentions brought about many negative consequences. Jennings and Rentner (2006) discovered some unintended consequences, recognizing that NCLB had created narrowed curriculum with extreme focus on math and reading, had not been funded adequately to be implemented successfully, and had yet to show test score gains to effectively help all children become proficient. It was these unintended consequences that arose from placing all school systems in America under the same template from NCLB that fueled the need for flexibility.

Unfortunately a decade later, Congress stalled any bill to reform NCLB from moving forward. This political inaction caused the Obama administration to further consider the restraints of NCLB, and the Obama administration provided "a process for states to seek relief from key provisions of the law" (U. S. Department of Education, 2011, para. 1). The answer to the restraints of NCLB the Obama administration created was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request, which exempts states from some NCLB requirements (U. S. Department of Education, 2013b). This request allowed states the opportunity to identify struggling schools, to direct

resources to struggling schools more efficiently, and to recognize exemplary schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2011). This request allowed states flexibility with accountability and educator evaluation systems (U. S Department of Education, 2011).

After the states learned the required criteria for the ESEA Flexibility Request, each state had the challenge of designing and submitting a research-based plan in order to guarantee further strides in student achievement (U. S. Department of Education, 2013c). Then, on June 29, 2012 the state of Missouri's ESEA Flexibility Request was accepted, and the MODESE had much ground to cover in regard to implementing a new evaluation system (MODESE, 2012e).

The new evaluation system was scheduled to be in place by the 2014 school year, with some districts volunteering to pilot the evaluation system during the 2012-2013 school year (MODESE, 2013b). The MODESE has provided many webinars and training dates to assist districts with the transition to the new system; however, individual districts were not all coming from the same evaluation system that was currently in place. Districts are in varied degrees of implementation of the new system simply based on the structure of their current system. Where do superintendents of Southwest Missouri perceive their districts are in regard to readiness for the transition to the MEES?

Purpose of the study

With this transition to the MEES, districts are faced with many challenges. This study assessed the current readiness levels of one geographical region in Missouri to determine the next necessary steps for superintendents. The study also gave educators a clearer picture of assurance—allowing them to better understand the readiness levels in general of one geographical region of Missouri districts for each of the essential

principles of effective evaluation. With any change comes fear, so this assurance for educators helped clarify some change factors and allowed for concrete understandings, which provide quicker acceptance of this new evaluation system. For universities and professional development centers, this study may have assisted in their planning for additional trainings. Additionally, the focus of this study allowed descriptive data for future research projects focusing on the MEES. Lastly, the findings of this study could be used to guide district level decision-making in regard to those principles found to be less ready for the transition.

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating research-based practices into instruction?
2. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to differentiating clearly defined levels of performance and measuring growth?
3. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to implementing a probationary period for new educators, providing accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data?
4. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating measures of student growth in learning in the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?
5. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to ongoing, meaningful, and timely feedback to educators provided by the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?

6. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to standardized and periodic training for evaluators to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable?

7. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to the evaluation results informing employment determinations, decisions, and policy?

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined:

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Legislation that “emphasizes equal access to education and establishes high standards and accountability. The law authorizes federally funded education programs that are administered by the states. In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind Act” (State of Washington, 2013, para. 1).

Elementary and Secondary Flexibility Request. A waiver that allows states “to request flexibility regarding specific requirements of the NCLB Act of 2001 in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013b, para. 1).

Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. The foundation of an effective evaluation system that contained research-based principles the MODESE (2012b) determined will provide growth and learning through observable and measureable criteria, resulting in effective teaching which contributes to improved student performance.

Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES). The evaluation system for Missouri educators developed in response to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Request. This evaluation system focused on formative development of each educator and was founded on the belief that improving educator practice improves student performance (MODESE, 2013b).

Performance-based Teacher Evaluation (PBTE). An evaluation instrument “designed to measure the teacher's knowledge of effective teaching techniques so that students can achieve at higher levels” (MODESE, 2011, p. 5).

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations were identified in this study:

Sample demographics. The sample demographics of this study focused on the superintendents in school districts located in the Southwest region of Missouri. All superintendents in school districts located in the Southwest region in Missouri were invited to participate. Email addresses were obtained from the MODESE’s (2013) Missouri’s School Directory. Missouri superintendents in other regions of the state were not included in the study; therefore, the return rate may not distinguish the complete representation of superintendents’ perceptions.

The following assumptions were accepted:

Survey instrument. The researcher-generated survey statements based on the MODESE’s (2012b) Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. It was assumed the participants understood the survey statements. It is also assumed responses from the participants were honest and without bias.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the existing research concerning educator evaluation. As Missouri transitions to the MEES, the results of this study may be utilized to form district level policy. Specifics regarding the standardized and periodic training for evaluators to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable were reviewed and may serve to inform educators of the importance of systemic training. Equally important, this study reiterates the value of effective feedback, a critical component of an evaluation system. Furthermore, this study recorded readiness levels, illustrating the varied levels on specific essential principles of effective evaluation. The conclusions based on the findings of this study will aid educators in planning and implementing effective professional development activities in an effort to fully understand the MEES.

Summary

With the approval of the ESEA Flexibility Request, Missouri had more flexibility in regard to federal reporting requirements than was offered with NCLB, which initiated a need for a new educator evaluation system. This evaluation system was designed by the MODESE to better highlight the growth educators achieve annually in order to meet one of the federal requirements within ESEA Flexibility Request. The development of the essential principles of effective evaluation created questions as to where Missouri school districts were in regard to readiness for this new evaluation system, the MEES.

Therefore, a survey was created in which the essential principles of effective evaluation were detailed to determine superintendents' perceptions of the readiness levels for the transition to the MEES. The information gained will attempt to fill the gaps of uncertainty moving forward with this transition. Additionally, the findings may serve to

increase information to assist in future professional development determinations. Equally important, the collection of data and subsequent analysis may yield insights that will bring about changes in current practices, potential shifts in thinking that need to be introduced into the district culture, and necessary trainings to prepare staff for the transition.

In Chapter Two, the literature review was detailed. The main topics included the purpose of evaluation, flaws in evaluation systems, clear expectations, differentiated performance levels, probationary period, student performance and growth measures, meaningful feedback, evaluator training, and use of evaluation results. An explanation of the methodology specific to this study was provided in Chapter Three. Next, an analysis of data was detailed in Chapter Four. Finally, the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research were presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

In compliance with the ESEA Flexibility Request, Missouri addressed principle 3, Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership, with guidelines for a new state evaluation system. The journey of implementation of this new evaluation system guidelines required superintendents to lead this important transition. What readiness levels were perceived by superintendents in school districts located in one geographical region in Missouri when transitioning to the guidelines for a new evaluation system?

As Missouri districts make the transition from one evaluation system to another, it is important to reflect, measure, and train stakeholders in order to make the transition smooth. The MODESE had to consider the purpose for educator evaluations and the flaws in the current evaluation system. Likewise, teacher effectiveness had to have a clear definition, shared with all districts. Clear expectations, differentiated performance levels, student performance measures, feedback, and evaluator training were deemed as essential principles of an effective evaluation system (MODESE, 2012b). Additionally, a probationary period for new educators and administrators and the use of evaluation results finished Missouri's determination of essential principles of an effective evaluation system (MODESE, 2012b).

For this study, the purpose for evaluation systems was explored, followed by existing flaws in a performance based evaluation system. Although there were many different models for evaluation systems available for reference, only the seven Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation were studied because the MODESE had already made this determination of criteria.

Purpose of Evaluation

Under the ESEA Flexibility Waiver, states had the “flexibility to improve evaluation systems so that they provide meaningful indicators of effectiveness and support teachers and leaders by considering both student growth and multiple measures of professional practices” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p. 1). This explanation involving the ESEA Flexibility Waiver provided states with a general defined expectation for teacher evaluation. It was then each state’s responsibility to determine the specific “meaningful indicators of effectiveness and support” (U. S. Department of Education, 2013d, p. 1).

Missouri’s Flexibility Waiver Request (MODESE, 2012e) addressed the specifics of state Senate Bill 291 that had passed in June 2010. The specifics included:

...directing school districts to adopt teaching standards which were to include the following elements: students actively participate and are successful in the learning process; various forms of assessment are used to monitor and manage student learning; the teacher is prepared and knowledgeable of the content and effectively maintains students’ on-task behavior; the teacher uses professional communication and interaction with the school community; the teacher keeps current on instructional knowledge and seeks and explores changes in teaching behaviors that will improve student performance; and the teacher acts as a responsible professional in the overall mission of the school. (p. 104)

With the state’s adoption of these teaching standards, Missouri had begun the transition from the Performance Based Teacher Evaluation (PBTE) process to the MEES.

A transition from one evaluation system to another requires clear understanding of the goals and vision of the organization. Marzano (2012) explained the importance of clearly understanding the purpose of the evaluation process, “When measurement is the primary purpose, a small set of elements is sufficient to determine a teacher’s skill in the classroom” (p. 19). Marshall (2009) added, “evaluation focuses on the process of teaching, not the result” (p. 36). However, measurement was no longer the purpose of evaluation with the adoption of Senate Bill 291: Missouri had determined that development of teachers was the purpose of evaluation as indicated by the additional teacher standards (MODESE, 2013e). Therefore, Missouri had to be sure to clearly express the purpose of the MEES.

Many researchers share similar definitions regarding the purpose of evaluation. In fact, *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching*, defined the purpose of supervision as “the enhancement of teachers’ pedagogical skills with the ultimate goal of enhancing student achievement” (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011, p. 2). The MODESE (2013b) agreed with this purpose, focusing on teacher growth connected to student achievement evidence. Likewise, Glickman (2002) considered teacher development essential in evaluation. Glickman (2002) expressed the need to have educators collaborate to share knowledge. Expansion on the need for both teacher and student growth to be considered in the evaluation was discussed by Danielson and McGreal (2000), expressing a need for a balanced system, “examining teaching practices for the skill teachers demonstrate and considering the degree of student learning they produce” (p. 44).

These views are reinforced when considering the complexity of teaching. Teachers desire the need for development each year. No teacher begins or continues in education completely competent. Development of individual talents and strengths are deemed necessary for continued growth in the profession. Simon (2012) explained, “Good teachers are not found through some magical recruitment pipeline. They are made, over time” (p. 59). This belief that no educator ever finishes growing is necessary for true understanding of the purpose of evaluation. Growth along the path of expertise provides all educators avenues for continued improvement.

If the purpose of evaluation is to develop teacher expertise to enhance student achievement, then commonalities must be consistently present. Marzano et al. (2011) reinforced that certain conditions must be met in order for expertise to be developed in a teacher. To begin with, “a well- articulated knowledge base for teaching must be established for teachers” (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 4). Teachers who consistently demonstrate effective pedagogy in the classroom help students achieve (Danielson, 2007).

Examples of effective pedagogy cover multiple frameworks of teaching (Danielson, 2007). Hence, continued growth focuses on selecting additional components of pedagogy in order to broaden teacher expertise. For example, if a teacher has strong classroom management pedagogy expertise, then the teacher shifts the focus of the evaluation to a different framework pedagogy for continued growth (Marzano et al., 2011).

Additionally, evaluations that develop teacher expertise focus on the practice of the pedagogy skill to be evaluated and quality feedback (Danielson, 2007). The key to

developing this condition is the focused, intentional strategies for both feedback and practice (Marzano et al., 2011). A teacher utilizing focused feedback over a period of time gains knowledge on that specific strategy. Likewise, “feedback that involves too many elements or is too broad has little influence” (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 7) for expertise growth. Likewise, focused practice requires teacher selection of the specific strategy in advance for the feedback to grow the expertise level of the teacher.

This focused practice merges with the focused feedback leads naturally to another condition for expertise growth as “opportunities to observe and discuss expertise” (Marzano et al., 2011, p.7). Observations describe what is seen in the classroom and interprets what had been seen based on judgments (Glickman, 2002). In order for evaluations to develop teacher expertise, multiple observations and discussions are completed. These interactions occur consistently and often, emphasizing the specific strategy the teacher is developing. These multiple observation snapshots allow discussion with fellow teachers and evaluators alike. In order for teachers to completely understand the specific strategies, “clear criteria and a plan for success” (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 4) have to be in place, answering questions for teachers. Novice to experienced teachers need a common, understandable scale of what the specific strategy looks like in order for deep discussion and relevant feedback to occur (Danielson, 2007).

Lastly, teachers are motivated by “recognition of expertise” (Marzano et al., 2011, p. 8). Praise and documentation noting recognition for focused growth in expertise on the focused, specified strategy aids the teacher’s internal motivation. Mielke and Frontier (2012) added, “allowing teachers to generate data about their own teaching, identify their own areas of focus, and establish their own improvement goals can increase teacher

motivation and engagement” (p. 13). Utilizing all the conditions together provides teachers with the direction needed to develop additional teacher expertise.

Flaws in Current Evaluation Systems

If the purpose of evaluation is “to grow great teachers to drive student excellence, the traditional model has failed” (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012, p. 29). In fact many flaws have surfaced with teacher evaluation systems. One such flaw focuses on the assumption that “if we grade our teachers in a truly comprehensive way, we’ll drive student learning” (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012, p. 28). Comprehensive checklists for teachers requires observations and discussions to be broad and general. Simply adding evaluation criteria with no other changes proves incapable of increasing student achievement (Marzano et al., 2011). The evaluation system of simply measuring a teacher on a standardized scale to gain a score to prove success creates inaccuracies. Focusing a large amount of effort on scale scores does not increase student achievement (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012).

Instead, this assumption is proven faulty when teachers focus on improvement and growth, not scores (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012). Besides the small number of observed evaluation criteria, the actual scored evaluation criteria is often outdated and limited (Danielson and McGreal, 2000). Much research has been conducted in the past 25 years that has development additional pedagogy for teachers. Danielson and McGreal (2000) explained, “Education is built around a conception of practice based on current and emerging research findings; as those findings suggest new approaches, pedagogical practices must also move forward” (p. 3). This flaw is addressed in the MEES by narrowing the focus of the evaluation to a few pedagogy strategies.

Another flaw in evaluation systems is present due to unclear criteria. Oftentimes individual teachers view what constitutes good teaching differently. There are few shared values within the building and only assumptions about good teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). There is never a “common language to describe teaching” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 4) and that makes professional conversations about observation difficult and inefficient. This flaw is addressed in the MEES by establishing rubrics of research-based practices, allowing for all educators to have access to a menu of multiple components.

In addition to unclear criteria, many evaluation systems allow teachers little to no choice (Marzano et al., 2011). When the evaluator is viewed as the formal authority treating teachers as “deskilled workers following prescriptive mandates” (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1990, p. 444), teachers are not considered colleagues actively contributing to improved student achievement. This flaw is addressed in the MEES by providing each teacher choice and ownership in the process of selecting areas of growth and pieces of evidence that support the growth.

In order to eliminate many common flaws in teacher evaluation, Missouri legislation provides additional criteria for evaluation systems. Senate Bill 291 aided in strengthening teacher evaluation systems. The bill directed school districts to adopt teaching standards that include several proven practices. These practices link performance behaviors to research about “how student learning improves” (MODESE, 2012a, slide 8) and creates seven essential principles of an effective evaluation system.

Clear Expectations

One essential principle for effective evaluation is the use of well-defined, research-based practices. As described by the MODESE (2012a), this principle “measures educator performance against research-based, proven practices associated with the improvements of student performance” (slide 6). Teacher practices observed must be clearly articulated, research-based, and proven effective in improving student learning. Additionally the clear language reduces subjectivity among individuals and provides clear direction for improvement (MODESE, 2012b).

One practice listed in the bill clearly states the expectation that “students actively participate and are active in the learning process” (MODESE, 2013e, p. 1). Cooperative learning is one research-based, proven teaching method that relies on student collaboration and active participation to meet this expectation. This research-based, proven practice expands and improves student learning through social interaction (Marzano, 2007).

In cooperative learning students actively listen to other students and talk through the learning material. Cooperative learning also increases motivation because of the responsibilities the students develop between one another (Roseth, Johnson, & Johnson, 2008). This method increases self-esteem and attitudes towards school (Dean et al., 2012). In order to keep students actively engaged in the lesson, the activities challenge and encourage “nonroutine thinking” (Danielson, 2007, p. 83). Just as cooperative learning increases self-esteem, motivation, and learning in students, it can also be applied to the MEES in order to help teachers grow. The collaboration and clearly expressed direction for improvement found in cooperative learning are also found within the

principle of clear expectations to measure teacher performance of research-based proven practices.

Another example of a proven practice is the use of varied assessments.

Assessment types included standardized, authentic, and locally developed. Standardized testing provide strong evidence of student knowledge of a specific content area.

However, these summative assessments measure growth only if the results are compared to the same student's results on previous tests over the same content area (Goe, 2010). A second type of assessment, formative assessments, helps teachers document student growth and recognize students who are in need of additional support. The use of these frequent assessments has been found to positively relate to achievement levels of several content areas at all academic stages (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

Another type of assessment utilized to show student growth are authentic assessments that include writing samples, portfolios, or other performance-based work. These performance assessments require that students create proof of academic ability. Using both performance assessments and standardized tests enables students to focus on general and specific skills (Marzano & Toth, 2013). Lastly, common assessments, or locally based assessments provide evidence of student improvement. Examples of locally based assessments are tests created by teachers, district-wide assessments, or specific content area tests. Each type of this practice provides clear expectations of student growth and evidence that research-based proven practices increase student learning with assessments that are consistent, accurate, and meaningful (O'Connor, 2007).

Teacher preparation and knowledge of content area is another research-based practice stated in the bill. This standard also includes the teacher's ability to understand

motivation and behavior that encourages “active engagement in learning, positive social interaction, and self-motivation” (MODESE, 2012d, p. 80). Indeed the teacher’s preparation establishes affected student learning. Effective classroom procedures allow “achievement to take place” (Wong & Wong, 2009, p. 169). In fact learning occurs only when students are “actively engaged and in control of their own learning” (Wong & Wong, 2009, p. 167). Therefore, motivation and behavior are essential for effective teaching because a teacher’s level of subject-area expertise is strongly correlated with the students’ achievement levels (Goe et al., 2008).

Yet another vital practice is the use of professional communication and interaction in the school community. A quality indicator of effective communication is that teachers exemplify effective communication techniques with students, parents, and colleagues (MODESE, 2012d). These techniques include nonverbal, verbal, and media communication. The individual criteria for this standard states that teachers should ask questions at the same rate and respond to incorrect answers in the same style to both low-expectancy students and high-expectancy students. Another quality indicator is that teachers must be sensitive to “culture, gender, intellectual, and physical differences” (MODESE, 2012d, p. 1). Teachers utilize techniques to cultivate student engagement and to build an accepting classroom environment. Another standard of communication includes clear communication. Teachers clearly communicate with all students, parents, and colleagues in order to achieve their goals. For example, in the classroom the rubric must be clearly stated so that students can see the specific levels of performance that relate to the overall goal of the lesson (MODESE, 2012d). The same need applies to

teacher evaluation rubrics, as well. Teachers deserve the professional communication allotted within the rubrics to understand the natural progression of the standard.

The MODESE (2012) stated another research-based practice is that teachers must “keep current on instructional knowledge” (slide 9), discovering and pursuing different teaching behaviors that will enhance student achievement. Certainly, Goe et al. (2008) emphasized that effective professional development is “sustained, aligned with the curriculum, and focused on instruction” (p. 6). Professional growth produces opportunities for teachers to learn from their colleagues and provides teachers with more insights into how their instruction relates to student achievement (Goe, 2010). Teachers seek opportunities for professional growth in order to improve the academic achievement of students. Teachers also self-assess their growth through keeping records of evaluations, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop a growth plan to implement in their classroom (MODESE, 2012d).

The last practice stated in the Senate bill highlights teachers engaged as responsible professionals, exemplifying the total mission of their school (MODESE, 2012e). Norms of acceptable behavior of teachers and administrators establishes professionalism in schools. Some norms include how the staff resolves conflicts, communicates effectively with one another, or behaves during professional meetings or workshops (Marzano, 2007). Professional collaboration is achieved through teachers collecting evidence from their own classroom to share with their colleagues. The professional commitment made by teachers include the planning and implementation of goals as an educator and overall quality as an educator. Data collected regarding the professionalism of teachers include personnel records and improvement plans

(MODESE, 2013a). As defined by the MODESE (2012d), a distinguished teacher is one who participates in school district committees and actively participates with the revising of policies and procedures. In order to achieve this, teachers remain informed of the school's initiatives and participate as much as possible in order to increase support to students and their families, as well as colleagues.

Differentiated Performance Levels

Effective evaluation systems include differentiated levels of performance to distinguish teachers' ratings. The evaluation system contains at least three levels, with each level providing clear descriptions and measurable guidelines (MODESE, 2012a). These levels provide directions for growth and desired level of performance. Levels are not categorized by the years of experience, but rather by performance (MODESE, 2012b).

As established by the MODESE (2012a), the professional continuum of the teacher contains five levels of teacher ratings. These ratings include candidate, new teacher, developing teacher, proficient teacher, and distinguished teacher (MODESE, 2012a). Each level contains a description of the teacher who would best fit into the level and the specific terminology pertaining to the teacher's abilities and goals. The importance of a functional, effective system aligning the levels requires clear, easily understood descriptions (Schooling, Toth, & Marzano, 2011). Other elements used to determine a teacher's performance rating include level of commitment, abstract thinking, learning, planning, and conditions (Secretary's Priorities for Discretionary Grant Programs, 2010).

The candidate level was created for educators who are preparing to enter the education field and focuses on the teachers' abilities to create, reflect, and demonstrate knowledge of the profession (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). Teachers who have just started teaching rank in the new teacher level. These teachers are expected to be able to communicate, implement, and facilitate (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). New teachers display basic content knowledge but often struggle with making connections (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). New teachers work on increasing their own knowledge and improving their own practices to enhance their students' achievements (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011). New teachers are offered a consulting teacher who assists the teacher in planning and implementing lessons and helps determine the level of guidance the teacher may need (Simon, 2012).

Developing teachers are educators still emerging in their careers as teachers and are able to actively participate, apply, and engage (MODESE, 2013d). Educators who are constantly participating in professional development and advancing their growth are placed in the proficient teacher level (MODESE, 2013d). The highest level of distinguished teachers includes educators who contribute to the education profession and are constantly advancing student growth. Teachers in this level act as mentor teachers and serve as leaders in the district (Marzano et al., 2011). Distinguished teachers also exhibit extensive content knowledge and actively build on this knowledge through expanding their own professional development (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Educators at this level of experience distinguish themselves from more novice teachers because they adopt appropriate and challenging practices for the classroom (Hattie, 2009).

Another factor measured into the various teacher levels of evaluation considers the level of teacher commitment. Teachers with little or no commitment to the educational field who choose to “simply go through the motions” (Glickman, 2002, p. 84) with little concern for student achievement or professional growth illustrate a low level of teacher commitment. Moderate commitment involves focusing heavily on one specific aspect of the job, while neglecting others (Glickman, 2002). Teachers highly committed to their careers demonstrate the utmost concern for their students’ growth and are willing to put in as much extra time as necessary (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Similarly, the amount of abstract thinking teachers practice in their classroom also plays a part in the performance evaluation levels (Glickman, 2002). Problems often develop in the classroom, but when teachers use little to no abstract thinking in their teaching practices, problems grew into larger concerns (Wong & Wong, 2009). Teachers who do not handle classroom management or do not create challenging and appropriate assignments may struggle with abstract thinking (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

These educators make content errors and understand very little about important pedagogical practices (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Teachers who use a moderate amount of abstract thinking can think of solutions on their own, but they sometimes struggle with the larger goal or objective (Strong, 2011). These teachers struggle with unexpected issues that might arise in the classroom. High abstract thinking skills enables a teacher to take the viewpoint of students, teachers, parents, and administrators (Strong, 2011). These more effective teachers think of alternative plans and solutions, as well as carefully consider each step of the teaching and learning process (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

When rating teachers on their ability to develop appropriate lessons, evaluators consider the pace of the lesson, as well as the content. A teacher who receives an unsatisfactory rating will have poor time management with lessons that are too slow or too rushed, thus affecting student achievement. These lessons will also not appropriately relate to course objectives. At the same time, teachers who need improvement will sometimes have appropriately paced lessons, but are inconsistent in maintaining this practice. Students may be constantly off-task, activities may not directly relate to student ability and achievement, or a combination of both are present in the classroom (Danielson, 2007). In contrast, competent educators are those who embrace well-paced lessons and appropriately utilize classroom instruction time (Danielson, 2007).

Teachers who desire development in their performance levels often practice self-directed growth (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). This practice involves the teacher and an administrator who observes and offers guidance to the transitioning teacher. Self-directed growth allows teachers to build on their own knowledge, set meaningful goals, and devise advanced, concrete plans for their classroom (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Through using this method, teachers create curriculum projects, reflective journals, or professional development trainings based on teacher learning from individual book studies. Through these practices, as well as working with administrators and district leaders, teachers are able to further their growth as educators and achieve higher performance levels.

Furthermore, focusing on student achievement and expecting gradual improvement allows teacher growth within the performance levels (Marzano & Toth, 2013). The goal of a teacher centers on the students, and their learning progress, and

achievement (Marzano & Haystead, 2008) . For effective student achievement and growth to occur, teachers consider student needs when planning every aspect of their curriculum, throughout the planning, implementing, and assessment (Marzano & Haystead, 2008). When teachers design changes to their grading and teaching practices, constant, gradual gains are achieved (Marzano & Heflebower, 2011). By creating small and gradual changes to the classroom, teachers track these changes, evaluate the effect on student learning, and determine effectiveness for future performance.

Developing clear performance levels with descriptive criteria and guidelines validates an effective evaluation system (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Having clearly designed performance levels along with several other factors regarding teaching practices and professional growth aids in determining the performance level of an educator. Teacher development solidifies with these clearly defined performance levels, providing teachers the opportunity to enhance their teaching practices and improve their performance level.

Probationary Period

A probationary period is included in all effective evaluations and provides new teachers time to receive mentoring and become integrated into the school environment. The probationary period lasts five years, including two years of required mentoring by an experienced colleague. During the probationary period, new teachers require unique needs, such as reassurance of a job well done and professional development (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). Evaluators and administrators provide constructive evaluations, cooperative meetings with support, and the opportunity to boost morale of the beginning teachers by providing data as evidence of growth (Winters, 2012).

The mentoring aspect of the probationary period proves to be successful. Schools that develop a mentoring program see a great increase in first-year teachers who return for a second year (Heller, 2004). Standards are developed for those who are chosen to be mentors to the new teachers. The mentors establish a specific plan for their new teacher that is individualized and meets required standards (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Then the mentor receives proper training that stresses the importance of confidentiality, includes observation and feedback skills, and focuses on proven practices. Specific criteria for mentors includes at least three years of teaching experience, holds a similar position as their mentoree, and demonstrates a full understanding of best practices and instructional strategies (MODESE, 2012a).

Aside from the mentoring program, several other support methods have been established to assist beginning teachers during the probationary period. Support meetings are another way to incorporate beginning teachers into their new environment. These meetings provide teachers an opportunity to express their ideas, voice their concerns, and share perspectives (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). Support meetings include new teachers, as well as their mentors. Providing a supportive work environment also helps put the teacher at ease. The teacher should be provided with a variety of resources, ample planning time, a reasonable amount of extracurricular responsibilities, and manageable class sizes (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). Portfolio tasks are also used to support new teachers. These tasks help teachers connect state teaching standards to their own curriculum, without overwhelming the teacher.

The purpose of evaluating new teachers during the probationary period reassures the teachers that they are doing well and introduces them to the evaluation system

(Peterson & Peterson, 2006). Portfolio assessments reflect one example of effective evaluations during the probationary period. This method allows teachers to document what they are teaching, as well as to reflect on their classroom practices. Providing teachers with simple data or feedback from a panel of experienced teachers are also good ways to reassure the teacher of a job well done. Offering teachers a variety of performance assessment and feedback methods allows the teachers to become involved in the process and to find the evaluation systems that work best for them (Peterson & Peterson, 2006).

Creating a strong and effective probationary period in a district's evaluation program leads to staff development and fosters committed teachers and administrators (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). By providing effective professional development through the mentorship aspect, school districts retain exceptional teachers (Heller, 2004). The probationary period is a crucial time to aid beginning teachers in adapting to the new environment and to empower them to become strong educators.

Student Performance and Growth Measures

Another principle for the MEES requires consideration of student performance and growth. In fact, an effective evaluation system is one that “uses measures of growth in student learning as a significant part of the evaluation” (MODESE, 2012a, slide 23). Therefore, an effective evaluation system has to address student growth that is defined as “a change in academic achievement across two or more points in time” (MODESE, 2012a, slide 24). If the student growth measures are low, the educator is not given a proficient or distinguished rating.

In order to measure student growth, the teacher uses a variety of assessments to accurately determine academic performance. Goe and Holdheide (2011) recommended a variety of assessments as each has limitations and differing strengths. In fact, student growth is measured through benchmark tests, performance assessments, student portfolios, individualized learning objectives, and common assessments. In order to accurately measure growth, assessments are administered more than once a year (MODESE, 2012c). Strong (2011) agreed, “Any valid and reliable test given to all students at the beginning and end of the school year can be used” (p. 103). Common assessments provide focused data determined by the district and utilized by all teachers in the district for optimal instructional effectiveness (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Several models have been developed to determine student growth and may be utilized by teachers to measure student growth.

One such model is the value-added model. The value-added model is a statistical approach that predicts how much growth a student should accomplish. Growth is determined by comparing the amount of growth that similar students have made historically (MODESE, 2012c). If students exceed the predicted growth, the teacher receives a higher rating. Some models similar to this compare students’ current scores to their own scores in their prior three years of taking a test in the same subject matter (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). When students score above the predicted expected learning, this results in “value added” to the teacher (Peterson & Peterson, 2006, p. 33).

Multiple regressions models also compare student growth by considering “population influences,” such as ethnicity, school attendance, or socioeconomic status (Peterson & Peterson, 2006, p. 35). Adjustments are made with these systems to correct

these parameters. This parameter adjustment determines which differences are affected by the teacher's performance.

Another model is the rasch unit scale. The rasch unit scale uses a large population sample to analyze the difficulty of a specific test item. Student achievement is typically shown through their grade level with this model that compares achievement within large populations. Although expensive, this scale allows for customized testing, which in turn increases the accuracy of the assessment (Peterson & Peterson, 2006).

An additional model focuses on percentile scores. The student-growth percentile model calculates student growth by comparing one student's progress to their peers. A percentile rank is given to each student that indicates how many peers that student outperformed. A smaller percentile rank shows low progress, thus resulting in a lower rating for the teacher.

Beyond percentile scores, teachers have the opportunity to consider growth targets as another model for measuring student growth. Students take pre- and post- tests and compare these scores with the growth targets that are determined. This model is typically used for classes in which students enter the class with little or no previous experience, such as elective classes (Reform Support Network, 2006). This method offers a solution to the issue of how to assess students in a class where there exists no standardized test, such as a state assessment.

Additionally, student-learning objectives attribute to one of the most popular teaching models teachers use to measure student growth. These objectives are defined as "a specific learning goal and a specific measure of student learning used to track progress toward that goal" (Reform Support Network, 2006, p. 1). Teachers develop these

objectives after student needs are analyzed. These objectives could be developed solely by the teacher or mutually through the evaluator and the teacher (Potemski, Baral, & Meyer, 2011). Teachers appreciate help in developing appropriate objectives that are both realistic and rigorous (MODESE, 2012c). In order to be most effective, objectives are applied in a variety of classroom environments.

This student learning objectives model offers a variety of options that teachers use to assess their students such as portfolios, formative and summative tests, and standardized state tests (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Formative assessments check for growth so that adjustments can be made if necessary, and a summative assessment takes place at the end of the student learning to demonstrate mastery levels achieved (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). These results are used in conjunction with other validating measures to determine the performance rating of the educator. Maintaining high quality objectives guarantees realistic and obtainable targets.

When considering student growth in regard to the student objective model, the teacher identifies the student population and other relevant factors. The population demographics are specific and unique in each classroom and include all students, as well as subgroups (Reform Support Network, 2012). The learning content of the classroom should also be identified and clearly communicated and aligned with curriculum standards (MODESE, 2012c). A realistic time interval must be established that gives the students a set time period to complete the task. In addition, a growth target should be created that will predict the expected growth. Also included in the objectives is a rationale that details student needs and relates to standards. Instructional strategies that identify key strategies to use in the classroom, such as small group or peer-to-peer

instruction, is a vital component to this teaching method. Using assessments that properly measure growth in the classroom and connect teachers and students is the final component of Student Learning Objectives (Reform Support Network, 2012). The need for reliable and valid assessments avoids any testing bias to yield reliable student growth measures.

Once these growth methods are used in the classroom, teachers and evaluators ensure accuracy by properly documenting and presenting the progress of student performance. Evaluators decide how to accurately collect and analyze the data and whether or not to include the information in the teachers' annual summative evaluations (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). After the data are collected through assessments or other growth measures, teachers create a report that depicts student performance through the use of specific descriptions, comparisons, or graphics. On a larger scale, school districts also analyze the student growth data. An expert panel assembles to examine the reports and offer recommendations and implement new policies in order to maintain or increase the growth of student performance (Peterson & Peterson, 2006).

Student growth is one element used to define the effectiveness of an educator. Educator ratings can be determined by analyzing the student growth that each model measured. Along with observations and surveys, these teaching models mentioned offer more opportunities for evaluators to determine the overall performance of a teacher.

Regular, Meaningful Feedback

The fifth principle of effective evaluation is the deliverance of “ongoing, deliberate, and meaningful feedback on performance relative to research-based targets” (MODESE, 2012a, slide 6). Meaningful feedback is defined as “information about how

we are doing in our efforts to reach our goal” (Wiggins, 2012, p. 10). Shute (2008) clarified that feedback is “information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behavior for the purpose of improved learning” (p.154). Furthermore, Feeney (2007) expanded this definition and identified the goal of feedback as to “improve the effectiveness of teaching and promote professional growth” (p. 191). Consequently, defining deliberate feedback combines multiple ideas. Deliberate feedback, centered on improvement of current teaching practices, encourages growth and development of the teacher and includes surveys and observations (MODESE, 2012a). Meaningful feedback involves conversations between the teacher and the evaluator and not just simply filling out forms and paperwork. Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, and Poston (2004) stated, “the most powerful part of the model is in the reflective, collaborative dialogue that follows the visit” (p. 10). Providing effective and meaningful feedback to teachers leads to improvements in teaching methods that increases student achievement (Feeney, 2007). Hattie (2009) agreed that feedback is the most powerful single component that improves student achievement. Several key factors of effective and meaningful feedback have been identified.

Effective feedback that is goal-oriented helps teachers be aware of what specific actions will achieve their objectives (Wiggins, 2012). Clearly communicated goals between the teacher and administrator are imperative in order to avoid misguided feedback and to also confirm the students are clear on the objective. In fact, Hattie and Timperley (2007) defined the purpose of feedback in order to “reduce discrepancies between current understandings and performance and a goal” (p.154). Tomlinson (2012) stated that teachers should still be able to create their own decisions for how they will

apply the future goals into their classroom, rather than the administrator dictating the teacher's plan of action. Goals should be focused and measured by improved student learning (Feeney, 2007). Teachers who are not clear on their own goals are unable to fully communicate the information to their students (Dean, Hubbell, Pitler, & Stone, 2012). The administrator provides the teacher with tangible results, such as the students were distracted during the lesson. Wiggins (2012) described how teachers often focus too much on the actual teaching of the lesson and they fail to notice the student behaviors. By providing tangible results, these issues are brought to the attention of the teacher. In addition, technology aids in the process of providing tangible feedback and instruction through the use of video or audio recordings (Wiggins, 2012).

Actionable feedback provides the teacher with "concrete, specific, and useful" information (Wiggins, 2012, p. 12). Students who receive vague comments or letter grades may be unsure of what they can do to improve their performance. Research has shown that the method of only telling students which answers are right or wrong leads to negative effects on their achievement (Marzano et al., 2001). Teachers have these same experiences if the feedback provided has no clear content or purpose; thus, teachers, just like students, may be less likely to accomplish their goals (Feeney, 2007). Feedback helps solidify that the teacher can effectively apply the information within the classroom. Generalizations about classroom observations may be a misjudgment or an inaccurate observation. Instead, feedback that includes concrete information is most effective (Wiggins, 2012). Proving survey responses, specific student data, or explicit observed behaviors are just a few examples of concrete details that could be provided to a teacher. Administrators utilize rubrics when performing evaluations, much like teachers use with

students, in order to measure their ability and progress (Feeney, 2007). Rubrics give clear definitions of the expectations required of the teacher. Effective feedback also includes specific and detailed opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching practices (Tomlinson, 2012). When teachers evaluate students on an assignment, the teachers write comments about using additional resources or trying a new method to correct the students' mistakes. It is these same types of comments that administrators give teachers that provide examples of opportunities to help these teachers grow.

Meaningful feedback delivered clearly and respectfully is simple for teachers to understand. Using advanced technical jargon creates room for misinterpretation by the teachers (Wiggins, 2012). An abundance of feedback is also ineffective because it overwhelmed the teachers, rather than allowing them to focus on one or two key elements at a time. Along with easily understood feedback, the feedback should be expressed in an uplifting and positive manner. Some feedback focuses too much on areas that need improvement and not enough on identifying the strengths of the teacher (Danielson, 2007). Tomlinson (2012) described her ideal observer as someone who would deliver feedback "as a compliment to my capacity to grow" (p. 88). Respectful feedback empowers teachers to continue to improve their teaching practices and strengthen their "sense of efficacy in their teaching" (Feeney, 2007, p. 193).

The timeliness in which the feedback is delivered may also affect the effectiveness of the information. Feedback should be provided in a timely manner after the observation has taken place in order to be the most effective. Teachers and students indicate that the timing of feedback affects performance and understanding (Dean et al., 2012). Therefore, feedback delivered promptly through a face-to-face conversation

proves more effective than generalized praise (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Once the feedback is provided, it is important to allow time for the teacher to apply the information into the classroom (Tomlinson, 2012).

Ongoing and consistent feedback allows teachers to constantly adjust their teaching practices when assessing their own students. Formative feedback allows teachers to restructure or alter their goals and practices, rather than receiving a summative assessment at the very end when no time exists to change what had already been done (Wiggins, 2012). Research conducted by Marzano (2003) showed that formative feedback provided throughout the school year improved teaching practices, as well as student achievement.

Feedback provides teachers with meaningful information that helps them enhance or restructure the strategies, learning objectives, and teaching practices they use in the classroom (Dean et al., 2012). By applying the factors that create a meaningful feedback process, administrators and teachers collaborate together to create the most effective learning environment and increase student achievement.

Evaluator Training

Equally important is the need for evaluator training in order to have an effective evaluation system. Before training occurs, districts develop a “common understanding of high-quality teaching” (McCann, Jones, & Aronoff, 2010, p. 67). This commonly defined criterion for high-quality teaching becomes the necessary focus for professional development options for districts and individual teacher’s growth. Staff development offers opportunities to practice new theories and adoption of new strategies to help student achievement gains (McCann et al., 2010).

The shared evaluation from expert teachers with administrators proves a successful way to address an administrator's limited time or expertise. Allowing expert teachers opportunities to evaluate peers provides classroom observations "on multiple occasions by multiple evaluators" (Toch, 2008, p. 33) and coaching to develop further growth. Gawande (2011) also emphasized the value in a teacher coach to help one continue to give the best performance possible. Expert teachers incorporated into an evaluator's role enables teachers to support teacher growth, collaboration, and additional feedback throughout the school year while strengthening the quality of evaluations (Toch, 2008).

A key to successful teacher gains includes expert teachers used in an evaluator role who possessed certain traits. Heller (2004) warned that great teachers are "not necessarily also a great mentor" (p. 30) so understanding effective traits is crucial for teacher evaluators. Granted that expert teachers demonstrate strong instructional practices; therefore, other teachers can view the expert teacher modeling such skills as differentiated instruction, remediation, accurate use of time and questioning, and classroom management techniques (Heller, 2004). Credibility with both teachers and administrators is another necessary trait. Danielson (2007) expressed the need for teachers to be viewed as specialists in their content area, providing other teachers resources and ideas. In detail, these diverse resources and ideas shared with other teachers allows for the expert teacher's eagerness for continued learning and curiosity for effective practices to be viewed throughout the school year (Little, Goe, and Bell, 2009). Conceivably, the expert teacher possesses strong interpersonal skills and respect for multiple perspectives (Heller, 2004).

Peer assistance and review (PAR) is a method that trains expert teachers to observe new or struggling teachers' classrooms (Goe, 2010). The expert teacher, defined as a teacher who constantly has students who achieve at high academic levels, maintains classrooms that are structured with challenging activities for the students (Goe, 2010). Through the PAR method, expert teachers support new or struggling teachers when they begin to change and adapt their classroom in order to match an expert teacher's classroom (Goe, 2010). This method allows the expert teachers to not only learn more about their content area through the evaluation training they received, but also for the new teacher to learn through detailed feedback and access to new resources (Goe, 2010).

Use of Evaluation Results

Evaluators and administrators utilize data results to make educated choices regarding personnel, employment decisions, and employment policies. These decisions guide district decisions and enable administrators to create policies that directly relate to student achievement (MODESE, 2012a). By utilizing the evaluation results, districts are better able to recognize highly effective teachers, as well as struggling teachers who are in need of further support. Employment decisions can also be made regarding educators who may have received very low results.

Evaluation results affect teachers in a variety of ways. When effective teachers are recognized, opportunities are presented to them to further their professional development and their role in the school district. These educators become mentors, are placed in key leadership roles, and assist high-need students. When data results show a teacher who is performing above and beyond, that type of instruction demonstrated by the teacher should be highlighted to show all teachers the value of excellence that is expected

(Peterson & Peterson, 2006). On the other end of the spectrum, teachers who receive low marks gain assistance through intervention programs and support from mentors.

Timelines established with these teachers in order to document growth guarantees the teacher's attention. If, at the end of the timeline, the teacher's results are unsatisfactory, dismissal protocol is utilized (MODESE, 2012b).

A popular statistical method for gathering data is the value-added model. This method predicts future achievement by using prior standardized test scores and achievement. In order for this model to be effective and accurate, the evaluator possesses not only experience but also the proper, effective observation instrument (Blank, 2010). For instance, web-based tools provide an effective instrument to use when determining teacher performance. These tools allow educators to view a comprehensive picture of the professional development a teacher receives and utilizes in the classroom (Blank, 2010). Furthermore, evaluators average the value-added results over a course of several years to make predictions more stable (Pallas, 2011). Using the value-added model, administrators identify patterns of student performance and achievement differences between ethnic and socioeconomic groups (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011).

In the same way, data compiled using a variety of sources, provides valid and reliable information that can be used to make sound decisions regarding district employees. Evaluators analyze the teaching materials used in the classroom, as well as videotaped lessons. These data sources illustrate the planning and preparations performed by the teacher, as well as capture every aspect of the classroom environment (Nolan & Hoover, 2008).

Equally important, input from both students and teachers provide multiple perspectives on the teacher's performance. Surveys and focus groups are most appropriate for this type of data collection, with responses being centered on teaching practices and behavior (Desimone, 2009). This focus on actual teaching practices and behavior confirm an accurate and valid result, rather than having survey answers that focus on perceptions and attitudes that can be skewed (Blank, 2010). In fact, the most common form of data collection is performed through classroom observations, allowing administrators to draw valuable conclusions concerning teaching practices and classroom management (Little, Goe, & Bell, 2009). Furthermore, a portfolio created to compile all sources used throughout the evaluation period in order to analyze the data collected is effective (Nolan & Hoover, 2008).

Accurate, reliable, and valid data results are imperative. In order to solidify correct data, administrators possess a full understanding of the potential data sources (Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2011). In like fashion, greater accuracy of data is achieved through the collaboration of teachers who know their students and classroom and also the personnel who know and collect the data (Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2011). Certainly, validity of data results is achieved through developing relevant measures that reflect the expected results (Goe, 2010). Similarly, avoiding bias in the data results proves imperative.

Certainly by gathering multiple sources of data, using data collected over several points in time, and ensuring confidentiality in the data responses, unbiased reporting of data is clearly illustrated (Little et al., 2009). Furthermore, using multiple data measures also informs the district if any of the sources used should be reevaluated (Curtis &

Wiener, 2012). Data measures utilized within the district are considered and assessed to confirm clear, direct, and user-friendly attributes (Curtis & Wiener, 2012). By avoiding miscommunication and confusion, the data results utilized by teachers enhance their students' achievement in a timely manner (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011).

By using evaluation results effectively and accurately, districts determine vital patterns regarding teaching practices and student achievement (Marzano & Toth, 2013). This information of effective practices in turn aids districts in making sound decisions involving educational policy and employment decisions (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Indeed, through compiling multiple sources of data and analyzing this data accurately, educators are held responsible for their performance level.

Summary

The MODESE designed an effective evaluation system based on research-based best practices in order to better meet the purpose of evaluation, balancing a teacher's professional development with student achievement and classroom success. This new evaluation system, the MEES, addressed flaws in the current system, providing educators with differentiated performance levels, clear expectations, and student performance and growth measures. Keys to the effectiveness of the MEES includes a probationary learning period for new to the profession teachers; specific and focused training for evaluators; and regular, meaningful feedback to assist the teacher growth throughout the year. Therefore, the use of the evaluation data results validates teacher growth and student achievement earned throughout the year.

In Chapter Three, the methodology for this study was described. This study involved a survey for superintendents in school districts located in one geographical

region in Missouri in order to determine readiness levels for the transition to the MEES.

An analysis of data was presented in Chapter Four, and the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research were detailed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study analyzed quantitative data from a web-based survey of superintendents in school districts located in one geographical region in Missouri. This web-based survey explored the perceptions in regard to transitioning to the MEES from the former PBTE system. The web-based survey captured information about existing readiness levels for each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation.

The objective of describing and explaining readiness levels led to quantitative research. Descriptive statistics were utilized. Measures of tendency and frequency distributions were employed in order to analyze the data to determine patterns, weaknesses, and strengths.

Problem and Purpose Overview

With the approval of the ASEA Flexibility Request, Missouri began the transition from the PBTE to the MEES. As with any change, it was important to reflect upon current practices, consider the culture and climate, and devise steps to reach the goal date of implementation for the new system. In order to assist the transitional phase, it was important to consider the perceptions of readiness levels superintendents of public school districts possessed.

This study considered the perceived readiness level for each of the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation that the MODESE had deemed necessary for an effective evaluation system. Areas of strengths and weaknesses were determined. Patterns within individual principles were analyzed. Lastly, recommendations for continued progress were discussed.

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating research-based practices into instruction?
2. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to differentiating clearly defined levels of performance and measuring growth?
3. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to implementing a probationary period for new educators, providing accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data?
4. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating measures of student growth in learning in the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?
5. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to ongoing, meaningful, and timely feedback to educators provided by the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?
6. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to standardized and periodic training for evaluators to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable?
7. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to the evaluation results informing employment determinations, decisions, and policy?

Research Design

Quantitative research was utilized as the design of the study for a number of reasons. To begin with, the focus of the study was very specific and narrow, driven by criteria predetermined by the MODESE. The Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation were already identified and communicated to Missouri superintendents. Likewise, the objective of the study led to quantitative research. In order to describe and explain, the researcher utilized quantitative research design. Another determining factor for quantitative research design focused on the results. According to Johnson and Christensen (2007), “generalizable findings providing representation of objective outsider viewpoint” (p. 34) justified quantitative research due to the fact that the researcher used an electronic survey to gather data. Lastly, it was “useful and feasible to organize data as numbers” (Punch, 2005, p. 55) within the electronic survey. Each survey response was converted to numerical value to perform the quantitative statistics.

Descriptive statistics were deemed to be the best tool to gather and analyze the data for this non-experimental study since the purpose was “to simplify and organize a set of scores” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007, p. 738). The quantitative data “in the form of numbers produced by measurement” (Punch, 2005, p. 56) linked the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation to the numerical data.

Population and Sample

The population and sample represented district level leadership. First it was important to note that the population studied consisted of Missouri superintendents. Missouri superintendents are the leadership responsible for carrying out the mandates developed by the MODESE. Gravetter and Wallnau (2007) declared a sample “is a set of

individuals selected from a population” (p.5). The selected set of superintendents for this study was determined using the Southwest region superintendents. According to Bluman (2010), populations divided “by some means such as geographic area” (p. 12) were known as a cluster sampling, so the Southwest superintendents were a cluster sample of the superintendents in Missouri. All 92 superintendents belonging to the Southwest region of Missouri were invited to participate in the study. Bluman (2010) determined, “The distribution of the sample means will be approximately normal when the sample size is 30 or more,” so the researcher gathered a minimum of 30 surveys before analyzing the data (p. 401).

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a web-based survey (see Appendix A). A web-based survey was chosen for this study due to the fact that it “physically resides on a network server (connected to either an organization’s intranet or the Internet) and that can be accessed only through a Web browser” (Reynolds, Woods, & Baker, 2007, p. 8). The researcher generated the survey statements to be completed through SurveyMonkey application.

Survey statements were constructed from specific descriptions used by the MODESE (2012b) when defining each of the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. Readiness levels determined by the researcher included: 0 not present; 1 emerging, beginning discussions; 2 developing, designing processes, and documents; 3 piloting changes; 4 inconsistent implementation; and 5 implemented with fidelity. The survey was presented to an assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum and development for review. After initial edits were made, the survey was field tested by a

group of six peers. This field test allowed for additional input. The field test group focused on reviewing the statements, making sure each was clear, specific, and easily understood and answerable. This field test group verified that the statements were easily understood and relevant. Punch (2005) noted that “statements must also be interconnected and substantively relevant” (p. 46), so the researcher also gained input from a Lindenwood advisor in regard to these two important question structures.

Multiple statements were posed on the survey for each of the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. The following numbered survey statements were interconnected to the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation research-based and proven performance targets: 1, 8, 15, 20, 26, and 30. Differentiated levels of performance, another Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation, were interconnected to the following numbered survey statements: 2, 9, 21, and 31. The following numbered survey statements were interconnected to the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation probationary period for new educators: 3, 10, 22, 27, and 32. The use of measures of student growth in learning, another Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation, was interconnected to the following numbered survey statements: 4, 11, 16, 28, and 33. The following numbered survey statements were interconnected to the ongoing, deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation: 5, 12, 17, 23, and 34. Likewise Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation standardized and periodic training for evaluators was interconnected to the following numbered survey statements: 6, 13, 18, 24, and 35. The following numbered survey statements were interconnected to the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation results to inform personnel employment, determinations, decisions, and policy: 7, 14, 19, 25, 29, and 36.

The researcher sent an electronically mailed (email) invitation to all superintendents in school districts located in one geographical region in Missouri introducing the study and encouraging participation through the introduction letter (see Appendix B). The request was made for each of the 92 superintendents located in the Southwest region of Missouri to participate. Those volunteer superintendents simply opened the email the researcher sent; the consent to participate was included in the survey. Each volunteer superintendent completed the thirty-six statement. A two-week response window was given for collection of the data with 36 superintendents responding as willing to participate in the study, but only 30 superintendents responded to all the statements of the survey.

Data Collection

The process of collecting data for this study had many stages. Following approval of the research project by the Institution Review Board at Lindenwood University (see Appendix C), the superintendent list was obtained from the MODESE (2013c). Next, the introduction letter, consent to participate, and survey link were emailed to the 92 Southwest Missouri region superintendents requesting participation. Thirty-six superintendents responded to the request to participate in the study.

When the sample size of at least 30 was reached, the researcher then utilized SurveyMonkey to view the results. The researcher converted the survey responses to numerical value in order to perform descriptive statistics. Measures of central tendency and measures of frequency distribution were utilized for descriptive purposes.

Data Analysis

Measures of central tendency were used to “describe a single data set” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007, p. 738) within each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation in order to summarize the entire distribution of each principle. The mode was the score that had the largest tendency in the quantitative data. Gravetter and Wallnau (2007) expressed that it “can be used to determine the typical or average value for any scale of measurement” (p. 87). A table was constructed to illustrate the mode of each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation efficiently. The mode was also considered for specific survey statements connected to each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation. Individual tables documented all of the modes of the survey statements linked to each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation.

Likewise, the researcher investigated the total mean (M) score of each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation in order to determine a rank order for each principle. In fact, each individual survey statement originated a mean score. Then each mean (M) score within the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation was averaged to determine the mean for the entire Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation.

Lastly, the frequency distributions were derived, illustrating additional information about superintendents’ perceptions of readiness levels. Frequency distributions were used to present “entire set of scores” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007, p. 738) within each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation. Since frequency distributions measured the range of the distribution and the number of each measurement (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007), it aided in further interpretation of the data, highlighting weaknesses and patterns.

Summary

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and simplify the quantitative data obtained from the web-based survey determining the perceptions of superintendents in school districts located in Southwest Missouri. Levels of readiness were explored in order to organize the data. Frequencies within each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation were also explored to discover patterns, areas of strengths, and weaknesses. Discrepancies were discovered. The analysis of the data enabled recommendations to assist Missouri educators in the transition to the MEES.

In Chapter Four, the data were analyzed. Tables and figures were created to depict the data. The findings, conclusions, and recommendation for future research were presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

Introduction

The development of the MEES resulted directly from federal approval for flexibility under the ESEA Flexibility Request. With the need for an improved evaluation system, the MODESE determined the Essential Principles for Effective Evaluation. Upon the creation of the MEES, the MODESE validated these Essential Principles for Effective Evaluation within the processes and structures of this new evaluation system.

With the creation of the MEES completed, Missouri educators prepared for the implementation of the MEES. With this transition to the MEES, the MODESE produced the need for additional statewide education and training of educators, planning for the newly developed the MEES, and reflections of current practices. As educational leaders for districts, superintendents have begun the transition to the MEES. These needs present during the transition to the MEES contributed to the following research questions that guided the study:

1. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating research-based practices into instruction?
2. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to differentiating clearly defined levels of performance and measuring growth?
3. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to implementing a probationary period for new educators, providing accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data?

4. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating measures of student growth in learning in the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?

5. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to ongoing, meaningful, and timely feedback to educators provided by the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?

6. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to standardized and periodic training for evaluators to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable?

7. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to the evaluation results informing employment determinations, decisions, and policy?

For this reason, a survey was constructed to obtain the perceptions of Southwest Missouri superintendents' transition to the MEES. The survey considered the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. Measures of central tendency were considered in order to better describe how superintendents perceived readiness levels. Thirty superintendents agreed to participate in the survey and completed all the responses managed through SurveyMonkey.

Multiple survey statements sequenced randomly in the survey addressed each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation. Essential Principle 1: research-based and proven performance targets, was addressed through survey statements 1, 8, 15, 20, 26, and 30. This essential principle considered measurements of “clearly articulated, research-based and proven performance targets” (MODESE, 2012b, p. 2). Essential

Principle 2: measurements of differentiated levels of performance were addressed through survey statements 2, 9, 21, and 31. Essential Principle 3: probationary period for new teachers was addressed through survey statements 3, 10, 22, 27, and 32. This essential principle considered measurements of the first five years of teaching (MODESE, 2012b).

Essential Principle 4: measures of student growth in learning was addressed through survey statements 4, 11, 16, 28, and 33. This essential principle considered measurements illustrating a “positive change in student achievement between two or more points in time”(MODESE, 2012b, p. 3). Essential Principle 5: meaningful and timely feedback was addressed through survey statements 5, 12, 17, 23, and 34. Essential Principle 6: standardized and periodic training for evaluators was addressed through survey statements 6, 13, 18, 24, and 35. This essential principle considered measurements confirming that evaluators are “highly trained to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable” (MODESE, 20102a, p. 4). Essential Principle 7: evaluation results was addressed through survey statements 7, 14, 19, 25, 29, and 36.

Overall Tendency Distributions

Measures of central tendency were analyzed for each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation by determining the mode for each individual survey statement within the principle. As a result of the data, only two statements were bimodal. Both statement 7: My district’s evaluation system has ratings of educator effectiveness that guides district decisions, and statement 23: My district’s evaluation system feedback uses multiple sources for evidence, received bimodal scores of two and five. The fact that both statements received equal scores of developing processes and documents and

implemented with fidelity was interesting. Clearly superintendents were divided in regard to readiness levels with these two statements.

The total mode for each of the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation was determined from the sequenced randomly placed statements throughout the survey. These individual mode scores provided one total mode score for each essential principle. Consequently, the data showed that superintendents' perceptions regarding the readiness level of five out of the seven essential principles were implemented with fidelity. Only principle two and principle four received a different mode score. In fact, both principle two and principle four received the developing processes and documents readiness level. Surprisingly, superintendents perceived their readiness levels as either 2 developing processes and documents or 5 implemented with fidelity. No modes were discovered for the following readiness levels: 0 not present; 1 emerging, beginning discussions; 3 piloting changes; or 4 inconsistent implementation.

Further analysis was conducted to determine the total mean (M) for each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation. The mean was considered in order to further describe the readiness levels. As a result of considering both the total mode and the total mean (M) for each principle, more variance of perceptions was realized than from the total mode alone (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Mode and Mean (M) of Readiness Levels per Essential Principle

Essential Principle	Mode	Mean (<i>M</i>)
1	5	3.21
2	2	3.17
3	5	3.41
4	2	2.62
5	5	3.45
6	5	2.84
7	5	3.43

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Therefore, the total mean (*M*) for each principle established a method for ranking the order of principles. The rank order created from the total means (*M*) of each principle contained a surprising result. Although principle two and four received a total mode readiness level of developing processes and documents, both of these principles were not the lowest ranked principles.

Certainly, superintendents' perceptions were low in regard to the readiness level of incorporating measures of student growth in learning ($M = 2.62$). However, Table 2 show the second lowest ranking of superintendents' perceptions dealt with standardized and periodic training for evaluators to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable ($M = 2.84$). This same principle received a total mode score of implementation with fidelity. The total mean (M) of this essential principle calculated much lower, falling between developing processes and piloting changes; consequently, the mode and mean methods emphasized contrasting readiness levels.

In fact, principle two calculated to the third lowest position when rank ordered. This principle that received fifth ranking had received the mode score of developing processes and documents along with one other principle, but ranked higher than one principle possessing the implemented with fidelity mode score. When considering the total mean ($M = 3.17$), there was a contrast of readiness levels highlighted.

Differentiating defined levels of performance and measuring growth within the evaluation system were perceived as a level of improvement for superintendents with this essential principle ($M = 3.17$). Next, the essential principle for incorporating research-based practices into instruction ranked fourth ($M = 3.21$). Then, implementing a probationary period for new educators while providing accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data ($M = 3.41$).

The essential principle focusing on the evaluation results informing employment determinations, decisions, and policy was second highest ($M = 3.43$). Finally, the essential principle receiving the highest ranked order ($M = 3.45$) was ongoing, meaningful, and timely feedback to educators. This result was surprising due to the fact

that the current research emphasized that effective feedback was lacking from current evaluation systems; yet, the superintendents perceived feedback as implemented with fidelity (Marzano, 2013).

Table 2.

Mean (M) and Ranked Order of Readiness Levels per Essential Principle

Mean (M)	Ranked Order	Essential Principle
3.45	1	Meaningful and timely feedback
3.43	2	Evaluation results for employment decisions
3.41	3	Probationary period for new educators
3.21	4	Research-based practices
3.17	5	Differentiated levels of performance
2.84	6	Standardized and periodic training for evaluators
2.62	7	Incorporating measures of student growth

Overall Frequency Distributions

In order to determine the nature of the distribution, this study also considered frequency distributions to understand the data from the survey. Cumulative frequency distributions were charted in order to illustrate the various responses (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). Overall, the enormity of superintendents' perceived readiness levels

highlighted the continued need for differentiated professional development due to multiple consistent implementation with fidelity and multiple developing processes and documents scores in order to meet the needs of all educators in Missouri (see Figure 1).

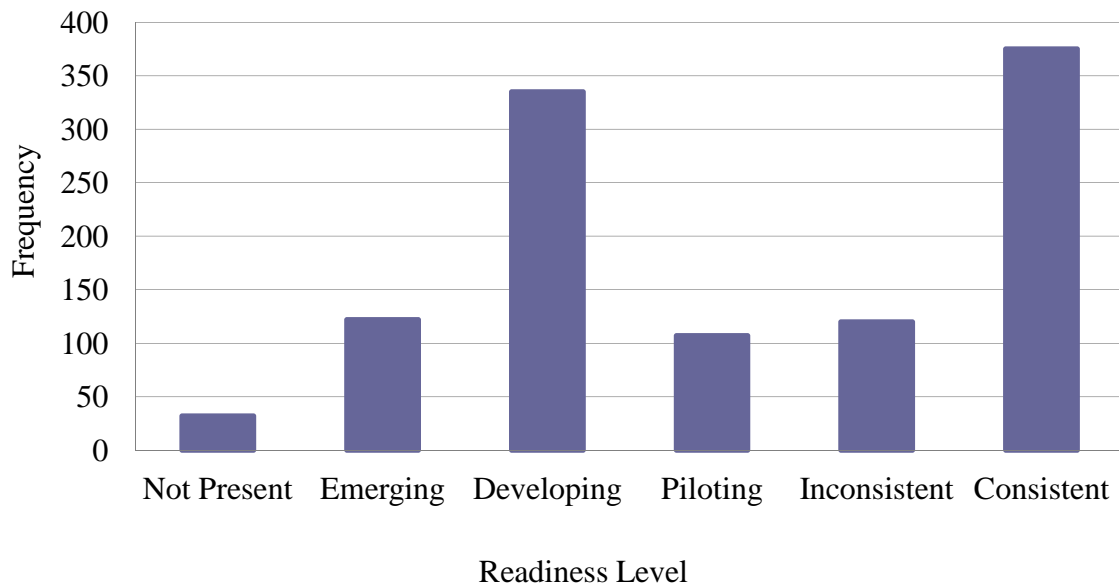


Figure 1. Scores of readiness levels. The overall scores showed large variance in superintendents' readiness levels. Although the majority of scores suggested consistent implementation with fidelity, the scores of developing processes and documents were selected quite frequently.

Survey Statements Tendency Distributions

Multiple statements comprised each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation. The individual modes of each survey statement within the Essential Principle of Effective

Evaluation were considered to further investigate the findings. Likewise, the individual means (M) of each survey statement within the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation were calculated.

Essential Principle 1: research-based practices and clear expectations' survey statements 1,8,15, 26, and 30 provided some contrasting readiness levels based on mode and mean (M). When considering the mode, survey statements illustrated readiness levels of developing processes and document and implemented with fidelity (see Table 3). Likewise statement 1, My district's current evaluation system allowed students to actively participate and be successful in the learning process, was determined to lowest perceived statement ($M = 2.57$) within the essential principle. In contrast, statement 30, my district's current evaluation system considers research-based practices, was the highest perceived statement ($M = 3.67$) within Essential Principle 1.

Table 3.

Central Tendency Results for Survey Statements of Essential Principle 1

Survey Statement	Mode	Mean (<i>M</i>)
1	2	2.57
8	2	3.07
15	5	3.33
26	5	3.43
30	5	3.67

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Essential principle 2: differentiated performance levels consisted of survey statements 2, 9, 21, and 31. When considering methods of central tendency, survey statements noted readiness levels of developing processes and document and implemented with fidelity (see Table 4). Statement 9, my district’s evaluation system allows for discrete, independent, measureable elements that reliably describe current practice as well as a clear direction for growth, was perceived as the lowest statement

($M = 2.83$) with this principle. In contrast, statement 31, my district's current evaluation system considers differentiated levels of performance, was the highest perceived statement ($M = 3.50$) within Essential Principle 2.

Table 4.

Central Tendency Results for Survey Statements of Essential Principle 2

Survey Statement	Mode	Mean (M)
2	2	3.03
9	2	2.83
21	2	3.33
31	5	3.50

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Essential Principle 3: probationary period for new teachers focused on measurements of the first five years of teaching. Survey statements 3, 10, 22, 27, and 32 confirmed superintendents perceived this principle implemented with fidelity for all statements but one contrasting the readiness level of developing processes and documents. Statement 10, my district's evaluation system provides accurate and

appropriate accumulation of performance data on a new educator's practice, was the lowest perceived statement ($M = 2.53$) within this principle (see Table 5). In contrast, statement 3, my district's evaluation system provides mentoring for new teachers, principals, superintendents, special education directors, and career education directors during their first two years of practice, was the highest perceived statement ($M = 3.83$) within Essential Principle 3.

Table 5.

Central Tendency Results for Survey Statements of Essential Principle 3

Survey Statement	Mode	Mean (M)
3	5	3.83
10	2	2.53
22	5	3.63
27	5	3.30
32	5	3.77

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Essential Principle 4: use of measure of student growth in learning survey statements 4, 11, 16, 28, and 33 considered measurements illustrating a “positive change in student achievement between two or more points in time” (MODESE, 2012b, p. 3). The statements within this essential principle determined readiness levels of developing processes and documents and one contrasting readiness level of implemented with fidelity. Statement 28, my district’s evaluation system reflects on the measures of student growth over two periods in time in the evaluation process, was the lowest statement ($M = 2.27$) within the essential principle (see Table 6). In contrast, statement 4, my district’s evaluation system clearly shows stakeholders that the ultimate goal is improvement of student performance, was the highest statement ($M = 3.27$) within Essential Principle 4.

Table 6.

Central Tendency Results for Survey Statements of Essential Principle 4

Survey Statement	Mode	Mean (<i>M</i>)
4	5	3.27
11	2	2.53
16	2	2.53
28	2	2.27
33	2	2.50

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Essential Principle 5: measurements of deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback coordinated with survey statements numbered 5, 12, 17, 23, and 34. All the statements within this essential principle indicated the readiness level of implemented with fidelity but had one bimodal statement emphasizing developing processes and documents as well. Due to being bimodal, statement 23, my district’s evaluation system feedback uses multiple sources for evidence, was the lowest statement ($M = 3.13$) within the essential principle (see Table 7). In contrast, statement 17, my district’s evaluation

system provides feedback to educators regardless of their career stage and status, was the highest statement ($M = 3.77$) in Essential Principle 5.

Table 7.

Central Tendency Results for Survey Statements of Essential Principle 5

Survey Statement	Mode	Mean (M)
5	5	3.37
12	5	3.43
17	5	3.77
23	2 & 5	3.13
34	5	3.57

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Essential Principle 6: standardized and periodic training for evaluators survey statements 6, 13, 18, 24, and 35 considered measurements confirming that evaluators are “highly trained to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable” (MODESE, 20102a, p. 4). The statements’ readiness levels within this essential principle were determined as either implemented with fidelity or developing processes and documents (see Table 8).

Clearly, statement 18, my district’s evaluation system includes master teachers and peers as well as other external, trained third party people from within or outside the district that serve as evaluators to move staff to increased levels of effective practice, was the lowest statement ($M = 1.83$) in this essential principle (see Table 8). In contrast, statement 24, my district’s evaluation system contains evaluator training, was the highest statement ($M = 3.33$) with Essential Principle 6.

Table 8

Central Tendency Results for Survey Statements of Essential Principle 6

Survey Statement	Mode	Mean (M)
6	2	3.03
13	5	2.93
18	2	1.83
24	5	3.33
35	5	3.10

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Essential Principle 7: measurements of evaluations results utilized for personnel employment decisions and policy were determined through survey statements 7, 14, 19, 25, 29, and 36. All of the statements received readiness levels of implemented with fidelity, but there was one bimodal statement receiving developing processes and documents (see Table 9). Statement 14, district's evaluation system empowers us to recognize and utilize highly effective educators to improve student learning, was the lowest statement ($M = 3.20$) in this essential principle. In contrast statement 36, my district's current evaluation system considers evaluation results to inform personnel employment determinations, decisions, and policy, was the highest statement ($M = 3.70$) in Essential Principle 7.

Table 9.

Central Tendency Results for Survey Statements of Essential Principle 7

Survey Statement	Mode	Mean (<i>M</i>)
7	2 & 5	3.33
14	5	3.20
19	5	3.47
25	5	3.37
29	5	3.53
36	5	3.70

Note. 0 = Not present; 1 = Emerging, beginning discussions; 2 = Developing—designing processes/ developing documents; 3 = Piloting changes; 4 = Inconsistent implementation; 5 = Implementation with fidelity.

Survey Statement Frequency Distributions

Essential Principle 1: research-based practices and clear expectations' survey statements 1,8,15, 26, and 30 were analyzed. The readiness levels most frequently represented within the statements were implementation with fidelity and developing, designing processes and developing documents; therefore, the perceptions of superintendents were contrasting for this Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation.

All statements were divided; the one statement receiving the most agreement, focused on the use of research-based practices.

Statement 1 noted that my district's current evaluation system allowed students to actively participate and to be successful in the learning process. The frequency distribution for this statement illustrated eleven scores on the developing processes and documents readiness level (see Figure 2). Clearly, the majority of superintendents perceived this statement as developing processes and documents.

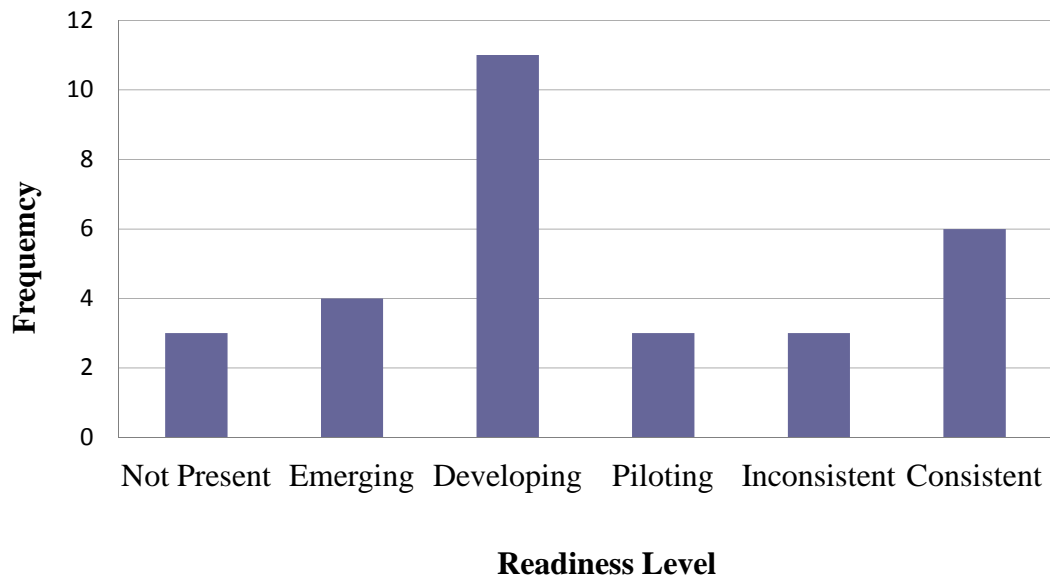


Figure 2. Survey statement 1. Superintendents' perceived developing processes and documents readiness level in regard to students actively participating in the educator evaluation system.

Statement 8 noted that my district's evaluation system considered various forms of assessment used to monitor and manage student learning. Eleven scores expressed the developing processes and documents readiness level with eight scores of implementation with fidelity. The small difference of only three scores emphasized that superintendents are at varied levels for this statement (see Figure 3).

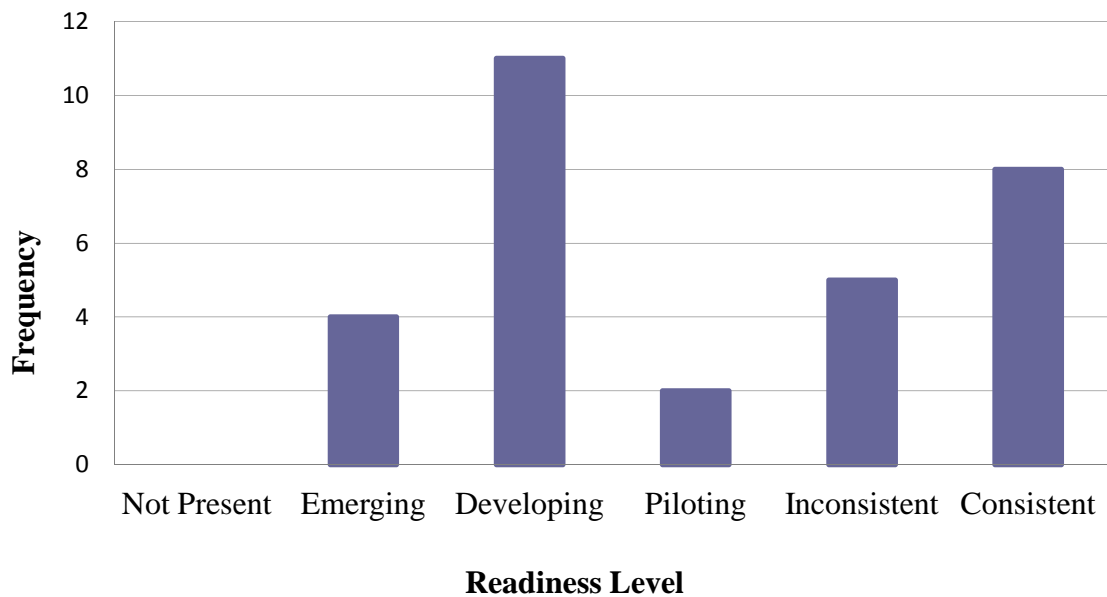


Figure 3. Survey statement 8. Superintendents have varied perceived readiness levels in regard to evaluation systems considering various forms of assessment to monitor student learning.

Statement 15, my district's evaluation system ensured the teacher is prepared and knowledgeable of the content, contained the frequency rating of 12 scores as implementation with fidelity but also contained eight developing processes and documents (see Figure 4). In regard to this statement, superintendents are at varied levels of readiness.

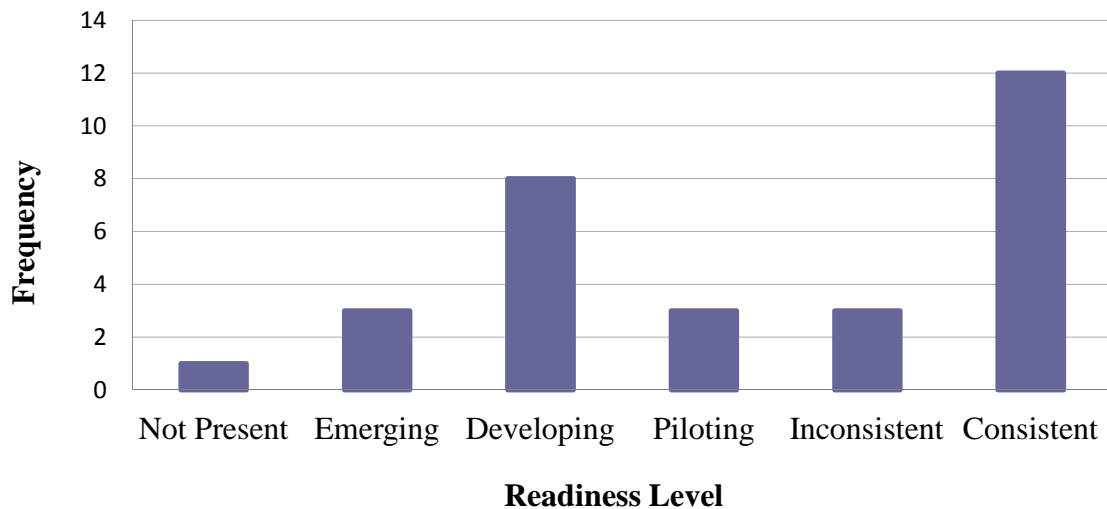


Figure 4. Survey statement 15. Superintendents' perceived readiness level was varied in regard to ensuring the teacher was prepared and knowledgeable of content.

Statement 20, my district's current evaluation system showed that the teacher keeps current on instructional knowledge and seeks and explores changes in teaching behaviors that improve student performance, illustrated eleven scores of implementation with fidelity and nine scores of developing processes and documents (see Figure 5).

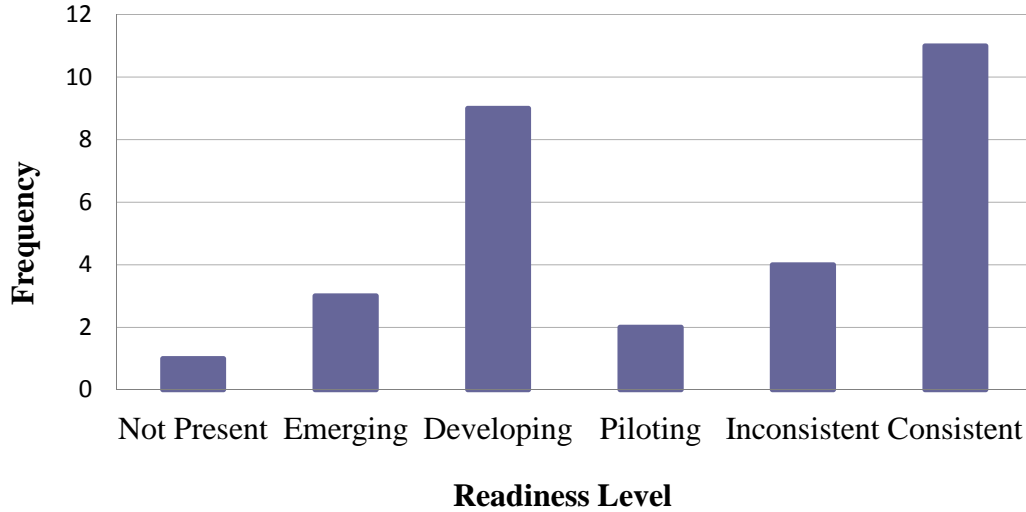


Figure 5. Survey statement 20. Superintendents' perceived readiness level was varied in regard to the teacher keeping current on instructional knowledge and seeking changes in teaching behaviors that improve student performance.

Statement 26, my district's current evaluation system measured the teacher as a responsible professional in the overall mission of the school, was very divided with twelve scores implemented with fidelity and ten scores developing processes and documents readiness level (see Figure 6).

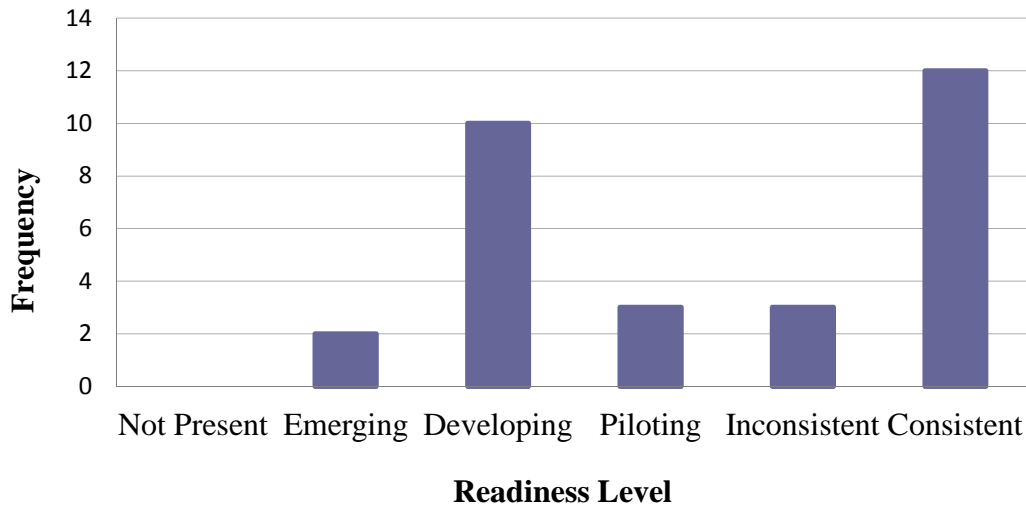


Figure 6. Survey statement 26. Superintendents perceived readiness level was varied in measuring the teacher as a responsible professional in the overall mission of the school.

Statement 30, my district's current evaluation system considered research-based practices, clearly showed readiness levels of implementation with fidelity with fourteen scores (see Figure 7). This statement received the most scores within the entire principle. The highest level of agreement amongst the superintendents occurred within this statement.

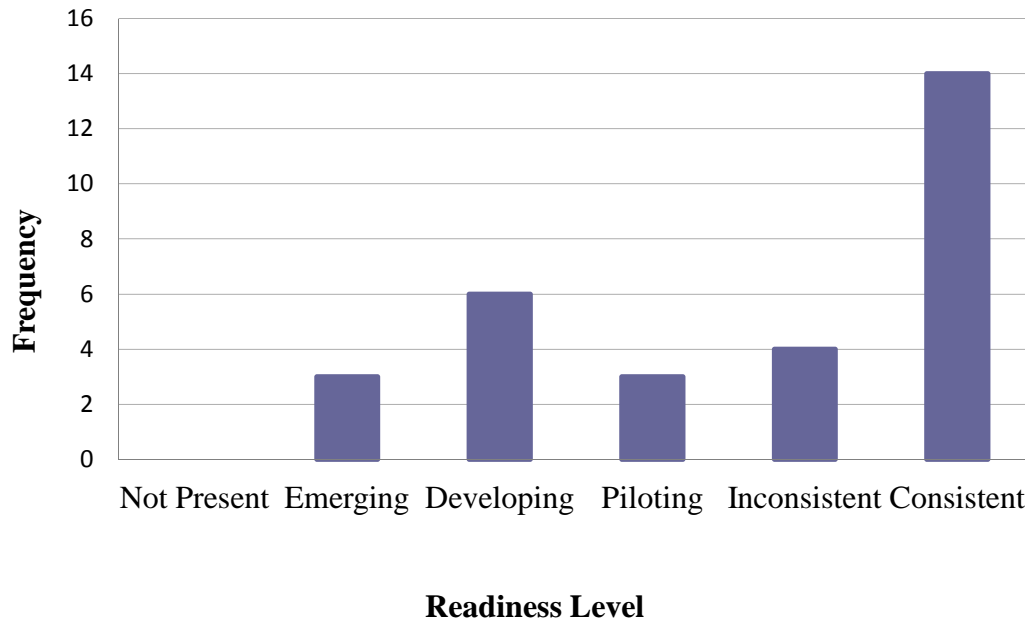


Figure 7. Survey statement 30. Superintendents' perceived readiness level was in agreement for the majority in considering research-based practices in the evaluation system.

Essential Principle 2: differentiated performance levels consisted of the following statement numbers: 2, 9, 21, and 31. This Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation determined half of the survey statements clearly developing processes and documents while the other half of the survey statements contained contrasting readiness levels. No statements within this essential principle contained high levels of agreement among the superintendents.

Statement 2 noted that my district's evaluation system defined differentiated levels of performance instead of years of service across a professional continuum, allowing the clear determination of growth and improvement across the scale. Thirteen

scores illustrated developing, designing processes and documents readiness level with nine scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 8). This statement and statement 31 documented the most scores within the entire principle; however, it provided a contrast of perceptions. The highest level of agreement amongst the superintendents occurred within this statement and another, implying that districts were still developing clear determinations of growth and improvement across a scale as opposed to simply years of service.

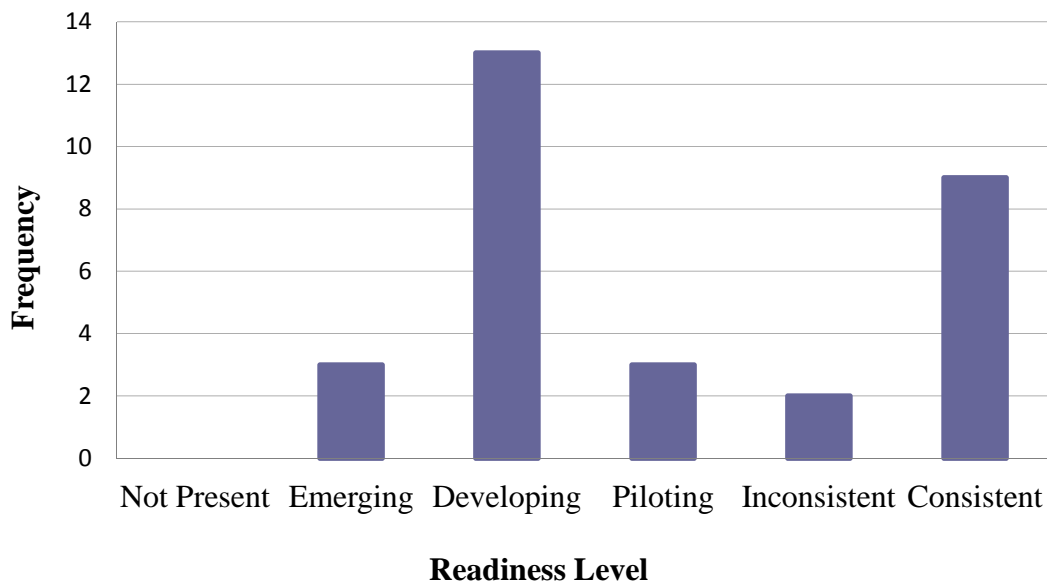


Figure 8. Survey statement 2. Superintendents' perceptions were varied when considering differentiated levels of performance instead of years of service across a professional continuum, allowing the clear determination of growth and improvement across the scale.

Statement 9, my district's evaluation system allowed for discrete, independent, measurable elements that reliably describe current practice as well as a clear direction for growth, detailed twelve scores of developing, designing processes and documents readiness level and eight scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 9). These contrasting superintendents' perceptions showed various readiness levels.

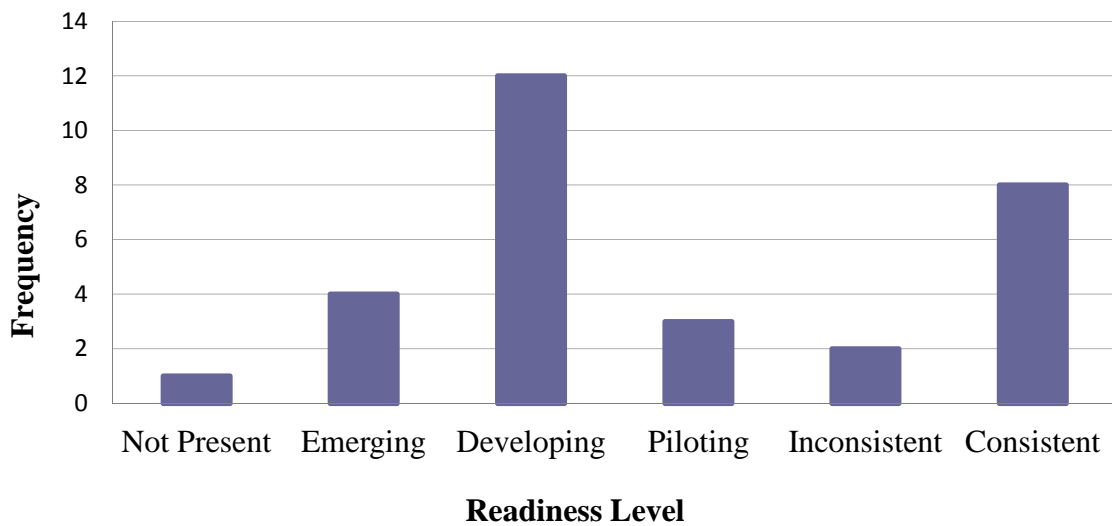


Figure 9. Survey statement 9. Superintendents' perceptions were varied when considering an evaluation system allowing for discrete, independent, measurable elements that reliably describe current practice as well as a clear direction for growth.

Statement 21, my district's evaluation system moved beyond sorting and classifying to ensuring opportunities for the improvement of effective practice, reported ten scores of developing, designing processes and documents readiness level and eight

scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 10). This statement illustrated a contrast of readiness levels.

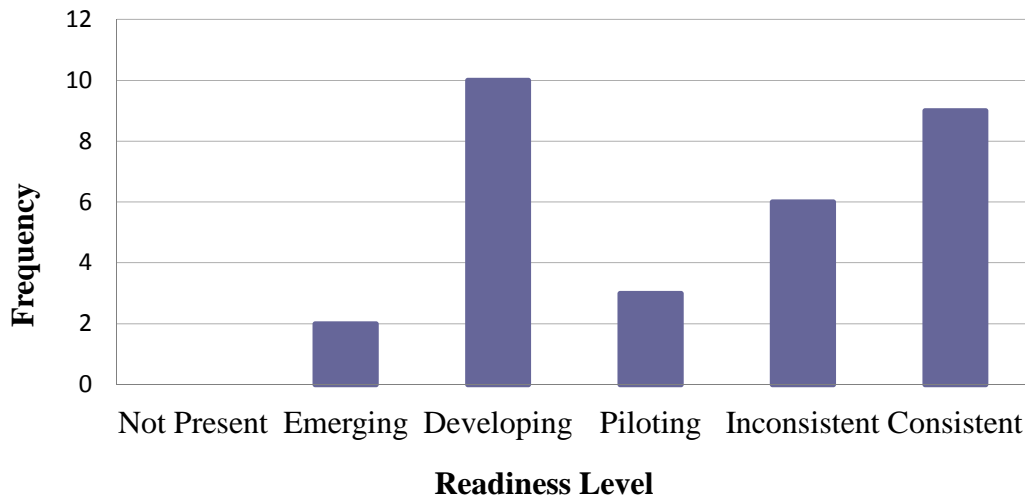


Figure 10. Survey statement 21. Superintendents perceived a contrast in regard to moving beyond sorting and classifying to ensuring opportunities for the improvement of effective practices.

Statement 31, my district's current evaluation system considered differentiated levels of performance contained thirteen scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 11). This statement shared the most scores within the entire principle with statement 2. The contrast of perceptions contained within this principle focused on how the evaluation system defined the differentiated performance levels.

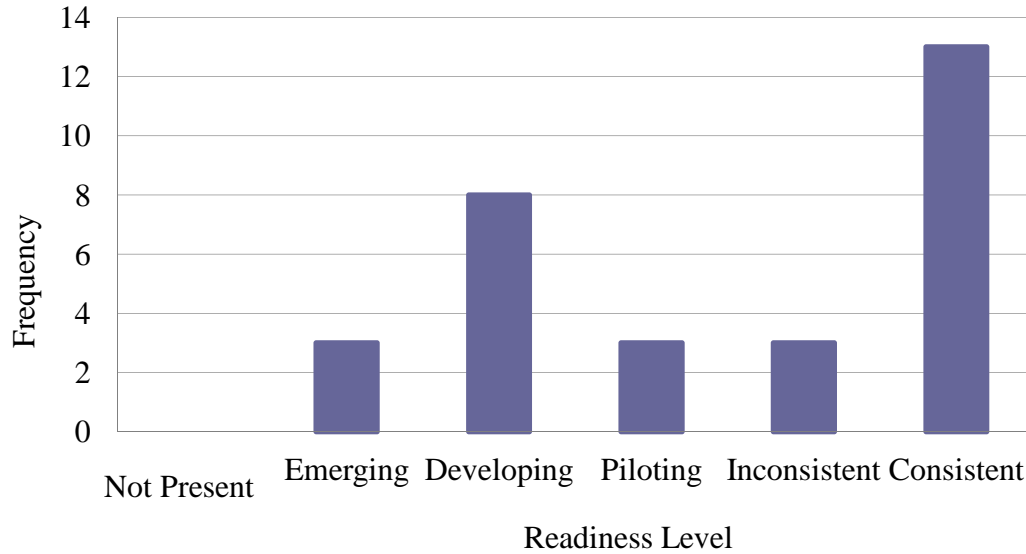


Figure 11. Survey statement 31. Superintendents perceived a contrast concerning differentiated levels of performance.

For Essential Principle 3: probationary period, frequency distribution was also considered for statements 3, 10, 22, 27, and 32. This essential principle contained strong frequency scores for all individual statements. This essential principle illustrated strong frequency scores emphasizing the implemented with fidelity readiness level with four out of the five statements. In contrast, one statement, the district collecting accurate and appropriate performance data, noted strong frequency scores for developing processes and documents.

Statement 3, my district's evaluation system provided mentoring for new teachers, principals, superintendents, special education directors, and career education directors during their first two years of practice, showed eighteen scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 12).

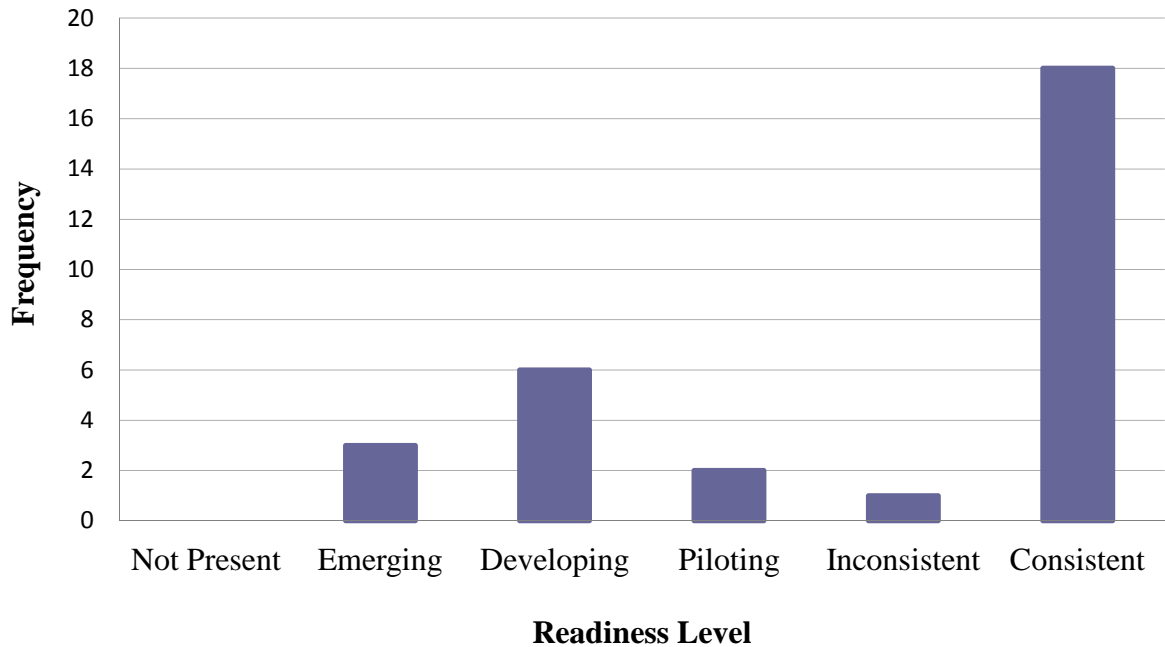


Figure 12. Survey statement 3. Superintendents perceived the readiness level of implemented with fidelity in regard to providing mentoring for new teachers, principals, superintendents, special education directors, and career education directors during their first two years of practice.

Statement 10, my district's evaluation system provided accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data on a new educator's practice, received fifteen scores of developing, designing processes and developing documents readiness level (see Figure 13). This statement was the one contrasting readiness level, emphasizing a need for districts to develop processes and documents to collect accurate and appropriate performance data for new teachers.

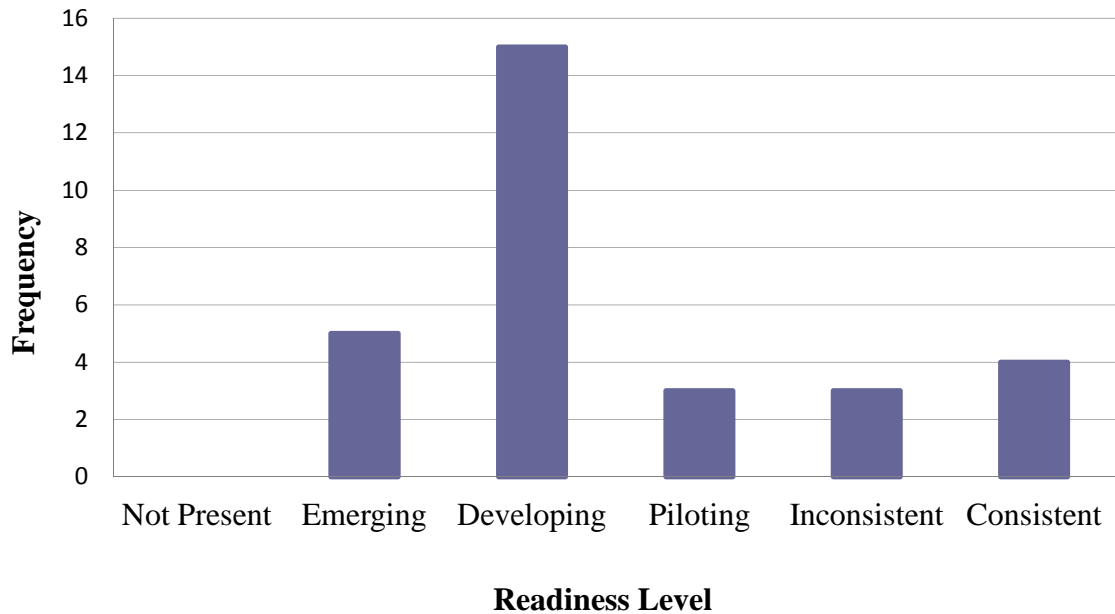


Figure 13. Survey statement 10. Superintendents perceived the readiness level of developing processes and documents when providing accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data on a new educator’s practice.

Statement 22, my district’s evaluation system encouraged confidential, non-evaluative support for new teachers during the probationary period, illustrated thirteen scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 14). Clearly, the majority of superintendents perceived this statement strongly ready for the transition to the MEES.

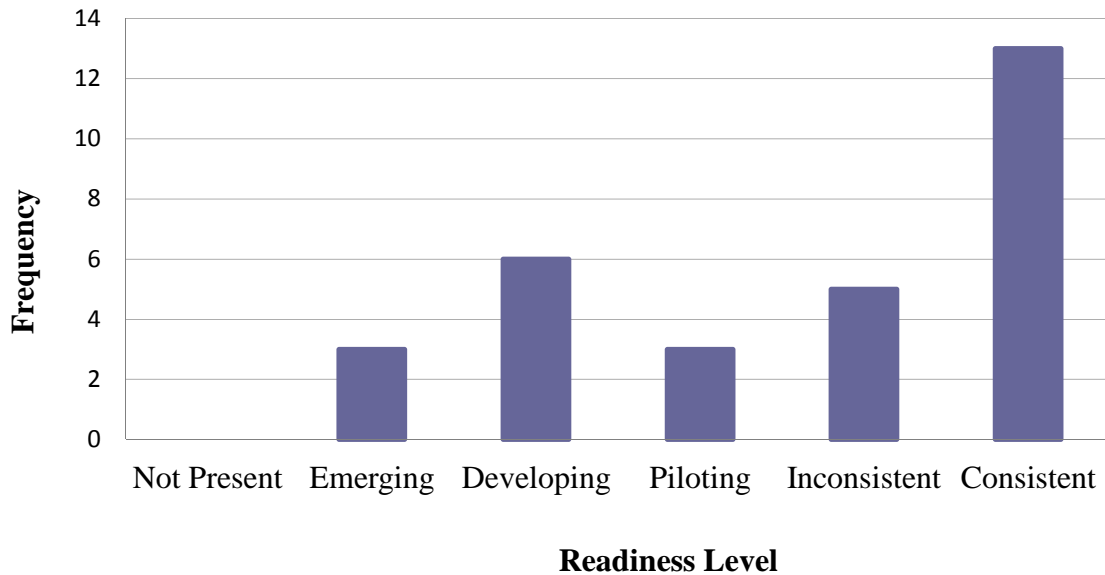


Figure 14. Survey statement 22. Superintendents perceived the readiness level of implemented with fidelity when encouraging confidential, non-evaluative support for new teachers during the probationary period.

Statement 27, my district's evaluation system provided intensive induction and socialization support into the district's culture, obtained eleven scores of implementation with fidelity but also seven scores of developing, designing processes and developing documents readiness level (see Figure 15). This statement contained the most varied responses within Essential Principle 3.

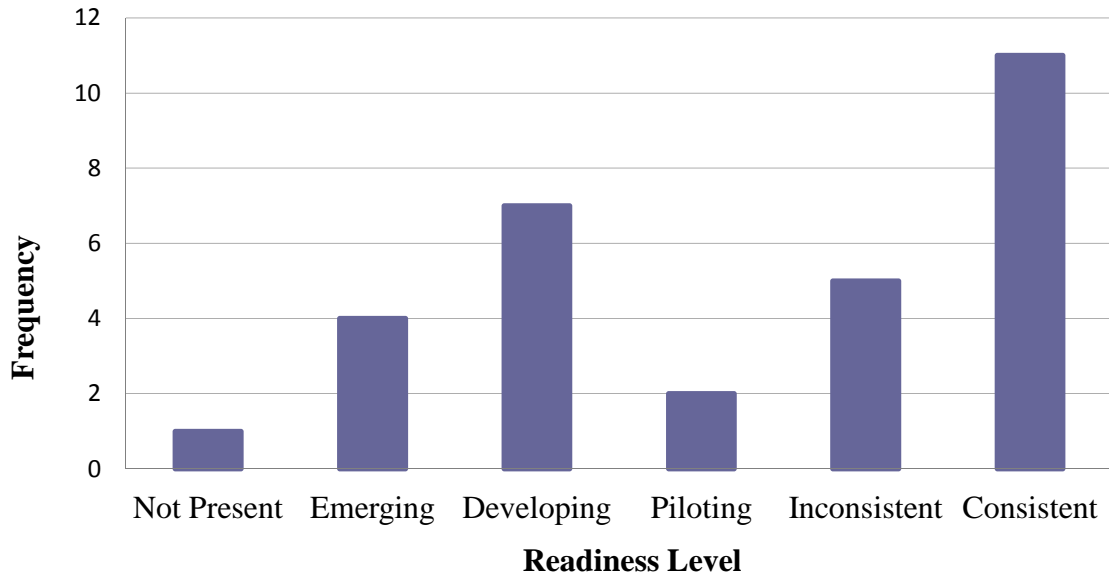


Figure 15. Survey statement 27. Superintendents had contrasting perceptions in providing intensive induction and socialization support into the district’s culture.

Statement 32, my district’s current evaluation system considers probationary period for new educators, detailed seventeen scores of implementation with fidelity. The readiness level of this statement confirmed districts understand the unique traits of a new educator and consider each carefully (see Figure 16).

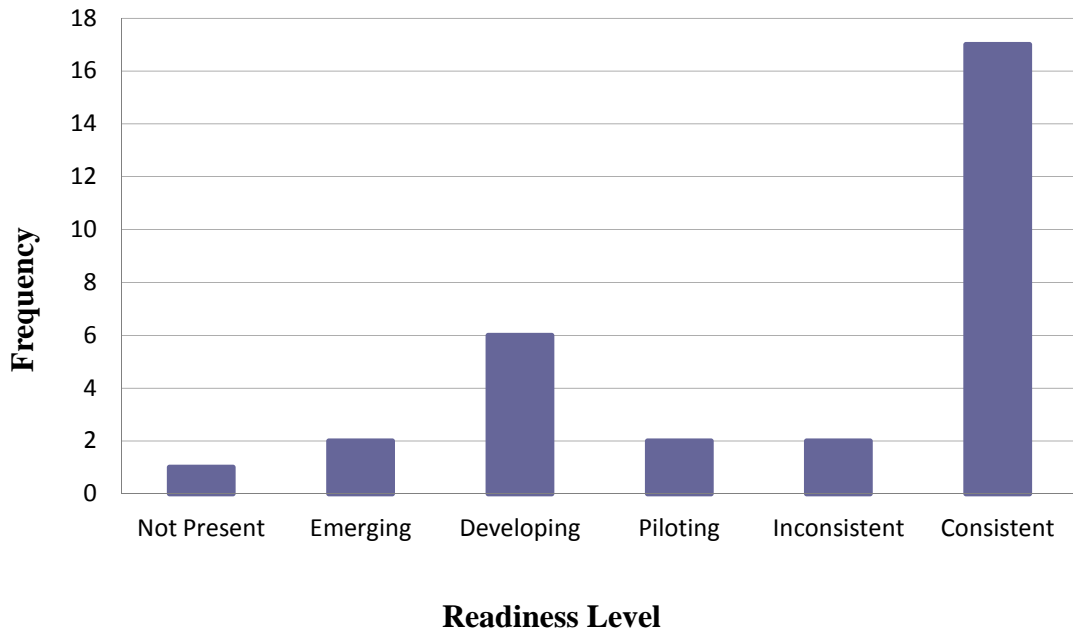


Figure 16. Survey statement 32. Superintendents perceived implemented with fidelity when considering probationary period for new educators.

In Essential Principle 4: student growth measures, statements 4, 11, 16, 28, and 33 were considered. Four out of five survey statements contained high frequency scores for the readiness level of developing processes and documents. Even the statement receiving implemented with fidelity, concerning the understanding of educator evaluation's ultimate goal was improvement of student performance, had contrasting readiness levels (see Figure 17). Consequently, this essential principle is clearly in the developing processes and documents readiness level.

Statement 4, my district's evaluation system clearly showed stakeholders that the ultimate goal is improvement of student performance, illustrated twelve scores of

implementation with fidelity but also nine scores of developing, designing processes and developing documents readiness level (see Figure 17). These perceived readiness levels demonstrated variance in levels of implementation.

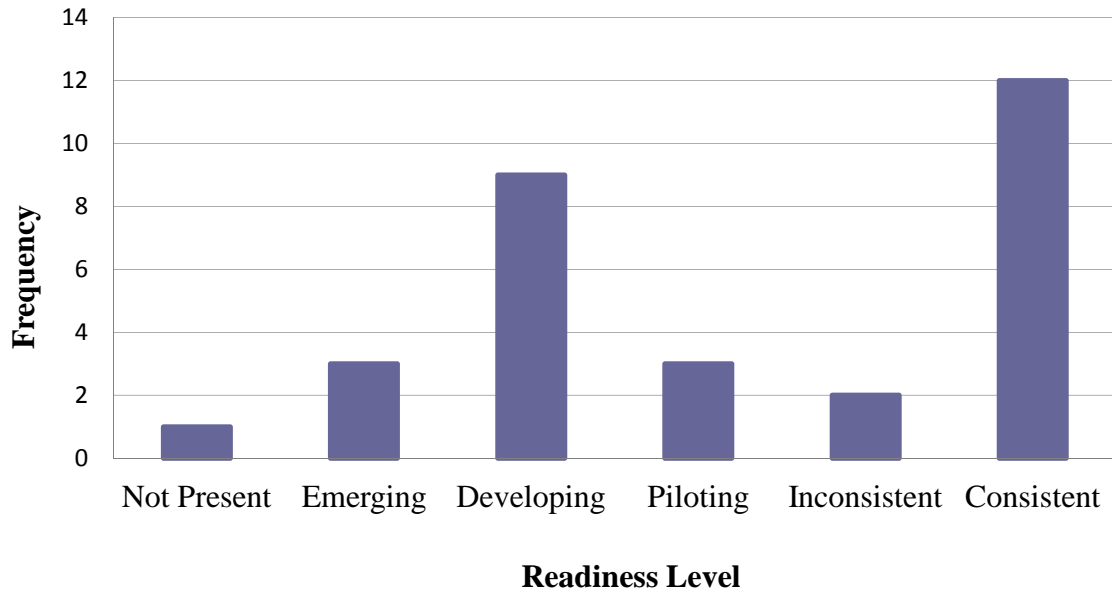


Figure 17. Survey statement 4. Superintendents had contrasting perceptions concerning the understanding of educator evaluation’s ultimate goal was improvement of student performance.

Statement 11, my district’s evaluation system held educators accountable for improvements in student growth, detailed fourteen scores of developing processes and documents readiness level (see Figure 18). The readiness level of this statement confirmed districts were developing a system that held educators accountable for student growth.

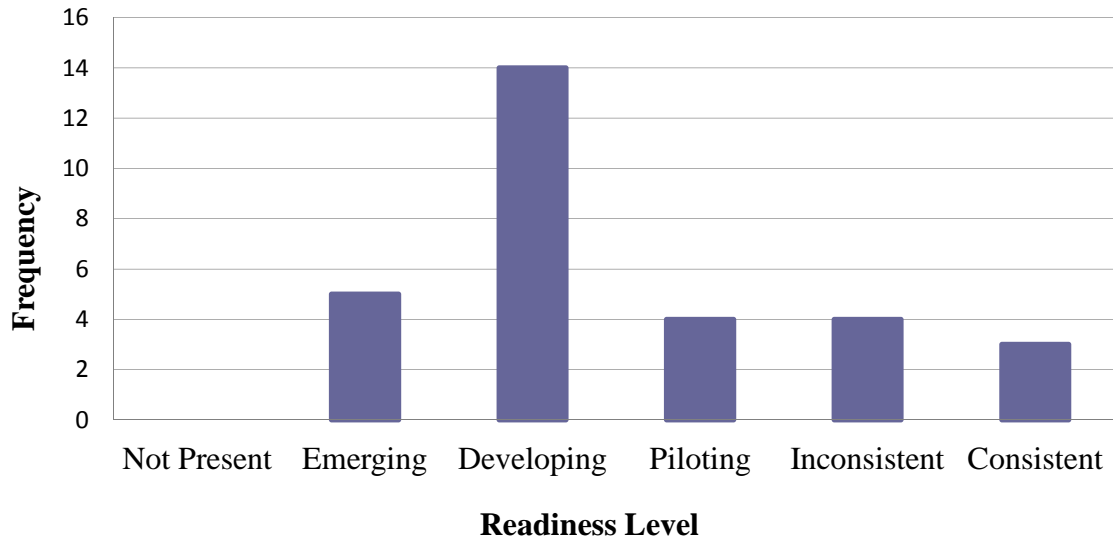


Figure 18. Survey statement 11. Superintendents perceived a developing processes and documents readiness level when holding educators accountable for improvements in student growth.

Statement 16, my district's evaluation system allowed for evidence of multiple measures of growth in student learning playing a significant part of the evaluation process, calculated fourteen scores of developing, designing processes and developing documents readiness level (see Figure 19). The readiness level of this statement confirmed districts were developing a system providing evidence of multiple measures of student growth.

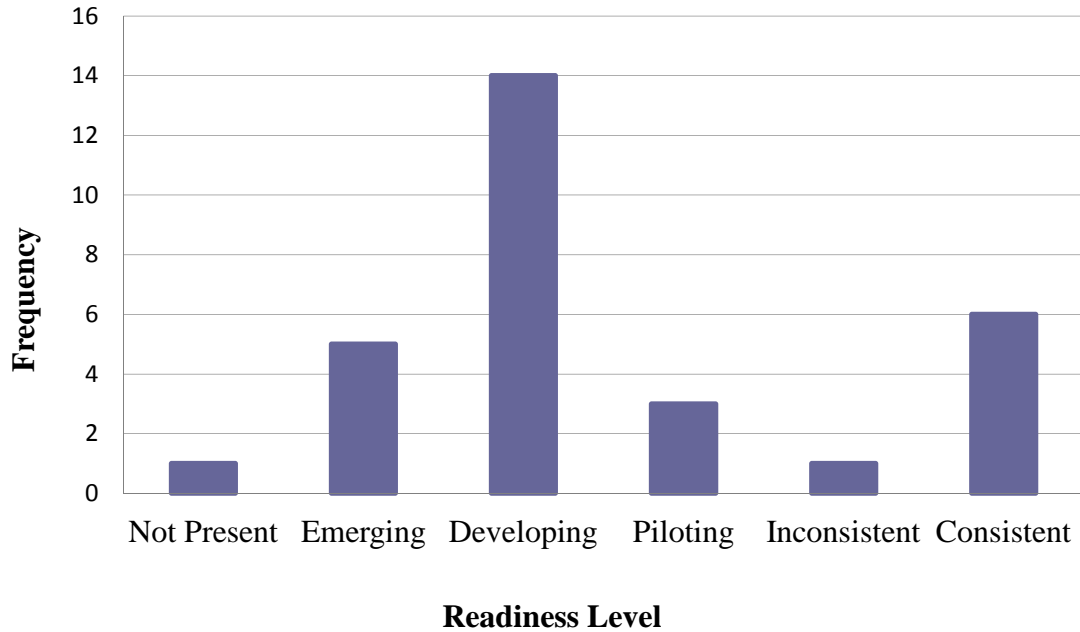


Figure 19. Survey statement 16. Superintendents were developing processes and documents when allowing for evidence of multiple measures of growth in student learning.

Statement 28, my district's evaluation system reflects on the measures of student growth over two periods in time in the evaluation process, contained sixteen scores of developing processes and documents readiness level (see Figure 20). This statement received the most scores within the entire principle. The highest level of agreement among the superintendents occurred within this statement.

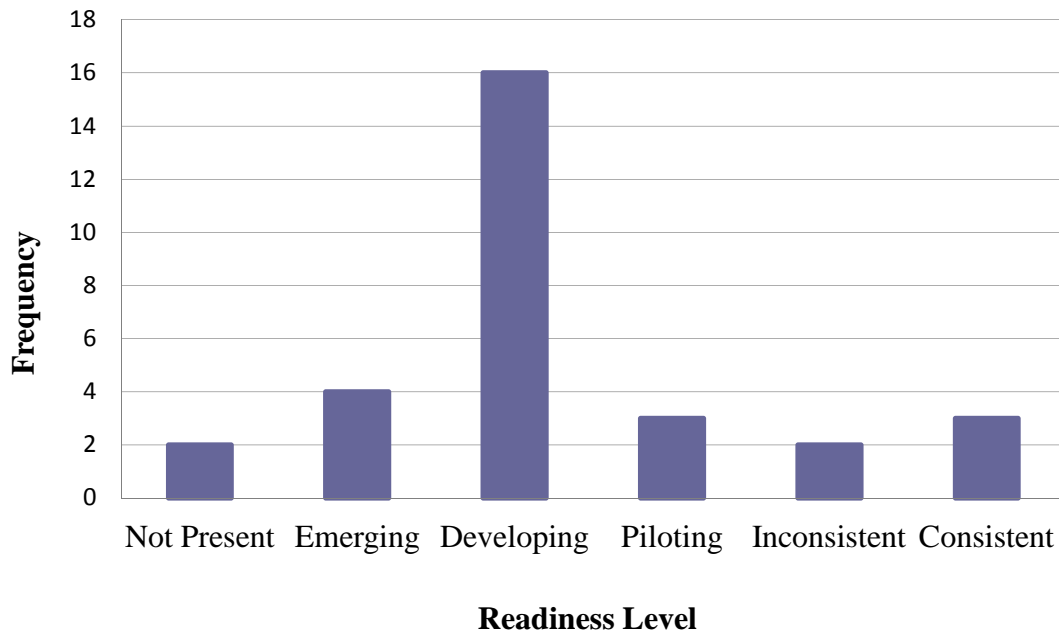


Figure 20. Survey statement 28. Superintendents were developing processes and documents in regard to reflecting on the measures of student growth over two periods in time in the evaluation process.

Statement 33, my district's current evaluation system considers use of measures of student growth in learning, detailed fourteen scores of developing processes and documents readiness level (see Figure 21). The readiness level of this statement confirmed districts were developing a system to consider measures of student growth.

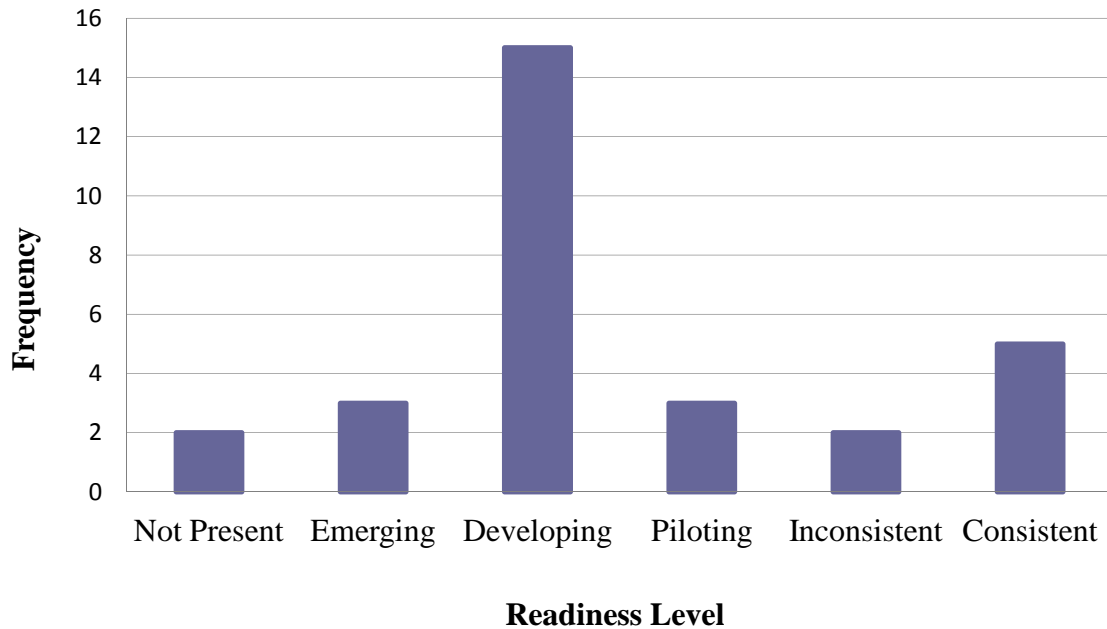


Figure 21. Survey statement 33. Superintendents were developing processes and documents in regard to using measures of student growth in learning.

Essential Principle 5: regular and meaningful feedback, statements 5, 12, 17, 23, and 34 were assessed. Overall the statements showed contrasting readiness levels with four out of five of the statements receiving significant frequency scores for developing processes and documents as well as significant frequency scores for implemented with fidelity. Providing feedback to educators regardless of their career stage was the survey statement most agreed upon by superintendents as implemented with fidelity.

Statement 5, my district's evaluation system enabled professional conversations about educator practice supports and promotes growth, contained 11 scores of implementation with fidelity but also nine scores of developing, designing processes and

documents readiness level. This statement contained contrasting superintendents' perceptions (see Figure 22).

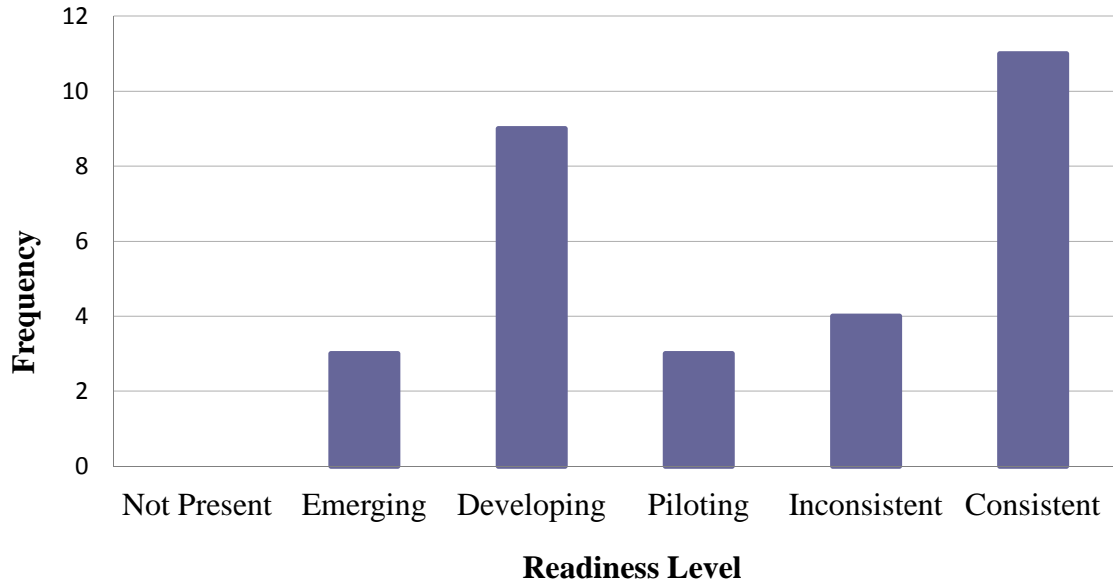


Figure 22. Survey statement 5. Superintendents' perceptions were varied when considering professional conversations about educator practice supports and promote growth.

Statement 12, my district's evaluation system provided deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback to encourage formative development throughout the year, contained fourteen scores of implementation with fidelity but also eight scores of developing processes and documents (see Figure 23). This survey statement noted contrasting perceptions.

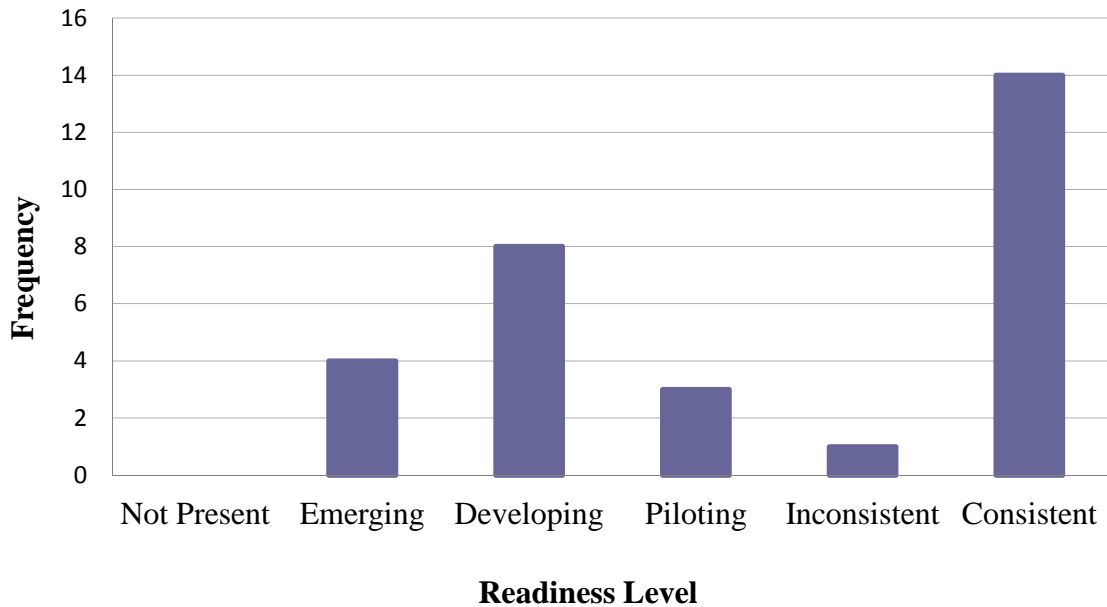


Figure 23. Survey statement 12. Superintendents' perceptions were varied when providing deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback to encourage formative development throughout the year.

Statement 17, my district's evaluation system provided feedback to educators regardless of their career stage and status, detailed fourteen scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 24). This statement illustrated the most agreement within this essential principle.

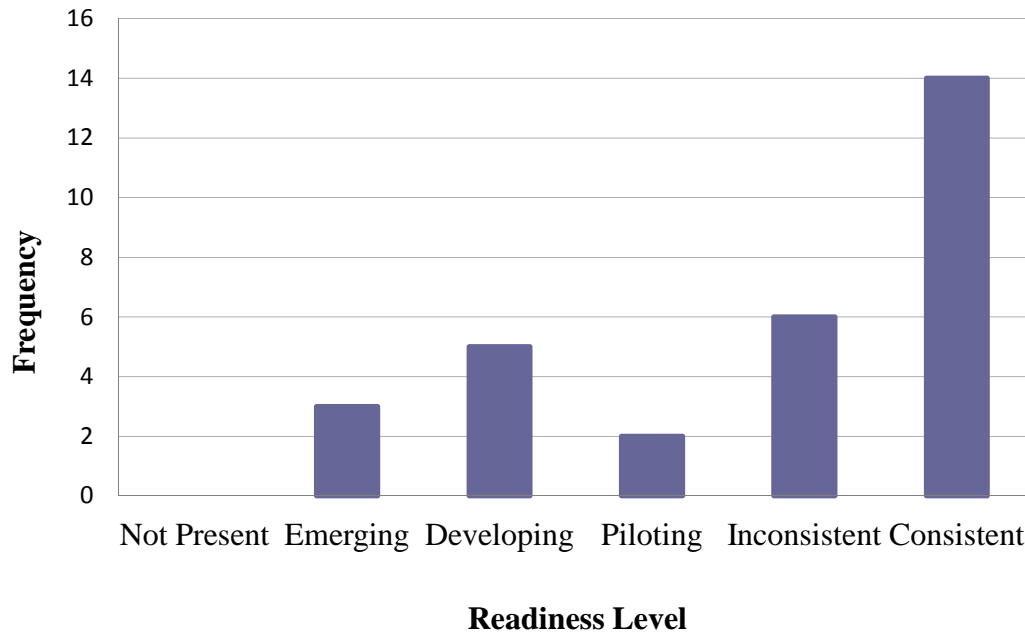


Figure 24. Survey statement 17. Superintendents agreed that providing feedback to educators regardless of their career stage and status was implemented with fidelity.

Statement 23, my district's evaluation system feedback used multiple sources for evidence, distributed ten scores to both implementation with fidelity and developing processes and developing documents readiness level (see Figure 25). The highest level of contrasting perceptions amongst the superintendents occurred within this statement with equal scores of varied levels.

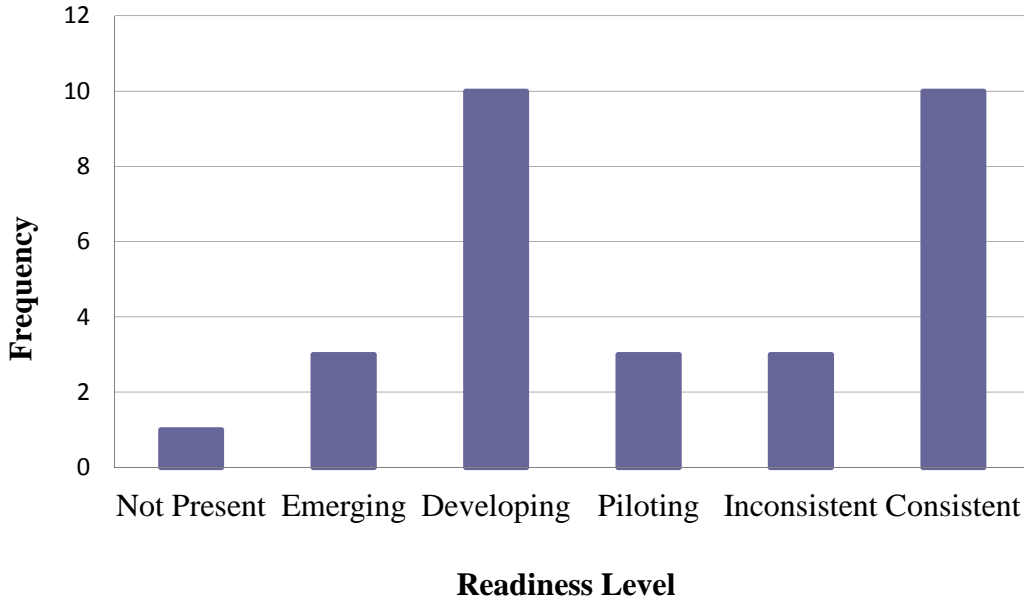


Figure 25. Survey statement 23. Superintendents’ perceptions were equally varied between developing processes and documents and implemented with fidelity in regard to feedback using multiple sources for evidence.

Statement 34, my district’s current evaluation system considered ongoing, deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback, detailed twelve scores of implementation with fidelity and eight scores of developing processes and documents (Figure 26). This statement contained contrasting readiness levels.

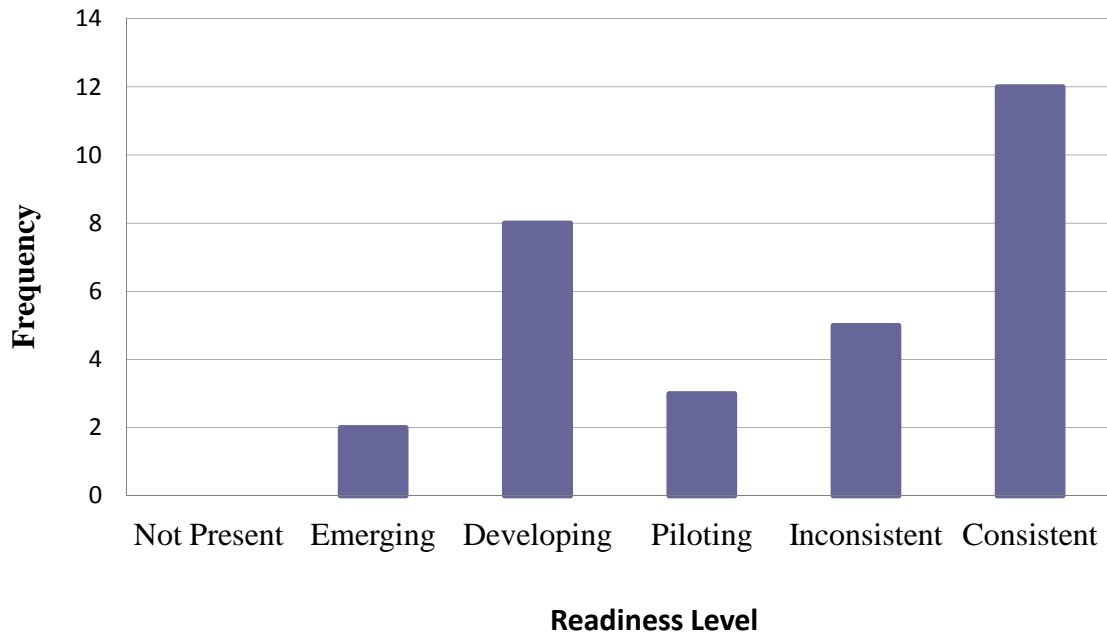


Figure 26. Survey statement 34. Superintendents were varied considering ongoing, deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback.

To explain Essential Principle 6: evaluator training, statements 6, 13, 18, 24, and 35 were assessed. The frequency scores for this essential principle showed contrasting readiness levels of developing processes and documents and also implemented with fidelity. This essential principle also contained the survey statement with the lowest readiness levels noted in the entire survey.

Statement 6, my district's evaluation system allowed for discrete, independent, measureable elements that reliably describe current practice as well as a clear direction for growth, detailed twelve scores of developing, designing processes and documents

readiness level but also ten scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 27).

Clearly, this survey statement illustrated a contrast in readiness levels.

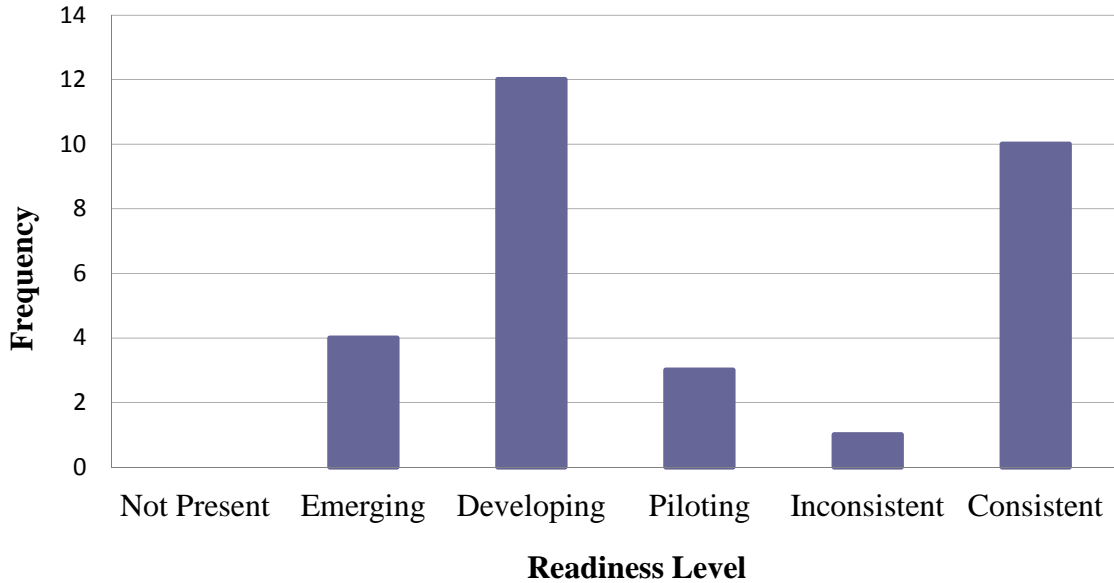


Figure 27. Survey statement 6. Superintendents had contrasting perceptions when allowing for discrete, independent, measureable elements that reliably describe current practice as well as a clear direction for growth.

Statement 13, my district’s evaluation system required continual training for evaluators to ensure ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable, contained nine scores to implementation with fidelity and eight scores to developing processes and documents readiness level (see Figure 28). The varied readiness levels of this survey statement signified a contrast.

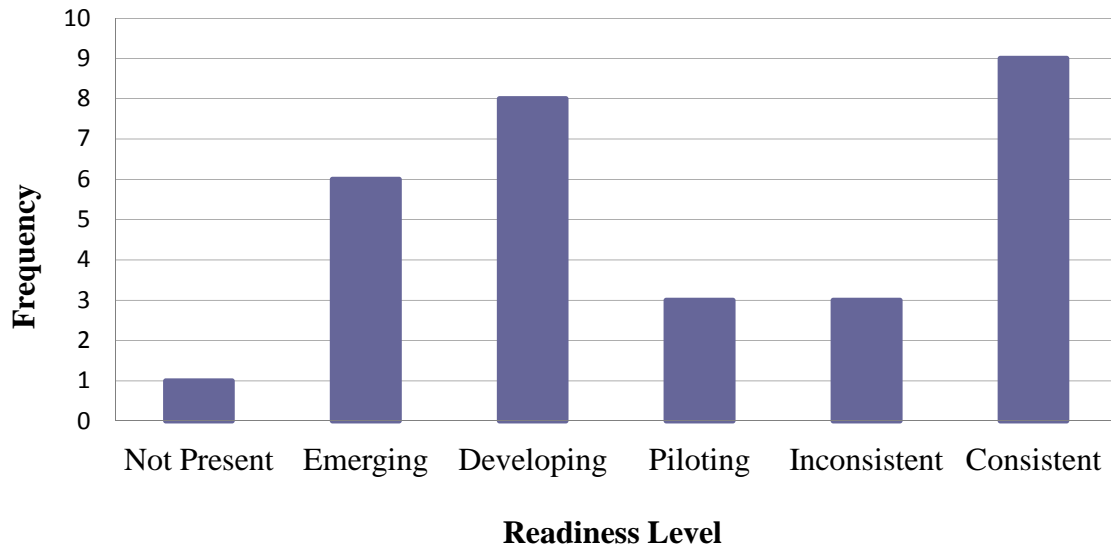


Figure 28. Survey statement 13. Superintendents demonstrated contrasting perceptions when considering continual training for evaluators to ensure ratings were fair, accurate, and reliable.

Statement 18, my district’s evaluation system included master teachers and peers as well as other external, trained third party people from within or outside the district that serve as evaluators to move staff to increased levels of effective practice, illustrated 10 scores to developing processes and developing documents readiness level while also containing nine scores of not present. This statement received the lowest scores of readiness levels perceived by superintendents (see Figure 29). Likewise, the highest level of agreement amongst the superintendents occurred within this statement, highlighting a strong area of weakness concerning including master teachers and peers within the evaluation system. This statement emphasized an urgent principle to be addressed by

districts, regions, and even the state level in order to ensure effective implementation of the MEES.

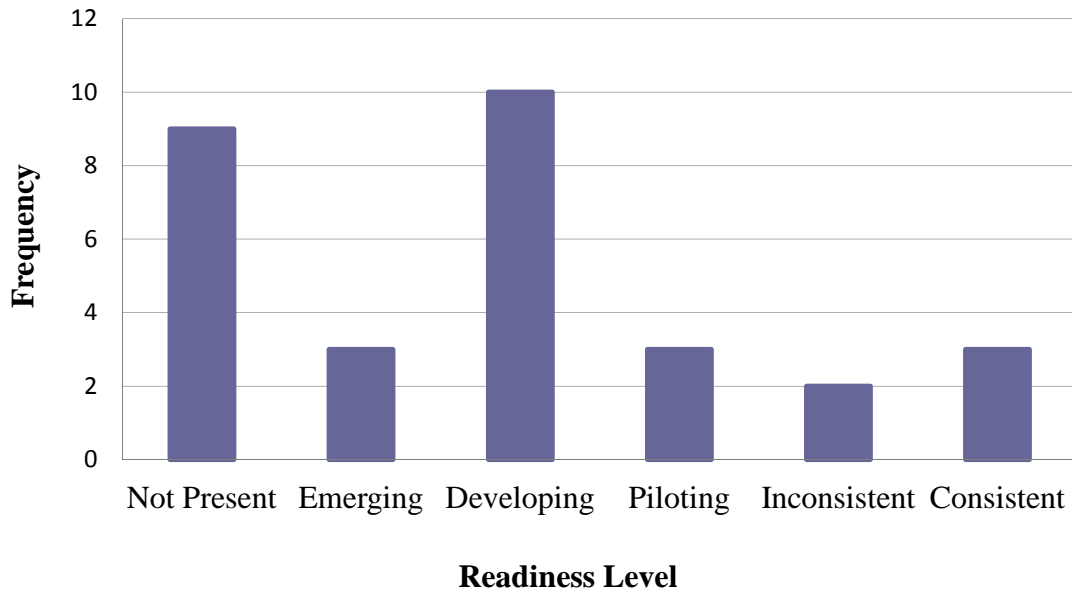


Figure 29. Survey statement 18. This statement provided the lowest scores out of all survey statements. Superintendents perceived low readiness levels in regard to master teachers and peers as well as other external, trained third party people from within or outside the district serving as evaluators to move staff to increased levels of effective practice.

Statement 24, my district’s evaluation system contains evaluator training, detailed thirteen scores to implementation with fidelity (see Figure 30). This statement highlighted superintendents’ perceptions of strong readiness in regard to evaluator training.

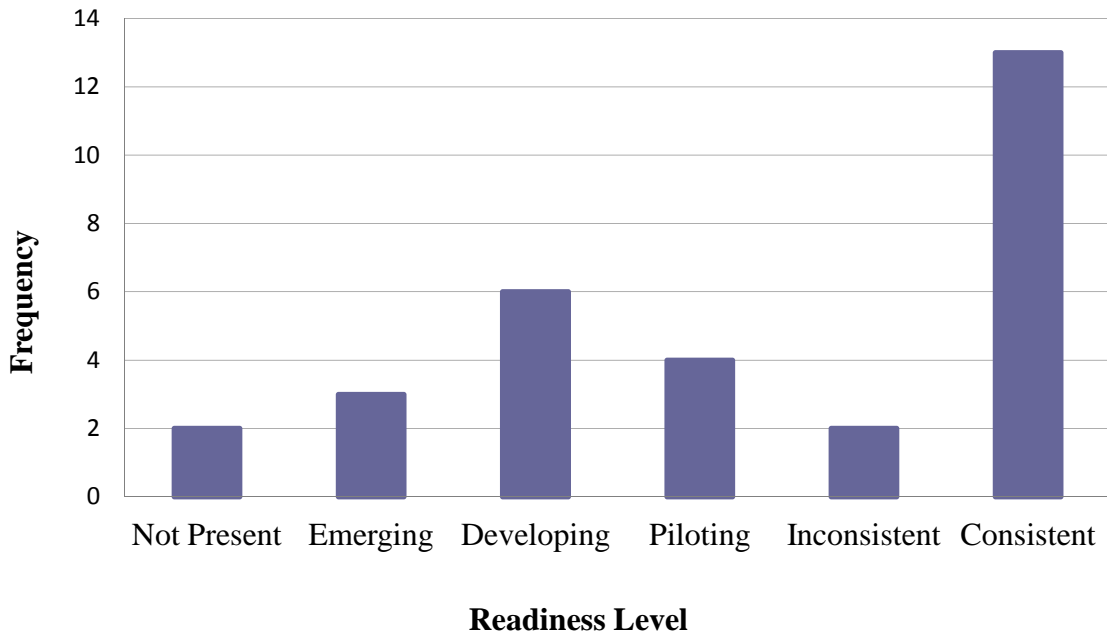


Figure 30. Survey statement 24. Superintendents perceived evaluation systems containing evaluator training as implemented with fidelity.

Statement 35, my district's current evaluation system considered standardized and periodic training for evaluators, contained eleven scores of implementation with fidelity but also seven scores of developing processes and documents (see Figure 31). This statement illustrated contrasting readiness levels.

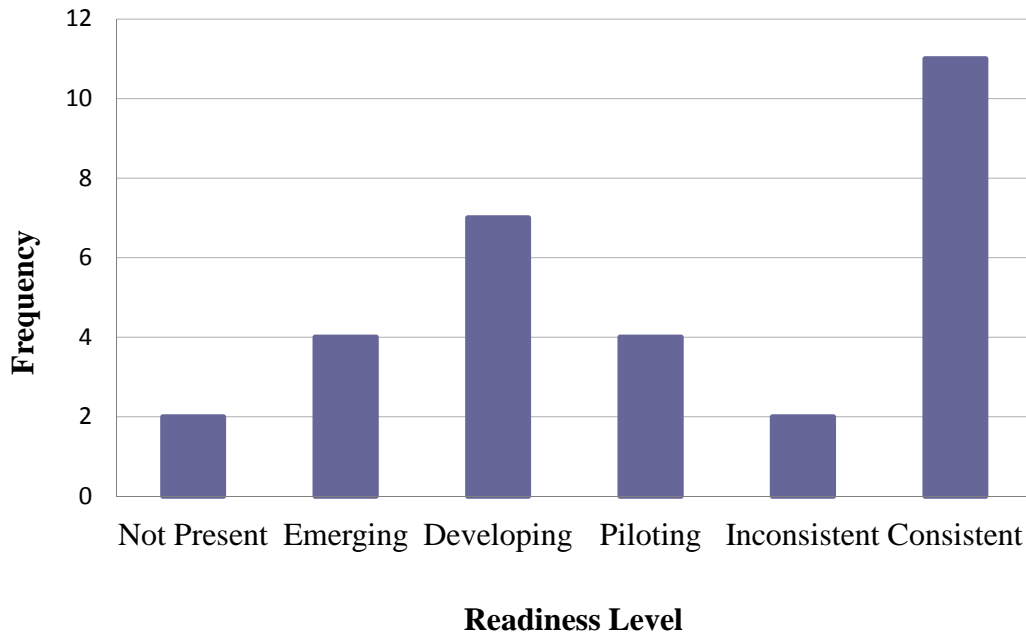


Figure 31. Survey statement 35. Superintendents' perceptions were varied when considering standardized and periodic training for evaluators.

Essential Principle 7: use of evaluation results' statements 7, 14, 19, 25, 29, and 36 were assessed. This essential principle contained five out of six survey statements highlighting contrasting readiness levels from developing processes and documents to implement with fidelity. Using timelines articulated through local policy was the statement illustrating the least contrasting perceptions (see Figure 36).

Statement 7, my district’s evaluation system had ratings of educator effectiveness that guides district decisions, distributed eleven scores to both implementation with fidelity and developing processes and documents readiness level. The highest level of contrasting perceptions among the superintendents occurred within this statement (see Figure 32).

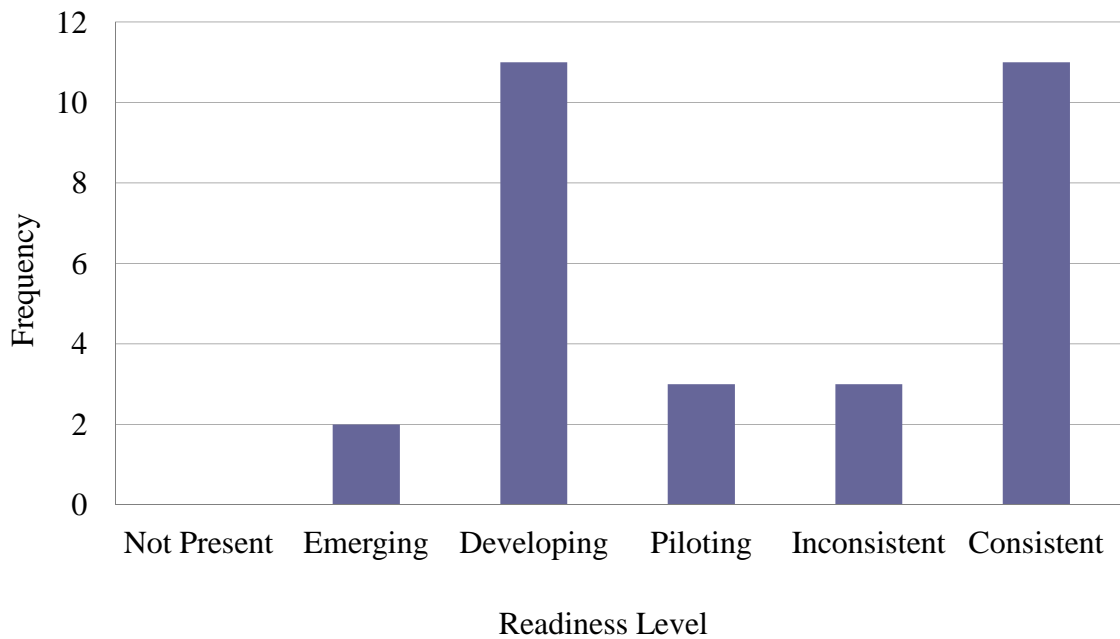


Figure 32. Survey statement 7. Superintendents had contrasting perceptions considering the ratings of educator effectiveness guiding district decisions.

Statement 14, my district’s evaluation system empowered us to recognize and utilize highly effective educators to improve student learning, detailed ten scores of implementation with fidelity, six scores of developing processes and documents, five

scores of implementation inconsistently, and five scores of beginning discussions (see Figure 33). This statement emphasized extremely varied readiness levels.

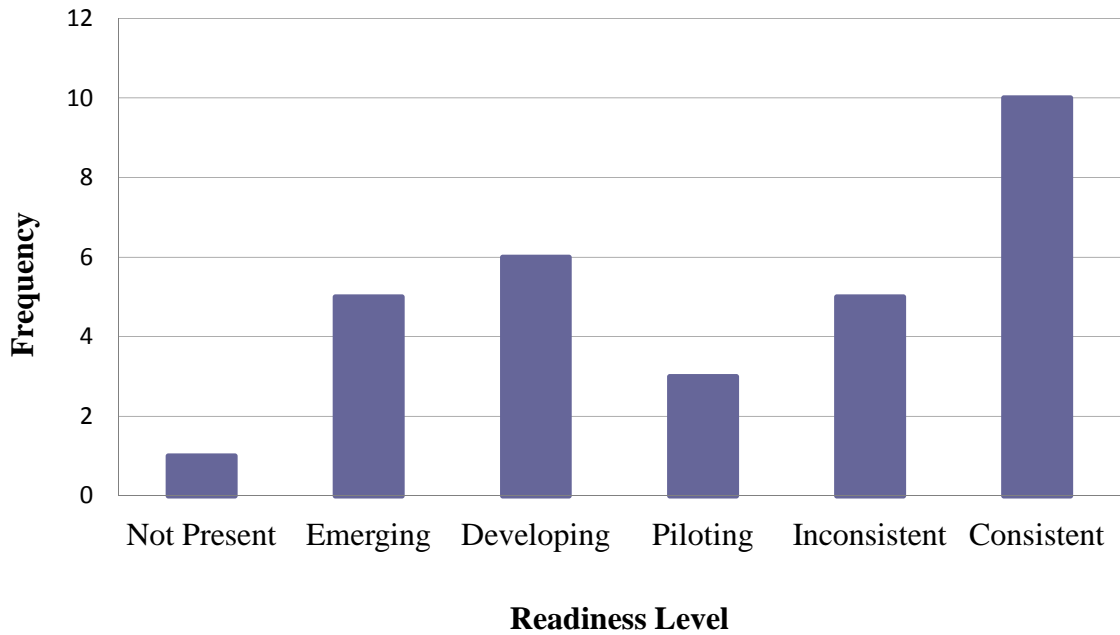


Figure 33. Survey statement 14. Superintendents did not agree on the readiness level for recognizing and utilizing highly effective educators to improve student learning as scores were extremely varied.

Statement 19, my district’s evaluation system documented ineffective educators, those demonstrating sustained periods lacking desired growth, by unsatisfactory evaluations, detailed eleven scores of implementation with fidelity and eight developing processes and documents (see Figure 34). The varied readiness levels showed a contrast in superintendents’ perceptions.

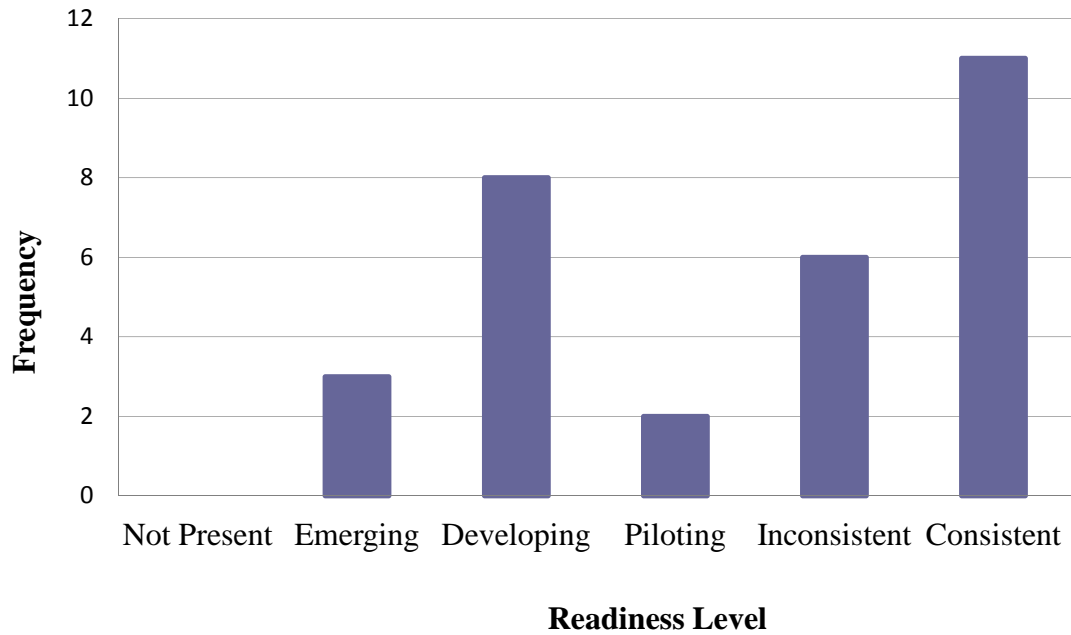


Figure 34. Survey statement 19. Superintendents were varied in regard documenting ineffective educators, those demonstrating sustained periods lacking desired growth, by unsatisfactory evaluations.

Statement 25, my district's evaluation system provided ineffective educators targeted interventions and support to encourage ongoing, formative development, illustrated eleven scores of implementation with fidelity but also eight developing processes and documents (see Figure 35). The contrasting perceived readiness levels indicated varied levels of readiness for this survey statement.

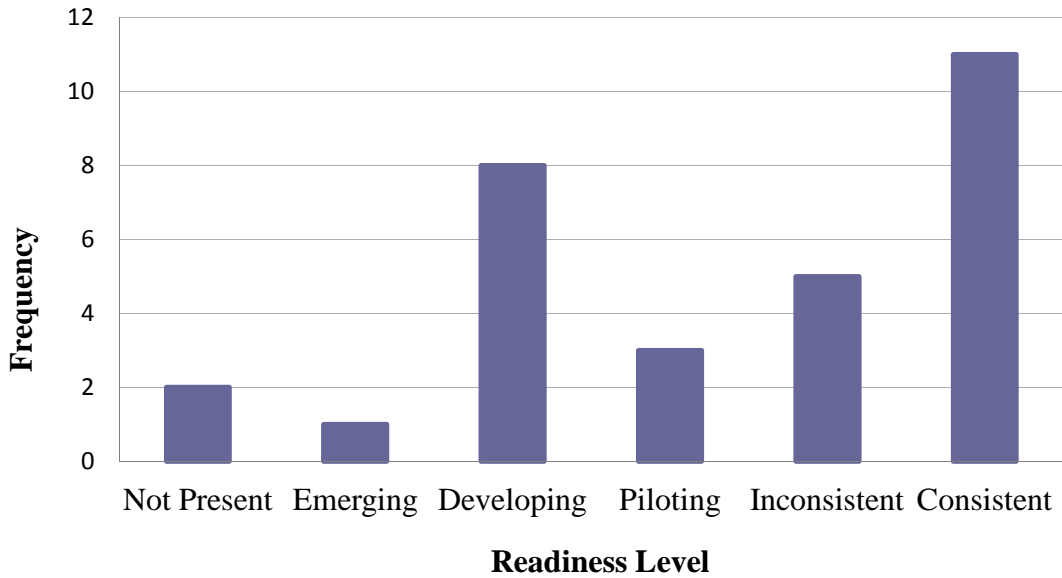


Figure 35. Survey statement 25. Superintendents’ perceptions were varied when considering providing ineffective educators targeted interventions and support to encourage ongoing, formative development.

Statement 29, my district’s evaluation system used timelines articulated through local policy, detailed thirteen scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 36). This survey statement emphasized districts’ readiness of policy development.

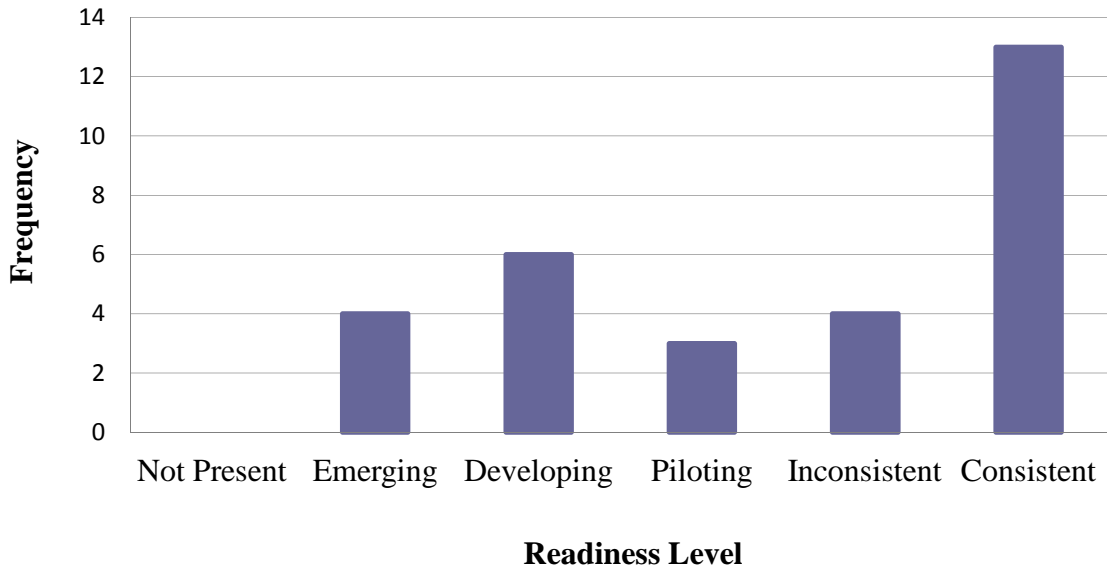


Figure 36. Survey statement 29. Superintendents’ perceptions of using timelines articulated through local policy received the implemented with fidelity readiness level.

Likewise statement 36 highlighted superintendents’ perceptions implemented policy in regard to determinations and other employment decisions. Statement 36, my district’s current evaluation system considered evaluation results to inform personnel employment determinations, decisions, and policy, contained 13 scores of implementation with fidelity (see Figure 37).

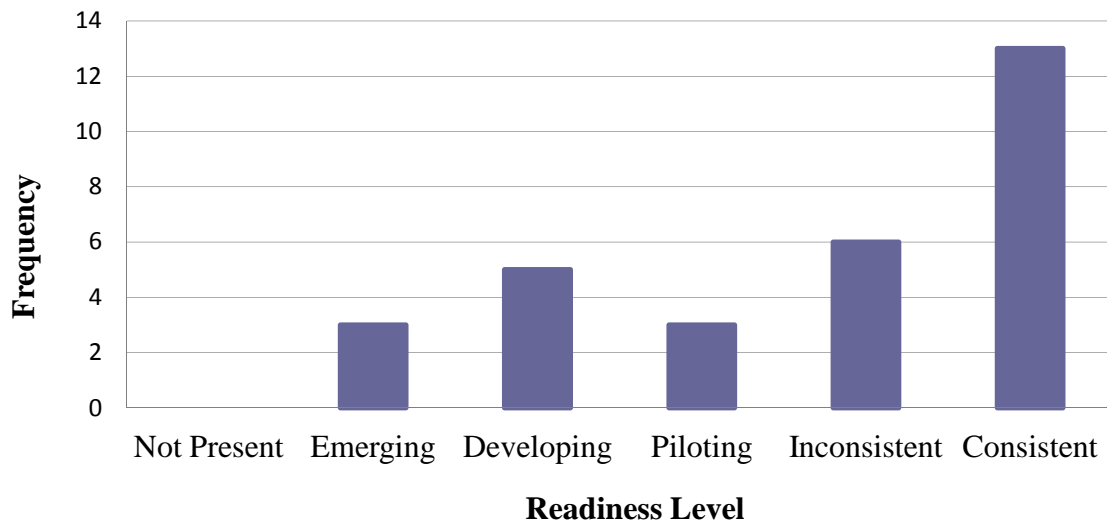


Figure 37. Survey statement 36. Superintendents agreed that considering evaluation results to inform personnel employment determinations, decisions, and policy were implemented with fidelity.

Summary

The superintendents' perceptions noted five out of the seven essential principles implemented with fidelity when considering the mode. The implemented with fidelity essential principles were research-based, clear expectations; probationary period; meaningful feedback; evaluator training; and use of evaluation results. The two essential principles receiving readiness levels of developing processes and documents were differentiated levels of educator performance and use of measures of student growth.

The total mean (M) for each essential principle was calculated in order to rank order the essential principles. When comparing the two methods, a contrast was determined. Standardized and periodic training for evaluators was the essential principle

considered implemented with fidelity. However, it received the sixth position ranking; this was one position lower than the essential principle, differentiated levels of performance, receiving a developing processes and documents readiness level.

Additional contrasts were realized when considering frequency distributions of individual statements within each essential principle. Multiple variances were noted within essential principles 1, 2, 6, and 7. Essential Principle 4: student growth measures was significantly developing processes and documents. Essential Principle 3: probationary period for new teachers and Essential Principle 5: measurements of deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback were clearly perceived as implemented with fidelity.

Chapter Five considered the findings of the study both overall and specifically within individual essential principles. Implications determined an extreme need for additional professional development. Recommendations included professional development, continued developing processes and documents, and additional questions the study revealed.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

Descriptive statistics were utilized in order to determine the readiness levels of superintendents transitioning to the MEES. Modes were calculated from the numerical value placed on survey response levels. The readiness levels perceived by the superintendents in the study revealed five essential principles of effective evaluation were implemented with fidelity and two essential principles of effective evaluation were developing the processes and documents necessary for the transition. Specifically, the five principles implemented with fidelity were research-based practices with clear expectations; evaluation results for personnel decisions; probationary period for new teachers; meaningful, timely feedback; and standardized, periodic training for evaluators. Consequently, the two principles developing processes and documents included differentiated levels of performances and the use of student growth measures.

Then the mean (M) was investigated for each essential principle of effective evaluation in order to rank order each principle. The survey findings resulted with the following ranked in order from highest essential principle to lowest: meaningful and timely feedback; evaluation results for employment decisions; probationary period for new educators; research-based practices and clear expectations; differentiated levels of performance; standardized and periodic training for evaluators; and incorporating measures of student growth.

Lastly, frequency distributions were considered in order for each individual superintendent's perception to be analyzed. The frequency distributions showed the survey statements that were most agreed upon in readiness level. In contrast, the

frequency distributions emphasized the survey statements that were most varied in readiness level.

Findings

The research questions guided the study to determine superintendents' perceptions of readiness levels for each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation. Surprisingly, five questions were answered by the implemented with fidelity readiness level:

1. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating research-based practices into instruction?
2. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to implementing a probationary period for new educators, providing accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data?
3. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to ongoing, meaningful, and timely feedback to educators provided by the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?
4. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to standardized and periodic training for evaluators to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable?
5. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to the evaluation results informing employment determinations, decisions, and policy?

Consequently, two questions were determined to be at the readiness level of developing processes and documents:

1. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to differentiating clearly defined levels of performance and measuring growth?

2. What is the readiness level as determined by Missouri superintendents in regard to incorporating measures of student growth in learning in the Missouri Educator Evaluation System?

In addition to overall essential principles, individual survey statement calculations were considered. To begin with, the study considered the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation Clear Expectations of Research-Based Practices. Missouri superintendents determined the readiness level of implemented with fidelity in regard to incorporating research-based practices into instruction.

Secondly, the study investigated the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation Differentiated Levels of Performance. Missouri superintendents determined the readiness level of differentiating clearly defined levels of performance and measuring growth as developing the processes and documents.

Thirdly, the study measured the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation of a Probationary Period for New Educators. Missouri superintendents determined the readiness level of implementing a “probationary period for new educators, providing accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data” (MODESE, 2012b, p. 1) as implemented with fidelity.

Additionally, this study postulated the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation of Incorporating Measures of Student Growth into the Educator Evaluation. Missouri superintendents determined the readiness level of incorporating measures of student growth in learning as developing processes and documents.

Likewise, this study considered the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation of Meaningful, Timely Feedback. Missouri superintendents determined the readiness level of “ongoing, timely, deliberate and meaningful Feedback” (MODESE, 2012b, p. 1) as implemented with fidelity.

In the same way, this study introduced the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation Periodic Training for Evaluators. Missouri superintendents determined the readiness level of standardized and “periodic training for evaluators to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable” (MODESE, 2012b, p. 1) as implemented with fidelity; however, the individual survey statements’ frequency scores for this essential principle showed contrasting readiness levels of developing processes and documents and also implemented with fidelity.

Lastly, this study explored the Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation Results to Inform Employment Decisions. Missouri superintendents determined the readiness level of the “evaluation results informing employment determinations, decisions, and policy” (MODESE, 2012b, p. 1) as implemented with fidelity. This essential principle contained varied responses within most of the individual survey statements.

Conclusions

These findings alone were misleading when focusing on the frequency distributions of specific survey statements within each individual essential principle. Upon further investigation, superintendents’ perceptions were much more varied than the mode determined. In fact, the following essential principles contained very contrasting perceptions:

1. Essential Principle 1: research-based practices and clear expectations

2. Essential principle 2: differentiated performance levels
3. Essential Principle 6: standardized and periodic training for evaluators
4. Essential Principle 7: use of evaluation results

Consequently, each of these essential principles was considered implemented with fidelity except essential principle 2. Each of these principles may not be implemented as completely as measured by the mode.

Implemented with fidelity readiness level for Essential Principle 1 was expected as the PBTE required research-based practices, but it did contain some contrasting readiness levels within individual statements. A component of this principle that may not have been fully considered was the clear expectation of proven performance practices utilized daily in the classroom. Educators must understand the need for continuous use of research-based, proven practices emphasized daily to ensure the most efficient student gains of learning possible.

For Essential Principle 2, the readiness level of developing processes and documents suggested that districts are moving away from placing educators on an evaluation level based on years of experience (see Figure 8). Instead differentiated levels of performance must be developed to consider individualized educator growth opportunities.

Consequently, Essential Principle 3 resulted as implemented with fidelity. This was not surprising since this principle was present in the PBTE. The frequency distributions of survey statements may have indicated districts' desire to continually improve methods of development for new teachers due to the complexity of the job as the readiness levels were varied within this otherwise implemented with fidelity principle.

In the Essential Principle 4, results were not surprising due to the fact that “multiple measures seem to be an absolute necessity if we are to accurately measure the effect of teachers on students” (Marzano & Toth, 2013, p. 25). This essential principle was significantly lower in perceived readiness levels than the other principles. This essential principle has the highest need for development.

Surprisingly, Essential Principle 5 was determined as implemented with fidelity. This result produced additional questions from the researcher about the quality of feedback currently provided to educators due to the fact that current research stresses the lack of meaningful and relevant feedback in evaluation systems.

Further investigation of individual survey statements emphasized a contrast within this principle. Superintendents’ perceptions of implemented with fidelity were not without varied responses; the need for initial training for the MEES is needed but also periodic, continuous trainings are needed to keep evaluators focused on consistent ratings.

Lastly, Essential Principle 7 was determined implemented with fidelity. When analyzing the individual survey statements, the survey statements contained multiple scores contrasting from developing processes and documents to implement with fidelity. The varied responses within most of the individual survey statements indicated the need for additional attention to be paid to all aspects of this principle.

Implications for Practice

The results from this study revealed an obvious implication concerning measuring student growth. First, the analysis of the results of the study discovered that many superintendents were developing processes and documents related to measuring student

growth effectively within the evaluation system. This essential principle emphasized the largest area of weakness. Likewise, with the educators' purpose of evaluation focusing on improving student learning, the need for measuring student growth was recognized. Marzano and Toth (2013) reiterated, "if students aren't demonstrating knowledge growth in a particular teacher's classroom, then that teacher is ineffective" (p. 16). The necessity of providing the pieces of evidence of student growth followed research of effective teaching. In fact, Tomlinson and Moon (2013) explained, "to help students make the kind of academic progress they need and deserve, it's essential for a teacher to understand and address student readiness needs" (p. 43).

Additionally, this study introduced an unexpected implication involving the principle of meaningful, timely feedback. The research stressed the need for the feedback to guide the growth of the educator, and superintendents' perceptions of student growth measures were determined as developing processes and documents. The superintendents' perceptions recorded for this essential principle reflected implemented with fidelity. This result contrasted views of Toch and Rothman (2008) who considered current evaluation systems "superficial, capricious, and often don't even directly address the quality of instruction" (p. 1). Likewise the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2012) reported that educators do not invest in high-quality feedback to aid in teacher growth. Additional considerations need to be given into this essential principle.

Above all, the perceptions of the superintendents involved in the study supported the need for continued, thorough professional development at the district, regional, and state level in order to implement the MEES correctly and effectively. Professional development was confirmed as necessary due to the many varied frequency distributions

in order to help educators' transition effectively. This belief in development and growth of individual educators requires districts to "provide teachers with direct support in their efforts to improve" (Marzano & Toth, 2013, p. 111).

Recommendations for Future Research

The need for continued professional development appeared most necessary in order for the evaluation system to be effective based on the varied frequency distributions discovered throughout the contrasts within many individual survey statements. Although five out of the seven Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation received implemented with fidelity, multiple survey statements throughout the various principles determined contrasting perceptions in readiness level. The contrasting perceptions of superintendents highlighted a need for general training to continue to understand each essential principle with only the probationary period for new teachers perceived implemented with fidelity consistently.

This professional development has begun through MODESE webinars. As districts move forward, these webinars may provide an efficient method for helping all educators within the district better understand each Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation. Likewise, Regional professional development centers will need to develop specific essential principle trainings for both teachers and administrators due to the different roles each possess in the evaluation system.

In addition to the need for general professional development to help all educators understand the MEES, additional professional development must be created for educators to understand how to use measures of student growth within the evaluation. This Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation was determined to be the lowest readiness

level. Professional development for understanding effective measures, how to incorporate the calculations into the evaluation system, and measures considered over multiple periods of time are some specific areas of this essential principle needing professional development.

Another professional development Essential Principle of Effective Evaluation identified was the need for differentiated levels of evaluation. The need for this professional development in evaluation implied the dedication each district has to improve educators new to the profession as well as the teacher with multiple years of experience. This understanding of constant growth and self-reflection formed within professional development transformed prior belief systems about the purpose of evaluation. The regional professional development centers can assist superintendents by providing specific training on this essential principle and opportunities for collaborative discussions among the superintendents in order to assist the development of this essential principle.

In addition to professional development, superintendents' perceptions emphasized two Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation as developing processes and documents. In regard to measures of student growth and differentiated levels of educator performance, both principles suggested the need for further planning to develop processes within the evaluation system. Likewise, documents developed are necessary to clarify expectations for educators within the district. Clarity of the teacher expectations for each level will require multiple collaboration sessions within the district level. The development of effective documents is vital for the evaluation system to reach the goal of assisting teacher growth annually, so these principles need immediate planning and

thorough attention given in order to be in place effectively within the 2014 -2015 school year as mandated by MODESE.

The diverse levels of readiness superintendents' perceived created additional questions. The question of whether teachers perceived the same implementation level as superintendents or principals would create an interesting study. Such a comparative study of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of implementation levels of each essential principle of effective evaluation may have illustrated differing views or confirmed the results from this study.

On the other hand, another descriptive study would also be beneficial. Expanding the study to include all Missouri superintendents may have reiterated the perceptions recorded in the geographical region of the state. However, expanding the study to include all Missouri superintendents may have presented different results. Either way, the expansion process would have provided valuable information for the transition to the MEES. Likewise, a descriptive study of readiness levels of one of the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation determined as developing could be considered within school districts, geographical regions, or statewide. The administrator and the teacher perceptions concerning the developing principle may provide additional insights.

Additionally, a qualitative study that considered district methods of providing meaningful feedback for educator growth would have been interesting. The result of implemented with fidelity of meaningful feedback allowed for additional questions. Curiosity of specific techniques taught to administrators to ensure effective feedback by each district could be considered. This study could determine patterns of similar methods utilized by districts, provide struggling districts new ideas for implementation purposes,

and validate this study or confirm research-based deficits documented in regard to effective feedback.

Summary

The MODESE (2012b) determined seven Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation in responses to the ESEA Flexibility Request. These seven principles make up the criterion the MODESE has classified as relevant to aiding teacher growth and student achievement. Missouri superintendents have begun the transition from PBTE to the MEES in order to fulfill the requirements of ESEA Flexibility Request.

The study noted multiple findings relevant to educators in Missouri. The weakest readiness level reflected educators using student growth measures over at least two time periods to show student achievement. Student growth incorporated into an evaluation system was the essential principle most superintendents determined to be developing. Likewise, in the developing stages readiness level was noted with differentiated levels of performance. The analysis of the study discovered superintendents are transitioning from systems that differentiated based on years of experience into a more structured process focusing on teacher growth and student achievement. Both these essential principles require a concentrated focus for planning the processes and documents necessary to make for an effective transition.

Fortunately, superintendents revealed five of the principles to be implemented with fidelity. However, the frequency distributions for each survey statement highlighted many contrasts in perceptions within each of the principles: research-based, clear expectations; differentiated levels of performance; evaluator training; and use of evaluation results.

Another interesting finding ranked in order the seven Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation, and the result did not mirror the mode determinations. Although the essential principle of differentiated levels of educator performance received a mode score of developing processes and documents, the ranked order mean (*M*) placed this principle as the third lowest principle above one essential principle, standardized and periodic training for evaluators which received implemented with fidelity as the mode determined readiness level. This contrast of readiness levels needs to be considered in ensure complete implementation in the future.

Ultimately every district could benefit from additional professional development in order to transfer successfully to the MEES. Districts must consider individual readiness levels and plan additional professional development based on the current needs of the staff. Regionally, tiered professional development must allow for training centers to meet the needs of all districts in the state with varied levels of training offered. In addition, the MODESE contributed to the professional development efforts with webinars educators can access as needed. No matter the approach an educator has taken to better understand the MEES, the most important conclusion for all educators is the need to actively pursue individual, professional growth each year in order to best serve each child placed under the care of the district.

Appendix A

Survey Statements

I understand and am willing to participate in the proposed study. Yes No

Please answer the following questions while reflecting on the current status of your district's practices in regards to evaluation. These questions were generated from the Missouri Department of Education's website (MODESE, 2013b):

0. Not Present

1. Emerging—beginning discussions

2. Developing—designing processes/ developing documents

3. Piloting Changes through DESE

4. Inconsistent Implementation

5. Implementation with fidelity

1. My district's current evaluation system allows students to actively participate and be successful in the learning process.
2. My district's evaluation system defines differentiated levels of performance instead of years of service across a professional continuum, allowing the clear determination of growth and improvement across the scale.
3. My district's evaluation system provides mentoring for new teachers, principals, superintendents, special education directors, and career education directors during their first two years of practice.
4. My district's evaluation system clearly shows stakeholders that the ultimate goal is improvement of student performance.
5. My district's evaluation system enables professional conversations about educator practice supports and promotes growth.
6. My district's evaluation system uses reliable and valid measures of performance in the evaluation process.
7. My district's evaluation system has ratings of educator effectiveness that guides district decisions.
8. My district's evaluation system considers various forms of assessment used to monitor and manage student learning.
9. My district's evaluation system allows for discrete, independent, measureable elements that reliably describe current practice as well as a clear direction for growth.
10. My district's evaluation system provides accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data on a new educator's practice.
11. My district's evaluation system holds educators accountable for improvements in student growth.
12. My district's evaluation system provides deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback to encourage formative development throughout the year.
13. My district's evaluation system requires continual training for evaluators to ensure ratings are fair, accurate, and reliable.
14. My district's evaluation system empowers us to recognize and utilize highly effective educators to improve student learning.

15. My district's evaluation system ensures the teacher is prepared and knowledgeable of the content.
16. My district's evaluation system allows for evidence of multiple measures of growth in student learning playing a significant part of the evaluation process.
17. My district's evaluation system provides feedback to educators regardless of their career stage and status.
18. My district's evaluation system includes master teachers and peers as well as other external, trained third party people from within or outside the district that serve as evaluators to move staff to increased levels of effective practice.
19. My district's evaluation system documents ineffective educators, those demonstrating sustained periods lacking desired growth, by unsatisfactory evaluations.
20. My district's current evaluation system shows that the teacher keeps current on instructional knowledge and seeks and explores changes in teaching behaviors that improve student performance.
21. My district's evaluation system moves beyond sorting and classifying to ensuring opportunities for the improvement of effective practice.
22. My district's evaluation system encourages confidential, non-evaluative support for new teachers during the probationary period.
23. My district's evaluation system feedback uses multiple sources for evidence.
24. My district's evaluation system contains evaluator training.
25. My district's evaluation system provides ineffective educators targeted interventions and support to encourage ongoing, formative development.
26. My district's current evaluation system measures the teacher as a responsible professional in the overall mission of the school.
27. My district's evaluation system provides intensive induction and socialization support into the district's culture.
28. My district's evaluation system reflects on the measures of student growth over two periods in time in the evaluation process.
29. My district's evaluation system uses timelines articulated through local policy.
30. My district's current evaluation system considers research-based practices.
31. My district's current evaluation system considers differentiated levels of performance.
32. My district's current evaluation system considers probationary period for new educators.
33. My district's current evaluation system considers use of measures of student growth in learning.
34. My district's current evaluation system considers ongoing, deliberate, meaningful, and timely feedback.
35. My district's current evaluation system considers standardized and periodic training for evaluators.
36. My district's current evaluation system considers evaluation results to inform personnel employment determinations, decisions, and policy.

Appendix B

Introduction Letter

<Date>

Dear Superintendent:

My name is Stacy Hollingsworth, and I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. I am conducting a study that will determine the perceptions of Southwest Missouri superintendents in regard to the transition to the new Missouri Educator Evaluation System. The survey is based on the seven essential principles of effective evaluation the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2012) has developed. The perceptions of each district's readiness level to move to the new evaluation system will be examined. The data collected will determine areas of need for additional professional development, strengths, and weaknesses. This information will allow for self-reflection on the current status of each district.

All of the information will be completely confidential with no district identifying questions asked. his survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. As a sign of understanding the purpose of the study and agreement to participate, please click on the following link to be connected to the web-based survey:

(Link inserted here)

Your honest responses are truly appreciated and will be used to assist Missouri educators in making a smooth transition into this new evaluation system. Consent is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The identity of the participants, as well as the identity of the school district, will remain confidential and anonymous in the dissertation or any future publications of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Stacy Hollingsworth
shollingsworth@wcr7.org
417-673-6055

Appendix C

LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE: July 31, 2013

TO: Stacy Hollingsworth
FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [483632-1] Superintendents' Perceptions of Readiness in Regard to Transitioning to the Missouri Educator Evaluation System to Fulfill the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Request

IRB REFERENCE #: [483632-1]
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: July 23, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE: July 31, 2014
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research project. Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the completion/amendment form for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of July 31, 2014.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Tameka Moore at (618)616-7027 or tmoore@lindenwood.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

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Vita

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Previous administrative positions included community educator director for Columbus Unified School District in Columbus, Kansas, where she coordinated after school and summer school programming for the K-12 district, provided junior college extension courses, and integrated fine arts opportunities for the community. As a teacher, she taught high school English in Carthage, Missouri, and Columbus, Kansas. She earned a Specialist degree in administration, a Master's degree in educational leadership, and a Bachelor's degree in secondary education with a major in English from Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg Kansas.