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Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and Their Alignment with Current district Practices in a Suburban School District

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Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and Their Alignment with Current district

Practices in a Suburban School District

by

Kimberly Rae Dickens

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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School of Education

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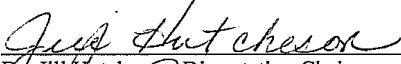
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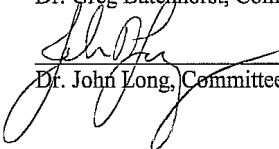
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

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Declaration of Originality

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

Full Legal Name: <u>Kimberly Rae Dickens</u>

Signature: *Kimberly Rae Dickens*   Date: <u>February 20, 2010</u>

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Abstract

School districts across the country make many decisions that impact teachers'
satisfaction both positively and negatively. With statistics reporting a significant number
of teachers leaving the profession in the first 5 years of experience, determining the
reasons for teacher dissatisfaction are important in shaping district practices to be more
supportive and satisfying to teachers.

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

The data produced through this study showed teachers in the suburban school
district were satisfied in their positions and professions. These teachers indicated their
satisfaction on a majority of questions asked in the Factors Influencing Teacher
Satisfaction Survey. The majority of responses in the highly satisfied to moderately
satisfied categories in this survey supported alignment between school district practices
and practices identified through the research as being supportive of teacher satisfaction.
In a comparison of the administrator follow-up interview responses and teacher follow-up
interview responses, a strong alignment existed between the two groups' perceptions and
practices perceived to be in place within the suburban school district.
The results of this study when compared with the rural school district revealed that
demographics had no impact on teacher job satisfaction.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

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

To attract and retain teachers, school districts have also given consideration to factors important to their employees. School systems across the country have had a wide range of experiences when it comes to retaining highly qualified educators in their schools. School districts have experienced difficulty in retaining teachers and filling positions with individuals who are the best fit for the job due to other career opportunities which have been presented. With recent studies examining the retention of teachers at all points in their careers, school districts have begun to analyze the research on job satisfaction and their own current practices to determine what factors provide job satisfaction to teachers in their positions (Inman & Marlow, 2004).

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

disconnect that exists between teacher preparation programs and the day to day work of a beginning teacher. Education professionals are working to determine which factors present during the first few years of teaching are not conducive to retaining new teachers. These negative factors actually cause teachers to look at other options, and a significant number leave the education profession entirely before they have reached the midpoint in their careers. Several experts point to a variety of reasons teachers leave the profession so early. When matching up education with other professions, a lack of support and lower compensation are evident when compared with the support and payment received in professions that have the same level of educational training (Bracey, 2007).Beginning teachers may find these two factors reason enough for leaving a profession where hard work and personal sacrifices are common. As Kopkowski (2008) noted, over half of the teachers who left the profession in 2003-2004, left in search of a new career.

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

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

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

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

make a difference for new teachers (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Teachers who feel supported in their work felt more capable of supporting students in the learning process.

Statement of the Problem

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

Educational research studies have shown a large number of classroom teachers abandon the education profession within the first five years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009; Brown, 2002). The number of teachers leaving the profession early in their careers can range from one-third of beginning teachers to as high as fifty percent (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2003). According to a study completed by Zhang, Verstegen, and Kim (2008), "2.2 million new teachers, 666,000 (30%) will leave sometime during their first three years of teaching, and one million (45%) will turn over within the first five years of their teaching career"

(p.19). Mihans (2008) believed attrition rates for teachers will increase in the years to come. In a study conducted by Mertler (2001), over one-third of educators surveyed responded that if given the chance to start over, they would not choose to enter the teaching profession. These data indicate there are factors within the profession of education that are dissatisfying to a significant number of practitioners.

In order for school districts to increase teacher retention, district practices and teacher values must be aligned. Therefore, if school districts nationwide want to increase their ability to retain teachers, they need to find what teachers in their districts value and reexamine their practices to see if these two entities are in alignment. The focus of the teacher dissatisfaction problem is not the inability to find educators to replace those teachers who are leaving, but figuring out ways to retain teachers, so they may continue to grow and develop into sound educators who are successful with students in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2003). When educators abandon the profession they have trained for early in the process, it forces schools and districts to bring in new, possibly inexperienced individuals to replace them. Therefore, the investment the district has made in the leaving teachers is a loss for the district. Darling-Hammond (2003) found the state of Texas "estimated that the state's annual turnover rate of 15%, which includes a 40% turnover rate for public school teachers in their first three years, costs the state a "conservative" $329 million a year, or at least $8,000 per recruit who leaves in the first few years of teaching" (p. 8). School districts are not reaping the benefits of their investment through a teacher that has used district-provided training and resources to grow and improve. Instead, they must reinvest in the new, replacement teacher in hopes that the resources they receive will help them grow into a well-rounded educator.

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

Each school is unique and the physical conditions of working environments, including resources, supplies, and classrooms, along with the safety features of a school, can have strong influences on teachers' levels of satisfaction. Research also found significant differences in these factors depending on the location of the school environment. When focusing on the physical conditions of a school, there were noted differences in the conditions identified in rural, urban, and suburban school districts. Quaglia, Marian, and McIntire (1991) reported rural teachers as having the most concern over their working conditions. In the report, America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993-1994, the National Council for Education Statistics found teachers working in more affluent areas tend to have less concerns over the physical aspects of their teaching environments (Henke, Choy, Chen, Geis, & Alt, 1997). In these more prosperous areas, class sizes tend to be smaller, which results in lighter student-to-teacher ratios. Research

students (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Mihans, 2008) reported that schools serving lower income families have working conditions that were not satisfactory to most teachers. This resulted in a significant number of teachers looking for positions in schools with better extrinsic working conditions.

A single factor or a combination of the extrinsic or intrinsic factors can force a teacher into leaving the profession or looking for employment elsewhere. There are numerous factors for teachers to contend with while working in the school setting. These data (Mihans, 2008; Quaglia, Marion, & McIntire, 1991) highlighted a need for school districts to communicate with teachers to determine if the district's current practices align with what the teachers perceive as important factors in determining their satisfaction level with their current position. In research studies focused on identifying factors in teacher satisfaction (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Quaglia, Marion, & McIntire, 1991), researchers presented a variety of reasons that teachers are leaving the profession, which can be classified as both intrinsic and extrinsic.

Collaborative Study

This research study, Factors Influencing Teacher Job Satisfaction and Their Alignment with Current District Practices in a Suburban School District, was a collaborative study with another researcher. The foundation, outline, research framework, and data collection instruments were created by two researchers, Kimberly Dickens and Taneal Wallace. The researchers conducted this study in two different school districts, each with a unique demographic profile, to conduct a comparative study to determine how a school district's demographic profile can influence teachers' job satisfaction levels.

Of the two school districts that served as study sites for this research, one district was considered a large suburban school district, and was referred to in this study as the suburban school district. The other school district is considered a small rural school district, and was referred to in this study as the rural school district. After data were collected through the course of this study, the researchers analyzed the data to determine how the results compared between the two different school districts. The researchers looked for relationships or patterns existing in the data and how the results may have been influenced by the demographic profile of the school district.

Dickens is an assistant principal at the middle school level in the suburban school district and conducted the research on teacher job satisfaction within this school district. With overall satisfactory marks in the area of teacher job satisfaction, as evident in an earlier school climate survey distributed district-wide, Dickens began this study based upon an interest in determining what factors are most important to teachers in the suburban school district and what areas of the school district's practices were moderately satisfying and could be improved to highly satisfying levels. Within the overall satisfaction level of the teachers in the suburban school district, Dickens probed deeper into individual ratings of different factors to determine which practices could be improved to raise moderate levels of job satisfaction to higher levels of job satisfaction.

The suburban school district works to provide a high quality education for their students. Through their established mission, vision, core value statements, and goals, it is clear to students, staff members, and community members what they are striving for in their day to day work. The suburban school district's foundation is based upon the following mission statement, "We do whatever it takes to ensure all students realize their

potential" (RSD, Strategic Plan and CSIP, 2009). One major component to ensuring that students realize their potential is putting them with qualified educators in the classroom. Not only are these individuals qualified, but they should also be satisfied by their work in the education profession and in their school and classroom. Satisfied teachers in the classroom produce higher achievement results from their students, therefore helping students realize their potential.

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

The suburban school district's goals are the following (RSD, Strategic Plan and CSIP, 2009):

1. Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic and career goals

2. Provide curriculum and instructional approaches that prepare students for an increasingly diverse and global society

3. Recruit, attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff to carry out the District's mission, goals and objectives

4. Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student and community involvement in District education programs

5. Provide and maintain appropriate instructional resources, support services and functional and safe facilities

6. Govern the District in an efficient and effective manner, providing leadership and representation to benefit the students, staff and patrons of the district

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

Wallace, the collaborative partner for this research study, is a special education teacher and supervisor in the rural school district. After developing an interest in the teacher job satisfaction levels within her district, Wallace determined the rural school district did not have an instrument in place to measure the level of teachers' job satisfaction. Furthermore, Wallace conducted this research study within her school district to determine if the demographic profile of the rural school district influenced the results teachers expressed through the research study instrument by comparing her results with the results produced by the research study in the suburban school district. Wallace also desired to determine areas of strength related to teacher job satisfaction and to find areas of lower levels of job satisfaction that could be improved.

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

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

1. To place the welfare of our children above all else

2. To have schools in which teaching and learning take place in a climate of mutual respect

3. To serve our public in a professional and courteous manner

4. To expect a high level of performance from our students and ourselves

5. To educate students to become a credit to themselves, their families, and their community (NWR1, Employee Handbook, 2009, p. 2)

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

Rationale for the Study

This study focused on two school districts; a large, suburban school district and a small, rural school district; and how they met the needs of their teachers. While the suburban school district is historically identified with acceptable marks in the area of teacher job satisfaction, this study is rooted in the interest of the researchers' collaborative partnership to provide data and research to aid both school districts in moving to achieving higher levels of satisfaction from areas of moderate satisfaction to dissatisfaction in all areas of focus in this study. The researchers examined individual

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

The foundation of the study is laid by determining which factors are valued by teachers and establishing a framework of key factors that play an essential role in determining a teacher's level of job satisfaction. This framework is used to develop a survey to gather data from practicing teachers in the school districts to gain their perspectives on how the districts' current practices matched the established framework for teacher satisfaction. Additionally, the administrations within the school districts were surveyed to determine how they put the key factors into practice through their day to day work in the school setting. A comparison is made between the current practices reported by school district administration and what is perceived to be in place by the teachers surveyed from each district. The purpose of this study was to determine areas of strength and weakness and use this data to make recommendations to refine current practices and develop new district practices.

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

level of teachers' job satisfaction. The purpose of the framework was to determine if the practices of the school districts were in alignment with the literature review's most frequently cited factors as being influential to the level of teachers' job satisfaction.

In order to make the connection to teachers' job satisfaction for the school districts, an additional component was examined to determine how teachers perceived the effectiveness of each school district's current practices as related to the prominent factors identified in the framework. After establishing the teachers' perceptions, the data were used to identify how the demographic profile for each school district may influence the results in relation to the teachers' perceptions. The suburban school district is located outside of St. Louis, Missouri, in primarily St. Louis County, which consists of almost 1 million residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The physical area of the suburban school district covers 150 square miles and serves approximately 150,000 residents over 11 different municipalities lying within the district's boundaries (RSD, About Us, Demographics, 2009).

The suburban school district is one of the largest districts in the state of Missouri in terms of student and staff population. According to the 2008-2009 School Accountability Report Card (MO DESE, School Accountability Report Card, RSD, 2009), the suburban school district served 22,566 students in preschool through grade 12 during the 2008-2009 school year. In order to meet the needs of this student population, the district employs over 3,000 staff members which are composed of certified and support staff members in 2 administrative centers, 4 high schools, 6 middle schools, 19 elementary schools, 1 individualized learning center, 2 elementary talent and gifted resource centers, and 2 early childhood education centers. The suburban school district's

students are 82.7% Caucasian, 10.3% African American, 5.1% Asian, 1.8% Hispanic, and 0.2% Native American, with 12.7% of the students participating in the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program. In 2008-2009, the suburban school district reported a 95.2% graduation rate, 1.2% dropout rate, and 84.6% post-secondary education rate. The assessed valuation of the suburban school district in 2008-2009 was recorded as $2,890,618,210 with 85.1% of funding for the district coming from local resources (MO DESE, School Accountability Report Card, 2009).

The data obtained from the suburban school district's teachers regarding their current level of job satisfaction was compared to the rural school district, a smaller school district also located in the state of Missouri. The rural school district serves 6,892 students according to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's 2009 School Accountability Report Card. The rural school district is comprised of one administrative center, one high school, one seventh and eighth grade center, three intermediate buildings, and six elementary schools.

Students in the rural school district are 97.5% Caucasian, 0.5% African American, 0.8% Asian, 1.0% Hispanic, and 0.1% Native American. This district has 35.1% of their student population participating in the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program. On the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's 2009 School Accountability Report Card, it is reported that the rural school district had an 84% graduation rate, 3.5% dropout rate, and 79.3% post-secondary education rate. The assessed valuation of this district was recorded as $476,250,236 with 49.0% of funding coming from local sources. Together, this information helped to establish a demographic profile for the rural school district.

Finding high quality educators and retaining them in a school district and specific school should be a top priority for every individual involved in educating children (Levin, 2008). The students should be the center and focus of each practice in a school district, and the direct impact those decisions have on the children are the basis for every practice in place. The primary goal in education is to provide students with a solid, well-rounded, high-quality education. Darling-Hammond (2003) reported the research completed by Kain and Singleton (1996) in which they found in their study that teacher effectiveness in the classroom increased after the first few years in the profession. Therefore, keeping teachers and investing in them may help them grow into more well-rounded educators who should produce better achievement results for the students. With the state and federal governments placing strict guidelines upon our schools to measure student achievement, it is of utmost importance to have practices in place that help teachers feel satisfied in their roles in educating children. If the teachers feel fulfilled in their position, and they feel valued and have the necessary resources to help their students, it should help schools progress and improve in their achievement levels obtained by the students.

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed data gathered from the suburban school district and the rural school district concerning teachers' levels of job satisfaction and current practices in place by building administration. Results obtained from each of the two school districts were compared to determine if their demographic profile influenced the practices in place by each district and the levels of teacher job satisfaction reported. The results from the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey provided insight to areas of strengths and weaknesses concerning the factors identified from the literature review that contribute to

the level of teacher job satisfaction and the effect the factors have on their teachers. The Administrator Participant Survey responses outlined current practices in place within the schools of each respective school district. The follow-up interview questions for teachers and administrators allowed the researchers to gain further insight to the perceptions of teachers in each district and how the administration uses the research on teacher job satisfaction to influence the practices they have in place within their school.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

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

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

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

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

Assumption

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

Limitations of the Study

  Individual school demographic profile. The suburban school district is comprised of 34 schools ranging from early childhood education through high school. The school district covers approximately 150 square miles and serves over 11 different municipalities within St. Louis County. The rural school district is comprised of 12 schools ranging from early childhood education through high school. This school district covers 121 square miles serving the communities in and around six different municipalities. Therefore, teachers surveyed in this study may be considered representative of schools throughout their district, which may have variations in their demographic profile data in items such as the percentage of students participating in the free and reduced lunch program, the percentage of students identified as special education students, and differing percentages of racial composition among their students.

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

  Indoctrination. Boote (2001) found that working closely with others over a period of time can lead to individuals learning the principles and beliefs of those who are within the same work environment. Continued work and personal relationships with one another

can lead the individual to conform to shared principles and beliefs. Depending on the level of cohesiveness among a teaching staff, any teachers may, over time, align his or her principles and beliefs to match those of the colleagues with whom they spend the majority of their work time. The points of view of the participants may have changed over time to become more cohesive with the group in which they teach. This could affect the perceptions of the participants in relation to this study and their level of satisfaction with their current position, thus causing these principles and beliefs to be a limitation of this study.

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

Survey distribution. The online teacher satisfaction survey was distributed to all teachers within the suburban and rural school districts during the last week of the 2008-2009 academic school year. Due to the demands the last week of school can place upon teachers in regards to the closing of school and the completion of grade reporting requirements, the initial teacher response to the survey was low. Therefore, when the schools reopened in the fall, the survey was redistributed to teachers within the district. Additionally, the original administrator participation survey was submitted during the month of July, a time of year when administrators are typically working while the majority of the staff is on summer vacation. Again, due to a low response rate, the

administrator participant survey was redistributed when the schools reopened in the fall semester. As a result of having two rounds of survey distribution, there is a possibility some respondents completed the survey twice. Efforts were made to minimize this possibility by reminding teachers of the original distribution and setting the online survey to not allow repeat responses from the same computer.

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

Teacher preparation program. The format and design each college follows to prepare its pre-service teachers can be unique in relation to other preparation programs. If the preparation teachers receive inadequately prepares them for their work in the classroom, this will have a negative impact on their desire and ability to remain in the profession. College preparation programs differ in intensity and format, and the preparation the participants in this study received may have a direct impact on their current level of teacher job satisfaction. In addition, a growing number of teachers are receiving their certification through alternative programs that do not include a four-year

undergraduate degree in education. "Studies have found that teachers prepared in extended teacher education programs enter and remain in teaching at higher rates than teachers in traditional four-year programs, and remain at much higher rates than those prepared in short-term, alternative certification programs" (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 21). For this reason, it is possible for the teacher preparation programs to influence the perception teachers develop regarding teaching and the education profession.

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

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Adequate Yearly Progress is a designation assigned to schools based upon their performance results from the mandatory state assessments given annually in the areas of mathematics and communication arts. The goal for all states is for students to reach the proficient designation level on state assessments by the year 2014 (United States DOE, Key Policy Letters, 2002). Each year, there are benchmark requirements for each subgroup of students (school total, special

education, free and reduced lunch program, Caucasian, African American, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, and limited English proficiency) regarding the percentage of students within each group who should be scoring in the proficient or higher level range on the state assessment. If a school reaches the required percentage in each subgroup, it achieved adequate yearly progress.

Individualized Education Program (IEP). An Individualized Education Program is written for students with a disability as a way to provide them with a unique program that addresses their educational needs due to their disability. According to the U.S. Department of Education, "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires education institutions, in collaboration with parents (and older students), to tailor an individualized education program (IEP) for each student with a disability that meets the unique needs of that student" (United States DOE, 2010, IEP-purpose, ¶ 1). The IEP includes statements about a child's present level of academic achievement and functional performance, along with an identification of annual measurable goals and related services for the next calendar year.

Induction Program. An induction program is an outlined plan put into place to acclimate an individual to the teaching profession. The induction programs are often designed and mandated at the school district level; however they can be designed and mandated at the state level. Presently, there are 21 states that require participation in induction programs to obtain full licensure (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, AFT, 2001). Induction programs include components such as assigning each new teacher a mentor, which is an individual with significant experience in a similar content area of teaching, forming new teacher support groups, providing specific professional

development geared towards addressing new teachers' needs, and participating in

opportunities to observe other teachers and be observed by the assigned mentor to receive

feedback on current practices (Wong, 2004).

*Missouri Assessment Program (MAP).*The Missouri Assessment Program

measures student achievement in Missouri's public schools through the use of state-

designed assessments in the areas of communication arts, mathematics, and science.

These assessments measure students' progress towards specific proficiency goals

established by the state of Missouri. Students in grades three through eight participate in

annual assessments in communication arts and mathematics. Students participate in the

science assessment in grades five and eight (MO DESE, A Parent's Guide to the MAP

Grade-level Assessment, 2008, p. 7). The MAP assessments are criterion-referenced

standardized tests. Therefore, students' answers are scored based upon a predetermined

set of criteria which results in a correct answer, and this determines their level of

achievement on the assessment.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is

the main piece of legislation concerning public school education in grades Kindergarten

through twelfth grade. NCLB mandates that all states develop assessments to measure

students' performance in communication arts and mathematics. States are required to

measure yearly progress towards the goal of all children being proficient in

communication arts and mathematics by the year 2014 (MO DESE, Understanding Your

Adequate Yearly Progress Report, 2010).

School Climate. According to the article, School Climate and Learning, published

in the Best Practice Brief produced by Michigan State University, school climate refers

to, "the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place" (2004, p. 2). School climate can also refer to the way the school building looks and feels to the students and staff who comprise the school community.

Teacher Attrition. Teacher attrition, also described as teacher turnover, describes the number of teachers leaving the education profession on a yearly basis. Teacher attrition refers to teachers who exit the profession completely. For the purposes of this paper, teacher attrition will refer to those teachers who choose to leave the profession based upon their own desires and choices. This will not include teachers who have left the profession based upon financial constraints or downsizing, which resulted in a reduction in teaching personnel, or teachers who did not remain in the profession due to the nonrenewal of their contract based upon poor job performance (Teacher Attrition: A Costly Loss to the Nation and to the States, 2005).

Summary

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

the profession beyond the first few years. To do this, school districts must review and reflect upon their current practices to ensure they are in alignment with the important elements in teacher job satisfaction identified in the research process.

Through the identification of these factors, school districts can begin to reform their educational practices based upon the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction. Identifying why teachers leave the profession and what components of their job they felt ill-prepared for, or received inadequate support to handle, may help school districts identify their areas of strength and weakness and help them implement practices to better retain their teachers. This, in turn, may result in a higher level of teacher job satisfaction. In attempting to meet the requirements of the NCLB Act and achieving Adequate Yearly Progress, it is imperative for qualified teachers to feel valued and satisfied and be committed to the profession beyond their first years of experience.

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

Chapter2: Review of the Literature

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

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

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

Preparation for Post-Secondary Study

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

Schools' and school districts' climates play a role in the satisfaction level of educators. With a startling number of teachers leaving the profession, it is evident that district practices need to be examined to determine the alignment between what the research supports as good practices for teachers and what the school districts actually has in place to support their educators. If these factors are in alignment with one another, it

may provide beginning teachers with the necessary support to be successful in their first years of teaching.

Motivation for Study

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

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

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

Theory

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

New Teacher Induction Programs

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

During the capstone of incoming teachers' collegiate experiences, the beginning teachers take sole responsibility for their cooperating teacher's classroom for a limited amount of time. Even though the time is limited, pre-service teachers who experience student teaching are more likely to remain in the profession than their counterparts who do not partake in this process and thus have a 14% greater chance of leaving the

profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Even though there are benefits to participating in the student teaching experience, new teachers sometimes encounter a disconnect between what was learned in university courses of study and what the day to day responsibilities and activities are for a beginning teacher. For example, Kopkowski (2008) recalled little instruction or guidance on how to handle student discipline incidents when they arose in the classroom, which is an important element of classroom management. Because of the identified disconnect between the university classes and programs to the realistic duties of a practicing teacher, Moore and Sampson (2008) called on practitioners to focus on building collaborative partnerships between universities and public schools. According to Wiebke and Bardin (2009), new teachers are for the most part on their own, working to ensure student learning will take place while still taking care of other responsibilities that rest upon a classroom teacher. According to Inman and Marlow (2004), some beginning teachers experience feelings within the first days of classroom teaching that cause them to question their profession choice. As much as teacher preparation programs are designed to prepare the student to be an independent classroom teacher, there are still very few experiences available that may provide new teachers an opportunity to experience the feeling of being solely in charge of a group of students. It is important for school districts to have strong induction programs in place in order to acclimatize teachers and provide support systems for employees new to the profession. This is especially true when the demands of the job become strong and help is needed to handle the myriad of situations and concerns that arise.

Induction programs within school districts have provided benefits to beginning teachers. Ingersoll (2003) and the National Commission on Teaching and America's

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

Induction programs for beginning teachers are not required in every state. As of 2002, 33 states within the United States offered induction programs for teachers (Ingersoll, 2003). The increased amount of teachers exiting the educational field in the beginning years of their career indicates a need for a comprehensive induction program in every school district (Brown, 2002). The presence of a program does not guarantee success for beginning teachers. For a program to be successful, researchers have identified crucial components to the induction program that will help improve the success rate of beginning teachers. Crucial components to induction programs, as identified by

The Alliance for Excellent Education, include common planning time, mentoring, professional development, a network group of teachers, a standards-based evaluation, and release time for the mentor and mentee (Understanding and Reducing Teacher Turnover, 2008). Programs which include these crucial components have shown to be more successful for beginning teachers.

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

Not only do beginning teachers benefit from induction programs utilizing teacher mentors, but veteran teachers view the role of a mentor as a factor that contributes to staying in the profession. The opportunity to mentor beginning teachers appeals to veteran teachers because it provides an avenue for them to share their experiences and

expertise with new teachers and also provides them an opportunity to learn from others (Ingersoll, 2003 & Mihans, 2008). Darling-Hammond (2003) also identified benefits to enlisting veteran, experienced teachers to fill the mentor role for beginning teachers. Darling-Hammond found, "these programs provide a new lease on life for many veteran teachers" (2003, p. 12). The collaborative nature of a mentor partnership entices teachers to remain in the profession because it creates new and challenging situations for them, in addition to providing experienced teachers an opportunity to share their experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2003 & Mihans, 2009). The mentoring process can provide benefits to both the new teacher and the veteran teacher, who is serving in the role of a mentor.

In addition to matching beginning teachers with an experienced teacher to serve as their mentor, there are other components and characteristics that help induction programs retain teachers and set them up for success. Programs have higher success rates when they include all new teachers in the program, the program extends beyond the first year in the classroom, beginning teachers are responsible for less students and/or class/course assignments, and they participate in a comprehensive review based upon best practices in the classroom (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001). The first year of teaching is unique when pertaining to the experiences a new teacher faces. Therefore, if the supportive partnership can continue beyond the first year, this will allow new teachers the opportunity to continue to refine their practices after having one year of experience in the classroom to use as a foundation of knowledge. Conway (2006) identified the fact that teachers beyond their first year face challenges that go beyond making it from day to day in the classroom. Since nearly half of kindergarten through

twelfth grade educators leave the profession during the first five years (Budig, 2006),

Conway (2006) found logic in continuing mentoring programs beyond the first year.

Effective programs also utilize interventions and practices that include providing

release time for collaboration among educators, participating in professional development

opportunities to refine instructional skills, having a common planning time during the

school day for beginning teachers to collaborate with other educators who are responsible

for teaching similar classes, and having a network of teachers in which supportive

relationships can be developed (Understanding and Reducing Teacher Turnover, 2008).

Because the mentorship is such a vital part of the induction program, providing new

teachers with time to collaborate with mentoring teachers is critical in the form of

common planning time and providing release time to partnerships during the contracted

school day. "Induction provides the essential bridge for a beginning teacher between

being a student learning about teaching and becoming a professional teacher" (Beginning

Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001, p. 6). Individuals stepping into the

classroom for the first time need structure and support to transition them to the next level.

Significant gains can be measured for beginning teachers when they receive dedicated

and continual support from a professional, well-trained mentor (Weibke & Bardin, 2009).

Therefore, the level of support given to new teachers is a primary factor in contributing to

their length of time in the profession.

The beginning induction program for new teachers should be representative of a

foundation for the educator to stand on. If the foundation is strong and solid, it will set

the teacher up for success. If the foundation is weak and lacks critical components, the

teacher will struggle in managing all the critical components of being a successful

classroom teacher. A positive feeling is rooted in the teachers when they feel confident about what they know, and they feel their method of teaching makes a difference in the education of their students. Ma and MacMillan (1999) found professional competence to be a key contributor in teacher job satisfaction, and divided competence into three categories based on teacher belief. The first way can be described as a belief by teachers that they have the prerequisite subject-content knowledge and skills in sufficient detail to be able to teach the particular course effectively and with confidence. The second way is the teachers' belief that they have access to effective and current instructional strategies and skills for their use. The third way can be expressed as their ability to use their subject-content knowledge in conjunction with instructional techniques to enable students to meet the standards for the course they are being taught.

After educators become adjusted to the profession over time, their focus will become more curriculum and instructionally centered (Conway, 2006), and other factors will contribute to their satisfaction levels in the profession and in the classroom. The amount and type of support teachers receive from their building-level administrator will have a large impact in teachers' perceptions of their profession (Marston, Brunetti, & Courtney, 2005). Administrator support penetrates many factors in teacher job satisfaction and is an important element throughout all practices put into place by school districts.

Administrator Support

As Wiebke and Bardin (2009) pointed out, a supportive work environment for any organization is crucial to the group's success. Within a school, administrators play a key and central role to the success of the school. Teachers repeatedly identify the support they

received from their school principal as a crucial factor in their profession and in specific

aspects of their everyday work (Mihans, 2008, Rafoth & Foriska, 2006). Goldberg and

Proctor (2000) reported that there is a significant correlation between the behaviors of

administration and teacher job satisfaction. In 2003, Richards found the lack of support

from administrators was the number one reason teachers left the profession. More

specifically, Richards reported that teachers needed to be emotionally supported,

respected, praised, and acknowledged by their administrators.

> Lack of support is a major cause of burnout and dissatisfaction. Teachers crave
>
> effective principals who make an effort to become personally involved in
>
> supporting teachers. Principals must create environments in which positive
>
> support is apparent. Job satisfaction has been shown to increase when regular,
>
> supportive feedback is a high priority for those in supervisory positions. (Mihans,
>
> 2009, p. 23)

According to Hurren (2006), the most frequently cited reason for teachers leaving the

profession were those related to the school principal. There is often the assumption that

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

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

One major key to teacher satisfaction is having the support and respect of the school

administration (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Bloom, Danilovich, and Fogel found in

their study at the University of California-Santa Cruz, that well-prepared principals have

a positive effect on student achievement, which is a result of their daily work within the

school and with the teachers (2005). Teachers want their school administrators to be

supportive of various aspects of their school day. Marston, Brunetti, and Courtney explained,

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

The expectations for building administrators are high and they must possess leadership skills that allow them to be knowledgeable and supportive in a variety of facets in the school community. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found in their research study entitled, The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, those educators who voluntarily moved to different school buildings during the four-year study named administrator dissatisfaction as being a top factor, being mentioned more frequently than any other reason. As Whitaker (2002) pointed out, great schools are led by great principals. These individuals never lose sight of the purpose of their everyday work and they morph themselves into a myriad of roles to help all individuals in the school reach success.

 Support given by a school administrator is crucial to teachers in all aspects of their career and it does not always look the same from school to school and from teacher to teacher. Along with the support provided by beginning teacher mentor programs, teachers are also concerned about the level of support they receive from their building-level administrators. As a beginning teacher, any type of feedback and support an administrator can offer is valuable and often has a greater impact than feedback received

from a peer (Bender, 2005). Improving a teacher's level of confidence and ability to work through challenging experiences increases when they have the support of the building principal (Bender, 2005). Arranging tours of the school's attendance area, selecting high-quality mentors, interviewing teachers to develop a profile of their expertise, creating a schedule for classroom visits and conferencing, peer-coaching, and having an open-door policy are steps a building administrator can do to acclimate a new teacher to the school and the profession (Brown, 2002). Not only is a new teacher's mentor a large component of the induction program, so is the building principal. Yvonne Bender (2005) suggested after her work with beginning teachers, it is often the building principal's feedback and approval new teachers need and seek. The individual in this role is held in high esteem in the eyes of someone new to the profession.

Of the many qualities teachers desire their administrators to possess, Hurren (2006) determined that one of the most important qualities was a sense of humor. Not only was this evident in Hurren's study, but also in studies conducted by Moxley and Olson (1988), Wilson (1991), and the United States Department of Education, as cited by Hurren in his report. The demands of the teaching profession are intense, and teachers look to their leaders to provide avenues to relieve some of the stress that is presented with this position. This can be done in the form of laughter; therefore, cementing the importance to educators that leaders have a good sense of humor.

Managing student discipline in the classroom is a challenge for beginning teachers (Tulley & Chiu, 1995). Therefore, administrator support in this area can help lead teachers to put sound practices in place to help facilitate positive situations for students in the classroom. With little practical experience in dealing with student

misbehavior, having a building administrator with expertise can be a comforting factor to teachers. Weibke and Bardin (2009) identified administrative support in dealing with student behaviors as an essential component of a school leader. Administrators can provide support to discipline situations and decisions by becoming involved. Teachers appreciate when administrators get involved with discipline, especially when the students are perceived as being disruptive or aggressive and measures are taken to remove the student from the classroom environment (Rafoth & Foriska, 2003). New teachers will feel supported in student discipline issues if they receive reinforcement from their building administrator on actions they take to manage situations and if they perceive the administrator is supportive during their induction period.

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

Teacher leaders, just as beginning teachers, are in need of support from their administrators (Lattimer, 2007). As teachers progress in their careers and reach a level beyond a beginning teacher, an administrator's support is still a primary factor in teachers' job satisfaction. Mihans (2008) and Kopkowski (2008) both identified the level

of support given by administrators to their teachers as a primary factor in teacher attrition. Rofoth and Foriska (2006) revealed that teachers desire a leadership balance from their supervisor. They want the principal to be a leader, but they also want the principal to provide the staff with leadership opportunities. Knowing when to lead and when to step back is a skill effective school administrators possess. Rooney (2007) described the satisfaction some teachers feel when administrators put a situation, issue, or problem into the hands of the teachers and let them use their expertise to create and promote a solution. An administrator's role is to create an environment of continual improvement and put the necessary resources into place for the teachers to be successful (Rooney, 2007). As Lattimer (2007) noted, teachers appreciate when administrators are not scared to present the school's current reality to the staff members. In interviewing teacher leaders, Lattimer identified an individual who reported her most rewarding time as a teacher was when her building principal presented an unpleasant reality to the staff about their school and empowered them to come up with a solution (2006). It was clear that the principal would be there for support, but the teachers were trusted to solve the problem given their expertise in educating students. Certo and Fox (2002) found through their study, Retaining Quality Teachers, that teachers viewed having quality administration as one of their top three reasons for remaining in the profession. When looking at this reason more in-depth, teachers were highly satisfied when their work was supported and when they were treated as professionals by the administration in their building.

Through the study conducted by Certo and Fox (2002), the importance of support in the work environment was evident in the findings. They found, with salary excluded,

that a lack of administrative support at the district and building-level was the number one reason teachers leave their position. This was confirmed with the finding that very involved teachers named having an unsupportive place to work as their top reason for leaving the education profession. In the same study, when teachers were asked to identify reasons why teachers leave the profession, they said building-level support compensation and other employment opportunities outside their current position. Teachers view a supportive work environment as a top priority.

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

Teacher Compensation

Within the framework for teacher satisfaction, in addition to administrator support and strong beginning teacher induction programs, educators also consider their compensation, which is comprised of their annual salary and their benefits provided by their employing school district, as a top factor in determining teachers' level of job satisfaction. Compensating employees is a major factor in education, accounting for 80% of public funding designated for education (Zhang, Verstegen, & Kim, 2008). Among the reasons the American Federation of Teachers has identified for beginning teachers leaving the profession, salary and lack of support are two of the top reasons beginning teachers are moving on to other professions (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential

Bridge, 2001). Teachers are concerned about low monetary compensation (Marston & Courtney, 2002). In a research study conducted by Certo and Fox (2002), the number one reason educators leave the profession, as perceived by other teachers, is salary.

When the education profession is compared with others, the numbers do not always matchup. In Mihans' 2008 report, students graduating with a four-year degree and comparable experience levels are earning approximately 12% more in weekly salaries than those graduates who entered the teaching profession. This divide can be even greater when the education and experience of specific types of graduates are examined. For example, students who study mathematics and science may find larger gaps in compensation depending upon their decision to either teach their area of study or enter another aspect of the scientific or mathematics field (Mihans, 2008). In a study conducted by the Economic Policy Institute, Allegreto, Corcoran, and Mishel (2008) used skill criteria to study several different jobs. Their study concluded that public school teachers earned approximately 15% less in weekly earnings than workers in comparable categories. Bracey (2007) showed the teaching profession's salaries trailed all other occupations with similar skill criteria except for one, the clergy. Mihans (2008) and Darling-Hammond (2003) reported teachers are earning on average less in annual salary when they were compared with individuals in careers that required similar educational preparation. In Darling-Hammond's report, data was cited from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which showed teacher salaries ranking below nurses, accountants, dental hygienists, and computer programmers (2003). Darling-Hammond recognized that most teachers are intrinsically motivated, but still desire a career with a competitive salary. As

Mihans identified, salaries for teachers must increase in order to be competitive with other occupations (2008).

In a majority of school districts nation-wide, educator compensation is based upon two key factors, years of experience and level of education (Goldhaber, DeArmond, Player, & Choi, 2005). These two factors constitute a salary schedule, which ensures that all teachers within a specific school district receive the same compensation if they have the same years of experience and educational level. This salary is in no way dependent on job performance or on the achievement of the students assigned to each specific teacher (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). When the salary schedule system was initially instituted, it was designed to eliminate favoritism among teachers and other inequities that may exist (Toch, 2009). However, using a salary schedule ensures that all teachers with the same experience and college credit receive the same compensation, regardless of their job performance (Toch, 2009).

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

signing bonuses to allure new teachers into their district. Increasing teacher compensation can have positive effects on teacher job satisfaction.

While salary schedules can ensure consistency in pay within one district, teacher salaries between districts can often vary, which can be a source of dissatisfaction among teachers (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007). As reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics, teachers in urban districts on average earn approximately 33% less than teachers in more affluent school districts (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Hanushek and Rivkin reported further data obtained from the National Center for Educational Statistics concerning annual teacher salaries. They suggested in their 2007 article that 44.4% of urban teachers and 69.6% of rural teachers in their first year earn less than $30,000 annually, compared with 41.7% of teachers in suburban school districts. Accordingly, suburban teachers have a higher percentage of educators earning over $35,000 annually in their first year of teaching at 31.7%, compared with 29.2% in urban school districts and 15.7% in rural school districts. As the data demonstrates, the type of school district in which a teacher is employed can have a direct impact on the type of salary teachers will receive. Therefore, from one school district to another, teachers may experience varying levels of compensation even when the amount of teaching experience and education is comparable.

Not only are teachers earning less in annual salary, they are spending their own money on resources for their classroom. Kopkowski (2008) found on average teachers spend $438 annually on supplies for their classrooms and 8% of educators spend closer to $1,000 on materials used to facilitate student learning. With school districts closely watching their budgets, teachers spend personal money to obtain classroom supplies and

resources (Olszewski & Maury, 1997). When Olszewski and Maury conducted a study of teachers in Minnesota, it was determined that teachers spend an average of $492 annually on instructional materials for their classrooms (1997). The lack of materials and resources for teachers to use in their classroom created feelings of stress among teachers, which led to teacher burnout and teacher turnover (Kaufhold, Alverez, & Arnold, 2006). Adequate instructional resources need to be available to teachers to support the classroom curriculum.

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

Working Conditions

Working conditions is an all-encompassing term that refers to numerous aspects of the working environment. Working conditions not only refers to the physical conditions of the building and workspace, but also the non-physical aspects of the position, which can be described as an environment's climate. The working conditions

within a school are an important factor in teachers' job satisfaction. The environment in which they work needs to be safe, comfortable, and conducive to the learning process. When teachers find the working conditions to be poor, they will look for employment that will provide them with better surroundings (Mihans, 2008). Beginning teachers often leave the profession when their employing school has difficult working conditions (Beginning Teacher Induction: The Essential Bridge, 2001). While school districts will never be able to supply everything a teacher may want (Levin, 2008), it is important for school districts to listen to teachers' needs and allocate resources appropriately based on feedback from the teachers.

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

Schools located in different socioeconomic settings include different patterns of working conditions based on the economic stability of the communities they educate. A survey administered to California teachers found working conditions to be less desirable in schools with a low-income, high-minority student population. The physical structures

of the school buildings were in poor condition and there was less or limited access to instructional resources (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Mihans (2008) found that the poorest conditions are often found in schools with high percentages of minority students, which often results in teachers seeking employment opportunities in school districts located in more suburban-type settings. Schools with a large number of students from low-income families also experienced poorer working conditions, which prompted teachers to seek employment elsewhere (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). If the working conditions in one position are undesirable, educators are likely to migrate to another similar position in a different school or school district in search of working conditions that impact their work in a positive manner.

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

The feelings of teachers produced by a school's climate can have an impact on job satisfaction. Zhang, Verstegen, and Kim (2008) found that school climate also impacts professional growth, compensation, and teacher autonomy. When teacher autonomy was perceived to be low, teachers found this to be a great source of dissatisfaction with their position (Quaglia, Marion, & McIntire; 1991). Teachers with a low commitment to the profession reported being concerned with school relationships and lack of empowerment. (Berry, Wade, & Trantham; 2008). In the work of Berry, Wade, and Trantham (2008), the findings of a 2006 annual teacher survey conducted by the state of North Carolina found that teachers believe they have little influence over decisions made within their schools.

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

working conditions. When teachers are part of the decision-making process, teacher morale improves; teachers take on more responsibility in the school, and are able to create better solutions to problems (Seed, 2008).

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

Relationships between students and teachers are also a significant form of intrinsic motivation for teachers. Research reported by Marston and Courtney (2002) demonstrated that effective teachers place a significant emphasis on their relationships with students. Martson and Courtney (2002) found that teachers feel a personal sense of satisfaction seeing children develop and learn. "Satisfaction also came from hearing about the accomplishments of former students as a result of teachers staying in touch with them or their families throughout the years" (p. 5). In a study conducted by Klecker and Loadman (1997), interactions with students are rated most positive by teachers and are the most satisfying aspect of classroom teaching.

The environment that surrounds an individual sends an insurmountable number of messages. From the physical conditions of their surroundings, to the practices in place within the building and how they influence teachers, all have an effect on a school's

working environment. Working conditions are an important factor in teacher job satisfaction and have a direct influence on the satisfaction level of teachers and whether or not they choose to stay in a specific position or in the educational profession. Attention should be paid not only to appearance, security, and safety of the school building, but also to the effect current practices have on teachers and the feelings they create within the school.

Teacher Autonomy

Measuring the achievement and success of schools is an important component of the educational system. As the importance of measuring a school's success has increased over time, teachers have been seeing their autonomy in the classroom lessen as the demands for overall student achievement have been increased. Within the past decade, efforts have been made to ensure schools are making progress and students are achieving at proficient levels. When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized as the NCLB Act in 2001, measures were put into place to hold every school accountable for student achievement. In order to do this, students in grades three through eight are tested annually in the areas of communication arts and mathematics (United States DOE, Introduction, No Child Left Behind, 2009). These scores are then used to compare schools to one another and determine if a school has made adequate yearly progress. Each year, specific goals are established which define the percentage of students who must reach a specific level on each standardized assessment prescribed by the state in conjunction with NCLB. When schools fail to meet annual proficiency goals, they become a School of Improvement. When a Title I school receives the designation of School of Improvement for two consecutive years, parents have the option of sending

their child to an alternative public school and may be eligible to receive additional supports such as tutoring (MO DESE, Understanding Your Adequate Yearly Progress Report, 2010). With the achievement levels for the annual goals continually rising, teachers are feeling pressure to ensure their students are achieving and meeting the required state standards (Kopkowski, 2008).

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

In efforts to reform any school, teacher autonomy is vital and it is imperative that all stakeholders be supportive of the school's efforts and mission (Quiocho & Stall, 2008). Professional autonomy or decision-making authority plays a role in the level of satisfaction teachers feel. "Empowered teachers are allowed, in fact encouraged, to share

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

Teacher Job Satisfaction

A review of the literature revealed numerous studies identifying key factors in determining the level of teacher job satisfaction. In 1997, Shen determined the following: Teachers with less experience tend to move or leave, whereas more experienced teachers tend to stay; the amount of teacher salary was positively correlated with teacher retention; recognition and appreciation help teachers stay in the profession; empowering teachers and giving them more influence over school and teaching policies are associated with teacher retention; and teacher attrition was associated more with poor schools. He also

found the location of the school, teaching level, and subject matter did not play a role in retention and attrition.

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

Ingersoll's (2001) predictors for teacher turnover were contradictory to the above studies. While Ingersoll noted age to be a predictor, it was found that teachers less than 30 and over 50 years of age were more likely to depart due to dissatisfaction than middle-aged teachers. He also indicated gender and ethnicity as a predictor, stating male teachers and minority teachers are less likely to leave the profession. Teachers earning higher salaries, teachers who teach in public schools versus private, and teachers in both suburban and rural schools are less likely to leave the profession. Schools with fewer discipline problems and higher administrative support have lower teacher turnover rates, as well as schools which provide teachers with autonomy and higher levels of decision-making influence.

Marston, Brunetti, and Courtney (2005) compared elementary teacher satisfaction with high school teacher satisfaction in Pennsylvania and California. In the study, elementary and high school teacher groups were surveyed and the researcher found an equally high level of job satisfaction among teachers in both groups, but with some regional differences. Elementary teachers in Pennsylvania valued autonomy more than the California elementary teachers. Researchers explained that this difference could have been caused by regional factors or by the stricter curricular constraints placed upon Pennsylvanian teachers in 2000-2001at the onset of the NCLB Act. The high school teachers surveyed in California were found to be less motivated by extrinsic factors (tenure, salaries, and schedule) than teachers at the elementary level.

Follow-up interviews in Marston, Brunetti, and Courtney's 2005 study revealed some general differences between elementary and high school teachers. High school teachers stated that they felt the elimination of teacher tenure would improve the profession. High school teachers placed emphasis on the importance of the subject matter they taught over other related factors. However, elementary teachers indicated a higher degree of satisfaction in seeing children learn and grow, though this was still a powerful motivator for high school teachers. High school teachers indicated that the subject they teach is very important and relates to their desire to remain in the classroom. Elementary teachers indicated this to be only somewhat important, pointing out the fact that high school teachers teach a specific subject while elementary teachers are responsible for teaching numerous subjects. Based upon the results, having good relationships with co-workers and having a good principal are more important to the elementary teachers than

the high school teachers. Overall, teachers at both levels are satisfied with their jobs and core values are what keep teachers at both levels in the profession.

Summary

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

Chapter 3: Method

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

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

The survey distributed to teachers in each school district provided data concerning the satisfaction level of teachers on a series of 31 questions in which teachers rated their level of satisfaction using a Likert scale. Patterns and relationships were identified from

the survey responses regarding different aspects of satisfaction with the profession, including new teacher induction programs, administrator support, and working conditions within the school environment. Teachers were also asked to respond to six demographically-based questions in order to identify any additional patterns that may exist in the survey data. Finally, teachers were given the opportunity to participate further in this study by providing their name and school location. A survey distributed to administrators served to determine how the district's outlined policies and practices are implemented at the building level. This survey consisted of 17 open-ended questions focused on the aspects of their position that directly or indirectly impact teachers in their building. Building administrators were asked to respond to five demographically-based questions and were offered an opportunity to further participate in this study by providing their name and school location.

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

The data collected through this survey research study may provide the two school districts with insight into how their practices impact teachers and the effect they have on the satisfaction level of teachers. Research identified in the literature review suggests that having teachers who are satisfied in their positions may lead to positive school climate, better working conditions, and greater success in the classroom.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this study:

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

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

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

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

Research Methodology

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

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

2. Data is obtained using words or pictures rather than numbers.

3. Researchers focus on the process and the product.

4. The researcher analyzes the data inductively.

5. The researcher is concerned with the way people make sense of their lives.

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

Participants

In order to obtain a sufficient number of survey responses, all teachers and building administrators currently practicing in the suburban and rural school districts were solicited for participation in this study. The suburban school district is located in suburban Saint Louis County and serves 11 different municipalities covering 150 square miles (RSD, About Us, Rockwood Demographics, 2009). The rural school district is

located in rural Jefferson County covering 121 square miles in and around six different municipalities (Dr. Kevin Carl, personal communication, April 12, 2010).

The suburban school district began in 1908, when four school districts were consolidated. Over the next 100 years, the school district grew to serve over 22,000 students and is comprised of 34 different schools (RSD, About Us, District Facts, 2009). The demographics for the school district are shown in Table 1. For the academic year 2008-2009, as taken from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Accountability Report Card, the study site of the suburban school district's student population was represented by 82.7% Caucasian, 10.3% African American, with 12.7% of the school district's students participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (MO DESE, 2009).

The rural school district served a student population of approximately 6,892 throughout their 11 schools during the 2008-2009 school year. The demographics for the school district are shown in Table 2. For the academic year 2008-2009, as taken from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Directory, the study site of the rural school district's student population was represented by 97.5% Caucasian, 1.0% Hispanic, with 35.1% of the students participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (MO DESE, School Directory: NSD, 2009).

Table 1

Demographics: The Suburban School District

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

Note. From Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Accountability Report Card: RSD, (2009)

Table 2

Demographics: The Rural School District

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

Note. From Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Accountability Report Card: NSD, (2009)

Table 3 highlights the enrollment distribution for the suburban school district at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Enrollment data presented here does not include students participating in the early childhood programs provided by the suburban school district. However, students attending the elementary-level gifted center and students attending the alternative education high school are included in the total enrollment for their respective levels, as they are accounted for in their home school's total enrollment. Additionally, Table 3 identifies the number of certified staff at each academic level (MO DESE, Staff and Salary Analysis, 2006; RSD, Attendance Recap Report, 2009).

Table 4 illustrates the distribution for the students enrolled in the rural school district at the elementary, intermediate, seventh and eighth grade center, and high school levels. This enrollment distribution does include the students who are enrolled in the early childhood program in the rural school district, which is located within the seventh and eighth grade center. In addition, Table 4 includes the distribution of the 541 certified teachers at each academic level, as well as, the administrators at each level (MO DESE, School Directory, 2006, NWR1).

Table 3

The Suburban School District: Staff and Student Enrollment Distribution

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

Note. Classroom teacher data was obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Staff and Salary Analysis, 2006). Administrator data was taken from the 2009-2010 RSD Schools and School Services Directory. School enrollment was taken from the Suburban School District Period 4 Attendance Recap Report dated 12/2/2009.

Table 4

The Rural School District: Staff and Student Enrollment Distribution

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

Note. Classroom teacher data was obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Staff and Salary Analysis, 2006). Administrator data was taken from the 2009-2010 Rural School District website. School enrollment was taken from Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Directory, NSD (2009).

This study analyzed the satisfaction level of teachers in the suburban and rural school districts at each of the levels of academic distribution. The initial online survey

was distributed to teachers in the suburban school district on May 18, 2009, and then a second time on September 23, 2009. The initial online survey was distributed to teachers in the rural school district on May 19, 2009 and then a second time on September 24, 2009. Therefore, the survey was sent to approximately 1,300 certified staff in the suburban school district based upon the data presented in Table 3, and approximately 541 certified staff in the rural school district based upon the data presented in Table 4.

School administrators within the suburban school district were sent the Administrator Participant Survey initially on July 13, 2009, and again on September 23, 2009. During the first distribution of the administrator survey, 82 school administrators were solicited. During the second distribution of the survey, it was sent to all building-level administrators, which accounted for 81 administrators in September of 2009, due to the restructuring of one position at the middle school level. School administrators within the rural school district were initially sent the survey on July 8, 2009 and again on September 24, 2009. All 18 administrators in the rural school district were solicited through each distribution. However, the online survey for both school districts was set to allow only one response per computer; therefore decreasing the chance respondents would complete the survey more than one time.

The majority of teacher respondents for the suburban school district's initial, online teacher satisfaction survey were classified as beginning teachers, within their first five years of the profession. The majority of the respondents in the rural school district's initial, online teacher satisfaction survey had been teaching for 11-15 years. The majority

of respondents for both school districts can also be described as Caucasian and female based upon the results of the demographic profiling questions at the end of the online survey.

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

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

Research Design

Qualitative data was presented in this teacher job satisfaction study. Qualitative data, as described by Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), can be used to investigate

circumstances, identify causes, and predict outcomes or behaviors. This type of data is

collected through observations, interviews, field studies, and case studies. In this study,

qualitative data was collected from the initial teacher and administrator online surveys,

and a second time in the teacher and administrator follow-up interview questions. During

the initial teacher survey, respondents were asked to rate a series of questions on a scale

ranging from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied. After each question, teachers were

given the opportunity to add comments or justify their rating in a text box below the

question. This data, along with the open-ended responses from the teacher follow-up

interview questions constituted the qualitative data for teachers in this study. Qualitative

data was also collected from the administrator participants in this study. Their initial

online survey was a series of open-ended questions. For each question, which can be

described as open-ended, administrators were asked to describe their current practices

relevant to the question. Additionally, administrator volunteers choosing to further

participate in this research study, were given an additional series of open-ended questions

on a second occasion, which allowed the researchers to gather more in-depth information

about their level of practice in their school buildings. This information constituted the

qualitative data for administrators in this study.

In the initial teacher online survey, teachers were asked 31 questions that each

began with the stem, "How satisfied are you with . . . ?" Teachers were asked to rate their

feelings using a Likert scale with the rating categories identified using the following

headings; highly satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, highly

dissatisfied, and not applicable. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) described a Likert scale as,

"A self-reporting instrument in which an individual responds to a series of statements by

indicating the extent of agreement. Each choice is given a numerical value, and the total

score is presumed to indicate the attitude or belief in question" (p. G-4). For each

question in the initial teacher online survey, the number of responses was tabulated for

each category heading to give a percentage of respondent agreements with the specific

question. For example, looking at a specific question, the Likert scale tabulations can tell

the researchers what percentage of teacher respondents are highly satisfied, moderately

satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, highly dissatisfied, or perceived the question to not be

applicable to them. The pattern formed from these responses provided the researchers

with evidence as to the attitudes and opinions of the participants.

Data for this research study were taken from four instruments; the online teacher

job satisfaction survey – Factors Influencing Teacher Satisfaction Survey, the online

administrator participant survey, the teacher follow-up interview questionnaire, and the

administrator follow-up interview questionnaire. The researchers were interested in the

opinions and perceptions of all teachers and administrators in the suburban and rural

school districts. Therefore, all current teachers and administrators in both districts were

solicited for participation in this study. For the four different sources, an online program

called SurveyMonkey.com was used to gather and calculate the data. There are several

advantages for using an online tool to conduct survey research. Using the Internet to

conduct this research allowed the researchers to make contact with a large number of

individuals at one time. Additionally, the amount of time necessary to survey teachers

across the suburban and rural school districts and receive their responses was greatly

decreased by using an online tool. Teachers' responses to the survey could be collected immediately after their completion. This tool did not require postage or mailing fees, therefore making the online survey more cost-effective.

Survey Instruments

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

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

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

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

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

Following the job-focused questions that were constructed based on the research gathered, there were six demographic questions to obtain information on the respondents' years of teaching experience, age, ethnicity, gender, current level of teaching, and school district. After the demographic questions, teachers were asked two questions with a yes/no answer option. These questions included (a) If given a second opportunity to choose your profession, would you become a teacher, and (b) Generally speaking, do you

feel that a majority of the teachers you work with are satisfied with their profession? The last two questions on the teacher survey offered respondents the opportunity to continue further into the study. They were asked, "Are you interested in participating in future focus groups and/or interviews related to the topic? Future focus groups and/ or interviews may be audio taped to ensure the accuracy of responses. All participants' identities will be kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms." Teachers responded yes or no, and were then given the opportunity to list their name and school location as contact information for the follow-up components of this study.

The administrator participant survey was designed to consist of open-ended questions to gather information about the practices put into place by the building-level administration. The questions in this survey were developed by the researchers based upon the information collected on the topic of teacher job satisfaction. The survey consisted of 17, open-ended questions asked in second person voice. The questions were focused on the topics of empowerment, support, professional development, leadership, motivation, collaboration, resources available, and physical aspects of the school building. Administrators were instructed within the directions of the survey to respond in any way that was comfortable to them. This could include writing in paragraph form about their practices or listing key points. There was also no length requirement for each of these types of questions.

Following, the job-focused questions, there were four demographic questions to gather more information about the administrators completing the survey. These questions gathered information on the number of years of experience the individual had in administration, and their gender, age, and school building level. Following the

demographic questions, administrators were asked two yes/no response questions. The first question asked administrators if they felt a majority of the teachers they worked with were satisfied with their position. This response could only be marked as a "yes" or a "no". The next question asked the administration if they were interested in participating in future focus groups or interviews related to this study. Respondents were able to mark either "yes" or "no". If they marked "yes", they were asked to provide their name and school location. This information was then used to solicit individuals to participate in the answering of the follow-up interview questions, which delve deeper into the study to gain additional information about teacher job satisfaction and how it relates to the current practices in place by the school district. Because sufficient data and information was gathered individually using telephone interviews and online questionnaires, focus groups were not utilized.

Following the collection of data from the initial survey, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, all respondents who were interested in answering follow-up interview questions related to this study were contacted through the use of district e-mail. The respondents were given the option to participate in the next phase of the study through a telephone interview, a face-to-face conversation, or through the use of an e-mailed online questionnaire. Each teacher contacted through e-mail was asked to reply to the researcher regarding their preference for continuation in the study. The preference for each individual was recorded. Any respondent expressing interest in further participation who did not reply to the e-mail was assigned to the e-mailed online questionnaire preference.

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

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

Four building administrators in the suburban school district and nine building administrators in the rural school district expressed interest in continuing the study through participation in the follow-up interview questions. Each of these individuals was contacted via school district e-mail. They were provided a link to an online questionnaire with follow-up interview questions to probe deeper into the initial topics in the

administrator participant survey. They were not required to answer every question and there was no length requirement for their answers on the 19 open-ended questions. Prior to the administrator follow-up interview questions, they were given the same details as the teacher participants regarding their participation in the study.

Validity

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

The first instrument, an online survey for each group, was distributed to teachers and administrators to form a foundation of knowledge regarding the perceptions held by individuals employed by the suburban school district and individuals employed by the rural school district. The questions were based on the information gathered by the researcher while reviewing previous research studies and professionally written journal articles regarding the topic of teacher job satisfaction. The online teacher job satisfaction survey provided information on the satisfaction level of current suburban and rural school

district teachers on numerous aspects of their position. Teachers were also allowed to provide comments regarding each response, but were not required to do so.

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

After the initial instruments were distributed, each researcher determined which respondents expressed interest in continuing with the research study. Through the online surveys that were distributed to teachers and administrators, the researchers were able to identify teachers and administrators, separately, who were willing to provide more in-depth information regarding this study through follow-up interview questions. Volunteers for continued participation provided their name and job location if they were interested in participating further in this study. The follow-up interview questions were distributed via an online questionnaire to teachers and all participating administrators within both school districts. In the suburban school district, three of the participating teacher respondents expressed interest in completing the follow-up interview questions using a one-on-one telephone interview. These interviews were conducted individually on separate days with the researcher for that district. In the rural school district all volunteer participants agreed to answer questions via the online tool.

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

All questions in the follow-up interview component of the research study and the initial online surveys were designed solicit relevant information related to the research study questions. These questions included

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

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

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

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

The results of the initial online surveys and the follow-up interview questions helped to determine which factors related to teacher job satisfaction are most important to the teachers in the suburban school district and the rural school district. By surveying

building administrators, in addition to the teachers in both of the study districts, the researchers were able to determine how building administrators use the factors important to teacher job satisfaction in their current practices within their building.

The format of the initial administrator participant survey allowed an avenue for administrators in each district to describe their practices, thoughts, and beliefs instead of rating their perceptions on a predetermined scale. To determine how both the suburban and rural school district's current practices align with the teachers' perceptions related to job satisfaction, information and data was taken from each of the four instruments. The researchers then determined the level of teacher job satisfaction with each component of the profession studied and compared it with the current practices the two school districts have in place. This was determined from information provided by both school districts and by participating administrators in this study.

Finally, information was taken from the state-level department of education, in addition to the two studied school districts, to determine how each district's demographic profile influences teacher job satisfaction. For the basis of this study, the suburban school district's results were compared with the rural school district's results to determine if any type of pattern exists between the data and demographic profile for the two school districts.

External validity of the study. If this study were to be applied to an alternative population, there are components of the study in need of consideration. The type and location of the school districts, the size of the school districts, the timeline of the survey distribution, and the format of the survey instruments should all be considered when conducting this study with an alternative population.

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

Johnson and Christensen (2004) described ecological validity as taking the findings of one study and applying them to a new setting. Therefore, if this study were to be replicated in a different setting, the size, type, and location of the district would need to be considered as a factor that could influence the results. The structure of a large school district can vary greatly from a district with a smaller student and staff population. There may be potential differences in the types of programs offered in the school district and the types of resources available for instructional use and professional development for the district's instructional staff. Additionally, school districts located in urban, rural, and suburban settings tend to have differences in school climate and differing impacts from the communities in which they live.

Population validity can be described as the ability to take the findings of one research study in which a small population is studied and apply them to a larger population (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Population validity had an impact on this study because all participants became involved by volunteering to complete an online

survey after all qualifying subjects were solicited within each study school district. There were no mandates placed upon staff members to participate in the initial online surveys or the follow-up interview questions. The results of this study could be impacted by the fact that all responses came from individuals who made a conscious decision to participate in the research study. Therefore, the population used may not be an accurate cross-section of the staff members employed by the suburban school district or the rural school district, which may impact the results of this study. Additionally, since the study was replicated within another district, the sampling method utilized in the study may have a direct impact on the type of results obtained. In this study, where the participants became involved by volunteering to participate, the results may be skewed by the idea that individuals tend to volunteer to participate if they feel particularly strongly about the topic or if they happen to know the researcher personally and choose to participate to benefit the researcher's study.

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

Procedures

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

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

interview questions to be used during the research study. The IRB also required proof of the permission granted by the school districts involved in the study.

After permission was granted by the IRB on May 14, 2009 (Appendix E), the initial teacher job satisfaction survey was distributed to all teachers in both the school districts via district-provided e-mail. The survey was distributed the last week of school during the academic year 2008-2009. Teachers were instructed that there would be a two-week window to complete the survey using the online survey program SurveyMonkey.com. To increase the number of responses to the teacher job satisfaction survey, the survey was redistributed again in September of the following academic year, 2009-2010. The survey was distributed with a description and further instructions to prevent teacher respondents from completing the survey a second time. In addition, the survey was set to not allow more than one response from the same computer in an effort to minimize repeat responses to the survey.

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

In November of 2009, the names of all respondents interested in participating in a follow-up interview were collected and each person was contacted via e-mail to describe the process. The teacher respondents were asked to choose their method of participation

among an online questionnaire, telephone interview, or in-person interview and reply to the e-mail that was sent to them with their preference. All but three teacher respondents in the suburban school district and all of the teacher respondents in the rural school district chose to use an online questionnaire or indicated they were open to any avenue of participation. Any potential subjects who did not respond to the e-mail solicitation were given the online questionnaire preference. The three respondents in the suburban school district who did not choose an online questionnaire decided to participate through a telephone interview.

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

To facilitate the involvement of administrators in the follow-up interview portion of the study, all administrator participants were contacted with an e-mail containing a link to the online questionnaire, which contained the follow-up interview questions. The

online questionnaire was designed using SurveyMonkey.com and it included all the details of the study. Administrators and teachers alike, in the suburban and rural school districts, could respond to the follow-up interview questions until the end of the first semester, which concluded on December 23, 2009.

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

Summary

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

To summarize, the researchers utilized four different instruments in two parts. The first part of the data collection process was fulfilled by the use of two survey instruments, one designed for teacher respondents and one designed for building-level

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

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

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

identified due to the impact the location of each school district can have upon the results. If a similar study is conducted in the future, the size, type, and location of the each school district should be considered. Lastly, effects of the participants or researcher may have had an impact on this study. There is a small possibility that behaviors by either party could have had an impact on the data collected. Therefore, the behaviors of the participants and researcher were identified as a potential threat to validity.

Within the literature review, important elements related to teacher job satisfaction were identified. The purpose of this study was to determine if current practices in the suburban and rural school districts were aligned with the important factors identified in the literature review. In order to determine the level of teacher job satisfaction in each school district, and to determine if current practices were aligned with research-proven practices, instruments were designed by the researchers to gather information from current teachers and administrators in each school district.

Chapter 4: Results

This study analyzed teacher job satisfaction in both a suburban school district and a rural school district. Along with teacher job satisfaction, this study sought to find a relationship between identified practices in the literature review and what the school districts actually do in terms of their practices that influence the satisfaction level of teachers. The purpose of this study was to determine if the suburban school district and the rural school district's practices are in alignment with the teacher satisfaction framework developed by the researchers. From this study, based upon the data collected, the researchers sought to find ways to increase the level of teacher job satisfaction and align district practices with research supported practices which positively influence teachers' levels of job satisfaction.

Participants

To obtain a well-rounded picture of the current practices in both districts of study and to be able to determine current practices in place, both teachers (beginning teachers and experienced teachers) and building-level administrators were participants in this research study. All respondents were invited to participate through a solicited e-mail invitation sent to all qualified individuals using each school district's e-mail system. The suburban school district utilized to gather information in this study is a large school district located in St. Louis County, MO and a small section of Jefferson County, Missouri. The suburban school district includes two early childhood centers, 19 elementary schools, six middle schools, four high schools, two elementary talented and gifted centers, and one alternative high school. Two hundred sixty-eight teachers participated in the initial teacher job satisfaction survey, Factors Related to Teacher

Satisfaction. The participating teachers were representative of each level of education (early childhood, elementary, middle, and high), with the majority of respondents representing the high school level. The rural school district utilized in this study is located in Jefferson County, Missouri and includes six elementary schools, three intermediate schools, one seventh and eighth grade center, and one high school. One hundred teachers participated in the initial teacher job satisfaction survey, with the majority of respondents from the elementary school level. Table 5 shows the breakdown of teacher respondents according to their level of teaching assignment. While the plurality of teacher respondents was representative of the high school level in the suburban school district and the elementary level in the rural school district, there were a substantial number of teachers representing each school level.

Table 5

Demographics: Teacher Respondents' Level of Teaching Assignment

Level	Percentage of Participating Teachers in the SSD	Percentage of Participating Teachers in the RSD
Early Childhood Education (Pre-K)	0.4%	1.2%
Elementary Education	26.5% (K-5th)	41.2% (K-4th)
Middle School Education	35.6% (6th-8th)	29.4 (5th-8th)
High School Education	37.5% (9th-12th)	30.6 (9th-12th)

Note. SSD = suburban school district, RSD = rural school district

To better understand the data recorded in this study, additional demographic-based questions were asked. Teacher participants were also asked to describe themselves based upon gender, age, ethnicity, and the number of years they have experienced in the teaching profession. Respondents of this survey in each school district were

predominantly female, 74.0% of respondents falling into this category (26.0% male) in the suburban school district and 83.5% (16.5% male) in the rural school district. Additionally, a majority of the respondents were classified as Caucasian, with 95.6% of teacher respondents' describing themselves as this ethnicity in the suburban school district and 92.9% in the rural school district. The remaining ethnicity options represented less than five percent of the population sample in the suburban school district, which included 2.4% classified as "Other", 1.2% African American, 0.8% Hispanic American, and 0.0% of the population listed as Asian American. In the rural school district, the demographic breakdown of the remaining respondents included 5.9% "Other" and 1.2% Asian American.

The remaining two demographic categories represent a correlation in the data collected. The number of years in the teaching profession and the chronological age of the teacher respondents represent similar findings. The majority of respondents represent teachers in the profession 20 years or less, while the chronological age data shows the majority of respondents are age 40 or younger. Tables 6 and 7 represent the demographic data collected in these two categories.

Table 6

Demographics: Teacher Respondents' Chronological Age

Age Range	Percentage of Participating Teachers in the SSD	Percentage of Participating Teachers in the RSD
21-25	9.6%	6.0%
26-30	20.1%	8.3%
31-35	15.3%	17.9%
36-40	12.9%	22.6%
41-45	12.9%	7.1%
46-50	10.0%	9.5%
51-55	7.2%	11.9%
56+	12.0%	16.7%

*Note.*SSD = suburban school district, RSD = rural school district

Table 7

Demographics: Teacher Respondents' Years of Experience in the Profession

Years of Experience	Percentage of Participating Teachers in the SSD	Percentage of Participating Teachers in the RSD
1-5	26.4%	20.0%
6-10	22.1%	22.4%
11-15	15.9%	25.9%
16-20	17.4%	14.1%
21-25	10.5%	5.9%
26-30	2.3%	9.4%
30+	5.4	2.4%

Note. SSD = suburban school district, RSD = rural school district

The second category of participants in this research study consisted of building-level administrators working in the schools located in both school districts. Only administrators working directing in the school buildings were solicited for participation in this survey. Therefore, administrators at the upper level of the district, including individuals at the director or superintendent level, were not asked to participate in this survey. After the e-mail invitation to participate in the online administrator participant survey, 12 administrators in the suburban school district completed the survey and nine administrators in the rural school district. Data from the administrative survey instrument showed a majority of respondents were female in each school district (75.0% suburban, 55.6% rural). The participants were distributed across the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The format of this survey instrument did not include an early childhood

category for this question. In Table 8, the breakdown of building administrators by level is displayed. There is a majority of respondents from the elementary level in the suburban school district and a majority of respondents from the middle school level in the rural school district.

Table 8

Demographics: Administrator Respondents' Building Level Assignment

Level	Percentage of Participating Administrators in the SSD	Percentage of Participating Administrators in the RSD
Elementary Education	41.7% (K-5th)	33.3 (K-4th)
Middle School Education	33.3%	55.5 (5th-8th)
High School Education	25.0%	11.1 (9th-12th)

Note. SSD = suburban school district, RSD = rural school district

Every administrative respondent to the initial administrator participant survey has been a practicing administrator for 15 years or less in the suburban school district, with the majority of respondents in their first five years as a building-level administrator. In the rural school district, a majority of administrator respondents have been practicing 15 years or less, with the majority of administrators in their sixth through tenth year of experience. Table 9 shows the distribution of administrators according to their years of experience in this position.

Table 9

Demographics: Administrator Respondents' Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Percentage of Participating Administrators in the SSD	Percentage of Participating Administrators in the RSD
1-5	75.0%	22.2%
6-10	8.3%	44.4%
11-15	16.7%	22.2%
16-20	0.0%	0.0%
21-25	0.0%	11.1%
26-30	0.0%	0.0%
30+	0.0%	0.0%

Note. SSD = suburban school district, RSD = rural school district

Given that administrative positions are typically secondary to teaching positions, in other words individuals typically begin in the education profession as teachers and move into the administrative role, the majority of administrator participants have a chronological age higher than the recorded majority age for teacher participants (26-30) for the suburban school district. However, the majority of teacher and administrator respondents for the rural school district both recorded an age majority of 36-40 years. Table 10 displays the data regarding the recorded chronological age for administrative participants in this study.

Table 10

Demographics: Administrator Respondents' Chronological Age

Age Range	Percentage of Participating Administrators in the SSD	Percentage of Participating Administrators in the RSD
21-25	0.0%	0.0%
26-30	8.3%	0.0%
31-35	41.7%	22.2%
36-40	16.7%	33.3%
41-45	16.7%	11.1%
46-50	16.7%	11.1%
51-55	0.0%	11.1%
56+	0.0%	11.1%

Note. SSD = suburban school district, RSD = rural school district

Results

The results of this study were extracted from the data collected by four different instruments. The data sources utilized in this study included the following:

1. Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

2. Administrative Participant Survey

3. Teacher Follow-up Interview Questions

4. Administrator Follow-up Interview Questions

The research questions focused on throughout this study were answered using the data collected from the four instruments utilized in this study. To communicate the results

of this study, tables and narratives were used to explain the data presented and relationships or commonalities among the data. The following questions were addressed in this study:

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

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

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

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

The data collected during this research will be discussed relative to both the rural and suburban school districts of study. The data will be presented for each of the four instruments separately and then it will be presented as it relates to each of the four research questions in this study.

Description of the Instrument Data: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

The first step in gathering data regarding the current level of teacher job satisfaction in each school district was to distribute the online teacher job satisfaction survey, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction. The purpose of this survey was to present teachers with a series of questions focused on common issues in teacher job satisfaction to determine their current level of satisfaction regarding the topic in question.

This survey was distributed to all teachers in each school district using the district's e-mail and their e-mail group listing for teachers. In the e-mail there was an explanation of the study and a link to take the participant to the online survey, which was constructed using the SurveyMonkey.com web site. This survey consisted of 31 job-related questions, which all began with the sentence starter, "How satisfied are you with . . .?" The sentence endings, or questions were listed, and respondents used a Likert scale to mark their level of job satisfaction in each area. The Likert scale options for this study included highly satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, highly dissatisfied, and not applicable. Teacher respondents were also given the option of adding comments under each question if they wanted to share further insight, opinions, or wanted to justify their ranking.

In the suburban school district, there were 268 total teacher respondents to this initial survey. The goal of this survey was to have as many teachers respond as possible to develop a base level of information concerning current perceptions teachers in the district possess regarding a wide range of factors related to job satisfaction. These factors were obtained from research articles and studies, which were used to develop the survey instrument.

Responses to the survey were tabulated by calculating the number of responses in each of the Likert scale categories. Additionally, the SurveyMonkey.com program not only listed the number of responses in each category for each question, but also the percentage of respondents who marked their satisfaction level in each category, with the category containing the majority of the ratings being highlighted in bold print. It was also determined how many teachers responded to each question and the number of teachers

who chose to skip a particular question. The comments listed for each question on the survey were reviewed by the researchers. The researchers read each comment and grouped them according to their content. Patterns and relationships emerged by reviewing the comments for frequency of answers that represented the perceptions and thoughts of the survey participants. In Table 11, the responses from the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey are listed for the suburban school district. The category with the majority of teacher responses is highlighted in bold type. Table 11 can be found in Appendix C.

Table 11 shows a high level of satisfaction among the teachers working in the suburban school district. Of the 31 Likert scale questions, data showed on seventeen of those questions that teachers were highly satisfied. The remainder of the questions obtained a majority of the responses in the moderately satisfied category with the exception of two questions. These two questions focused on aspects of the profession that pertain to beginning teacher programs. The teacher respondents had a majority of their responses in the "not applicable" category. This could relate to the number of teachers completing the survey who were beyond their beginning years or could not recall enough information to answer the question accurately. For the entire survey, the categories of highly dissatisfied and moderately dissatisfied were never found to contain a majority of the teacher participants' responses.

In addition to the Likert scale questions in Table 11, teacher participants were asked," If given a second opportunity to choose your profession, would you choose to become a teacher?" Of the 216 participants who answered this question, 84.4%

responded "yes", they would choose to become a teacher a second time. Twelve teachers chose to skip this question, and 15.6% of teachers responded "no".

In the rural school district, there were 100 teacher respondents to the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey. Teachers in the rural school district were given the same 31, open-ended questions presented to the teachers in the suburban school district via the Factors Related to Satisfaction Survey. On twenty of the questions posed on this survey, teachers within the rural school district found the majority of teachers' perceptions to be marked in the moderately satisfied category. Of the remaining questions on this survey, the teacher respondent group recorded the majority of their answers in the highly satisfied category, with the exception of three questions. The remaining three questions on this survey received a majority of their responses in the "not applicable" category. These questions were formed to determine teachers' satisfaction levels with aspects of the teaching profession that pertain to beginning teachers. Therefore, if teacher respondents did not consider themselves as a beginning teacher, or could not recall their own experiences, they may have marked these questions "not applicable." A concluding question on the survey asked teachers, "If given a second opportunity to choose your profession, would you choose to become a teacher?" Of the respondents from the rural school district, 81.7% of teachers responded, "yes," they would choose to become a teacher a second time.

When comparing the survey results between the two school districts, the two groups of teachers each marked the majority of their response in the same category for 22 of the 31 questions. For seven of the questions, the suburban school district marked a majority of their responses in the highly satisfied category while the rural school district

found these questions to be moderately satisfying. Between the suburban school district and the rural school district, one question of the three pertaining to beginning teachers did not receive a majority of the responses in the "not applicable" category. For the suburban school district, the question, "How satisfied are you with the new teacher support program in place by your school district?" recorded a majority of responses in the highly satisfied category, even though this question was directed primarily to beginning teachers. Another noted difference in the teacher responses between the two school districts pertains to the question, "How satisfied are you with the working relationship you have developed with your teaching team, department, or grade level?" The suburban school district's teachers marked the majority of their responses in the highly satisfied category, while the rural school district's teachers were equally divided between the highly satisfied and moderately satisfied categories.

Within the online survey, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, teachers were given the opportunity to leave comments regarding each of the questions. In the directions immediately prior to the questions being asked on the online survey, teacher respondents were told they could leave comments regarding each question in the textbox directly below the question. Therefore, a variety of responses were collected regarding each question asked in the online teacher job satisfaction survey. Responses included general thoughts, opinions, and perceptions individual respondents have for each question topic. The comments were analyzed to find patterns and relationships and determine how they represent information regarding the research questions that served as a foundation for this study. Using the comments provided, the researchers found recurring thoughts

and themes that relate to each research question for this study. The comments are described later in this chapter in relation to how they relate to each research question.

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

In order to obtain more in-depth information regarding teachers' opinions and perceptions about their job in the suburban and rural school districts, they were given the opportunity to answer a set of follow-up interview questions. This group consisted of teachers who completed the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey who expressed interest in further participation in this research study. On the teacher job satisfaction survey, question 40 asked all respondents, "Are you interested in participating in future focus groups and/or interviews related to the topic?" Thirty-four teachers in the suburban school district expressed interest in participating further and were instructed in question 41 to leave their name and school location as contact information for the follow-up study. Of these responses, 33 went on to leave their name for further participation in the study. Within the rural school district, 12 teachers volunteered to participate in the follow-up interview questions.

Teachers in both school districts were then solicited through a second e-mail inviting them to communicate their preference for participating in the follow-up interview. The teachers were given the option of participating in the interview via an online questionnaire, a telephone interview, or an in-person interview. Of the 33 e-mail invitations in the suburban school district, each teacher responding to the e-mail invitation requested to participate in an online questionnaire, with the exception of two individuals requesting a telephone interview, and one individual requesting an in-person interview. The one individual requesting an in-person interview completed a telephone

interview for this study due to situational circumstances on the day of the scheduled interview. Within the rural school district, all teacher participants in the follow-up interview questions participated through an online questionnaire.

The follow-up interview questions were designed to solicit more in-depth information regarding teacher perceptions of their chosen occupation. While these responses were open-ended in nature, the responses were analyzed and grouped into categories that were representative of the data. At times, teacher respondents provided more than one answer to the question within the course of their open-ended response. Each full response for each participant was analyzed and information for each answer was broken down and categorized into each specific category. This provided data that showed how frequent, or what the most prevalent responses were for each question. Table 12, which can be found in Appendix F, highlights the responses to each of the teacher follow-up interview questions. The percentage listed next to each answer represents the number of responses that fell within this category in the open-ended responses of the teachers. Therefore, to find the percentage, the number of responses within each category was compared with the overall number of responses for the question and the answer was rounded to a whole number.

Table 12 represents a variety of viewpoints by the teachers completing the follow-up interview questions. The responses in Table 12 describe the majority of teachers in this group as satisfied individuals (question #6) who would choose this same career again (question #7) if given the opportunity. Table 12 also represents the variety of comments, thoughts, opinions, and perceptions recorded by teacher participants for this follow-up interview portion of this study.

Description of the Instrument Data: Administrator Participant Survey

Administrators in the suburban and rural school districts were surveyed to gather information pertaining to building-level practices that were identified in the literature review as having an impact on teacher job satisfaction. This information provided a foundation of knowledge regarding building-level administrators' views, thoughts, and opinions in relation to the practices they have in place within their building. To solicit information, each building administrator in both school districts was invited to participate in the study through an e-mail message. The message contained a link to the Administrator Participant Survey, which was created using SurveyMonkey.com. Administrators were given a series of 16 questions, in which administrators responded with open-ended answers. There was no length or format requirement for answers, which were recorded in a textbox just under each question. Two, two-choice questions were asked of administrators, and they could only respond yes or no. The first question was, "Generally speaking, do you feel that a majority of the teachers you work with are satisfied with their position?" The second question was used for participants to mark either yes or no in terms of their desire to complete a set of follow-up interview questions. Four demographic-based questions were asked at the end of the survey concerning respondents' age, gender, years of experience, and school level assignment (elementary school, middle school, or high school). In order to obtain further information regarding administrative practices, they were asked at the end of the survey if they had interest in participating further with this study. Respondents could mark yes or no, and if they marked yes, they were asked to leave their name and school location.

Table 13, which can be found in Appendix H, represents the responses given by the administrator participants in the survey. Next to each question, a series of answers is provided, with the percentage this answer was given next to each one. All responses were grouped into the categories listed, and the percentages next to each category represent the frequency with which the answer was given.

In the survey responses described in Table 13, there are references made to both meetings and committees. For the purposes of this study and response classification, a meeting refers to regularly scheduled collaboration times in which a group of the same individuals meet throughout the school year. The word committees refer to unique groups of individuals who have come together to work on one problem or issue and their collaboration will result in a product or solution. Also within this survey, collaboration is referred to as job-alike, team, or departmental. Team collaboration refers to middle school academic teams, which include a group of teachers each teaching their own subject, but all teaching the same group of students. It may also refer to a team of elementary teachers—for example, all the fifth grade teachers in one specific school. Job-alike collaboration refers to individuals who teach the same class, age level or grade of students. Examples of job-alike collaboration could include all eighth grade social studies teachers or all Algebra I teachers in a high school. Departmental collaboration refers to all teachers in a specific academic department within a school, such as science, coming together for collaboration across grade levels or specific courses being taught.

Description of Instrument Data: Administrator Follow-up Interview Questions

Upon completion of the Administrator Participant Survey, respondents were given the option to volunteer for further participation in this study by leaving their name and

school location. After collecting the names of interested individuals, they were invited to participate in administrator follow-up interview questions through an e-mail message, which contained a link to an online questionnaire. This questionnaire contained 19 questions pertaining to the education profession. The questions were similar to the questions posed to the teacher participants in their follow-up questions, but the wording of the questions was altered to refocus the question on the teachers in the administrative questionnaire. For example, on the teacher instrument, the question was worded, "Looking back over your teaching career, what have been the most challenging situations to deal with?" When this question was placed on the administrator instrument, it was reworded to, "Looking over your career, what have been the most challenging situations teachers have had to deal with?"

In the suburban school district, four administrators volunteered to answer the follow-up interview questions: one elementary school principal, two middle school principals, and one high school principal. For the rural school district, all nine initial participating administrators volunteered to answer the follow-up questions. The questions asked of the administrators are listed in one column, and their responses are listed in the right column for Table 14, which can be found in Appendix J. For some questions, multiple topics or themes may be listed. This is attributed to an administrator respondent providing multiple answers to the one question posed. If the same response was given more than once, the total number was marked using roman numerals alongside the answer.

Reviewing the data in Table 14 revealed recurring themes including the utilization of professional development, collaboration, time, and references to the amount of work

teachers are responsible for in their position. The data obtained from the administrator follow-up questions will be used to determine each school district's alignment of district practices, in relation to the information the research has provided, that contributes to high levels of teacher job satisfaction.

Research Questions

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

A review of the initial teacher job satisfaction survey for the suburban school district revealed that of the questions pertaining to new teacher induction programs, the majority of teacher responses were in the highly satisfied category. Respondents were highly satisfied with how their collegiate education prepared them for their position, the new teacher support put into place by their school district, and the hiring process they experienced to obtain their current position. While two questions had the majority of responses in the not applicable category, if these responses were excluded to focus on those teachers who perceived themselves as beginning teachers, teachers' perceptions would have been moderately satisfied with the first-year new teacher orientation activities, and equally distributed between highly satisfied and moderately satisfied in terms of the required mentor/mentee relationship. The term support is mentioned in each

of the instruments used in this study. Within the Factors Related to Satisfaction Survey, three questions were specifically asked which relate to administrator support within the schools (questions 8, 11, and 18). Teachers in the suburban school district were found to be highly satisfied with the relationship they have with their building administration and with the amount of support they are provided by their building-level administrator. However, the majority of teachers were found to be moderately satisfied with the manner student discipline is addressed by their administrators.

The term teacher compensation refers to the annual salary and benefits teachers receive from their employer based upon the terms of the position they were hired to fulfill. The Factors Related to Satisfaction Survey solicited feedback from teachers regarding their perception of their annual salary and the suburban school district's benefit package. According to the results of the survey, over 50% of teachers (51.7%) were moderately satisfied with their annual salary. In addition, teachers were also found to be moderately satisfied (50.2%) with the benefit package provided by the district for its full-time certified teachers.

Working conditions is a broad category, which encompasses many facets of the school environment. Working conditions refers to both the physical and non-physical aspects of the school building that constitute the working environment for teachers. Questions on the teacher job satisfaction survey covered a variety of aspects of working conditions, including relationships, communication, student behavior, availability of resources, safety and functionality of the school building, and the overall school climate (described as relationships, building pride, motivation). When pertaining to relationships, teacher respondents were highly satisfied in their relationships with their teaching team,

department, or grade level, with other teachers in the building, and with their students. The level of satisfaction dropped down to the next category, moderately satisfied, when the question focused on the teachers' relationships with their students' parents. While the participants were highly satisfied with their relationships with their students, they were only moderately satisfied with the behavior they see being exhibited by the students within the school. A trend is evident in the survey in relation to the amount of collaboration and planning time teachers have available to work with. In each of the four questions asked pertaining to personal plan time per day and week, and collaboration time per day and week, the majority of teacher respondents were moderately satisfied. When considering their school's building climate, teachers were moderately satisfied (42.7%) with the levels of motivation, building pride, and overall interpersonal relationships that exist. Over 60% of teachers were highly satisfied with the instructional resources that are available to them to perform their teaching duties. Only five percent of teachers were moderately and highly dissatisfied. Teachers were highly satisfied with the functionality of their school building and with the safety procedures that have been put into place at their school.

The last major factor found to play a role in teacher job satisfaction is teacher autonomy in conjunction with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Teachers were asked on the teacher job satisfaction to rank their satisfaction level regarding the expectations the suburban school district places upon them. Teachers were found to be moderately satisfied at 47.1% with the majority of teacher responses falling into this category. However, specific comments were made that linked this question to the factor of standardized testing. These comments included, "The expectations on 'testing' are

mandated by government, not school district"; "It's all about test scores, except those teachers who don't have to give state tests"; "They want higher enrollment levels in upper level courses, but also want higher test scores", [and] "District expectations should focus around the ACT, not the end of course examinations." Comments left by teacher participants indicate a connection between standardized testing and expectations placed upon them by the school district.

Results from the initial teacher job satisfaction survey, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, produced similar results between the suburban and the rural school districts. Teacher respondents from both school districts found several similar factors to be comparable in their satisfaction levels. However, slight differences within the data existed between the perceptions of teachers in the suburban school district and the perceptions of teachers in the rural school district. When the data from the Factors Related to Satisfaction Survey were analyzed, five differences emerged between the two school districts of study. In each instance, the majority of teachers in the suburban school district found each factor to be highly satisfying, while teachers in the rural school district found each factor to be moderately satisfying. Differences in the data existed in each of the five areas listed below:

1. New teacher support put into place by the school district

2. Amount of support provided by their building-level administrator

3. Relationships with other teachers in the school building

4. Instructional resources available to perform teaching duties

5. Functionality of the school building

The differences between the two sets of data may be attributed to those practices that have influenced teacher satisfaction in these five areas.

Research Question #2: How do the suburban school district and the rural school district use the identified factors in teacher job satisfaction to develop current district practices? As new teacher induction programs are evident in the research regarding teacher job satisfaction, administrators were surveyed via the Administrator Participant Survey to determine how they accounted for this factor in their building practices. Administrators were asked to identify the types of support they offer to new teachers. In the suburban school district, the practices they identified and utilized predominantly fell into one of three categories: (a) having a mentor, teammate, or buddy to partner with (33%); (b) providing professional development opportunities and support groups for new teachers (33%); and (c) initiating unique building practices based upon the needs of their staff members. Unique building practices included providing supervision to new teachers, having an open-door policy regarding communication, providing incentives, and having new teachers participate in professional learning communities. Using the performance-based teacher evaluation instrument was also recorded as a way administrators provide support to new teachers in their building (3%). The rural school district administrators predominantly use the practice of pairing up new teachers with a mentor or teammate as a primary way of providing support (50%). Other practices in place by the rural school district administrators for beginning teachers include providing one-on-one support with the building principal, participating in professional learning communities, and engaging new teachers in professional development.

To expand further on what practices administrators implement specifically in their buildings outside of the required activities mandated by each school district for new teachers, administrators were asked to provide more information on specific practices, programs, and supports provided beyond those mandated for new teacher induction. The most predominant practices administrators in the suburban school district utilized were a routine check-in system, coupled with new teacher meetings in their specific building. In the rural school district, administrators most often used involvement with faculty members as a way to acclimate new teachers to the profession. Other often mentioned practices for both school districts included engaging new teachers in professional development and providing them release time to collaborate with others or observe teachers. Administrators also commented that they encouraged teachers to get involved with the school and use the new teacher's mentor to provide additional in-building support.

Administrators were asked a series of questions within the administrator participant survey to develop an understanding of the practices they use to provide teachers support. Administrators in the suburban school district shared that their primary ways of offering teachers support were through classroom observations, making classroom visits, and being visible throughout the school (35% of responses). Twenty-seven percent of responses referred to administrators having an open-door policy to promote communication between administrators and teachers and being available for the communication to take place. The remaining practice identified as a way to provide teacher support was to encourage and engage teachers in collaboration. Twenty-three percent of responses saw this as a valuable tool in giving teachers support in their work.

In the rural school district, administrators' primary way of providing support to their teachers was having an open-door policy and providing professional development opportunities (32%). Other avenues utilized in the rural school district to support teachers included providing teachers an opportunity to collaborate (18%) and being a presence within classrooms and the school building (18%).

Administrators in both school districts were questioned about their current practices relating to professional development programs within their school. In addition to collaboration opportunities (23%) as a type of professional development offered to teachers, administrators in the suburban school district offered support to teachers by offering curriculum-focused (46%) professional development. This was the most frequent type of professional development identified by the participants from the suburban school district in this administrator survey. Teachers were also provided professional development opportunities regarding technology (12%) and topics of their choosing, or personal choice (19%). Curriculum-focused professional development (25%) was also a noted practice in the rural school district, along with professional development opportunities in the areas of Positive Support Team and Response to Intervention (16%), building school improvement planning (8%), technology (4%), and personal choice topics (4%). However, the primary type of professional development reported by the rural school district's administrators was collaboration opportunities among groups of teachers (40%).

Communication was the top-rated way administrators provided teachers with support when dealing with student discipline issues in both school districts. Sixty-seven percent of responses were focused on the importance of communicating while working

through student discipline incidents in the suburban school district, while 79% of

responses were focused on this importance in the rural school district. Other strategies for

providing teachers support in relation to student discipline mentioned by administrators

in the suburban school district included having meetings, such as a discipline review

board, to discuss discipline concerns (19%), and providing resources, such as Positive

Behavior Supports and a student handbook. Administrators in the rural school district

reported providing teacher resources (14%) and following district policies to ensure

consistency (7%) in primary practices.

Determining how administrators motivate and empower their teachers was

another way to determine the support they provided their staff. When asked how they

motivate teachers, administrative participants in both the rural (50%) and suburban (35%)

school district used recognition as their primary way. After recognition, principals in the

suburban school district shared that they used incentives and celebratory gifts to motivate

their staff members. Using gifts referred to honoring their teachers at specific times of the

school year, such as Teacher Appreciation Week. Administrators in the suburban school

district also found that when they focused on teacher strengths and using these strengths

to grow and learn, it served as a motivating factor for staff members. In addition, the

effects of a positive attitude and school atmosphere, and expressing thanks and giving

encouragement, are all ways administrators have motivated teachers in their buildings in

the suburban school district. While administrators in the rural school district also used

recognition and providing incentives and celebratory gifts as ways to motivate their

teachers, other practices were identified in this school district. Administrators reported

giving teachers support, having good communication, using humor, and building trusting relationships as ways to motivate their teachers.

The empowerment of teachers made evident additional ways administrator participants provided support to their teachers. Of the ways administrators empowered their teachers, the top three responses given by administrators in the suburban school district received almost identical frequency markings. These practices of empowerment included the following: providing teachers leadership opportunities (23%), building a support network for teachers within their building (23%), and allowing teachers to be a part of the decision-making process (20%). Administrators also found teachers in the suburban school district to feel empowered when they are given autonomy regarding their work (10%), when they are provided with training and materials to use in their teaching (10%), and when they feel a part of the communication taking place in the school (13%). Similar practices were found to be in place in the rural school district related to teacher empowerment. The most frequent practice cited by administrators was allowing teachers to be a part of the decision-making process (38%). Administrators also found teachers to feel empowered when provided collaboration opportunities (33%) and when teachers felt a part of the communication within the school (24%).

A variety of practices are in place concerning working conditions within the schools in each school district, as evidenced in the information provided by participating administrators. When administrators in both school districts were asked a series of questions regarding the physical working conditions of their school building, they were able to share that a majority of teachers in their schools had their own classrooms (95% of teachers or higher) and that the average class size in their buildings was in the low 20s.

Administrators in the suburban school district shared a variety of available resources intended to benefit instructional practices. Resources listed included human resources such as mentors, classroom assistants, department chairpersons (28%), library resources and items specific to their curriculum (19%), technology (19%), professional development (17%), collaboration opportunities (15%), and release time (2%). Regarding the technology resource, administrators in the suburban school district worked with the district to provide teachers with computers and computer-related materials such as Smart Boards and software (60%); technology classified in an "other" category such as document cameras, a Wii video game system, student response systems, etc. (27%); Internet resources (8%); and training to utilize and learn technology (4%).

Resources reported to be available for teachers in the rural school district were similar to those provided by the suburban school district. Teachers in the rural school district benefited from technology (29%), use of funds to purchase resources (21%), curricular materials (18%), collaboration opportunities (14%), professional development (11%), and human resources (7%). Teachers in the rural school district benefited from the same types of technology that were available in the suburban school district; computers and computer-related materials (76%), "other" technology such as document cameras and student response systems (10%), and technology support services (4%). One difference in the reported resources provided for each school district was a wireless computer lab provided by the rural school district (10%).

Administrator participants limit the requirements for involvement in extra duties by the teachers. Responses recorded in both school districts shared that teachers are not obligated to participate in anything beyond their contractual duties (52% suburban, 37%

rural). However, in the suburban school district, 33% of responses noted that it is encouraged that teachers participate in a committee or organization (33%), but most teachers have freedom to choose what they are involved in (14%). In the rural school district, administrators provided teachers with opportunities to join committees and volunteer at school functions (36%). Administrators in this school district also provided their staff with duties in which they can receive additional compensation, but on a voluntary basis (18%).

Administrative participants put practices in place to create opportunities for collaboration, leadership, and involvement in the decision-making process. Just as empowerment was used to describe administrative support, the practices reported for empowerment also fall under the heading of working conditions, which includes the work environment. Half of the recorded responses in the suburban school district found that using committees was common practice for giving teachers input into decisions within the school (46% in the rural school district). Administrators in both school districts also reported using conversations, e-mail messages and the open-door policy to promote communication regarding decisions being made that concern the school community. In addition to these practices, input is solicited from both administration and teachers at meetings and through the distribution of surveys. Administrators in the suburban school district have embedded collaboration time into teacher schedules to promote mentoring and support. Outside of informal collaboration that may come up during the school day (10% of responses), other forms of collaboration resulted in an almost even data distribution in the suburban school district, which included team (cross-curricular)

collaboration (28%), job-alike collaboration (21%), staff development days/release time (21%), and during committee work and meetings (21%).

In addition to using meetings with teachers and administrators as a way to involve teachers in the decision-making process and collaboration, administrators in the rural school district utilize time built into the teachers' contracted work time to promote collaboration. These collaborative opportunities take place during professional development days (20%) or during grade level or department level plan times (40%). Other practices reported by administrators in the rural school district included providing time for professional learning communities (33%) and encouraging teachers to be a part of a school committee (7%).

Administrators were asked to describe what opportunities are provided to teachers to foster their involvement in leadership roles. Administrators reported getting teachers involved in committee work within the building (39% suburban, 75% rural), or serving as a leader with a department or team (27% suburban, 8% rural). Additionally, administrators in the suburban school district allowed staff members to be representatives for the school on district-level committees (12%) and serve as a professional development presenter within the building for their teacher peers (9%). Serving as a beginning teacher's mentor (6%), sponsoring a student activity (3% suburban, 8% rural), and interning with the building-level administrators (3%) were other practices identified by the participating administrators in the suburban school district as ways they provide leadership opportunities.

As the demands of standardized testing are identified as a factor in teacher job satisfaction, administrators in the suburban school district favored professional

development activities specifically focused on increasing student performance in academic areas (46%). Of the types of professional development in the suburban school district listed in the responses for the administrative participant survey, nearly half of the professional development (46%) had a curricular focus. In the rural school district, administrators reported using collaboration as the primary form of professional development (40%) followed by professional development with a curricular focus (28%). Additionally, in four different questions on the administrator participant survey, collaboration was listed as a frequent response given by administrators, including collaboration among administrators and teachers (23% suburban, 18% rural).

Research Question #3: How do the suburban school district and the rural school district's current practices align with teacher perception related to job satisfaction? In an effort to determine the alignment between the practices put into place by building-level administration and the perception teachers possess within their roles, teachers and administrators participating in the follow-up interview portion of this study were given similarly worded and topic-driven questions. Table 15, which can be found in Appendix K, highlights the similar questions given to administrators and teachers in the follow-up interview questions. The first column provides the base question, the second column includes the responses provided by the administrator participants, and the third column provides the responses of the teacher participants in order to determine the alignment between the two sets of answers.

Of the questions described in Table 15, 13 of the 15 questions worded similarly for both administrators and teachers revealed alignment between the two sets of answers recorded for the suburban school district. Both administrators and teachers viewed time

constraints as a challenge to in the teaching profession. Both groups identified pay, workload, time demands, and lack of support as factors that motivate teachers to leave the profession. Teachers were also found to leave in order to move to a different school district for a lateral position. Teachers and administrators alike viewed situation circumstances (such as school location), compensation, and the perception of better working conditions as reasons teachers decide to relocate to another school district. Teachers and administrators were aligned in their reasons for choosing this profession. This is evident by the similarity of three responses for both teachers and administrators in the suburban school district. Both groups listed working with people/students, having a love of learning, and the influence that goes with the profession as reasons for entering the field of education. Yet, teachers and administrators responded similarly when asked what seems to be missing from education when comparing it with other professions. These responses included better salary and benefits, respect, and professional status in society.

Alignment also exists among the answers in regards to areas in need of attention, administrator support, and motivating factors for teachers. There is agreement in the answers regarding areas of the profession that are in need of attention in the next five to ten years. Both teachers and administrators in the suburban school district found issues with students, including engagement, along with giving teachers time to teach and fulfill their classroom responsibilities as areas of focus. In regards to how administrators support teachers in the schools, both teachers and administrators identified practices by building principals that included communicating and having good conversations, making decisions with a student-focused perspective, and collaborating with others. Both groups

agreed that motivating teachers in the profession involved having conversations, communicating, and increasing the time teachers have to fulfill responsibilities.

Of the questions compared in Table 15 for the suburban school district, two areas in which no alignment is evident in the responses included administrator and teacher views regarding areas of the profession in need of focus in the next five to ten years and in the behaviors they feel need to be exhibited by building-level or district-level administrators that are not currently being practiced. Administrators participating in the follow-up interview found that areas in need of focus over the next five to ten years included how to work with a diversified student body, increasing teachers' skill level in regards to inquiry-based and hands-on learning, finding ways to develop positive character within students, increasing collaboration time, and providing teachers with meaningful professional development. From the opposite point of view, teachers chose a second set of areas that are in need of attention. Their responses included dealing with student/parent issues, recruiting and retaining new teachers, assessment practices, compensation and budgeting by the school district, technology progression, a reexamination of teacher expectations, and teacher motivation. Another area of misalignment in interview responses dealt with the behaviors administrators and teachers wanted to see exhibited by building-level and district-level administrators. These behaviors, from an administrative perspective, included using the evaluation instrument as a growth tool, sharing success stories and obstacles that have been overcome, and implementing teacher recognition programs. Teachers' responses indicated a view different form practicing administrators. They wanted to see administrators acting as professionals/exhibiting professionalism, holding people accountable, respecting

teachers' time, being fair and consistent, having good rapport with students, and inspiring and motivating teachers. A portion of the teacher responses for this question, approximately 10%, identified that they were satisfied with their administration's practices and did not see a need for something more.

In the rural school district, alignment between the administrator follow-up interview responses and the teacher follow-up interview responses was evident in 14 of the 15 questions measured. Within each of the 14 questions, the responses given by teachers and administrators were in alignment with at least one category given as a response to the measured question. One question that resulted in misalignment was, "What practices do you use to motivate your teachers?" In the teacher interview, the question was worded, "What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?" Administrators in the rural school district reported in that having good communication, providing support, using humor, and giving praise were all practices utilized to motivate teachers. However, when teachers were asked what practices would motivate them to continue in the profession, their focus shifted to more tangible items, such as resources and working conditions.

Research Question #4: How does the demographic profile for the suburban school district and the rural school district influence the results in regards to current district practices and teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction? The suburban school district, which served as the study site for this research project, is classified as suburban due to its location, which covers over eleven different municipalities in the suburbs of a large, metropolitan area (RSD, About Us, Demographics, 2009). To determine if there was a connection between the results of this study and the type of school district in which

it was conducted, this same research study was conducted in a second school district by a partner researcher. This researcher completed her study in a rural school district, which is classified as a rural due to its location in the state of Missouri.

To determine if there was an impact on the alignment between the district practices and the teacher perceptions based upon the type of school district the study was conducted in, the results of the suburban school district were compared with those of the rural school district. In a comparison of the results of the initial teacher online job satisfaction survey, the results of the Likert scale ratings were similar in two ways:

1. For a majority of the questions, 28 of 31, most responses fell into the moderately satisfied or highly satisfied categories.

2. There were a small number of questions, three in the rural school district and two in the suburban school district, which focused on beginning teacher practices in which a majority of responses were in the not applicable category. If responses for those respondents who felt the questions were not applicable to them were removed, the majority of responses for each of the questions were in the moderately satisfied category.

To determine the alignment that exists within the rural school district related to administrator perceptions and practices compared with teacher perceptions, the administrator and teacher follow-up interview questions within each study (suburban and rural) were compared, and can be found in Table 16 in Appendix L. When the question responses for the suburban school district's administrator and teacher follow-up interviews were compared with the rural school district's administrator and teacher follow-up interview responses, similarities were found in the actual responses given by

administrators and teachers, and in the alignment between the administrator and teacher responses. As the suburban school district exhibited alignment in a majority of the follow-up interview questions, the rural school district's responses did as well. In the suburban school district, 13 of the 15 interview questions had at least one categorical comment in common, thus representing a degree of alignment in the perceptions by administrators and teachers. Within the rural school district, there was some type of alignment present in 14 of the related 15 questions.

Summary

Four instruments were utilized in this study to report disaggregated data regarding the perspectives of teachers and administrators in the suburban and rural school districts. Teachers were found to be moderately to highly satisfied on a majority of questions asked in the Factors Influencing Teacher Satisfaction Survey in both school districts. In addition, the administrator participant survey, along with the responses given in both the administrator and teacher follow-up interview questions, were analyzed to produce common themes, relationships, and patterns that existed within the data. Within both school districts, strong alignment existed between the teacher perceptions of current district practices and responses from the administration, which outlined their current practice implementation for their school district. In chapter five, the results reported in chapter four are discussed in relation to the research questions developed for this study, a conclusion of the study is presented and recommendations for further studies related to teacher job satisfaction are provided. In chapter five, conclusions will be drawn based upon the data collected in this research study relative to the two separate school districts, suburban and rural.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Establishing goals, as an individual or group, is the beginning step in developing a framework for reaching success. In the suburban school district, six goals were established to guide their work in the field of education (RSD, Strategic Plan and CSIP, 2009). These goals, a product of an examination of the district's mission, vision, and core values include the following:

1. Develop and enhance quality education/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic, and career goals

2. Provide curriculum and instructional approaches that prepare students for an increasingly diverse and global society

3. Recruit, attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff to carry out the District's mission, goals, and objectives

4. Promote, facilitate and enhance parent, student and community involvement in District education programs

5. Provide and maintain appropriate instructional resources, support services, and functional safe facilities

6. Govern the District in an efficient and effective manner, providing leadership and representation to benefit the students, staff and patrons of the district

Teachers are an integral part of achieving the goals described, which are guiding the work of the suburban school district. It is clear from the third goal in the list that the school district places significant value on the teachers they employ. One of their primary

focuses, evidenced by this item's inclusion in the list, is to hire the most talented individuals to work in their schools and develop them as educators to fulfill their work the other goals described. As educators across the United States recognize the need to retain teachers in their school systems, the importance of reexamining district practices has increased to improve the retention of teachers in the profession. Statistics have shown as many as 50% of teachers are abandoning the profession in the first five years of teaching experience (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2003). If practices are reexamined and put into place to reduce this number, it could have a positive effect on the development of teachers in terms of skill and in raising the achievement of students.

This study was conducted to (a) provide information regarding teacher job satisfaction in a suburban school district, (b) to compare district practices with those factors related to teacher job satisfaction that emerged from the literature review, (c) to determine the degree of alignment between the practices implemented by building-level administrators with the teachers' perceptions of practices implemented by their administration, and (d) to determine if a relationship exists between the type of school district and the results of this study, which compared data from a rural and suburban school district. The questions answered through the collection and analysis of the data are the following:

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

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

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

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

Four instruments were developed through collaboration between the researchers to gather information and data to provide answers to the guiding research questions. All four instruments were distributed to participants using the online data collection site, SurveyMonkey.com. This site allowed distribution of the surveys and questionnaires, collection of responses, and tabulation of the data generated through the use of a Likert scale in one of the instruments. The four instruments utilized in this study were (a) Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, commonly referred to in this study as the initial online teacher job satisfaction survey, (b) Teacher Follow-up Interview Questions, (c) Administrator Participant Survey, and (d) Administrator Follow-up Interview Questions.

When reviewing the first instrument used in this research study, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, responses recorded for 29 of the 31 questions were marked in the top two levels of the Likert scale provided, highly satisfied and moderately satisfied. Not one question asked received a majority of responses in the bottom two levels of the provided Likert scale, moderately dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied. Two questions on this instrument received a majority of responses in the not applicable category at 35.5% and 34.0%, a higher percentage of responses than in any other Likert scale category. The focus of these two questions was related to first-year teacher

induction activities. Comments left regarding these questions explain the higher frequency of not applicable rankings. Respondents reported they are not familiar with the first-year teacher activities or they have not served in the role of a new teacher mentor or it has been some time since they have had any type of involvement in a mentee/mentor relationship.

The rural school district produced similar results from the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey. Of the 31 questions asked of teacher participants, 28 of the questions received a majority of responses in the highly satisfied and moderately satisfied categories. Like the suburban school district, the rural school district had a small number of questions (three questions in the survey) receiving a majority of responses in the not applicable category, questions focused on beginning teacher activities. In both school districts, when the not applicable percentages were eliminated from the results, the remaining responses were found to be in the highly satisfied or moderately satisfied categories. With every question on this survey recording more applicable responses in the top two categories of highly satisfied and moderately satisfied than in any other category of the Likert scale, this provides data to support the idea that teachers in the suburban school district and rural school district are satisfied in their positions and profession.

The second instrument utilized in this study was the Administrator Participant Survey. This survey provided information regarding the practices building-level administrators had in place related to the factors that emerged from the literature review as being important in relation to teacher job satisfaction levels. A review of the data collected by this instrument in both the suburban and rural school districts indicated that practices are in place in the school buildings that relate to new teacher induction

programs, administrative support, working conditions, teacher autonomy; all factors identified as being contributing factors in teacher job satisfaction. When the open-ended responses were reviewed, analyzed, and grouped into categories, recurring themes within the data included the importance of communication, collaboration, support, and providing opportunities to get all stakeholders involved in decision-making practices.

The last two instruments used to gather information for this research study were the Administrator Follow-up Interview Questions and the Teacher Follow-up Interview Questions. Each participant in the teacher and administrative groups was asked a series of similar or related questions within their separate set of interview questions. The responses from each interview group were compiled and analyzed to determine if there was alignment between the two sets of answers. A review of the data for these instruments supported a strong alignment between current practices and perceptions of building-level administrators with the perceptions of the teachers comprising the interview group. Of the 15 related questions in the teacher and administrator interviews, alignment was found in at least one part of the responses for 13 of the 15 questions in the suburban school district. Misalignment existed in the data regarding which areas of the profession should be focus areas in the next five to ten years and in relation to behaviors or practices they would like to see administrators engage in which they are not currently practicing.

Likewise, a pattern of alignment between the administrator and teacher responses for the follow-up interview questions existed within the rural school district. Of the 15 similarly worded questions, there was at least one commonality of responses in 14 of the 15 questions. The only question that did not represent some level of alignment between the two groups of answers dealt with teachers identifying what factors motivate them to

remain in the profession and administrators identifying how they motivate their teachers. There was no alignment between the teacher and administrator responses for this question based on the recorded answers from each group. However, with both school districts displaying alignment in a majority of the questions asked in the follow-up interview component of this study, it may indicate that when administrators and teachers have similar perceptions and viewpoints, it can lead to higher satisfaction levels among teachers within the two school districts. Results could be applied to school districts with a profile similar to the demographic profile of the school districts involved in this research study.

Summary of the Findings Related to the Research Questions

Four research questions were identified at the beginning of this research study, which guided the focus, development, process, and analysis of data. The information collected through the use of four instruments has resulted in data, which provided answers to the research questions.

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

The survey entitled, Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction, served as an initial step to provide a foundation of knowledge related to teachers' perceptions regarding job satisfaction in the suburban and rural school districts. Upon completion of the review of literature, five areas emerged as being contributing factors to teacher job satisfaction: new teacher induction programs, administrative support, teacher compensation, working conditions, and teacher autonomy. These areas were used to develop an instrument that provided an overview of the satisfaction level of teachers in each of the school districts.

Thirty-one questions were asked of participating teachers in which they evaluated their satisfaction level by rating their perception on a Likert scale consisting of the following categories; highly satisfied, moderately satisfied, moderately dissatisfied, moderately dissatisfied, and not applicable. In regards to the results of this survey, when the majority is referenced for a question, it is referring to a category having more responses than any other category of the Likert scale. Of these questions on the survey, 17of them received a majority of responses in the highly satisfied category, 12 in the moderately satisfied category, and two in the not applicable category for the suburban school district. With 29 of the 31 questions in the suburban school district having a majority of responses in the top two satisfaction categories on the scale, this provides evidence to support the conclusion that teachers in the suburban school district are highly satisfied in their positions. Similarly, the rural school district was found to have a majority of responses in the top two satisfaction categories on the Likert scale in 28 of the 31 questions. The same conclusion can be applied to the rural school district. Teachers are satisfied in their positions and in their chosen profession.

The questions of the initial teacher job satisfaction survey were grouped by topic areas to provide further information on the satisfaction levels of teachers in certain focus areas. Within these groups, patterns were searched for to determine the overall perceptions of the teacher participants in the different question focus areas. Conclusive findings for the suburban school district include

1. Teachers were highly satisfied in their relationships with their team, job-alike partners, or departments, along with other teachers in the building, the community members, and their students. However, data showed teachers were

less satisfied in their relationships with students' parents and their work location's overall school climate, with a majority of responses in the moderately satisfied category.

2. Teacher participants were highly satisfied with the support provided by their administration, but when the focus shifts to how discipline is addressed by the administration they were less satisfied.

3. Professional development was highly satisfying for teachers in the suburban school district. They were highly satisfied with both the type and number of professional development opportunities offered.

4. When questions about the time teachers have to collaborate and plan on a daily and weekly basis were analyzed, it was found that the majority of responses for each question in this group were moderately satisfied.

5. Teachers were highly satisfied in the area of new teacher induction. The majority of question responses were in the highest level for the new teacher support program, the hiring process they experience, and with how they felt their education in college prepared them for the role. A majority of teachers marked the "not applicable" category for first-year orientation activities and the required mentor/mentee activities, but of respondents that felt the question was applicable, they were moderately satisfied with the first-year orientation activities and both, equally, highly satisfied and moderately satisfied (same number of responses) with the required mentor/mentee activities.

6. Salary and benefits were moderately satisfying for teachers completing this survey.

Of the important findings expressed above for the suburban school district, similar results were found in the rural school district. Of the main points highlighted for the suburban school district, differences between the two school districts' responses on the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey are listed. In each instance a difference in the results existed, a majority of the rural school district's teacher responses were found to be moderately satisfying compared with the same questions receiving a majority of responses in the highly satisfying category for the suburban school district.

1. In regards to the working relationships with among teachers, respondents in the rural school district were equally divided between the highly satisfied and moderately satisfied categories.

2. Teachers in the rural school district were moderately satisfied in the relationship they have with their building principal.

3. In regards to professional development, teachers were moderately satisfied in the types of professional development opportunities offered, but highly satisfied in the number of development opportunities offered.

4. The teachers in the rural school district who felt the question pertaining to new teacher support was applicable to them were moderately satisfied with the support offered to new teachers in the rural school district.

While differences in the two school districts' data exist within the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, the overall results of the survey conclude teachers in both school districts were satisfied in their current position. If all "not applicable" responses were eliminated from the survey results, teachers in both school districts reported a

majority of their responses in the moderately satisfied and highly satisfied categories for each question on the survey. This data reflects satisfying perceptions of teachers in both the rural and suburban school districts for the factors questioned in this initial teacher job satisfaction survey.

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

In the Administrator Participant Survey, building-level administrators answered a series of open-ended questions to identify the practices they have implemented in their schools that impact teacher job satisfaction. The focus of these questions was related to the areas of new teacher induction programs, administrator support, and working conditions (both physical and non-physical conditions). Responses for each question were grouped into categories to provide summative data for each question.

Administrators were asked to describe what type of support they offer specific to new teachers in their building. They were also asked to describe building-level activities, outside of the required district activities, they implement for beginning teachers. The most frequent answers concerning new teacher support in the suburban school district concerned getting teachers involved in some type of supportive relationship, whether that was with a mentor, teammate, buddy, or some type of new teacher support group composed of other new teachers. Engaging new teachers in professional development was another frequent way administrators offered support to new teachers, including opportunities outside of those required by the suburban school district. Administrators also reported using communication as another important way to offer support to new teachers. Methods that were reported for communicating with new teachers included

having an open-door policy, checking in with new teachers on a routine basis, and using informal and formal classroom observations.

In addition to asking administrators how they support new teachers, questions were asked regarding the support they offer to their teaching faculty as a group. Questions included how they support teachers, what types of development opportunities they offer, how they work with teachers regarding student discipline, how they motivate teachers, and how they encourage leadership opportunities and empowerment among their staff. Administrators in the suburban school district were found to provide support to their teachers by being visible around the school and in the classrooms conducting observations, having an open-door policy, and through collaboration with teachers. Through analyzing administrator responses, the information collected showed most administrators engaged their teachers in professional development opportunities that were focused on curricular needs. In addition, administrators also reported a high frequency of their development practices being collaborative in nature among the teaching staff.

Frequently cited ways administrators in the suburban school district motivated their teachers within their buildings included providing them recognition for their work and developing incentives for their staff. Administrators also reported recognizing staff members with celebratory gifts during special times of the school year. When support was questioned regarding student discipline, communication was the primary way administrators offered support to their teachers in this area. They also reported using meetings (such as weekly team meetings) as a way to discuss student discipline within the school. Administrators in the schools of the suburban district empowered their teachers by involving them in the decision-making process, building a support network

for teachers, and by providing leadership opportunities. These opportunities reported through this survey showed administrators used committee work, the role of department chair or team leader, and the role of district committee representative as their primary ways of getting teachers involved in leadership roles.

Questions focused on building working conditions asked administration about various components from class size and classroom use to involvement of staff members in decision-making. Working conditions within this study refers to the work environment of each building. Through the responses collected, the majority of administrators in the suburban school district reported that 95% of teachers have their own classroom and that class sizes are in the low 20s (less than 25). A myriad of resources are available to teachers to do their work, and the most frequently reported resources included human resources (mentors, assistants, and curriculum coordinators), library and curricular items, and technology. Eight-seven percent of administrators reported offering their teachers use of computers and computer-connected tools (such as a Smart Board or interactive whiteboard) and other types of technological equipment, such as a document camera or Wii video game system. According to administrators, teachers are not required to engage in additional duties outside of their contract unless they are teacher-selected. Administrators encourage involvement in an organization or committee, but it is not mandated. Communication and collaboration are essential components of including teachers in the decision-making processes of the school. They use committee work, conversations, e-mail messages, open-door policies, and surveys to solicit feedback and foster collaboration among teachers.

Several common themes existed in the results from the Administrator Participant Survey in the rural school district. Within the answers provided by the administration in this school district, several common ideas and practices emerged in relation to the primary factors in teacher job satisfaction that were identified the literature review. In regards to new teacher induction, the rural school district administrators predominantly use the practice of pairing up new teachers with a mentor or teammate as a primary way of providing support in addition to other practices, which include providing one-on-one support with the building principal, participating in professional learning communities, and engaging new teachers in professional development. In the rural school district, administrators most often used involvement with faculty members as a way to acclimate new teachers to the profession.

In the rural school district, administrators' primary way of providing support to teachers is having an open-door policy and providing professional development opportunities. Other avenues utilized in the rural school district to support teachers included providing teachers an opportunity to collaborate and being a presence within classrooms and the school building. Curriculum-focused professional development was also a noted practice in the rural school district, along with professional development opportunities in other areas, which include Positive Support Team and Response to Intervention, building school improvement planning, technology, and personal choice topics. However, the primary type of professional development reported by the rural school district's administrators was collaboration opportunities among groups of teachers. Communication is the top-rated way administrators provided teachers with support when dealing with student discipline issues in both school districts. Sixty-seven percent of

responses were focused on the importance of communicating while working through student discipline incidents in the suburban school district, while 79%of responses were focused on this importance in the rural school district.

Administrators in both school districts utilized similar practices in how they motivate and empower teachers, and in how they encourage teachers to become involved in leadership opportunities. Recognition was the primary way in both school districts used to motivate and inspire teachers. In addition to recognition, other practices used to motivate teachers included giving teachers support, having good communication, using humor, and building trusting relationships. Similar practices were found to be in place in the rural school district regarding teacher empowerment. The most frequent practice cited by administrators was allowing teachers to be a part of the decision-making process. Administrators also found teachers to feel empowered when provided collaboration opportunities and when teachers felt a part of the communication within the school.

A variety of practices are in place related to working conditions within the schools in each school district, as evidenced by the participating administrators' information. Like the suburban school district, administrators reported that a majority of teachers have their own classroom and have class sizes in the low 20s. Resources reported to be available for teachers in the rural school district were similar to those provided by the suburban school district. Teachers in the rural school district benefited from technology, use of funds to purchase resources, curricular materials, collaboration opportunities, professional development, and human resources. Teachers in the rural school district benefited from the same types of technology that were available in the suburban school district; computers and computer-related materials, "other" technology,

such as document cameras and student response systems, and technology support services. One difference in the reported resources provided for each school district was a wireless computer lab provided by the rural school district.

Administrator participants limit the requirements for involvement in extra duties by the teachers. Responses recorded in both school districts shared that teachers are not obligated to participate in anything beyond their contractual duties; however administrators noted that teachers are encouraged to participate in a committee or organization, but most teachers have freedom to choose. In the rural school district, administrators provide teachers with opportunities to join committees and volunteer at school functions. Administrators in this school district also provide their staff with duties in which they can receive additional compensation, but on a voluntary basis.

The results from the administrator participant survey highlight practices that were put into place by building level administration in both the suburban and rural school districts. As evident through the information provided in this research study's literature review and through administrative responses gathered in this survey, administrators in both school districts have practices in place which are supported by previously conducted research on teacher job satisfaction. Practices in place by each school district that support teacher job satisfaction are as follows:

1. Mentoring programs for beginning teachers
2. Engaging new and returning teachers in professional development, which includes collaboration time among teachers
3. Providing teachers with leadership opportunities, including serving in the role as a beginning teacher's mentor

4. Administrators have open-door policies and are visible within the school building

5. Administrators use recognition and constructive feedback to motivate teachers.

6. Practices are in place to empower teachers, most often through the avenue of being involved in important decision-making within the school

7. Resources are provided for teachers to utilize in implementing their curriculum

8. Teachers are provided with individual classrooms a majority of the time and assigned a manageable number of students to educate

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

To determine the alignment between current district practices and teacher perception related to job satisfaction, teachers and administrators were asked if they would like to volunteer for participation in follow-up interview questions related to this study. From the initial teacher and administrator surveys, a group of teachers and administrators volunteered to answer a set of related, follow-up interview questions. These two groups were each given a series of similar questions to determine if their practices and perceptions were in alignment with each others' viewpoints.

Of the questions in the follow-up interview, 15 of the questions were worded the same or similarly to solicit responses on the same topic from both groups of interviewees, teachers and administrators. The responses were collected, analyzed, and grouped into categories based upon the frequency specific answers were given. When the two groups' responses were compared with each other, strong or partial alignment was found in 13 of the 15 questions in the suburban school district. Five of the questions recorded at least three common responses by both the administrators and the teachers, and only one

question recorded only one common response in the suburban school district. The question topics that recorded the strongest alignment were causes for teachers leaving the profession, causes for teachers to pursue jobs in other school districts, what schools can do to help teachers become more satisfied, reasons teachers enter the profession, and what ideal administrator support looks like. Strong agreement in these questions suggests that administrators and teachers are in alignment with their views related to these question focus areas.

Questions asked in the follow-up interview that resulted in no alignment in the answers were questions asking what areas of the profession should be focus areas in the next five to ten years and what behaviors they would like to see from their district and building-level administrators that are not currently being practiced. Administrators in the suburban school district felt that focus areas in the next five to ten years should be working with a diversified student body, increasing teachers' skill in inquiry-based and hands-on learning, developing good character in students, providing time for collaboration, and providing meaningful professional development. Teachers thought areas of focus should be dealing with student/parent issues, recruiting/retaining new teachers, assessment, compensation/district budgeting, technology, and reexamining teacher expectations. When pertaining to behaviors they would like to see exhibited by administrators that are not currently being practiced, administrators felt their peers in administration should be (a) using the evaluation process as a growth tool rather than viewing it as a burden, (b) sharing success stories and obstacles that have been overcome, and (c) implementing recognition programs in their schools. Teachers felt administrators should be practicing professionalism at all times, holding people accountable, respecting

teachers' time, being fair and consistent, developing good rapport with students, and inspiring/motivating staff members.

The data collected from the rural school district's teacher and administrator follow-up interviews suggest a strong alignment between the practices in place by administration and the viewpoints, or perceptions of the teachers. Of the 15 similarly worded questions, alignment existed between the two sets of responses for 14 of the 15 questions. The 14 sets of responses for these questions had at least one common response given when comparing the administrators' responses to the teachers. The only question in which alignment was not evident was in relation to the questions concerning teacher motivation. When administrators were asked to identify how they motivate their teachers, their responses were not among the teacher responses when asked what factors motivate them to continue teaching. This is an area of misalignment in the data, which if examined and communicated, could provide data to increase teacher job satisfaction in the rural school district.

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

To determine if the type of school district and its practices have an impact on the teacher job satisfaction results of this study, the same study was conducted in two school districts, a suburban school district and a rural school district. For this study, the same procedures and instruments were used to determine if any trends, patterns, or relationships exist between the two groups of data, one data set from the suburban school district and one data set from the rural school district.

The results obtained through this study show no impact on the results based upon the demographic classification of each school district. In both research studies, teacher respondents marked a majority of their answers in the moderately satisfied and highly satisfied categories on the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction survey; 29 of the 31 questions in the suburban school district received the highest percentage totals in the moderately and highly satisfied categories and 28 of the 31 questions in the rural school district. In addition, both school districts' results of the administrator and teacher follow-up interviews showed strong alignment between the two groups of answers. In the suburban school district, there was at minimum of one common response in 13 of the 15 similarly asked questions. The rural school district saw alignment in 14 of the 15 questions. Through these data, the researcher can conclude that the demographics of these two school districts did not have an impact on the results of this teacher satisfaction study.

Summary of Data Collection

Teachers in the suburban school district have exhibited high levels of teacher job satisfaction as evidenced by the data collected in this research study. Teacher responses resulted in a majority of teachers being highly satisfied with their job as a teacher, and over 80% of participants would choose to enter the teaching profession a second time if given the opportunity. Follow-up interview responses among administrators claimed at least 75% of teachers, in their opinion would choose this same career. Of the teacher follow-up interview participants, 72% of teachers participating would choose teaching as their career if they could begin again. When administrators were asked to reflect upon

teacher job satisfaction, 100% of administrators participating in the survey felt that a majority of teachers in their building are generally satisfied with their chosen profession.

Teacher survey results supported high satisfaction levels of the teachers in the suburban school district. Of the 31 Likert scale questions focused on teacher satisfaction, 29 of them received the majority of responses in the highly to moderately satisfied categories. The two question results that did not align with this group recorded their highest number of responses in the not applicable category. Therefore, excluding responses from individuals who did not feel the question was applicable to them, the remaining responses showed a majority falling in the highly satisfied to moderately satisfied categories. As a result of this data, recommended focus areas for the suburban school district will focus on areas of the survey that did not meet the highly satisfied ranking in the Likert scale.

District practices reported by participating administrators in this research study show similarities with practices identified in the research as being contributing factors in teacher job satisfaction. Within the Administrator Participant Survey, responses from administrators provided information regarding the perceptions and practices in place in their school buildings. Reported practices support the research in terms of new teacher induction program practices, ways to offer administrative support, and positive working conditions within the schools. Key elements found in administrative practice in the suburban school district that were described in the data collection component of this study as being positive practices for teacher job satisfaction include

1. Using mentoring, professional development, new teacher support networks, the evaluation process, and providing release time to teachers as ways to support teachers beginning their careers in the profession.

2. Using positive feedback, providing support in student discipline, providing resources and professional development, being a presence in the classroom, and providing support in parent interactions as ways administrators support their teachers.

3. Providing teachers with supplies and resources, giving teachers autonomy in their work, building relationships, including teachers in decision-making processes, and providing them with leadership opportunities as ways administrators provide positive working conditions or work environment.

4. Giving teachers autonomy in their teaching, involving them in decision-making regarding school practices, providing opportunities for curricular development, and collaboration as practices administrators use to alleviate the stress teachers may experience from the demands of standardized testing and the current mandates of the No Child Left Behind legislation.

5. Indirectly, administrator practices are considerate of teacher salaries and benefits. Since teacher salary is based upon both years of experience and education-level (including credit hours obtained), there are reported instances of teacher-selected professional development opportunities, which are supportive of teachers increasing their educational level. Additionally, administrator practices included several responses regarding the involvement of teachers in decision-making

processes, which is an important element in determining benefit packages for the school district.

Strong alignment exists concerning the administrators' perceptions and practices reported in their follow-up interview questions with the perceptions teachers reported in their follow-up interview questions. Of the questions asked in the interviews, similar viewpoints were found in a majority of the questions (13 of the 15 similar questions) in the suburban school district. The data collected supports that administrators and teachers have similar viewpoints and understandings involved with why teachers choose the profession, causes of teachers leaving the profession or school district, important factors missing from the education profession, ways schools can help teachers become more satisfied, areas within teaching that need more attention, perceptions of good administrator support practices, motivating practices for teachers, the importance of relationships, and ways to empower district teachers. When examining the responses collected, there appears to be misalignment in terms of areas of the profession that require attention and focus in the next five to ten years and in terms of what practices they would like to see administration begin that are not currently being practice to influence the level of job satisfaction. Administrators' and teachers' perceptions of principal behaviors most likely vary based on their current relationships and interactions and what they see as the responsibilities of this position. Administrators wanted to see an increasing number of administrators using formal evaluations as a growth tool, engage in best practices/problem solving discussions, and implement recognition programs in the schools for teachers. Teachers saw a need for principals to find ways to hold people

accountable, respect teachers' time, be fair and consistent, develop good rapport with students, and motivate teachers.

Administrators reported that the following areas need attention in the next five to ten years: an increasingly diversified student population, teacher skills in the areas of inquiry-based learning and hands-on learning, good character development in students, teacher collaboration time, and meaningful professional development. Teacher follow-up interview respondents felt an emphasis should be placed on student and parent issues, recruiting and retaining new teachers, assessment practices, compensation and district budgeting, technology, evaluation of teacher expectations, and teacher motivation. Therefore, a misalignment exists between what the administration perceive needs attention and what teachers perceive needs attention in the upcoming years.

The suburban school district's results were compared to the rural school district's results to determine if the demographics of a particular school district had an effect on the degree of alignment between the information recorded in the teacher follow-up and administrator follow-up interview questions. Analysis of the data caused the researchers to conclude that the demographics of the school district, being classified as suburban or rural, did not have an impact on teacher satisfaction. Both the suburban and rural school districts found a majority of teacher responses on the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey to be in the moderately satisfied and highly satisfied categories. In addition, the suburban and rural school district both found strong alignment among the responses collected in the administrator and teacher follow-up interviews. Of the questions asked, 15 questions were worded similarly to elicit comparable responses from the participants. The suburban school district's data showed, at minimum, one common

response in 13 of the 15 questions on the comparison, Table 15. The rural school

district's data comparison of the administrator follow-up interview questions and the

teacher follow-up interview questions showed alignment in 14 of the 15 questions, which

can be found in Table 16.

The Demographic Profile's Impact on Teacher Satisfaction

This research study was conducted in two separate school districts; one a large

suburban school district and the other a small rural school district. Consistent practices

were put into place in regards to the instruments used to gather research and the

procedure utilized to implement the research study. With these factors being held

constant, one aspect of interest to the researchers was to determine if the type of school

district would have an impact on the overall teacher job satisfaction and the alignment

between school district practices and teacher perceptions.

In both school districts, data was collected using four instruments, Factors Related

to Teacher Satisfaction Survey, Administrator Participant Survey, Teacher Follow-up

Interview Questions, and Administrator Follow-up Interview Questions. When data from

each instrument was collected, analyzed, and compared with the opposite school district,

the overall picture of the results presented consistent results in each district. Similar

satisfaction scores were recorded in the Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey.

For the questions asked of teachers, both school districts received satisfying marks in an

overwhelming number of the questions. Teachers in both school districts were found to

be moderately to highly satisfied. In addition, both school districts' administration

reported practices in place within schools that are supportive of positive teacher job

satisfaction. Practices in both school districts included methods to support teachers,

professional development practices, resources provided to teachers, support for new teacher induction programs, and giving teachers leadership opportunities and the ability to be a part of the decision-making process. Similar practices in place by both school districts helps to explain the similar positive teacher job satisfaction scores. The practices in place are contributive of the positive satisfaction marks and help explain why the school district demographics are not related to teacher job satisfaction.

Teachers and administrators were given the opportunity to participate in interview questions beyond the initial surveys distributed to the participants. The purpose of the follow-up interview questions was twofold: (a) to probe deeper into specific topics regarding school practices and teacher job satisfaction and (b) to determine if alignment existed between the administrators' perceptions and practices in place with the teachers' perceptions of those same practices. Of the questions asked in the interview portion of this research study, 15questions were designed to elicit comparable responses from the teachers and administrators. The goal was to determine if the teachers perceived the practices to be in place that were identified as being implemented by the building-level administration. When the comparison was made between the administrator and teacher perceptions, alignment in each of the school districts was evident. Of the 15 questions asked of each group, both school districts saw alignment in a majority of the questions, 13 of the 15 questions for the suburban school district, and 14 of the 15 questions for the rural school district. This alignment told the researchers that the lines of communication between administrators and teachers are open. Open communication leads these two groups to understand each other's needs, and use this knowledge to implement practices that are positive contributors to teacher job satisfaction. Additionally, the administrators'

report of the practices in place was supported by the teachers' identification of those practices. A strong alignment between positive teacher satisfaction factors, administrative practices, and teacher perceptions resulted in high teacher job satisfaction scores for these two school districts.

Recommendations for Further Study

Determining teacher job satisfaction within a school district is an ongoing process. Measuring the satisfaction level of teachers should be periodically completed, as the perceptions and feelings of teachers may change over time due to a variety of changes and circumstances. When teachers in a school district are highly satisfied it should translate into positive school environments and increased student achievement. Teacher job satisfaction is mostly determined by the practices a school district has in place. These practices help shape and mold the work of the teacher and foster the feelings and perceptions they have regarding the profession. When alignment exists between research based school practices and factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction, while at the same time teachers understand and perceive these practices and factors to be in place, a high level of teacher job satisfaction and all its accompanying benefits should be the result.

Based upon the results of this study, recommendations for further study exist to provide future researchers recommendations to investigate this evolving topic of teacher job satisfaction. One potential future study is to seek further information about why teachers choose to leave the profession. This study could be in the form of in-depth case studies involving teachers who have voluntarily left their teaching profession. While examining exit interview information and possible further discussion, the researcher may

be able to determine if teachers left the profession due to dissatisfaction or if they were lured away from the profession by a more enticing work environment in a different profession.

Teacher job satisfaction could also be examined from alternative angles than the one chosen for this research study. Instead of examining the effects of practices in place on teacher job satisfaction in a suburban and rural school district, researchers could gather information relative to teacher job satisfaction based on alternative criteria, such as teacher gender, school or school district location, teachers' subject area of concentration, or the age level of their students. This type of study may provide information to narrow the findings of teacher job satisfaction to more distinct groups of individuals.

A similar future study with an alternative perspective could be conducted to compare the effects of administrator and school practices on teacher job satisfaction in private, parochial, and public school systems. The researcher may be able to determine the degree of alignment between factors influencing teacher job satisfaction and the practices being implemented in each school setting. The degree of alignment may indicate a connection to the level of teacher job satisfaction in each type of school.

Conclusions

Teachers in the suburban school district are satisfied with their positions and with the practices put into place by their school district. When evaluating the practices that are positive indicators of teacher job satisfaction, the suburban school district has implemented these practices and communicated them fully; this is evident in the alignment that exists between their practices and teacher perceptions of their practices. Strong alignment in this area has led to high satisfaction levels for teachers working in

the suburban school district. School district demographics have been shown in this study to have no influence over the results, as both the suburban school district and the rural school district recorded high levels of teacher job satisfaction and close alignment between the administrator and teacher follow-up interview responses.

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Appendix A: District Research Approval

ROCKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Growing Together, Learning for Life

Administrative Center
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Bertha Doar, Ph.D.
Director of Data Analysis and
Quality Management

MEMORANDUM

March 4, 2009

Kimberly Fallert
10015 North Marlene Drive
St. Louis, MO 63123

RE: Request for Research within the Rockwood School District

I have reviewed your research request, and I see no harm in your project. You are aware of the staff confidentiality issues, and you have taken precautions to protect student/staff/school privacy. There is little to no interference with the normal instructional time of staff participants. However, I would like to recommend that you inform participants that their participation is voluntary and in no way will impact their employment with the district. I am a bit concerned about the potential time required of district staff members to pull the e-mail addresses of staff members that meet the criteria to be participants in your project. Though I am approving your project, it will be up to you to obtain the needed e-mail addresses from the respective district departments. I am not certain, but this may require the collaborative efforts of the Human Resources and Information Services departments.

As always we would be very interested in your research results. Your research may be helpful in illuminating areas for improvement for our students. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know. Good luck in your research investigation.

Sincerely,

Bertha G. Doar

Bertha Doar Ph.D.
Director of Data Analysis and Quality Management

c: Dr. Carrie Luttrell, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
       Dr. Kelvin McMillin, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
       Steven Beatty, Chief Information Officer

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Appendix B: Instructional Review Board Approval Letter

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board Disposition Report

To: **Kimberly Fallert and Taneal Wallace**
CC: **Dr. Vitale**

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

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

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Teacher Satisfaction Survey

The questions below will be used to conduct research concerning factors related to teacher satisfaction. All responses are anonymous and are not linked to individual respondents in any way. If you would like to comment regarding a specific question, please do so in the box directly following the question.

Please choose the answer that best describes your level of satisfaction regarding the questions below.

1. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
your job as a teacher?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

2. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the working relationship you have developed with your teaching team, department, or grade level?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

3. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the working relationship you have with other teachers in the building?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

4. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the relationships you have developed with your students?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

5. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the relationships you have developed with your students' parents?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

6. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the amount of communication you have with your students' parents?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

7. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the type of communication you have with your students' parents?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

8. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderatly Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
your relationship with your building administration?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

9. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
your personal comfort-level with the curriculum you have been assigned to teach?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

10. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the behavior of students in your classroom?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

11. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the manner in which student discipline is addressed by your building administration?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

12. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the education you have received to prepare you for your teaching position?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

13. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the type of professional development offerings provided by your school district?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

14. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the number of professional development opportunities offered by your district?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

15. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the new teacher support program in place by your school district?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

16. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the first-year teacher orientation activities planned by the school district?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

17. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the required mentor/mentee activities?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

18. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the amount of support given by your building administrator?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

19. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the amount of teacher collaboration time per day?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

20. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the amount of teacher collaboration time per week?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

21. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the amount of personal teacher plan time per day?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

22. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the amount of personal teacher plan time per week?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

23. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the expectations placed upon you by the school district?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

24. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
your annual salary?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

25. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the district's benefit package?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

26. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the instructional resources available by the district for use with your students?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

27. How satisfied are you with …

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
your school climate (i.e. relationships, level of motivation, building pride, etc.)?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

28. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the safety procedures put in place by your building?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

29. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the community in which your school is a part?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

30. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the functionality of your school building?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

31. How satisfied are you with ...

	Highly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Not Applicable
the hiring process you experienced to obtain your current position?	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

32. How many years, including the present year, have you been teaching?

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

Appendix C: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

33. What is your gender?

◯ Male   ◯ Female

34. What is your ethnicity? (Optional)

◯ African American   ◯ Asian American   ◯ Caucasian   ◯ Hispanic American   ◯ Other

35. What is your age? (Optional)

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

36. What is the level you are currently teaching?

◯ Early Childhood   ◯ Elementary   ◯ Middle   ◯ High

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

◯ Yes   ◯ No

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

◯ Yes   ◯ No

39. Which school district are you employed with?

[_____]

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

◯ Yes   ◯ No

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

Name   [_____]
School Location   [_____]

Appendix D: Table 11Results: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Table 11

Results: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey n=268

Question How satisfied are you with …	HS	MS	MD	HD	NA	Resp. Count	Skip Ques.
1. Your job as a teacher?	**57.4%** **(152)**	35.1% (93)	7.2% (19)	0.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	265	3
2. The working relationship you have developed with your teaching team, department, or grade level?	**54.3%** **(144)**	32.8% (87)	9.4% (25)	3.0% (8)	0.4% (1)	265	3
3. The working relationship you have with other teachers in the building?	**48.5%** **(129)**	40.6% (108)	8.6% (23)	1.5% (4)	0.8% (2)	266	2
4. The relationships you have developed with your students?	**70.8%** **(187)**	27.3% (72)	0.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.1% (3)	264	4
5. The relationships you have developed with your students' parents?	38.4% (101)	**53.6%** **(141)**	5.7% (15)	0.4% (1)	1.9% (5)	263	5
6. The amount of communication you have with your students' parents?	43.3% (114)	**44.9%** **(118)**	9.9% (26)	0.4% (1)	1.5% (4)	263	5
7. The type of communication you have with your students' parents?	**47.7%** **(126)**	46.6% (123)	3.8% (10)	0.4% (1)	1.5% (4)	264	4
8. Your relationship with your building administration	**47.5%** **9125)**	36.5% (96)	11.8% (31)	4.2% (11)	0.0% (0)	263	5
9. Your personal comfort-level with the curriculum you have been assigned to teach?	**65.0%** **(173)**	27.4% (73)	5.6% (15)	0.8% (2)	1.1% (3)	266	2

Note. HS= Highly satisfied, MS=Moderately satisfied, MD=Moderately dissatisfied, HD=Highly dissatisfied, NA=Not applicable, Resp. Count=Response count, Skip Ques. =Skipped question

Appendix D: Table 11Results: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Question	HS	MS	MD	HD	NA	Resp. Count	Skip Ques.
10. The behavior of your students in your classroom?	37.3% (98)	**46.8%** **(123)**	12.2% (32)	2.7% (7)	1.1% (3)	263	5
11. The manner in which student discipline is addressed by your building administration?	30.7% (81)	**40.5%** **(107)**	20.1% (53)	6.1% (16)	2.7% (7)	264	4
12. The education your have received to prepare you for your teaching position?	**51.9%** **(137)**	42.4% (112)	4.2% (11)	1.1% (3)	0.4% (1)	264	4
13. The type of professional development offerings provided by your school district?	**58.0%** **(152)**	27.1% (71)	9.9% (26)	5.0% (13)	0.0% (0)	262	6
14. The number of professional development opportunities offered by your district?	**64.6%** **(170)**	24.7% (65)	8.0% (21)	2.3% (6)	0.4% (1)	263	5
15. The new teacher support program in place by your school district?	**33.3%** **(87)**	25.7% (67)	8.4% (22)	5.0% (13)	27.6% (72)	261	7
16. The first-year teacher orientation activities planned by the school district?	26.3% (69)	27.9% (73)	7.6% (20)	2.7% (7)	**35.5%** **(93)**	262	6
17. The required mentor/mentee activities?	27.9% (73)	27.9% (73)	7.3% (19)	3.1% (8)	**34.0%** **(89)**	262	6
18. The amount of support given by your building administrator?	**49.8%** **(131)**	34.2% (90)	11.4% (30)	3.8% (10)	0.8% (2)	263	5
19. The amount of teacher collaboration time per day?	28.8% (76)	**35.6%** **(94)**	17.8% (47)	14.4% (38)	3.4% (9)	264	4

Appendix D: Table 11Results: Factors Related to Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Question	HS	MS	MD	HD	NA	Resp. Count	Skip Ques.
20. The amount of teacher collaboration time per week?	28.4% (73)	**34.6%** **(89)**	21.0% (54)	11.7% (30)	4.3% (11)	257	11
21. The amount of personal teacher plan time per day?	33.5% (87)	**39.2%** **(102)**	15.4% (40)	9.2% (24)	2.7% (7)	260	8
22. The amount of personal teacher plan time per week?	34.2% (88)	**39.7%** **(102)**	15.2% (39)	8.2% (21)	2.7% (7)	257	11
23. The expectations placed upon you by the school district?	24.3% (63)	**47.1%** **(122)**	22.0% (57)	6.6% (17	0.0% (0)	259	9
24. Your annual salary?	12/4% (32)	**51.7%** **(134)**	23.6% (61)	12.4% (32)	0.0% (0)	259	9
25. The district's benefit package?	23.9% (62)	**50.2%** **(130)**	18.5% (48)	5.0% (13)	2.3% (6)	259	9
26. The instructional resources available by the district for use with your students?	**61.0%** **(158)**	32.0% (83)	4.2% (11)	0.8% (2)	1.9% (5)	259	9
27. Your school climate (i.e. relationships, level of motivation, building pride, etc.)?	41.5% (108)	**42.7%** **(111)**	11.5% (30)	3.8% (10)	0.4% (1)	260	8
28. The safety procedures put in place by your building?	**62.5%** **(162)**	29.3% (76)	5.8% (15)	1.9% (5)	0.4% (1)	259	9
29. The community in which your school is a part?	**61.2%** **(159)**	32.7% (85)	3.5% (9)	0.8% (2)	1.9% (5)	260	8
30. The functionality of your school building?	**46.7%** **(121)**	44.0% (1140	7.3% (19)	1.2% (3)	0.8% (2)	259	9
31. The hiring process you experienced to obtain your current position?	**54.3%** **(140)**	33.3% (86)	7.4% (19)	1.2% (3)	3.9% (10)	258	10

Appendix E: Teacher Follow-Up Interview Questionnaire

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

1. Your participation will include responding to the short-answer questions below.

2. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

3. There are no direct benefits for your participation in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about effective and non-effective district practices in relation to teacher job satisfaction and your participation may lead to an evaluation of district methodology pertaining to trends identified.

4. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.

5. Your responses are completely anonymous and your identity is in no way associated with your responses.

6. If you have any questions regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the investigator, Kimberly Dickens (314-277-1154). You may also direct questions to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel at 636-949-4846.

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

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

2. What keeps you motivated in the profession?

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

4. What causes teachers to leave the profession?

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

Appendix E: Teacher Follow-up Interview Questionnaire

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix E: Teacher Follow-up Interview Questionnaire

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

15. Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?

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

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

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

19. How does your school district empower you?

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

Appendix F: Table 12 Results: Teacher Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and
Frequency

Table 12

Results: Teacher Follow-up Interviews – Response Categories and Frequency   n=19

Question	Responses
1. Looking back over your teaching career, what have been the most challenging situations to deal with?	• Student/Parent Issues-35% • Administration-30% • Time/classroom management/work load-22% • Home/school connection-4% • Teaching specific controversial topics-4% • Obtaining National Board Certification-4%
2. What keeps you motivated in the profession?	• Art of teaching/enjoyment-31% • Working with students/relationships-31% • Importance of work-24% • Growing/trying new things-10% • Positivity/recognition-2% • Close to retirement-2%
3. What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?	• Student/Parent Issues-25% • Recruiting/Retaining New Teachers-24% • Assessment-18% • Funding/Compensation/Budgeting-14% • Technology-7% • Teacher Expectations-7% • Motivation-7%
4. What causes teachers to leave the profession?	• Money-32% • Work load-26% • Lack of respect/support-18% • Time demands-8% • Burnout-8% • Focus on standardized testing-3% • Cannot reach high expectations-3%

Appendix F: Table 12 Results: Teacher Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and Frequency

5. What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school districts?	• Better working environment-41% • Compensations/Benefits-24% • Location-16% • Personal views-14% • Promotion-5%
6. How satisfied are you with your chosen profession in the field of education?	• Satisfied-90% • Unsatisfied-10%
7. Would you choose the same career if you could begin again?	• Yes – 72% • No – 17% • Unsure – 11%
8. What were your reasons for wanting to go into the profession?	• Working with people-47% • Love of learning-27% • Influence-23% • Work schedule-3%
9. When looking at other careers, what important factors do they possess that are missing from the education field?	• Respect/Professionalism-38% • Salary/Benefits-35% • Better working environment-23% • Opportunities for advancement-4%
10. What can schools do to make more teachers satisfied in their profession?	• Improve relationships-37% • Readjust current school practices-31% • Improve personal benefits-14% • Provide additional training/resources-9% • Improve communication-9%

Appendix F: Table 12 Results: Teacher Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and Frequency

11. What areas in the day to day teaching profession are overlooked by the district and building-level administration?	• Time contraints-27% • Work load-27% • Classroom responsibilities-23% • Student issues-15% • Ineffective teachers-4% • Great ideas come from below-4%
12. In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?	• Respect teachers/treat as professionals-53% • Communicate/Provide leadership-33% • Facilitate/Team player-9% • Hire the best teachers-2% • Focus on students-2%
13. What behaviors would you like to see from your building administrators that are not currently being practiced?	• Professionalism-23% • Very satisfied with current practices-18% • Hold people accountable-18% • Respect time-14% • Be fair/consistent-14% • Good rapport with students-9% • Inspire/motivate-5%
14. Has your level of satisfaction with your career changed over time?	• Increased-35% • Ebbs and flows-35% • Decreased-18% • Changed (no direction given)-12%
15. Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?	• Yes-53% • No-47%
16. Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?	• Yes-55% • No-27% • Unsure-18%

Appendix F: Table 12 Results: Teacher Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and
Frequency

17. What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?	• Financial rewards-30% • Provide additional training/resources-20% • Better working conditions-20% • More time-10% • Less work-10% • Better communication-5% • Already motivated to stay-5%
18. How do you view your level of independence and control over your day to day responsibilities and duties?	• High-68% • Low-32%
19. How does your school district empower you?	• Provides training/resources-42% • Solicit input-37% • Committee involvement-11% • Administration welcomes ideas-11% • No empowerment-5%
20. How important are your relationships with other colleagues in your building?	• Important-75% • Somewhat important-19% • Not important-6%

Appendix G: Administrator Participant Survey

Administrator Participant Survey

Administrator Participant Survey

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

1. How does the administration empower teachers?

2. How are teachers involved in making decisions?

3. What is the average class size?

4. What types of resources are accessible for teachers?

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix G: Administrator Participant Survey

Administrator Participant Survey

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

Administrator Participant Survey

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

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

12. What opportunities do teachers have for collaboration?

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

14. What percentage of teachers have their own classroom?

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

16. How do you motivate your teachers?

Administrator Participant Survey

Please choose the response that best describes yourself.

Appendix G: Administrator Participant Survey

Administrator Participant Survey

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

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

18. What is your gender? (Optional)

☐ Female ☐ Male

19. What is your age? (Optional)

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

20. What is the level of your building?

☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ High

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

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

☐ Yes ☐ No

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

Name _____

School Location _____

Appendix H: Table 13 Results: Administrator Participant Survey-Response Categories and Frequency

Table 13

Results: Administrator Participant Survey – Response Categories and Frequency n=12

1. What type of professional development is offered to teachers?	• Curricular-46% • Collaboration opportunities-23% • Technology-12% • Personal choice-19%
2. What percentage of teachers have their own classroom?	• 95% or higher-54% • 80%-94%-23% • 79% or less-23%
3. How do you support and collaborate with teachers in regards to student discipline?	• Communication-67% • Meetings-19% • Provide resources-14%
4. How do you motivate your teachers?	• Recognition-35% • Incentives/celebratory gifts-21% • Use teacher strengths/learn and grow-18% • Communicate/provide thanks/encouragement-15% • Positive atmosphere and attitude-12%
5. How are teachers involved in making decisions?	• Committee work-56% • Meetings-25% • Input is solicited-15%
6. What is the average class size?	• Low 20s-62% • 25+-31% • Under 20-8%

Appendix H: Table 13 Results: Administrator Participant Survey-Response Categories
and Frequency

7. What types of resources are accessible for teachers?	- Human resources (mentors/assistants/coordinators)-28% - Library/curricular items-19% - Technology-19% - Professional development-17% - Collaboration opportunities-15% - Release time-2%
8. What is the level of technology provided for your teachers to use in their classrooms?	- Computers and computer-related materials (software, Smart Boards, etc.)-60% - Other (document camera, Wii, Airliner, etc.)-27% - Internet resources-8% - Technology training-4%
9. What type of support is offered to beginning teachers?	- Mentor/Teammate/Buddy-33% - Professional development/Support groups-33% - Building practices (supervision, open-door policy, PLCs-unique to building)-31% - Evaluation instrument-3%
10. What activities, programs, or in-building support do you offer beginning teachers outside of the required district activities?	- Administrative check-ins/new teacher meetings-38% - Professional development/release time-23% - Formal and informal observations-19% - Mentor-12% - Involvement with school and faculty-8%

Appendix H: Table 13 Results: Administrator Participant Survey-Response Categories and Frequency

11. What is the amount of extra duties given to teachers outside of their work in the classroom?	• Contractual obligations only-52% • Participation in a committee or organization-33% • Teacher-selected activities-14%
12. In what ways are teachers provided opportunities to have a say in procedures, programs, and reforms that take place in the buildings?	• Committees-50% • Conversations/e-mail messages-18% • Open-door policy-14% • Meetings (regularly scheduled, weekly)-11% • Surveys-7%
13. How do you, as a building administrator, offer support to your teachers?	• Observations/classroom visits/being visible-35% • Being available/open-door policy-27% • Collaborate with teachers-23% • Communication-15%
14. What opportunities do teachers have for collaboration?	• Team (cross-curricular) collaboration-28% • Job-alike collaboration-21% • Staff Development Days/Release time-21% • Committees and meetings-21% • Informally-10%

Appendix H: Table 13 Results: Administrator Participant Survey-Response Categories and Frequency

15. What opportunities exist for leadership roles within the school for teachers?	• Committee work-39% • Department Chair/Team Leader-27% • Representatives to District Committees-12% • Professional development presenter-9% • Mentors-6% • Sponsor of an activity-3% • Intern with administration-3%
16. How does the administration empower teachers?	• Provide leadership opportunities-23% • Build support network for teachers-23% • Allow them to be a part of the decision-making process-20% • Communicate-13% • Provide training and resources-10% • Allow teachers autonomy-10%
17. Generally speaking, do you feel that a majority of the teachers you work with are satisfied with their position?	• Yes-100% • No-0%

Appendix I: Administrator Follow-up Interview Questionnaire

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

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4. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will not be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or withdraw.

5. Your responses are completely anonymous and your identity is in no way associated with your responses.

6. If you have any questions regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the investigator, Kimberly Dickens (314-277-1154). You may also direct questions to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel at 636-949-1846.

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

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

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

3. What causes teachers to leave the profession?

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

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

Appendix I: Administrator Follow-up Interview Questionnaire

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix I: Administrator Follow-up Interview Questionnaire

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

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

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

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

18. How does your school district empower your teachers?

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

Appendix J: Table 14 Results: Administrator Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and Frequency

Table 14

Results: Administrator Follow-up Interviews – Responses and Frequency n=4

Question	Responses
1. Looking back over your career, what have been the most challenging situations teachers have had to deal with?	• Time constraints-II • Changing trends • Disappointing relationship between student and teacher • Lack of resources
2. What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?	• Working with diversified student body • Helping teachers become more skilled in inquiry-based, hands-on teaching and learning • Student character development • Time for teachers to collaborate • Meaningful professional development
3. What causes teachers to leave the profession?	• Money • Work load-II • Time demands • Non-supportive administration • Difficult parents • Lack of collaboration
4. What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school districts?	• Situational circumstances-II • Higher salaries-II • Perceptions of student bodies • Better professional development • Smaller class sizes • Climate of a school • Lack of support

Appendix J: Table 14 Results: Administrator Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and Frequency

5. How satisfied are you with your chosen profession in the field of education?	• Satisfied-IV
6. What percentage of your teachers do you believe would choose the same career if they could begin again?	• 90%+ • 80%-II • 75%
7. What do you view as the reasons teachers choose to enter the profession?	• Working with students-II • Love of learning • Influence/Make a different-III
8. When looking at other careers, what important factors do they possess that are missing from the education field?	• Salary/Benefits-III • Respect/Professionalism • In-depth professional development • Vacation time • True collaboration
9. What can schools do to help teachers be more satisfied with their profession?	• Honor teachers-II • Challenge and support teachers-II • Give time • Manage student load • Engage in quality professional development • Train teachers

Appendix J: Table 14 Results: Administrator Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and Frequency

10. What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration?	• Curriculum support • Student engagement • Personal time management • Reflection • Collaboration • Having a presence in the classrooms • Giving teachers time to teach
11. In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?	• Presence in the classrooms-II • Evaluation process, good conversation • Support with students and parents • Time to work towards improvement • Student-focused decision-making • Collaboration with teachers • Organized leader
12. What behaviors would you like to see from your colleagues and/or district-level administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?	• View evaluation as a growth tool instead of a burden • Share success stories and obstacles – best practices sharing • Recognition programs
13. Do you feel teachers' level of job satisfaction changes over time?	• Increases • Decreases-II • It could

Appendix J: Table 14 Results: Administrator Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories
and Frequency

14. How has NCLB impacted classroom teachers in your building?	• Increased pressure • Frustrating/unfair benchmarks • Focus shift from students to statistics • Teachers focus on areas in need of improvement • Look at individual results instead of a group's • Teachers feel NCLB is unrealistic
15. Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?	• More time in classrooms is needed • The program is too big picture • Adequate • The focus should be on finding a good mentor • Increase the length of the induction program and mentor partnership • Teachers appear to appreciate the topics and the collegial support
16. What practices do you use to motivate your teachers?	• Build relations/have conversations-II • Sense of humor • Being a presence • Using educational literature that is interesting/compelling • Gifts of time
17. How do you give teachers independence and control over their day to day responsibilities and duties?	• Trust • Remove unimportant tasks from their responsibility • Check-in with meetings and committee work • Treat as professionals

Appendix J: Table 14 Results: Administrator Follow-up Interviews-Response Categories and Frequency

18. How does your school district empower teachers?	• Professional development • Provide a solid curriculum • Involved in decision-making process • Trust teachers/respect them • Provide teachers autonomy
19. How important are your relationships with the teachers in your building?	• Relationships are key-IV • Trust is an important element-II

Appendix K: Table 15 Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Table 15

Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses- Perceptions of District Practices in Place
What have been the most challenging situations to deal with?	• Time constraints • Changing trends • Disappointing relationships • Lack of resources	• Student/parent issues • Administration • Time/classroom management/work load • Home/school connection • Teaching controversial topics • Obtaining National Board Certification
What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?	• Working with a diversified student body • Increasing skill in inquiry-based and hands-on learning • Developing character in students • Time for collaboration • Providing meaningful professional development	• Student/parent issues • Recruiting/retaining new teachers • Assessment • Compensation/budgeting • Technology • Teacher expectations • Motivation

Appendix K: Table 15 Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher
Perceptions

What causes teachers to leave the profession?	• Money • Work load • Time demands • Non-supportive administration • Difficult parents • Lack of collaboration	• Money • Work load • Lack of respect/support • Time demands • Burnout • Focus on standardized testing • Cannot reach high expectations
What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school districts?	• Situational circumstances (such as location) • Higher salaries • Perception of better conditions (students bodies, professional development, smaller class sizes, more positive school climate, more support)	• Situational circumstances (such as location) • Compensations/benefits • Better working environments • Personal views • Promotion
What percentage of your teachers do you believe would choose the same career if they could begin again / Would you choose the same career if you could begin again?	• 90% • 80% • 75%	• Yes-72% • No-17% • Unsure-11%

Appendix K: Table 15 Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher
Perceptions

What do you view as the reasons teachers choose to enter the profession? / What were your reasons for wanting to into the profession?	• Working with students • Love of learning • The influence/making a difference	• Working with people • Love of learning • The influence • Work schedule
When looking at other careers, what important factors do they posses that are missing from the education field?	• Salary/Benefits • Respect/Professionalism-View by society • In-depth professional development • Vacation time • True collaboration	• Salary/Benefits • Respect/Professionalism • Better working environments • Opportunities for advancement
What can schools do to help teachers be more satisfied with their profession?	• Honor teachers • Challenge and support teachers • Give time • Manage student load • Engage in quality professional development • Train teachers	• Improve relationships • Readjust current school practices • Improve personal benefits (time, money) • Provide training/resources • Improve communication

Appendix K: Table 15 Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher
Perceptions

What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration?	• Curriculum support • Student engagement • Personal time management • Reflection • Collaboration • Having presence in the classroom • Giving teachers time to teach	• Time constraints • Work load • Classroom responsibilities • Student issues • Ineffective teachers • Great ideas come from below
In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?	• Presence in the classrooms • Using the evaluation process/having good conversations • Providing support in work with students and parents • Providing time to work towards improvement • Student-focused decision-making • Collaboration with teachers • Organized leader	• Respect teachers/treat as professionals • Communicate/provide leadership • Facilitator/be a team player • Hire the best teachers • Focus on students

Appendix K: Table 15 Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher
Perceptions

What behaviors would you (administrators and teachers) like to see from administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?	• View teacher evaluation as a growth tool • Share success stories and obstacles overcome • Implement recognition programs	• Professionalism • Holding people accountable • Respecting teachers' time • Being fair/consistent • Good rapport with students • Inspire/motivate teachers • Very satisfied with current practices
Do you feel teachers' level of job satisfaction changes over time?	• Increases • Decreases • It could change	• Increased • Ebbs and flows • Decreased • Changed (no direction given)
How has NCLB impacted classroom teachers in your building? / Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?	• Increased pressure • Frustrating/unfair benchmarks • Focus shift from students to statistics • Teachers focus on areas in need of improvement • Individual teacher results are examined instead of a group's • Teachers feel NCLB is unrealistic	• Yes – 53% • No – 47%

Appendix K: Table 15 Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher
Perceptions

Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?	• More time in classrooms is needed • The program is too broad • Adequate • Focus should be on finding a good mentor • Induction program and mentor relationship should be lengthened • Teachers appear to appreciate the topics and the collegial support	• Yes-55% • No-27% • Unsure-18%
What practices do you use to motivate your teachers? / What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?	• Build relationships/have conversations • Have a sense of humor • Be a presence in the building • Use educational literature that is interesting/compelling • Give teachers gifts of time	• Financial rewards • Provide additional training/resources • Better working conditions • More time • Less work • Better communication • Already motivated to stay

Appendix K: Table 15 Results: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher
Perceptions

How do you give teachers independence and control over their day to day responsibilities and duties? / How do you view your level of independence in your work?	• Trust • Remove unimportant tasks from their responsibility • Check-in with meetings and committee work • Treat teachers as professionals	• High-68% • Low-32%
How does your school district empower teachers?	• Professional development • Provides a solid curriculum • Involved in decision-making process • Trust teachers/respect them • Provide teachers autonomy in their work	• Provides training/resources • Input is solicited • Committee involvement • Administration welcomes ideas • No empowerment
How important are your relationships with the teachers in your building?	• Relationships are key • Trust is an important element	• Important-75% • Somewhat important-19% • Not important-6%

Appendix L: Table 16 Results - Rural School District: Alignment of Current District
Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Table 16

Rural School District: Alignment of Current District Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses-Perceptions of District Practices in Place
What have been the most challenging situations to deal with?	• Student/parent issues • Working conditions • Standardized testing • Resource availability • Professional development • Work load • Salary	• Student/Parent issues • Work load/classroom management • Resource availability • Curriculum changes • Administration • State testing
What areas of the profession do you feel need the most attention in the next five to ten years?	• Professional development/RTI • Curricular areas/programs • Technology • Working Conditions • Collaboration • Teacher preparation programs • Community involvement • Budgeting/compensation • Standardized testing	• NCLB/state testing • Professional development/RTI • Teacher expectations • Budgeting/compensation • Technology • Parent involvement
What causes teachers to leave the profession?	• Money • Work load • Lack of preparation/challenging • Student issues • Working conditions • Focus on standardized testing • Professional development	• Work load •Lack of respect • Money • Student issues • Lack of administrative support • Focus on standardized testing • Number of initiates/change in curriculum

Appendix L: Table 16 Results - Rural School District: Alignment of Current District
Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses- Perceptions of District Practices in Place
What causes teachers to pursue positions in other school districts?	• Compensation/benefits • Location • Personal views • Lack of administrative support/recognition • Budgeting/resources • Better working environment	• Compensation/benefits • Better working environment • Location • Lack of administrative support/recognition • Professional development opportunities • Personal views
What percentage of your teachers do you believe would choose the same career if they could begin again? / Would you choose the same career if you could begin again?	• 80%+-56% • 70-80%-44%	• Yes-68% • No-5% • Unsure-26%
What do you view as the reasons teachers choose to enter the profession? / What were your reasons for wanting to into the profession?	• Working with students • Love of learning/profession • Making a difference in lives • Work schedule • Coaching	• Working with students • Love of learning/profession • Autonomy • Work schedule

Appendix L: Table 16 Results -Rural School District: Alignment of Current District
Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses- Perceptions of District Practices in Place
When looking at other careers, what important factors do they posses that are missing from the education field?	• Salary/benefits • Schedule/9:00-5:00 • Adult interaction • Respect/professionalism • Feelings of accomplishment	• Salary/benefits • Respect/professionalism • Better working environments • Schedule/9:00-5:00
What can schools do to help teachers be more satisfied with their profession?	• Recognition/respect • Readjust current school practices • Provide training/resources • Provide support/mentoring • Improve salary	• Readjust current school practices • Improve relationships • Improve salary • Provide training/resources • Decrease work load
What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration? /	• Professional Development/RTI • Time constraints • Work load • Extra effort by teachers • Student issues/zero tolerance	• Time constraints • Work load • Extra effort by teachers • Student issues
What can schools do to help teachers be more satisfied with their profession?	• Recognition/respect • Readjust current school practices • Provide training/resources • Provide support/mentoring • Improve salary	• Readjust current school practices • Improve relationships • Improve salary • Provide training/resources • Decrease work load

Appendix L: Table 16 Results - Rural School District: Alignment of Current District
Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses-Perceptions of District Practices in Place
What areas in the day to day teaching profession need more attention from the district and building-level administration? /	• Professional Development/RTI • Time constraints • Work load • Extra effort by teachers • Student issues/zero tolerance	• Time constraints • Work load • Extra effort by teachers • Student issues
In an ideal setting, what does good administrator support look like?	• Respect teachers/treat as professionals • Communicate • Facilitate/advise • Be available • Provide professional development • Positive/provide reinforcement • Discipline students/safe environment	• Respect teachers/treat as professionals • Communicate • Be available • Facilitate/advise • Positive/provide reinforcement • Discipline students/safe environment
What behaviors would you (administrators and teachers) like to see from administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?	• Positive feedback/reinforcement • New teacher professional development • Accept feedback • Allow ideas to be shared/input	• Positive feedback/reinforcement • Provide stricter discipline for students • Communication with staff • Be fair and consistent

Appendix L: Table 16 Results - Rural School District: Alignment of Current District
Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses- Perceptions of District Practices in Place
Do you feel teachers' level of job satisfaction changes over time?	• Yes • Ebbs and flows	• No • Decreased • Changed (no direction given) • Ebbs and flows • Increased
What behaviors would you (administrators and teachers) like to see from administrators that are not currently being practiced that could influence the level of teacher job satisfaction?	• Positive feedback/reinforcement • New teacher professional development • Accept feedback • Allow ideas to be shared/input	• Positive feedback/reinforcement • Provide stricter discipline for students • Communication with staff • Be fair and consistent
Do you feel teachers' level of job satisfaction changes over time?	• Yes • Ebbs and flows	• No • Decreased • Changed (no direction given) • Ebbs and flows • Increased
How has NCLB impacted classroom teachers in your building? / Has NCLB influenced your perception of the profession?	• Increased pressure/stress • Altered teaching strategies • Holds teachers accountable • It has no impact	• Yes • No • Unsure

Appendix L: Table 16 Results - Rural School District: Alignment of Current District
Practices with Teacher Perceptions

Questions/Topics	Administrator Responses – Practices in Place	Teacher Responses- Perceptions of District Practices in Place
Does our new teacher program offer enough support for beginning teachers?	• Yes • No	• Yes • No
What practices do you use to motivate your teachers? / What practices would motivate you to continue in the profession?	• Communication • Provide praise • Be available/visible • Advise • Use humor	• Financial rewards • Additional training • Provide more time • Better working conditions • Autonomy
How do you give teachers independence and control over their day to day responsibilities and duties? / How do you view your level of independence in your work?	• Provide them with autonomy • Provide time to complete tasks • Collaboration	• High – 67% • Somewhat high – 21% • Low – 13%
How does your school district empower teachers?	• Provides training/resources • Autonomy • Collaboration • Support/recognition • Compensation	• Provides training/resources • Committee involvement • No empowerment
How important are your relationships with the teachers in your building?	• Very important – 100%	• Very important – 89% • Somewhat important – 11%

Appendix M: E-mail Message to Teacher Survey Participants

Dear Teacher,

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Kimberly R. Dickens
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Appendix N: E-mail Message to Administrator Survey Participants

Dear Administrator,

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

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

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

Kimberly R. Dickens
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

Vitae

Kimberly Dickens is a native of Sainte Genevieve, Missouri. She is a graduate of Valle Catholic High School and continued her education at Southeast Missouri State University. While at Southeast, Dickens earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education with a concentration in science. She was also recognized as a top five finalist for Southeast Missouri State University's Woman of the Year. Upon her graduation from Southeast in 2002, Dickens took a one-year position with her national sorority, Alpha Xi Delta, as an Educational Leadership Consultant. While in this position, Dickens traveled the country to work with collegiate chapters in the areas of recruitment, management, and member education. In 2003, Dickens began her teaching career in the Rockwood School District teaching middle school science. In the fall of 2003, she began pursuing her Master in Arts Degree in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University, which was completed in the spring of 2005. Dickens began pursuing her degree in Educational Administration in the Doctor of Education program at Lindenwood University in January of 2007. The following academic year of 2007-2008 marked her first year as a school administrator for Dickens, serving as an assistant principal at the middle school level in the Rockwood School District, where she is currently in her third year. During this time, Dickens has graduated from the Rockwood School District's Instructional Technology Teaching Strategies Program and their Administrative Leadership Development Program. Dickens is also a graduate of the St. Louis Leadership Academy.