MOVING FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY EXPLORING K-12 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

by

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to discern what differentiated administrative supports teachers perceived they needed to continue pursuing their teaching careers based on the problem of high teacher attrition confounding educational leadership. The population receiving the survey was all of the 21,174 public school teachers working in a highly populated county in Texas. This cross section of teachers included teachers of both genders and of all of the racial groups from K-12 public schools defined as urban, suburban, and rural. The number of survey responses included in the analysis was 809. When scoring the perceptions of administrative supports the majority of the teachers answered affirmatively that the supports were important. The highest support item score as agree or strongly agree was 99.75% for discipline, while the lowest item score as agree or strongly agree was 84.17% for technology. The mean, or average, administrative supports scale score for all 10 items of the 809 completed surveys was 4.54 out of a possible 5.0, with a standard deviation of .400. For the hypotheses, no significant differences in administrative supports scale scores were found when the questions were analyzed by experience level, type of preparatory training, teachers' age, race, or principal tenure at campus. Statistical differences were found by gender, level of education, and type of school. Male teachers showed less need for administrative supports than their female counterparts. For teachers' highest level of educational attainment, master's degreed teachers perceived support to be more important than their bachelor degreed peers. High school and early childhood teachers both showed a higher need for support, with early childhood teachers demonstrating a slightly higher need for administrative support than their high school counterparts. A number of recommendations and implications are provided in Chapter 5.

Keywords: K-12, teacher attrition, differentiated supports, administrative supports, educational leadership, teacher retention

Dedication

For God. For my brother Michael, you are an inspiration and my rock.

Acknowledgement

I would not have achieved this milestone without God's love.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

As a profession, public education has an employee retention problem. Nationally, after only five years of teaching, 46.2% of all teachers leave the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Levine, 2005). Texas figures indicate that at the end of the sixth year of teaching, 70% of new Texas teachers who started teaching in the same year as a cohort will have exited the profession (Combs, 2004; Edward, 2002).

Researchers have consistently found that over 50% of the teachers leaving the field report poor administrative support as critical to their decision to leave (Combs, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). Alternatively, the majority of teachers who stay work at campuses with administrative support present (Boyd et al., 2011; Brown & Schainker, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Although researchers have identified poor administrative support as a cause for teachers leaving the field, this topic remains devoid of research-based elaboration (Combs, 2004; Farber, 1991; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003).

As of 2011, Texas faced an ongoing public education funding crisis. Revenue to schools was cut by the Texas Legislature for the 2012-2014 biennium in the amount $4,012,519,433 (Texas Legislative Budget Board, 2009). This unprecedented cut to school funding was made worse by federal funding reductions through what was known

as Edujob funding, during the first year of the biennium in the amount of $822,458,333. The outcome of these budget cuts created a net loss of 9,000 Texas teaching jobs at a time when student populations had increased by approximately 80,000,000 statewide (Research, 2008). These budget cuts occurred at a time when the causal factors of teachers' needs for administrative supports were exacerbated. As a result, class sizes have become larger, schools' populations have grown more diverse, and poverty has grown to a higher level while teaching and leadership positions have been reduced. Thus, schools have been forced to operate under ever increasing strains.

After decades of research calling attention to the teacher turnover problem, mostly through quantitative studies of existing secondary data sets, the profession still lacks an adequate understanding of what teachers need in terms of administrative support (Ellis, Grogan, Levy & Tucker-Seeley, 2008; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2011).

The need has been identified as being related to teachers' differentiated support needs, but actionable understanding about what this differentiated administrative support means among teachers is lacking. It is well documented that teachers leave schools with poor administrative support (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003), but policy makers may be able to intervene to improve teacher retention with better understanding of what is needed for administrative support. There is little to no research to guide state, district, or local leaders regarding how to improve administrative support for teachers.

Problem Statement

Researchers have consistently found that over 50% of the teachers leaving the field do so because of poor administrative support (Combs, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). Although researchers have

consistently cited poor administrative support among teachers' reasons for quitting, they have not explored this topic from the teachers' point of view. There have been studies using existing data sets such as the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Follow-up Teachers Survey (FTS). These surveys were not designed to explore this topic specifically, but the researchers determined that a few database variables had addressed administrative support, even though items on these surveys were general in nature and ignored many facets of this topic (Combs, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Johnson et al., 2011; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). The nature of what teachers regard as differentiated administrative support is not understood by educational administrators seeking to develop and retain more teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to discern what differentiated administrative supports teachers perceived they needed to continue pursuing their teaching careers. The researcher sought to understand how teachers define leadership support. The population receiving the survey was all of the 21,174 public school teachers working in one of the most highly populated counties in Texas. This population provided a representative cross section of teachers. The population included teachers of both genders and of all of the racial groups tracked by the Texas Education Agency as part of defining the state's teacher population. The population included teachers from K-12 public schools defined as urban, suburban, and rural. Also included were teachers at large and small schools and who represent many levels of experience, education, and skills. The researcher explored the teachers' perceptions of administrative support as differentiated by the teachers' unique personal characteristics.

Rationale

The current study was a survey-based comparative study of teachers working in one of the most highly populated Texas counties to assess their differentiated administrative support needs while taking into account demographical differences of the teacher population (McMillan, 2008). As there are no studies that have explored understanding of lack of differentiated administrative support, the current study was needed to establish a starting point for researchers to explore the topic and for policy makers to address the high attrition rate of teachers, particularly in Texas.

Research Questions

The overarching research problem was the need for specificity and teachers' definition of lack of administrative support which many have identified as a primary reason causing them to leave the profession (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). To gain understanding of this problem, the current study was conducted to discern what differentiated administrative supports teachers perceived they need to continue pursuing their teaching careers. The eight research questions (RQ) addressed in the current study were the following:

RQ1. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support by teacher experience level?

RQ2. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the type of preparatory training the teachers experienced (certification model: traditional university path versus alternative certification path)?

RQ3. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher age?

RQ4. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher gender?

RQ5. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher race?

RQ6. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon principals' tenure at current campus?

RQ7. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher's educational level?

RQ8. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the school type at which they teach?

Significance of the Study

Researchers have identified lack of administrative support as a reason teachers leave the profession (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). Quantitative research represents the appropriate tool to discern differences (McMillan, 2008). Many quantitative researchers have called for studies of teachers' perceived lack of administrative support as a causal factor in their decisions to quit the profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012; Johnson et al., 2011; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). None of the researchers clarified what was meant by differentiated administrative support by teachers, and they

focused only on general administrative support as being perceived to be lacking (Johnson, 2013; Walker & Slear, 2011). Teachers who leave are often experienced veterans and are replaced with inexperienced new hires. Mastering the skills of teaching is a multi-year endeavor. Inexperienced teachers are at the beginning of the learning curve, and typically less proficient than the teacher they are replacing. The profession needs to retain the experienced teachers, and they are more likely to remain in the field when they receive support from their administrations (Griffith, 2004; Jacob, Vidyarthi, & Carroll, 2012).

The idea that a new teacher employee can simply be plugged into a vacant position with no impact is false. It is well documented that teacher efficacy varies with experience (New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2008; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Ingersoll (2004) argued:

> For just this reason the issue of employee "substitutability," or ease with which organizations can replace employees, is a central concern in organizational management and a central theme in organizational research. In this perspective, employee turnover is especially consequential for work that involves uncertain and nonroutine technologies and which requires extensive interaction among participants. Such organizations are unusually dependent upon the commitment and cohesion of employees and, hence, especially vulnerable to turnover. (p. 8)

Schools are an example of this type of organization.

For the first time in 2013 the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) was conducted including the United States. The survey reported that U.S. teachers, when compared to other industrialized nations, work longer hours in very challenging classroom settings. They defined challenging as classrooms where there were

large numbers of low achievers or students with discipline problems (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014).

The importance of the current study to the field was multifaceted. The current study could help school organizations improve the teacher work experience and retention. The education profession loses half of the new teachers before they reach high levels of efficacy. Teachers who leave the profession cite a major reason for leaving as lack of administrative support (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). By identifying teachers' perceptions of differentiated administrative support, actionable steps for remediating the problem of excessive teacher turnover due to lack of administrative support was identified. Principal and superintendent training programs could be refocused toward providing administrative support based on the current study's findings, thereby leading to higher teacher retention rates and career longevity over time. The costs of teacher turnover could be reduced if the results lead to administrative support changes. To the researcher's knowledge and based upon the available research, no study of this subject with the current research design has been conducted.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the current study the following definitions are provided:

Administrator

This term refers to any person with a leadership role designed for impacting and overseeing a teacher's performance and includes campus administrators, central office administrators, and elected school district officials.

Alternative School

This nontraditional school serves students whose needs are not met in a conventional setting. They may have different curriculum, instruction, or student focus.

Attrition

This term refers to loss of personnel, such as teachers, for a variety of reasons such as retirement, death, transfer, or change of occupation (Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Administrative Support

This term encompasses the actions taken by administrators to ameliorate problems, increase success, provide motivation and encouragement, and facilitate the efficacy of the classroom teachers in the performance of their duties.

Disciplinary School

This school serves children who have been removed from the traditional school setting due to behaviors that violate the school rules. Typically these schools serve their students for a portion of a school year, upon which they are returned to their home campus.

Differentiated Support

The term as operationalized for the current study means managerial supports provided to individual teachers, based upon their unique needs and characteristics (Johnston, 2013; Walker & Slear, 2011).

Early Childhood School

This type of school serves children from birth through six years.

Elementary School

This type of school serves children who are typically five or six years old in kindergarten through grades 5 or 6.

Junior High School

This type of school serves children between elementary and high schools. This school may include one or more of grades 6, 7, 8, or 9. The instructional focus is organized around subject based departments.

Middle School

This type of school serves children between elementary and high school. This school may include one or more of grades 6, 7, 8, or 9. The instructional focus is organized around interdisciplinary teams of teachers and students. The team of teachers works with a specified group of students.

High School

This type of school serves older children completing their education. This school may include one or more of grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. The instructional focus is organized around subject based departments.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

It was assumed that the respondents were honest in their responses. It was also assumed that participants would accurately report their perceptions as they answer their survey questions.

Limitations

Teachers' self-reported perceptions, even if biased or inaccurate, shape their interactions with their work environments. The results of the current study may not be

generalizable to the population of teachers in all counties in Texas or the nation because the participants represented districts located in one highly populated county in Texas. The survey instrument measured teachers' attitudes regarding school leadership and working conditions increasing the likelihood for the data to be limited by self-report bias.

The second limitation was the number of teachers in the targeted geographic area as reported by the state did not match the number of teachers in the same geographic area as reported by the teacher association providing the directory information. A lag of about one year occurs in the state's teacher population reports relative to the association's reports about the population of teachers within the geographic area targeted for the current study. The association's data was current as of September 2013.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

It is important for the profession to understand what teachers mean when they proclaim their dissatisfaction with administrative support. The author has defined administrative support for the current study, however there is no agreed upon definition across studies.. In order to explore the research questions presented previously, a framework for relating teachers' perceptions with a range of possible administrative supports was applied via survey.

Servant leadership posited by Greenleaf (1973) is one theory offering a foundation for defining administrative support and researching what teachers perceive as necessary to remain in the field. The servant leadership model is built upon the leader serving the organization and its subordinates through the subordination of the leader's ego, personal needs, and ambitions (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Laub, 2000; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003). The need for group success in achieving organizational goals, while attending to the needs of the people and the organization is paramount to

successfully functioning as a leader; that is, according to Greenleaf, the need to serve precipitates the need to lead.

Laub (2000) measured the servant leadership attributes held by organizational leaders and identified six key characteristics of servant leaders. First, valuing people includes respecting and trusting others, perceiving the needs of others, putting the needs of others before their own needs, and being receptive listeners. Second, developing people requires providing opportunities for learning and growth for subordinates allowing them to develop full potential, using power and authority to benefit others, modeling appropriate behaviors, and building people up through encouragement and affirmation. Third, building community enhances relationships, enables working collaboratively by emphasizing teamwork, and leads to valuing individual differences. Fourth, displaying authenticity means being open to others, promoting open communication, keeping an open mind, being nonjudgmental, willingness to receive criticism and challenges from others, showing trustworthiness, and maintaining high ethical standards. Fifth, providing leadership involves taking initiative with the skill and judgment necessary to accomplish the task, showing healthy self-esteem, encouraging risk taking, setting clear goals, and turning negatives into positives by diminishing any sense of threat. Sixth, sharing leadership requires sharing power by empowering others, showing low need to control others, being humble, leading from personal influence rather than positional authority, and lacking expectation of status or the perks of leadership.

School principals who demonstrate these servant leadership skills have been shown to have schools with higher teacher job satisfaction (Anderson, 2005; Cerit, 2009). Schools where teachers have high levels of job satisfaction demonstrate higher student scores, and lower rates of teacher turnover (Griffith, 2004). This theory provided the

foundation for Figure 1, in which administrative supports represent the servant behaviors of the principals, perceptions of administrator traits represent the principals' act of balancing their servant leadership roles, and teacher demographic traits represent the group of subordinates being led by principals.

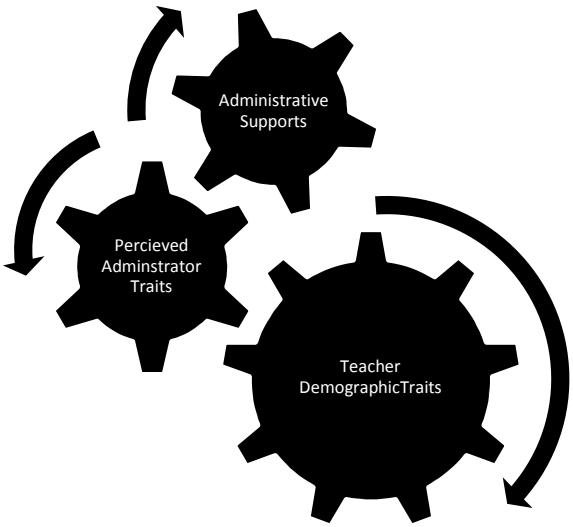

Figure 1. Visual representation of theoretical framework as applied to teachers' needs for administrative support from principals through the lens of Greenleaf's (1973) servant leadership model.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 is the review of current and pertinent literature. This chapter examined studies focused on teacher retention and attrition, the demographic characteristics of both teachers who stay and those who leave their positions, the environment and structure in which the teachers work, administrative supports examined so far, and conclusions drawn from the literature review.

Chapter 3 elaborates the methodology of the current study and explains the research design, the target population and the sample selection for the current study. The eight research questions that guide the research are reviewed, followed by the instrument

design and validation. The procedures for the data collection as well as analysis are explained. Ethical considerations were detailed, explaining the procedural plan for protecting the participants in the current study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings gleaned from the data. The findings of the data determined the presentation of the results. As the current study was a comparative design, some of the findings had a higher significance than others. The outcomes with the highest significance were discussed first, as they have the greatest potential to address teachers' perceptions of administrative support with possible further studies examining the role these play in teacher retention and attrition.

Chapter 5 includes the findings of the current study, defining administrative support, based upon teachers' perceptions, which should lead to an understanding of why teachers stay or leave the profession. A discussion about the results' importance to the profession based on the context from other researchers' results conclude the current study and tie all of the previous chapters together.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

By examining the literature regarding teachers' attitudes about and experiences with administrative support, this review illustrated the need to understand teachers' reasons for leaving the profession and by extension help school leaders mitigate these conditions. The current study added definition and specificity to the general understanding of administrative support in schools. Knowledge about teachers' administrative support needs might potentially lead to changes in the behaviors of school leaders, educational leadership training programs, and administrator preparation programs. When those who prepare teachers and those who lead teachers better understand what teachers need, then they may be better able to accommodate those needs and improve the career longevity of the individual teacher. The parsing of this topic's literature might provide information about the corrective actions needed based on other researchers' empirical research as well as about the research needed for better addressing the problem in practice. A consistent call for more research for understanding what teachers need from administrators has begun (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). This literature review is part of answering that call.

The chapter includes a review of the literature related to the topic of teacher attrition as it relates to the lack of administrative support. This review of notable studies explores the topic of administrative support as related to differences in teacher characteristics and the environments in which teachers work. The chapter is arranged into an analysis of the teacher retention and attrition, demographic characteristics of those

who leave teaching, administrative supports explored to date with a focus on the specificity and scope of the studies, and the environment and structure in which the teachers work. The chapter ends with conclusions based on the literature reviewed.

Teacher Retention and Attrition

As a profession, public education has an employee retention problem. Nationally, after only five years of teaching, 46.2% of all teachers leave the profession (Levine, 2005). By the end of the sixth year of teaching, 70% of Texas' new teachers exit the profession (Combs, 2004). Examining one urban school district using longitudinal data, Murnane and Phillips (1981) found 73% of new teachers had left the district within a 10 year period. Demonstrating the persistence of the problem, Ingersoll reported very similar trends 20 years later (Ingersoll, 2001). The exiting teachers are not necessarily low performers. By definition, a low performing teacher is one at the bottom of accountability results and should not be retained. Equal numbers of top performers and low performers exit the profession. The school system itself demonstrates a near-total indifference to which teachers stay and which ones leave. This pattern of losing equal numbers of talented and low performing teachers locks the low performing school into a cycle of never having enough talent on hand to turn a failing school around (Jacob, Vidyarthi, & Carroll, 2012).

Researchers have consistently found that over 50% of the teachers leaving the field give their reason for leaving as poor administrative support (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). These researchers tended to examine many factors thought to impact a teacher's decision to leave the profession, including but not limited to, salary, administrative support, working conditions, lack of prestige, and student discipline problems. Although

the researchers have consistently cited poor administrative support, they have never expanded on how poor administrative support is defined by teachers or explained the specific processes needed for healthy administrative supports. In this section, the costs associated with terminating and replacing teachers is explored. A discussion of the overall economic costs of teacher attrition concludes this section on teacher retention and attrition.

Termination Costs

The cost of replacing a teacher who leaves the campus is multifaceted. There are monetary and performance costs. The work needed for addressing and costs associated with the exiting and replacing a teacher occur at many levels within a district. Some expenses are obvious, others are not. Expenses related to facilitating a teacher's resignation may include a contract buyout which has been occurring in Texas as part of reacting to reduced funding for education. District leaders believed buying out contracts from teachers willing to depart their positions early would be cheaper and less stressful on staff morale. Many incentivized this process by offering up to 15% of senior employee's salaries if they voluntarily resign. When a significant number of teachers accept this type of offer, districts avoid laying off any teachers (Esselman, Lee-Gwin, & Rounds, 2012).

Other costs associated with teachers leaving school districts include time spent in exit interviews. Some districts require a human resources officer meet with as many as possible exiting employees. Others require an online exit interview (Crain & Kemerer, 2012).

There are other administrative costs associated with an employee's exit including, but not limited to, processing employee records, security updates, and payroll department

expenses, and extraordinary processes for issuing the final pay check. Benefits must be terminated and providers notified. The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) requires that employees be provided with information regarding the right to purchase insurance after their final day of employment; therefore, notifications must be sent out. Instructional materials and technology used by departing teachers must be inventoried. Access to restricted files, areas, and computer systems must be removed. Some employees may be eligible for unemployment benefits, which may have an impact on a school district's long-term insurance rates. Some employees may attempt to gain unemployment benefits, and the ensuing legal processes to determine eligibility carries a cost burden borne by a school district (Benner, 2000).

Costs are incurred by a school district when employees leave at times other than the end of their contracts. Many school positions can remain open for weeks while the best candidate is sought to fill the open position. During this time, students continue to need instruction and supervision, and long-term substitute teachers are hired to bridge this gap. The costs can be considerable, often exceeding $100 per day. One estimate of the cost of substitutes due to teacher absences can be as much as 0.5% of total annual per pupil expenditures (Roza, 2010).

Replacement Costs

The cost of replacing exiting teachers also contains many facets, including the costs associated with hiring replacement teachers. Employers must announce or advertise for the open position formally. The school district may incur advertising costs to seek potential candidates as well as costs for hiring recruiters whether internal or external and costs related to candidates' travel, meals, and lodging. Manpower within the district must be directed to tasks such as reviewing position requirements, reviewing resumes, and

performing background checks for employment history, education history, and criminal history. Staff must also spend time to select potential candidates for interviews then schedule and conduct the interviews. Tests, such as drug tests or personality tests, may need to be scheduled and administered. Both personal and professional references need to be checked for finalists for the positions. Additional costs include the signing bonuses often offered for hard to fill bilingual, early childhood, special education, mathematics, and science teacher positions (Kolbe & Strunk, 2012; Naper, 2010; Raffel, Cox, & Sherretz, 2011).

Once a potential teacher is selected, job offers need to be made. If the primary candidate does not accept an offer, the candidate's rejection must be documented. The successive candidates then need to be contacted with an offer of the position. Once a candidate accepts the position, further costs stem from establishing payroll, benefits, security, and technology for the new employee. Employee nametags, passwords, email accounts, as well as door placards, business cards, and website updates all need to be procured and these all cost money (Blatter, Mühlemann, & Schenker, 2012; Silva & Toledo, 2009; Staiger & Rockoff, 2010).

Performance Costs

Staiger and Rockoff (2010) stated "the primary costs of teacher turnover is not the direct costs of hiring and firing, but rather the loss to students who will be taught by a novice teacher rather than one with several years of experience" (p. 98). The relationship between the percentage of students who pass standardized tests and the number of teachers who leave a campus is inversely related, and as the percentage of teachers who quit a campus increases, the percentage of students who pass accountability tests falls (Rivkin et al., 2005). The relationship becomes stronger as the numbers of students who

qualify for free and reduced lunch increase, because the number of students of minority status increase (Rivkin et al., 2005; Staiger & Rockoff, 2010).

Economic Costs

There is an economic cost to having large numbers of teachers exit the profession each year. The Texas State Comptroller's office estimated the true costs to be $478,000,000 for the state of Texas in the year 2004. This figure included training, recruitment, background checks, administrative costs, among other budget lines and represents direct costs of $13,161 per teacher leaving the profession (Combs, 2004). Adjusting for inflation in 2013 U.S. dollars, the amounts are $588,405,600 and $16,200.85, respectively (Kokoski, 2010).

On a national level, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) conducted a case study of typical school districts from around the nation. NCTAF's study sample included urban, rural, and suburban districts representing the demographics of the states in which they were located. NCTAF concluded that as a nation America lost 12.5% of its teacher workforce annually. The cost to the nation was $7.34 billion in direct costs. Some districts' costs ran as high as $70,000 per teacher departure (Hunt & Carroll, 2002). Adjusting for inflation, these amounts were $9.91 billion and $94,524 in 2013 U.S. dollars (Kokoski, 2010). The spending of these vast sums of money represents the inefficiency in school spending. The money spent does not further the education of students and maintains the revolving door of educators entering and exiting the profession (Hanushek et al., 2004; Staiger & Rockoff, 2010).

The need for further research can be seen by comparing two outcomes of expansive systematic reviews by researchers. Borman and Dowling (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of research pertinent to teacher attrition and retention. Borman and

Dowling asked researchers to submit a suggested list of articles for inclusion in their study. Originally 150 studies were identified, but only 34 met the requirements for quality and rigor, and of this group, two were qualitative pieces. Based on the meta-analysis, Borman and Dowling confirmed that teacher attrition is an economic problem.

Next, the U.S. Department of Education researchers Grossman and McDonald (2008) sought to demonstrate the lack of adequate research on this topic. The authors outlined in the methodology section of the report their queries for searching for literature related to reducing teacher turnover. The search was framed in 15 different queries such as teacher or educator retention program, teacher or educator retention, teacher or educator turnover. The 15 search terms were used for searches of 36 different educational websites from those agencies and groups likely to guide a practicing school administrator toward better retention outcomes. Association websites included the National Association of State Boards of Education, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, and National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. However, 32 of the sites turned up zero results (Grossman & McDonald, 2008).

There are varying opinions about teacher retention and attrition. Some researchers view it as a positive effect and others as a negative effect. Hanushek et al. (2004) titled the staffing of the nation's schools a revolving door. Other researchers examined other professions and found that teachers leave at similar rates to fields that have similar skill demands and educational backgrounds such as accounting and nursing. They posited that not all turnover leads to bad financial results, especially when a low performing teacher chooses to resign (Harris & Adams, 2007). Useem (2003), writing for the Philadelphia Education Fund, conducted a study of all second year middle school teachers in the Philadelphia school district and found that some schools retained all of

their teachers while others lost up to 46% of their novice teachers. Teachers who left felt unsupported in many areas including discipline, materials, scheduling, and respect. These areas have been included as administrative support categories in some studies (Useem, 2003). Other researchers identified variations among teacher quitters related to educational attainment, age, and gender. The field has been shown to lose more women and White teachers, more younger teachers, more secondary level teachers, and mathematics and science teachers (Hanushek, et al., 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2011; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

The very organizations that should have advice on how to reduce the teacher attrition problem offer distressingly little insight. Even as the problem has been identified as teacher attrition occurring due to lack of administrative support, one of the key duties of a principal is the supervision and development of the teaching staff (Glickman, 2002). However, little to no research has been conducted to discern how to guide administrators in these endeavors, and this problem has been long identified. Arends (1982) wrote:

> Prior to the field work, the researchers had not anticipated that there would be so much consistency and overwhelming consensus among teachers in the public schools and faculty in institutions of higher education about the importance of administrative support. Nor did the researchers realize until they began to interpret study data and seek background research on the topic, that no empirical definition or detailed specification existed about precisely what administrative support meant. (p. 79)

Writing 31 years later on this same topic Baker (2012) reported that a "paucity of research" (p. 3) has been made available. Thousands of studies have looked at teacher

attrition, teacher retention, yet not one appears to have asked teachers what administrative support means to them. When teachers versus principals have been questioned about the level of support they receive, teachers report receiving a much lower level of support than principals report providing. Teachers describe the administrative support they receive as mechanical, sporadic, and ritualistic (Myton, 1984, p. 28).

A disconnection between what teachers need and the supports being provided seems to be occurring. The George W. Bush Institute issued a report aptly called Operating in the Dark: What Outdated State Policies and Data Gaps Mean for Effective School Leadership as part of examining principal preparation programs across the nation. The George W. Bush Institute reported that what the principals are trained to do is very different from the job they actually perform. Additionally, the report added that many, if not most, of the principal preparation programs use curriculum based upon outdated notions of the position. In only 16 states is a portion of the principal training and licensing assessment focused on the recruitment and selection of employees. Thirty-four states do not address the topic at all, and no state has a principal training and assessment piece for retaining employees (Briggs, Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2013).

Demographic Characteristics of Retained Teachers Versus Teachers who Resign

To gain perspective on the characteristics of teachers who leave teaching, the characteristics of teachers currently in the classroom need to be examined. This section addresses the demographic characteristics of teachers including teachers' ages, genders, educational levels, races, and years and types of experience. Teachers neither enter nor exit the profession in ratios that approximate the general population. For this review, the most current available national data are for the year 2008. Therefore, Texas 2008 data are used for comparison to national data, although for some demographic variables more

current data from 2011 are presented. Table 1 provides a guide between Texas versus U.S. teacher demographics.

Age

The characteristics of the current population of teachers are fluid and dynamic. Teachers retire or resign and are hired daily.

The age distribution of teachers by age group is approximately equal for each subgroup. First, teachers aged 29 years old and younger represent 22.2% of current workforce. Those aged 30 through 39 years represent 27.5%. Those teachers ranging from the ages of 40 through 49 years equal 21.5% of the teacher population. Teachers aged 50 years and above total 28.9% of the group (Feistritzer, 2011).The youngest and the oldest subgroups represent 51.1% of the currently employed teachers. These two groups also represent the majority of teacher turnover. The expected rate of retirement between 2010 and 2013 among the oldest group of teachers is expected to be larger than during any decade since World War II (Aaronson & Meckel, 2009).

This retirement rate will cause a dramatic shift in the age distribution of the teacher corps. The 40- to 49-year-old group is the smallest of the four subgroups, and as a group, has been found to be the most stable population in terms of retention (Allen, 2005). The retiring teachers tend to be replaced with younger inexperienced teachers at a rate of approximately 250,000 new teacher hires per year. These vacancies will likely be filled by young inexperienced teachers, who represent the highest group for turnover within education, further exacerbating the problem (Aaronson & Meckel, 2009; Feistritzer, 2011; Meghan, 2013). The projected outcome of the retirement trend creates a demographic shift from an evenly balanced distribution by age to a distribution in which the bulk of the teacher population is inexperienced and young and the number of

veteran aged teachers is comprised of a diminishing resource (Aaronson & Meckel, 2009; Albright, 2012; Hanushek et al., 2004).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Employed Public School Teachers

Teacher Characteristic	US %	Texas %
Total Teachers (N) [c]	3,219,458	327,905
Elementary Teachers (n) [c]	1,758,169	163,514
Secondary Teachers (n) [c]	1,234,197	127,161
Gender [c]		
Male	24.1	22.9
Female	75.9	77.1
Educational Degree [a,c]		
None	0.8	0.1
Bachelor's	47.4	70.1
Master's	44.5	26.3
Doctorate	0.9	0.1
Race [a,c]		
African American	7.0	9.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.0	1.3
Hispanic	7.0	22.1
Native American	0.1	0.03
White	84.9	66.7
Age [b]		
≤ 29	17.0	36.0
30-39	24.0	24.0
40-49	23.0	23.0
≥50	36.0	23.0
Experience in Years (Texas) [a]		
< 1		7.3
1 - 5		30.5
6 - 10		20.0
11 - 20		23.7
≥21		18.6
Experience in Years (US) [c]		
≥ 1	1.8	
2 - 5	28.7	
6 - 9	17.8	
10 - 14	16.3	
15 - 19	11.2	
≥ 20	25.7	

Note. [a] Adapted from 2008 Texas Education Agency (TEA) Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data. [b] Adapted from Feistritzer's (2011) profile of U.S. teachers. [c] Adapted from Digest of Educational Statistics (2010) data as cited in Snyder & Dillow (2011).

Gender

Teaching is a predominantly female profession. There has been an effort to recruit more men into the profession; however, the female percentage continues increasing. Since 1986 when women were 69% of all teachers, the trend has been an increase in the number of female teachers. The number of women has increased upward from 71% in 1990, 74% in 1996, 82% in 2005, to 84% in 2011 (Feistritzer, 2011; Meghan, 2013). This trend toward a largely female dominated profession has long term implications on employee retention. Women tend to retire at an earlier average age than men and in greater numbers (Feistritzer, 2011; League, 2008; Meghan, 2013).

Educational Level

Researchers have not been consistent when reporting teacher attrition and teachers' educational levels. Some researchers found that higher levels of educational attainment led to higher rates of exodus from classrooms (Kirby, Berends, & Naftel, 1999; Rees, 1991). Other researchers concluded that teachers with advanced degrees tend to be retained for longer careers (Allen, 2005; Shin, 1995). The majority of Texas' teachers, or 75.9%, have bachelor's degrees. About 23% hold master's degrees, and those with earned doctorates number just .5% of the population. These percentages are different from the national statistics with 43% having bachelor's, 55% holding master's, and 2% holding earned doctorates (Feistritzer, 2011; League, 2008; Meghan, 2013). The educational level also tends to vary by racial group (Feistritzer, 2011; Meghan, 2013).

Race

The teachers in Texas are predominantly White at 66.7% of the state's total teacher population. Next, Hispanic teachers are 22.1% of the state's teacher population, followed by African American teachers at 9.7%. Asian/Pacific Islander teachers account

for only 1.3% of the state's teacher population. American Indian teachers account for less than 1% at only .03%. The rate of exodus from the field is consistent by race across studies. White teachers leave the field at the highest rates. Minority teachers, as a multiracial group, have longer teaching careers. Hispanics have higher early retention rates while African Americans have longer classroom careers overall (Allen, 2005; Feistritzer, 2011; Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Jacob et al., 2012; Kirby et al., 1999).

Teacher Experience

Teachers' experience is a strong predictor of turnover. Teacher attrition is highest among new, inexperienced teachers. Most teachers never reach their fifth year in the profession. For those that do, there is a stabilization of attrition effects, so that after the 12th year, the rate of departure is consistently between .5% and 1% (Kirby, et al., 1999).

The distribution of teacher experience is shifting. In 2005, 27% of all teachers had more than 25 years of experience. In 2011, that number had fallen to 17%. The number of teachers with fewer than five years in the classroom has grown by a similar amount from 18% in 2005 to 26% in 2011 (Feistritzer, 2011). While not all teachers start their careers when they are younger in their 20s, it is possible to have a young 25-year veteran teacher. It is safe to say that the majority of the teachers with 25 or more years of experience leave the profession due to retirement. Also, teachers under 30 years old and over 50 years old are more likely to leave the field than teachers between 30 and 50 years old.

The design of the teacher retirement systems supports this dynamic. To be eligible for retirement in Texas, for example, the sum of a teacher's age plus years of experience must equal the minimum number of 80. A 55-year-old teacher with 25 years

of experience qualifies for retirement in Texas (Costrell & Podgursky, 2009; Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Kirby et al., 1999).

Due to the need for more qualified teachers, certification may be obtained through alternative certification programs. About 83% of all teachers are certified through traditional university programs; 16% are certified through alternative programs without seeking an additional bachelor's degree; and 1% cannot account for how they were certified (Feistritzer, 2011). Table 2 displays the certification pathway by gender, race, and years of experience. One important observation involves the years of experience by certification type data. As teachers' years of experience increase, the data showed they become more likely to be traditionally certified, suggesting that alternatively certified teachers are more likely to leave the field of education before attaining 10 years of experience.

Environment and Structure in Which the Teacher Works

This section addresses the environment and structure in which the teachers work. Two key features of environment examined in the literature include (a) school type and grade level taught as well as (b) principal impact.

School Type and Grade Level Taught

Schools are typically organized by the grade level of the student. The school types are often labeled into the broad categories of elementary, secondary, or all grades combined. Many configurations operate as elementary schools. Some house Prekindergarten (PreK) through Grade 3 and are separated from elementary schools housing Grades 4, 5, and 6. Other configurations house Kindergarten through Grade 6 or Kindergarten through Grade 5. Some have PreK, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 at one campus with Grades 2 and 3 on another campus. However, for this analysis of the

literature most researchers consider Kindergarten through Grade 6 to be the traditional elementary school grades (Hunt & Carroll, 2002; Ingersoll, 2001; Keigher, 2010; Reeves, 2005).

Table 2
Teacher Demographics by Certification Type

Demographic	Traditional %	Alternative %
Gender		
Male	66.0	32.0
Female	75.9	77.1
Not Sure	1.0	1.0
Race		
African American	61.0	39.0
Hispanic	48.0	52.0
White	82.0	18.0
Other	75.0	24.0
Experience in Years		
1 - 5	60.0	39.0
6 - 9	71.0	18.0
10 - 14	88.0	12.0
15 - 24	95.0	3.0
≥25	95.0	4.0

Note. Data adapted from Feistritzer's (2011) U.S. teachers profile. Values may not add to 100% due to sampling errors with margin of error being ±1%.

Secondary education is also arranged into many configurations. Some districts have the youngest of this group of children separated into middle schools that house grades as low as Grades 5 and 6 or house Grades 6, 7, and 8 or junior high schools that house as low and as many as Grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 or house Grades 7 and 8 only or house Grades 7 through 9. The oldest students are grouped into high schools. Again, there is variation in these configurations; some school districts isolate Grade 9 from the remaining high school grades. Some group Grades 9 and 10 together as high schools with Grades 11 and 12 as senior high schools. Some districts group Grades 9 through 12 together, and some group only Grades 10 through 12 as high school grades. For analysis

researchers include Grades 7 through 12 as secondary level (Hunt & Carroll, 2002; Ingersoll, 2001; Keigher, 2010; Reeves, 2005).

Using 2008 SASS data and 2008 TFS data, Keigher (2010) reported a notable teacher attrition rate difference when comparing teachers of elementary and secondary schools. For the 2008 data, 21% of elementary teachers left their campus as a result of quitting the profession or moving to another school. Secondary teachers left at an 18% rate, which was statistically significantly lower than the elementary teacher departure rate. Secondary teachers also left as a result of quitting the profession or moving to another school (Keigher, 2010). The type of school does impact the rate of teacher turnover. Keigher's findings were consistent with other researchers' findings about teacher attrition (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003).

Principal Impact

The school principal is the individual most likely to impact on the day to day working life of the classroom teacher. The management decisions made by the principal have significant impact on the retention and attrition of teachers (Baker, 2012; Benner, 2000; Boyd et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). The principal decides many factors that may seem mundane on the surface but do impact overall teacher satisfaction (Arends, 1982; Esch, 2010).

Principals assign teaching assignments to their teachers. A teacher may have a field of expertise, but within that department a range of assignments, some desirable, some less so, are present. Teaching remedial algebra to a student who has failed the course one or more times previously differs from teaching advanced or honors calculus to motivated students. An obvious difference in student ability, motivation, and behavior,

occurs between these two classes, which can affect a teacher's job satisfaction. An individual teacher may prefer the advanced calculus over remedial algebra assignment, for example. Principals have the authority to reassign teachers to different teaching assignments each year or semester, and teachers as a whole prefer a stable job assignment (Guarino, Brown, & Wyse, 2011; Hanushek et al., 2004; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012). Ingersoll (2001) concluded that school staffing decisions account for as much as 12% of teacher attrition.

Principals control the distribution and assignment of materials and resources. Many schools have more subjects taught than classrooms available. It is not uncommon for a large urban high school to have teachers unable to teach within a single room during the instruction day. Teachers may move from room to room for each section they teach, occupying rooms for classes while their non-nomadic colleagues take a break or planning time on another part of the same school campus. These nomadic teachers often pull a cart or wagon in which they keep all of their instructional materials and supplies, which increases the importance of the finding that teachers report higher job satisfaction when they teach within a classroom of their own (Langford, 2013).

Technology is another area over which the principal has the ability to reward or support specific classroom teachers. Principals seldom have enough new equipment for all of their staff. The allocation of scarce and desirable technological resources creates a disparate environment of haves and have-nots. Teachers want and need to be trained on the technology; the availability of this training represents yet another resource often controlled and allocated by the principal (Buckenmeyer, 2011; DeSantis, 2012; Gray, Thomas, & Lewis, 2010; Palak & Walls, 2009). The principal's power to make such

assignments and offer such resources impacts teachers' perceptions of administrative support (Langford, 2013).

For example, principals control teachers' work schedules. Large schools often have lunch periods starting as early as 10:15 AM and ending as late as 1:30 PM. Teachers find it harder to provide good instruction when they are hungry or when students are hungry. It is more desirable to have a traditional lunch time. Principals have to work with the facilities and populations they house, but the choices they make impact teachers' job satisfaction (Esch, 2010; Tickle, 2008; Traverso, 2012; Wheatley et al., 2009).

Interestingly, many studies treat administrative support and student discipline as two separate, unrelated categories (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd et al., 2001; Chuong, 2008). However, school wide discipline policies and practices are established by the principal and lead to the need for administrative support. A well planned and implemented school discipline policy is a key factor in predicting turnover rates among teachers. Student behavior is a strong predictor of attrition, because schools perceived to have high incidences of bad student behavior demonstrate higher rates of teacher attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Chuong, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Heck, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001). Due to the teacher's responsibility for following classroom management policies and procedures within the confines of the classroom, the teacher must operate within the disciplinary environment established by the school's administration. Shaw (2011) stated:

> Who is responsible for classroom discipline? Most people would say the classroom teacher is responsible. However, that is not necessarily the case. It is true that teachers must do what they can to control discipline in their rooms, but once that is done, responsibility goes to the administration. In reality, teachers

> can do three things: (1) use their own actions and discipline plan; (2) contact parents; and (3) send the student to the office. After that there is little a teacher can do. (Shaw, 2011, p. 1)

Principals' skill sets impact teacher retention rates. The second largest impact on a school's outcome of student learning and beyond the efficacy of the individual teacher is the effectiveness of the school principal (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Principal leadership impacts teacher retention in a positively correlated direction; good principals have low teacher turnover, while inadequately skilled principals experience high levels of teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Esch, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001; Jacob et al., 2012). For Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin (2008), "the historic anecdotal discussions of schools conclude that schools need, first and foremost, good leaders. Yet the empirical evidence is practically devoid of any attempts to estimate the variation in effectiveness of principals that exists" (p. 8). Using Texas Education Agency (TEA) data from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) database, Branch et al. identified that principals' experience positively impacts student outcomes. They identified a similar pattern for principals' experience with teacher mobility. Principals typically make many hiring decisions each year. Over time, the effects of the principals hiring and firing decisions shape the school staff to better reflect the principal's vision for the school (Branch et al., 2008; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010).

Principals can be expected to learn about district policies, school operations, staff strength, and weaknesses. This learning should presumably lead to greater efficacy in performing the duties of the job. Good principals gravitate toward less challenging schools that tend to serve a higher percentage of White, more affluent, and higher

With these findings in mind, this section concludes with consideration of the demographics of principals in the US. Interestingly, the principal gender and age are equally distributed, but White principals are over 80% of the population. Table 3 depicts these demographics.

Administrative Supports Explored to Date

Very little research has been conducted to illuminate the complexities of what teachers refer to when they talk of lack of administrative support. The available empirical studies are examined according to the following three categories: (a) samples of very narrow groups or subsets of teachers, (b) explorations of very large data sets in an effort to align the question and responses to outcomes the measures may not have been designed to measure, and (c) measurements of administrative supports but with instruments and methodology of low rigor.

Studies Focused on Very Narrow Groups

Many studies have been conducted to address the administrative support needs of a very specific subset of teachers. Cross and Billingsley (1994) focused on the needs of special education teachers who served only emotionally disturbed children. Expanding on that research, Otto and Arnold (2005) surveyed 228 regular special education teachers who were not specialized by disability in one region of Texas.

Griffith (2004) explored only one style of leadership, transformational, as it pertained to teacher retention. In a qualitative study, Arends (1982) surveyed 57 teachers and 14 principals. Without reducing this analysis to a long list of esoteric subsets, music teachers, teachers of Japanese, choral teachers, golf coaches, the attention needs to be focused on the applicability of these studies to the larger population of all teachers. All

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Principals for 2008-2009

Demographic Characteristic	%
Gender	
Male	49.6
Female	50.4
Age	
Less than 45 years old	33.8
45 to 54 years old	34.6
55 or more years old	31.7
Race	
African American	10.7
Hispanic	6.5
White	80.9
Other	2.1
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	
Bachelor's Degree	1.4
Master's Degree	61.0
Educational Specialist Degree	29.0
Doctoral Degree	8.4
Years at Current School	
Less Than 3 Years	47.5
3 to 5 Years	24.5
6 to 9 Years	16.0
10 or More Years	11.9
Years as Principal at Any School	
Less Than 3 Years	26.1
3 to 5 Years	22.4
6 to 9 Years	21.7
10 or More Years	29.8
Community Type	
City	23.8
Suburban	28.6
Town	15.3
Rural	32.3
School Level	
Elementary	69.0
Secondary	23.7
Combined	7.3
Student Enrollment	
Less than 100 Students	7.6
100 to 199 Students	9.3
200 to 499 Students	40.7
500 to 749 Students	22.5
750 to 999 Students	9.7
1,000 or More Students	10.1

Note. Data adapted from Battle (2010).

of these researchers reported that teachers want more administrative support, but none explained the nature of this administrative support need.

Studies Using Large Data Sets

A large portion of the research exploring teacher retention and attrition as it relates to administrative support includes mining of large existing data sets. This methodology generates large volumes of impressive statistical analysis but does not address the topics in a detailed or targeted manner. Commonly minded data sets include the School and Staffing Survey (SASS), Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), or Public Education Information Management System (PIEMS). These data sets were generated to facilitate better understanding of the functions and outcomes provided by schools, teachers, and student learning.

Researchers have taken variables within the data and redefined them as addressing administrative support when mining these data sets (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). These researchers have ignored other data set variables that realistically do relate to administrative support, such as student discipline, schedules, and facilities. It is debatable if any of the variables they mine in fact measure administrative support at all. An example of this reassignment of meaning for an item lies within the work of Tickle (2008).

To determine administrative support, Tickle (2008) mined SASS data, and the five items appearing to represent administrative supports were the following: (a) principals tell their staff members what they expect, (b) administrators behave with support and encouragement toward staff, (c) principals enforce rules about student conduct and support teachers, (d) principals know the type of school they want to build and communicate their vision with staff, and (e) administrators recognize staff members

for good performance. Tickle then compared the five items to the rates at which teachers reported job satisfaction. Analyzing the relationship between these two variables led Tickle to the conclusion that administrative supports were in fact important to stem the tide of teacher attrition. The validity of Tickle's conclusions could draw criticism when examined closely.

For the SASS instrument, respondents used a Likert-type scale with the answer choices being (1) strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) somewhat agree, and (4) strongly agree. The questions Tickle (2008) used to determine the administrative support variable related to (a) the principal lets staff members know what is expected of them; (b) the administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging; (c) my principal enforces rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it; (d) the principal knows what kind of school he/she wants and communicates it to the staff; and (e) in this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done. Four out of five of these criteria relate to the specific leadership skill of communication. The nature of this communication is unclear and not properly defined by Tickle.

Many of the most important names in the field of teacher retention and attrition (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003) used these data sets for their analyses and conclusions. The mathematical analysis of their studies and their critical thinking is beyond reproach, but the basis of their analysis, how they defined variables and whether those variables' definitions have validity for application to what administrative supports teachers need must be cautiously regarded.

Studies with Low Rigor in Measuring Administrative Support

Arends (1982) conducted a seminal study, and unfortunately was the only quality research, to define administrative support. Arends' study remains the only such study to

be published on the topic from 1982 until 2013. Arends' study was qualitative and included both secondary school principals and teachers as well as university deans and faculty. Arends defined administrative support as "giving something of value to organizational members" (p. 86). Arends listed four supports both groups valued: (a) verbal skills to explain goals, (b) role clarity of leaders and subordinates through clear job descriptions, (c) steadiness in direction and procedures, and (d) willingness to defend project from dissenting voices. Arends did not specify any particular weighting to either group's answers, and to this day, it is unclear as to how much of Arends' findings remain applicable to public schools. Arends closed his paper with the words that remain true in 2013: "Much remains for those wishing to examine administrative support in future studies" (p. 90).

Walker and Slear (2011) developed an instrument titled the Rating of Principal Characteristics, but they were not clear about whether or not they put this instrument through any validation process. Walker and Shear stated within the limitations that the instrument needs to be "further evaluated" (p. 58) and reported choosing the criteria they measured based upon their personal readings. They did not cite the works or the researchers. Johnston (2013) openly stated she was building upon Walker and Slear's (2011) work and adapted their instrument. The two instruments were very similar but not exactly the same content wise. The characteristics assessed in the two studies are provided in Table 4.

As seen in Table 4, the skills being assessed appeared to be the same, the nomenclature was different. Walker and Slear (2011) designed their survey to assess principal quality as it pertains to student outcomes. Johnston (2013) used her instrument to measure administrative supports principals could provide their staff to lower stress.

Johnston modified the instrument to measure administrative supports to reduce teacher stress but did not clearly address the validation of the modified instrument. The question remains whether either of these instruments effectively and with strong rigor measured administrative support as intended.

Conclusions from the Literature Review

This review of literature has shown a considerable gap in research and policy in terms of teacher retention as related to administrative support. The documented evidence showed that teachers of different levels or grades depart the field at different rates (Keigher, 2010), yet no research has been conducted regarding what is needed administrative support wise to retain teachers. Teachers are not interested in completing more paperwork or unnecessary meetings, but instead they want efficient and responsive leadership that supports their teaching efforts (Futernick, 2007). Because the leaders of the schools, the principals, also leave the field at high rates, the problem of attrition leads to the abundance of inexperienced leaders and teachers educating students of all grades. Teachers enter the field but do not stay in the profession past five years (Levine, 2005). The reaction to the teacher shortage has been to lower admissions barriers at the university level, within the alternative certification programs, and for attaining school administrator positions (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Humphrey, Wechsler, Bosetti, Wayne, & Adelman, 2002). The reduced standards may influence the attrition of teachers and principals.

There has been a consistent call for more research to explore what teachers believe to be the differentiated administrative support problems driving them out of the profession. Among the multitude of administrative support problems outlined is a profound need to develop a meaningful understanding of what more administrative

support means to teachers. The problem areas for administrative support need to be understood as it relates to the problem of teacher attrition if it is to be alleviated. The current study defined the administrative supports teachers deem important and allow school administrators to take actions to slow the teacher attrition rate.

Table 4
Comparison of Terms Used for Rating of Principal Characteristics Between the Walker and Slear (2011) and Johnson (2013) Studies

Walker & Slear (2011)	Johnson (2013)
Communication	Communication
Consideration	Compassion
Discipline	Discipline
Empowering Staff	Empowering Staff
Flexibility	Flexibility
Influence with Supervisors	District Level Influence
Inspiring Group Purpose	Inspiring Purpose
Modeling	Modeling
Monitoring and Evaluating Instruction	Feedback
Situational Awareness	Situational Awareness
Providing Contingent Rewards	Appreciation and Praise

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the current study was to discern what differentiated administrative supports teachers perceived they needed to continue pursuing their teaching careers. This chapter presents the methods for conducting the current study. Included in the chapter are the research design, target population and sample, research questions, instrumentation, data collection, procedures and data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The research design was a survey-based comparative study of teachers working in one of the most highly populated Texas counties in order to assess their perceived differentiated administrative support needs while taking into account demographical differences of the teacher population. The current study might help educational leaders better understand what supports teachers need from their administrators. A survey was administered to capture demographic and professional data as well as rankings of teachers' perceptions about their administrative support needs. In order to see if two or more variables were significantly different from each other, a comparative design was used for data analysis (McMillian, 2008). This design allowed the exploration of this understudied topic.

Target Population and Sample

The Texas county studied contained the majority types of school settings and all student races and socioeconomic statuses as defined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The teacher population represented all of the subgroups the TEA used to define

the teacher population as a whole: race, salary, experience, and education level. The 21,174 teachers from 16 school districts housed in this one highly populated Texas county included: (a) each of the racial categories as used by the TEA to describe teachers in Texas, (b) all of the educational levels of Texas teachers, (c) all teacher experience levels as measured by TEA, (d) teacher gender, (e) the two paths to a teaching certificate of traditional and alternative, (f) teachers' school type, (g) teachers' age groups and (h) teachers' tenure at campus. The last category of teacher's tenure at campus was not reported by TEA but was reflected within the self-reported data by the survey participants.

The sample size of useable surveys was 809. The participation invitation, as seen in Appendix B, was sent out to the prospective participants' email addresses once per week. Once the responses were gathered, all data collection stopped, and the survey was closed. The needed sample size of 500 responses ensured the ability to achieve a 95% confidence level by following the guidelines established by Fowler (1988); therefore, the sample size of 809 was appropriate for the current study. Until the appropriate numbers of respondents were obtained, the invitation to participate was re-sent each subsequent week for 3 additional weeks until the maximum possible sample size was achieved.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure the privacy and welfare of the participants, the researcher adhered to rigorous security procedures. Participants were contacted via their school district email accounts. The email they received indicated that a teacher's participation was voluntary and not a condition of employment or membership in the professional teacher association serving the area. The purpose of the current study was clearly stated along with the researcher's university affiliation and a brief discussion of the Dallas Baptist University's

Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects procedures that were in place to protect them as subjects of the current study. The teachers who wished to participate were able to click on a provided link which took them to a secure survey. The opening question was the informed consent statement that stated very specifically the minimal potential risk to the participant. The statement again assured them that their participation was voluntary. The statement addressed the procedures and protocols in place to protect the anonymous data as seen in Appendix A.

SurveyMonkey.com was a secure hypertext transfer protocol secure https site, meaning the transmissions are encrypted, and should anyone have intercepted the transmission all they would have seen would have been gibberish. There was no other access to the site such as a hypertext transfer protocol http link. The respondents were only able to answer the survey one time, and that response was time and date stamped. SurveyMonkey.com allowed the researcher to select how much data was to be gathered on each respondent, such as IP address. These features were disabled for the current study. No other identifying data was gathered.

All responses were anonymous to the researcher. Once submitted a response could not be withdrawn. The following was included in the informed consents statement: "Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. No absolute guarantees can be made regarding the confidentiality of electronic data" (Dallas Baptist University, 2012, p. 40). The data is stored both on the researcher's computer and the SurveyMonkey.com server. Data is backed up nightly. Access is limited to only the researcher by password protection entry. Data will be stored for five years, after which time the data will be transferred to a flash drive and the flash drive was destroyed.

Only after reading the informed consent statement was the participant presented with two options: (a) I agree to participate in this research, b) I do not agree to participate in this research. If the "I agree" button was selected, the subject was directed to the survey. Once the survey was completed, the participant received a message stating, "Thank you for participating in this survey. Once this study is complete the results will be posted on the teacher association website." If the "I do not agree" button was selected, the participant received the following message before being exited by SurveyMonkey: "Thank you for your consideration."

Research Questions

The overarching research problem was the need for specificity and definition of administrative support, because teachers have identified lack of administrative support—without giving specific details as to what they mean when using the term—as a causal factor when they consider leaving the profession (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). To gain understanding of this problem, the current study was conducted to discern what differentiated administrative supports teachers perceive they need to continue pursuing their teaching careers. The eight research questions (RQ) addressed in the current study were the following:

RQ1. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support by teacher experience level?

RQ2. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the type of preparatory training the teachers experienced (certification model: traditional university path versus alternative certification path)?

RQ3. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher age?

RQ4. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher gender?

RQ5. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher race?

RQ6. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon principals' tenure at current campus?

RQ7. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher's educational level?

RQ8. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the school type at which they teach?

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was a structured researcher-developed questionnaire. The instrument asked the respondents to provide their demographic information and to identify the administrative supports they desired. The lists of administrative supports were drawn from the researcher's personal experience as an employee at a teacher association. The supports selected for inclusion are frequently noted in the files of the association caseworkers and were determined in conjunction with advice from education experts. The process is described below for determining content validity. The demographic options presented to the survey taker were based, when applicable, on the

common usage of terms by the TEA. TEA categorizations of experience, race, school type, and gender were formatted using forced multiple choice via categories in alignment with the TEA model as seen in Appendix C. The respondent demographics section was used to collect the teachers' ages, paths to certification, race, years of teaching experience, genders, tenure at current campus, and education levels. Additionally the teachers were asked about the school setting they worked in, such as elementary, middle or high school. Questions regarding path to certification, education level, age, principal tenure, and availability of administration required forced choice of categories also.

The last section involved scoring using teachers' perceptions regarding 10 differentiated administrative supports. The measurement options for each item's Likert type scale were 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. The teachers reported their perceptions about their administrative needs through responses to the 10 items. The 10 supports to be considered were:

1. Support for working with diverse cultures
2. Availability of administration
3. Curriculum support
4. Instructional support
5. Policy and legal support
6. Logistical support including schedules, building maintenance, staffing, etc.
7. Effective communication of directives
8. Technical supports
9. Student discipline support
10. Providing access to professional learning opportunities

Scoring the Instrument

The list of administrative supports totaled 10, and for each of the 10 questions, teachers provided their responses according to a Likert type scale of 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. The teachers' selected ratings for each of the 10 items designed to measure administrative support were summed then divided by 10 to yield an average value that formed a single differentiated administrative supports scale score.

Content Validity

Content validity was established by a panel of five educational experts. The experts were emailed an explanation of the current study and asked for their feedback on the instrument. The expert panel consisted of five educational experts from public school districts. Their experience ranged from 12 to 35 years with an average of 26 years in the profession. Forty percent (2) were male and 60% (3) were female. Eighty percent (4) held master's degrees and 20% (1) had a doctoral degree. All held positions in the school district at the executive director level or higher.

The questionnaire presented to the experts was designed to allow them to clearly indicate their judgments regarding the inclusion of specific questions in the final instrument. They were presented with three choices for each potential question:

- ☐ This question should remain as presented.
- ☐ This question should be deleted from this instrument.
- ☐ This questions should be modified as follows (Please rewrite your suggestions in the provided comment box).

For the purpose of the analysis, remain as presented, and should be modified as follows were both used to calculate na, the symbol representing an accepted question, in

Lawshes' formula. The suggested modifications reflected agreement with inclusion, but questioned the expression of the question. Outright rejection of the question eliminated the expert's opinion from inclusion in na.

Lawshes' formula is as follows: $CVR = \frac{na - \frac{n}{2}}{\frac{n}{2}}$ where

CVR Content Validity Ratio

na number of experts who accepted question

$\frac{n}{2}$ number of experts divided by two

Lawshe established minimum acceptable *CVR* values (Lawshe, 1975). When using five expert panelists the minimum acceptable *CVR* value is 0.99. This rigorous standard effectively ensures unanimity among the panel. If all five experts accepted a proposed question the *CVR* score was 1.0, being greater than 0.99 it is an acceptable question. If four of five experts accepted a question the *CVR* score lowered to 0.60, an unacceptable score. Any rate of response less than unanimous approval rejected a question from the instrument.

Results of the Content Validity Analysis

The questions, the related *CVR* scores and the decision to include or exclude each are as follows:

Question 1. It is important to have administrative support to assist me with working with diverse cultures. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 2. It is important to have access (face to face, email, text or phone as the situation demands) as an administrative support. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 3. It is important to have administrative support with curriculum. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 4. It is important to have administrative support with instruction. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 5. It is important to have administrative support with policy and legal issues. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 6. It is important to have emotional support from my administrators. *CVR* = 0.6. This question was eliminated from the instrument.

Question 7. It is important to have logistical support (such as schedules, building maintenance and staffing) as an administrative support. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 8. It is important to have effective communication of directives from my administrators as an administrative support. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 9. It is important to have technology support as an administrative support. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 10. It is important to have administrative support with student discipline. *CVR* = 1.0. This question remained in the instrument.

Question 11. An important administrative support is to have my administrator buffer me from bureaucracy (campus, district, state or national). *CVR* = 0.6. This question was eliminated from the instrument.

Question 12. An important administrative support is to have my administrators buffer me from conflict, both internal and external. *CVR* = 0.6. This question was eliminated from the instrument.

As a result of the scoring of the experts' opinions, three questions, numbers 6, 11, and 12, were eliminated from the survey instrument. One of the experts suggested the inclusion of "offering access to professional learning opportunities is an important administrative support" to the questionnaire. It was added to the instrument prior to the next phase of validation.

Establishing Reliability

The final instrument consisted of 10 questions measured by Likert type scales; strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The questions presented were the following:

1. It is important to have administrative support to assist me with working with diverse cultures.
2. An important administrative support is to have access (face to face, email, text or phone as the situation demands) to administration.
3. It is important to have administrative support with curriculum.
4. It is important to have administrative support with instruction.
5. It is important to have administrative support with policy and legal issues.
6. It is important to have logistical support (such as schedules, building maintenance and staffing) as an administrative support.
7. It is important to have effective communication of directives from my administrators as an administrative support.
8. It is important to have technology support as an administrative support.
9. It is important to have administrative support with student discipline.
10. Offering access to professional learning opportunities is an important administrative support.

Pilot Study

The survey responses were obtained from 50 teachers who had gathered at a teacher association meeting. The researcher gave an overview of the current study, the processes, and asked for volunteers. Informed consent forms were distributed to those who volunteered. Once they had read and signed the forms, a paper copy of the survey instrument was provided to them. The first 50 completed forms submitted were used to finalize the instrument.

High quality tests are vital in evaluating the reliability of data in research. The Cronbach alpha is a commonly used index of test reliability. Cronbach alpha analysis is appropriate to use when items measure different substantive areas within the same construct. To measure internal consistency, IBM SPSS version 21.0 was used to analyze the responses. The responses were very uniform leading to highly skewed data distributions. The impact of this factor is a tendency to drive Cronbach alpha scores lower (Santos, 1999; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to be .72. Alpha values above .70 are considered to provide a good measure of internal consistency (Santos, 1999). The instrument has been proven to have reliability with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .72. A reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable in most social science research (Santos, 1999; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data Collection

The instrument data were collected using the online survey application, SurveyMonkey. All 21,174 public school teachers in the studied Texas county were invited to participate via an email provided through the directory of a professional teachers association. The list included both members and nonmembers of the association.

The current study was limited to the public independent school districts (ISD) that the TEA lists as being located within the targeted county.

All teachers working in any school listed as among the targeted county's ISDs by the TEA were be eligible to participate. School districts in Texas do not necessarily follow county borders. There are districts which serve students within the targeted county while, for the most part, having boundaries that lay outside of the county's borders. These districts' teachers were not included in the current study. Conversely, some students lived outside of the county but are served by districts listed by TEA as being inside the studied county. This group of districts' teachers was invited to participate in the current study. The ethnic and other population distributions of the highly populated Texas county were very similar to Texas as a whole as illustrated in Table 5.

Teachers' email addresses were obtained from a professional teachers' association. Permissions were granted for access to the database, and email distribution as seen in Appendix A. The list was reviewed to eliminate any non-teachers from inadvertently being invited to respond to the request for participation. There was a discrepancy between the number of teachers accounted for on the email distribution list and the number of teachers listed as working in the county by the TEA. This error was due to the reporting time lag, which can be up to one year, regarding those individuals listed as current education employees. This time lag was inherent to the state's reporting system when compared to real time data and the data provided to the association. There was no accommodation made to offset this lag. It was one of the limitations of the current study. Once the full study was approved to be conducted by the Dallas Baptist University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects for conducting research

with human subjects, the researcher used SurveyMonkey.com, an online service provider, to collect all data from the respondents. SurveyMonkey.com was a section 508 compliant online survey application, meaning that the application met all industry and governmental standards for handicap accessibility. SurveyMonkey.com provided the researcher with password restricted accounts to ensure the data collected are maintained as confidential and/or anonymous, reflecting the researcher's goals and needs. The researcher did not foresee any risks for participation for any respondents; nonetheless, the researcher carefully protected all data behind firewalls, using files requiring passwords, and locked any printed data in a home filing cabinet. The data collected is the property of the researcher, not the collection company SurveyMonkey.com nor the teacher association.

Table 5
Local Characteristics: Target County Versus Texas

Characteristic	% Target County	% Texas
People Under 18 Years Old	28.3	27.8
White	66.6	70.4
African American	14.9	11.8
Hispanic	26.7	37.6
Asian	4.7	3.8
American Indian	0.7	0.7
Foreign Born	15.4	15.8
Below Poverty Level	14.5	17.1
Home Ownership	63.3	64.7
Language Other than English Spoken at Home	26.4	33.6
High School Graduates	83.4	79.3

Note. Sources of data were Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System (2010-2011) and U.S. Census (2010).

Data Analysis

The two subsets of data used in the analysis were the teachers' demographics and perceptions of administrative supports. First, the data was presented through descriptive statistics and frequencies. The ratings for the 10 items were averaged into a single differentiated administrative supports scale score. The statistical analysis required for answering the eight research questions involved *t*-tests and analysis of variances (ANOVA). The *t*-tests were used to compare two groups' means to determine if they are statistically different from each other. ANOVA's were run to identify any differences between the responses of varying groups. The diversity of statistical procedures allowed for analyzing the variables' relationships. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 software was used to complete the data analysis. To conform to educational research norms of 95% confidence level, a 5% significance level were selected.

The eight research questions in the current study answered the following eight corresponding null hypotheses and used associated statistical tests:

$H1_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support by teacher experience level. The experience level item was measured by eight categories less than one year, 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 20-25, 26-30, 30+ . The ANOVA was used to test for differences in the differentiated administrative supports scale scores based on experience.

$H2_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the type of preparatory training the teachers experienced certification model: traditional university

path versus alternative certification path. The certification model is dichotomous, so the *t* test was used to test for differences in the differentiated administrative supports scale scores based on certification type.

$H3_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher age. The teacher age item was measured by six categories of 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 and older. The ANOVA was used to test for differences between the differentiated administrative supports scale scores based on age.

$H4_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher gender. The gender variable was dichotomous, so the *t* test was used to test for differences in the differentiated administrative supports scale scores between teacher genders.

$H5_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher race African American, Hispanic, White, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander. The race item was measured by five categories. The ANOVA was used to test for differences in the differentiated administrative supports scale scores between teachers' races.

$H6_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon principals' tenure at current campus. The principal tenure item was measured by six categories (less than one full year; one year or more, but less than two; three years or more,

but less than five; five years or more, but less than eight; eight years or more, but less than 10; 10 years or more). The ANOVA was used to test for differences in the differentiated administrative supports scale scores between teachers' reports about principal tenure at their current campuses.

$H7_0$: There is no difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher's educational level. The education level item was measured by five categories no degree, associate degree, baccalaureate, master's degree, doctorate. The ANOVA was used to test for differences in the differentiated administrative supports scale scores between teacher's education levels.

$H8_0$: There is no difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the school type at which they teach. The school type item was measured by six categories early childhood, elementary, middle school or junior high, high school, alternative, disciplinary. The ANOVA was used to test for differences in the differentiated administrative supports scale scores between school types.

Conclusion

The current study is a step toward addressing the high rates of teacher attrition in public education by defining a well-documented cause for teachers leaving or remaining in the profession (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). The outcomes have the potential to guide school administrators toward providing increased administrative support. The supports provided will potentially remove the issues that teachers cite as one of their main reason

to quit, thus reducing the numbers that exit each year. This has the potential to move the profession toward increased staff retention.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The overarching research problem in the current study was the need for specificity and definition for lack of administrative support. In past studies teachers have identified lack of administrative support—without giving specific details as to what they mean when using the term—as a causal factor when they consider leaving the profession. To gain understanding of this problem, the current study was conducted to discern what differentiated administrative supports teachers reported needing to continue pursuing their teaching careers. Eight research questions were answered in the current study through tests of associated hypotheses. This chapter discusses the results of these tests and is organized as follows: response rate, demographic data, and analysis of data and summary of findings.

Response Rate

The invitation email to participate in the current study was sent out once per week for three sequential weeks. The survey link was disabled after the third week. The file of the teachers' email addresses contained 21,147 unique addresses. The final number of responses was 814. The needed sample size was 500 responses to ensure the ability to achieve a 95% confidence level by following the guidelines established by Fowler (1988); therefore, the sample size of 809 was appropriate for the current study. The number of responses included in the analysis was 809. The completion rate was 99.38%. Four of the respondents did not accept the terms listed in the informed consent. One person, who accepted the terms, did not complete the survey.

The sample who responded was representative of the entire population by some measures, and less accurate with others. As shown in Table 6 the sample was within one percentage point of the studied population in reporting gender and path to certification. Ethnicity was within one percentage points in four of five categories. When examined by age, experience, and education level, the respondents were clustered toward middle aged, middle career workers as shown in Table 6. There was no comparison data for this population to compare principal experience, years of teacher experience, type of school, or age of teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

Table 6
Comparison of Sample Demographics to Population Demographics

Demographic	*n*	Sample	Population
I have _____years of teaching experience.			
Less than 1	16	36.34%	
1-5	113	13.97%	
6-10	165	20.40%	
11-15	162	20.02%	
16-20	124	15.33%	
20-25	105	12.98%	
26-30	68	8.41%	
30+	56	6.92%	
I entered teaching through _____path.			
Traditional	556	68.73%	68.7%
Alternative Certification Program	253	31.27%	31.2%
My gender is_____.			
Male	170	21.01%	21.8%
Female	639	78.99%	78.2%
My ethnicity is _____.			
African American	89	11.00%	7.5%
Hispanic	77	9.52%	9.9%
White	617	76.27%	79.9%
Native American	14	1.73%	0.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	12	1.48%	0.8%
My Principal has been the principal at this campus for _____years.			
Less than one full year	187	23.11%	
One year or more, but less than two	103	12.73%	
Two years or more, but less than three	105	12.98%	

(table continues)

(continued).

My Principal has been the principal at this campus for _____years.			
Three years or more, but less than five	163	20.15%	
Five years or more, but less than eight	148	18.29%	
Eight years or more, but less than ten	45	5.56%	
Ten years or more	58	7.17%	
My education level is_____.			
No Degree or Associate	7	0.87%	1.0%
Baccalaureate	474	58.59%	76.0%
Masters or Doctorate	328	40.54%	23.0%
I teach at a _____school.			
Early childhood	25	3.09%	
Elementary	401	49.57%	
Middle of Junior High	202	24.97%	
High School	200	24.72%	
Alternative	23	2.84%	
Disciplinary	9	1.11%	
My age is _____.			
18-24	13	1.61%	
25-34	147	18.17%	
35-44	242	29.91%	
45-54	223	27.56%	
55-64	162	20.02%	
65 and older	22	2.72%	

Note. Data adapted from Feistritzer's (2011) U.S. teachers profile. Values may not add to 100% due to sampling errors with margin of error being ±1%. Data regarding type of school adapted from Battle (2010).

Results for the Research Questions' Hypotheses

The two subsets of data to be used in the analysis were teachers' demographics and perceptions of administrative supports. The initial section of the survey contained questions to capture characteristics of each respondent. The subsequent section was designed to gather the respondents' perceptions of the value of each of the listed administrative supports.

Administrative Supports

When scoring the perceptions of administrative supports the majority of the

teachers answered affirmatively that all of the supports were important. The highest item rating was 99.75% for discipline, while the lowest item rating was 84.17% for technology. As shown in Tables 7 and 8, teachers perceive a need for all of the administrative supports, in varying degrees.

Table 7
Rank Order of Total Affirmative Response Rate

Rank		Total	Percent
1.	It is important to have administrative support with student discipline.	*807*	*99.75%*
2.	An important administrative support is to have access (face to face, email, text or phone as the situation demands) to administration.	*801*	*99.01%*
3.	It is important to have effective communication of directives from my administrators as an administrative support.	*799*	*98.76%*
4.	It is important to have administrative support with policy and legal issues.	*784*	*96.91%*
5.	It is important to have logistical support (such as schedules, building maintenance and staffing) as an administrative support.	*783*	*96.79%*
6.	It is important to have administrative support with curriculum.	*717*	*88.63%*
7.	Offering access to professional learning opportunities is an important administrative support.	*717*	*88.63%*
8.	It is important to have administrative support with instruction.	*698*	*86.28%*
9.	It is important to have administrative support to assist me with working with diverse cultures.	*697*	*86.15%*
10.	It is important to have technology support as an administrative support.	*681*	*84.17%*

Note. *Strongly Agree and Agree responses summed to generate Total Affirmative Response Total.

To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, the ratings for the 10 items measuring administrative support were given a corresponding numeral rating and were averaged into a single differentiated administrative supports scale score. The statistical analysis required for answering the eight research questions involved *t*-tests and ANOVAs. The *t*-tests were used to compare two groups' means to determine if they are statistically different from each other. ANOVAs were run to identify any differences

between the responses of varying groups. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 software was used to complete the data analysis. To conform to educational research norms of 95% confidence level, a 5% significance level was selected.

Table 8
Response Distribution by Question

	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	It is important to have administrative support to assist me with working with diverse cultures.	436	261	76	24	12
2.	An important administrative support is to have access (face to face, email, text or phone as the situation demands) to administration.	644	157	6	2	0
3.	It is important to have administrative support with curriculum.	394	323	64	25	3
4.	It is important to have administrative support with instruction.	345	353	83	25	3
5.	It is important to have administrative support with policy and legal issues.	592	192	21	2	2
6.	It is important to have logistical support (such as schedules, building maintenance and staffing) as an administrative support.	529	254	23	3	0
7.	It is important to have effective communication of directives from my administrators as an administrative support.	638	161	10	0	0
8.	It is important to have technology support as an administrative support.	375	306	104	23	1
9.	It is important to have administrative support with student discipline.	756	51	2	0	0
10.	Offering access to professional learning opportunities is an important administrative support.	404	313	72	17	3

Reliability of Data Results

The 10 items that measured perceived need for support were subjected to reliability analysis. The Cronbach's alpha, a coefficient of reliability was .811 indicated that the 10 items measured the underlying construct well. The reliability of the items was deemed adequate for scaling them into a single administrative supports scale score by summing the 10 and dividing by 10 to achieve the administrative supports scale score. This approach allowed for comparison to other research methodology. Additionally, the

administrative supports scale score demonstrated the characteristics of a normal distribution given that the skewness and kurtosis values were not close to the absolute value of 1, as seen in Table 9.

Table 9
Descriptive Statistics for the Administrative Support Needs Scale Scores

				Skewness		Kurtosis	
	n	*M*	*SD*	Statistic	*SE*	Statistic	*SE*
Supports Score	809	4.54	.400	-.789	.086	.374	.172

Research Question 1

This question asked if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support by teacher experience level. The null hypothesis was the following:

$H1_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support by teacher experience level.

The experience level item was measured by eight categories of less than one, one to five, six to 10, 11 to 15, 16 to 20, 20 to 25, 26 to 30, and 30+ years. The ANOVA was used to test for differences between experience and the differentiated administrative supports scale scores. The ANOVA results shown in Table 10 failed to achieve statistical significance, F (7, 801) = 1.621, p = .126. The null hypothesis was retained because no significant differences in the administrative supports scale scores were seen by teacher experience level.

Research Question 2

This question asked if there was a difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the type of preparatory training the

teachers experienced i.e., certification model as a dichotomy of traditional university path versus alternative certification path. The null hypothesis was the following:

Table 10
ANOVA for Teacher Experience and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

	SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	1.804	7	.258	1.621	.126
Within Groups	127.385	801	.159		
Total	129.189	808			

$H2_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the type of preparatory training the teachers experienced, traditional university path versus alternative certification path.

Because the certification model was a dichotomous variable, the *t* test was used to test for differences between certification and the differentiated administrative supports scale score. The *t* test failed to generate statistically significant differences between certification paths, $t\ (438.169) = 1.535$, $p = .126$. As seen in Table 11, the null hypothesis was retained because no significant differences in administrative supports scale scores were seen for teacher certification path.

Research Question 3

This question asked if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher age. The null hypothesis was the following:

Table 11
T-Test Results for Teacher Preparation Path and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

						95% C.I.	
	t	*df*	*p*	*M* Diff.	*SE* Diff.	Lower	Upper
Supports Score	1.535	438.169	.126	.049	.032	-.014	.111

$H3_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher age.

The teacher age item was measured by six categories of 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and older. As noted earlier, the respondents were clustered toward middle aged, more experienced workers; this had no meaningful impact on outcomes. The ANOVA was used to test for differences between teacher age and the differentiated administrative supports scale score. The ANOVA results shown in Table 12 failed to achieve statistical significance, F (5, 803) = 1.852, p = .100. The null hypothesis was retained because no significant differences in the administrative supports scale score were seen between teacher age groups.

Research Question 4

This question asked if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher gender. The null hypothesis was the following:

$H4_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher gender.

The gender variable was dichotomous, so the *t* test was used to test for differences between gender and the differentiated administrative supports scale score. The 170 male

teachers' mean for support was 4.41 out of 5, with a standard deviation of .442, while the 639 female teachers' mean for support was 4.57 with a standard deviation of .381. The difference between the two independent means was -.162.

Table 12
ANOVA for Teacher Age and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

	SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	1.473	5	.295	1.852	.100
Within Groups	127.716	803	.159		
Total	129.189	808			

The *t* test demonstrated statistically significant differences between male and female teachers, t (240.109) = -4.370, p = .000019. The effect size d = .388 was small but judged to have practical significance (Cohen, 1988). As seen in Table 13, the null hypothesis was rejected because of the statistically significant differences in the administrative supports scale score by gender.

Table 13
T-Test Results for Teacher Gender and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

						95% C.I.		
	t	*df*	*p*	*M* Diff.	*SE* Diff.	Lower	Upper	*d*
Supports Score	-4.370	240.109	.000019	-.162	.037	-.235	-.089	.388

Research Question 5

This question asked if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher race. The null hypothesis was the following:

$H5_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher race: African American, Hispanic, White, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander.

The race item was measured by five categories. The ANOVA was used to test for differences between race and the differentiated administrative supports scale score. The ANOVA results shown in Table 14 failed to achieve statistical significance, F (4, 804) = .867, p = .484. The null hypothesis was retained because no significant difference for the administrative supports score as seen for teacher ethnicity.

Table 14
ANOVA for Teacher Ethnicity and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

	SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	.555	4	.139	.867	.484
Within Groups	128.634	804	.160		
Total	129.189	808			

Research Question 6

This question asked if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon principals' tenure at current campus. The null hypothesis was the following:

$H6_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon principals' tenure at current campus.

The principal tenure item was measured by seven categories: less than one full year; one year or more, but less than two; three years or more, but less than five; five

years or more, but less than eight; eight years or more, but less than 10; and 10 years or more.

The ANOVA was used to test for differences between principal tenure and the differentiated administrative supports scale score. The ANOVA results shown in Table 15 failed to achieve statistical significance, F (6, 802) = 1.161, p = .325. The null hypothesis was retained because no significant difference in the administrative supports scale score was seen for principal tenure.

Table 15
ANOVA for Principal Tenure and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

	SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	1.112	6	.185	1.161	.325
Within Groups	128.077	802	.160		
Total	129.189	808			

Research Question 7

This question asked if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher's educational level. The null hypothesis was the following:

$H7_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon teacher's educational level.

The education level item was measured by five categories: no degree, associate degree, baccalaureate, master's, and doctorate. The ANOVA was used to test for differences between education and the differentiated administrative supports scale score. The means and standard deviations for each educational level are presented in Table 16.

Table 16
Means and Standard Deviations for Comparing the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score by Teacher Education Level

Education Level	*M*	*n*	*SD*
No Degree	0	0	0
Associate	4.31	7	4.34
Baccalaureate	4.51	474	.408
Master	4.59	317	.383
Doctorate	4.42	11	.366
Total	4.54	809	.400

The ANOVA results shown in Table 17 attained statistical significance, F (3, 805) = 3.555, p = .014. The null hypothesis was rejected because significant difference for the administrative supports scale score occurred for teacher level of educational attainment. Because the ANOVA yielded significance and demonstrated a main effect, the effect size of this result was calculated using eta and eta-squared (η = .114, η^2 = .013); however, eta-squared was extremely small and did not suggest practical significance (Cohen, 1988).

Table 17
ANOVA for Teacher Educational Level and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

	SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	1.689	3	.563	3.555	.014
Within Groups	127.500	805	.158		
Total	129.189	808			

Because the ANOVA yielded a main effect between teacher educational levels and their differentiated administrative supports scale scores, the Tukey HSD was performed with SPSS version 21.0. The results are shown in Table 18. The only factors to demonstrate a fixed effect were baccalaureate and master's levels. Baccalaureate

teachers showed a mean difference of -.079, $p = .033$, from master's level teachers. Among teachers' educational attainment levels, teachers with master's degrees were more likely to rate the need for support higher than their baccalaureate counterparts. The research design did not allow for the causal factors for this difference to be identified.

Table 18
Tukey HSD Fixed Effects for Teacher Educational Level and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score

					95% C.I.	
Education Level (I)	Education Level (J)	*M* Diff. (I-J)	*SE*	*p*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Associate	Baccalaureate	-.194	.152	.576	-.58	.20
	Master	-.273	.152	.277	-.66	.12
	Doctorate	-.104	.192	.949	-.60	.39
Baccalaureate	Associate	.194	.152	.576	-.20	.58
	Master	-.079	.029	.033*	-.15	.00
	Doctorate	.090	.121	.880	-.22	.40
Master	Associate	.273	.152	.277	-.12	.66
	Baccalaureate	.079	.029	.033*	.00	.15
	Doctorate	.169	.122	.510	-.15	.48
Doctorate	Associate	.104	.192	.949	-.39	.60
	Baccalaureate	-.090	.121	.880	-.40	.22
	Master	-.169	.122	.510	-.48	.15

Note. * indicates statistical significance for the mean difference at $p < .05$.

Research Question 8

This question asked if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the school type at which they teach. The null hypothesis was the following:

$H8_0$: There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived needs regarding differentiated administrative support based upon the school type at which they teach.

The school type item was measured by five categories: early childhood and

elementary, middle school or junior high, high school, multilevel K-12, and alternative and disciplinary. The ANOVA was used to test for differences between school type and the differentiated administrative supports scale score. The means and standard deviations for each school type represented by the respondents are presented in Table 19.

Table 19
Means and Standard Deviations for Comparing the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Score and School Type

School Type	*M*	*n*	*SD*
Early Childhood/Elementary	4.59	403	.374
Middle or Junior High	4.51	185	.407
High	4.46	180	.423
K-12 Multilevel	4.49	14	.429
Alternative & Disciplinary	4.49	27	.468
Total	4.54	809	.400

The ANOVA results shown in Table 20 attained statistical significance, F (4, 804) = 3.614, p = .006. The null hypothesis was rejected because differences in the administrative supports scale scores were seen among the types of schools at which the teachers worked. Because the ANOVA yielded significance and demonstrated a main effect, the effect size of this result was calculated using eta and eta-squared (η = .133, η^2 = .018); however, eta-squared was extremely small and did not suggest practical significance (Cohen, 1988).

Because the ANOVA yielded a main effect between teacher educational levels and the differentiated administrative supports scale score, the Tukey HSD was performed with results seen in Table 21. The only factors to demonstrate a fixed effect were the early childhood/elementary and high school types. High school teachers showed a mean difference of -.128, p = .003, from early childhood/elementary teachers.

Table 20

ANOVA for School Type and the Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Scores

	SS	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Between Groups	2.282	4	.570	3.614	.006
Within Groups	126.907	804	.158		
Total	129.189	808			

Table 21

Tukey HSD Fixed Effects for Teacher Educational Level and Differentiated Administrative Supports Scale Scores by School Type

					95% C.I.	
School Type (I)	School Type (J)	*M* Diff. (I-J)	*SE*	*p*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Early Childhood/ Elementary	Middle or Junior High	.072	.035	.247	-.02	.17
	High	-.128	.036	.003*	.03	.23
	K-12 Multilevel	.100	.108	.885	-.19	.40
	Alternative & Disciplinary	.097	.079	.733	-.12	.31
Middle/Junior High	Early Childhood/ Elementary	-.072	.035	.247	-.17	.02
	High	.056	.042	.666	-.06	.17
	K-12 Multilevel	.028	.110	.999	-.27	.33
	Alternative & Disciplinary	.025	.082	.998	-.20	.25
High	Early Childhood/ Elementary	-.128	.036	.003*	-.23	-.03
	Middle/Junior High	-.056	.042	.666	-.17	.06
	K-12 Multilevel	-.027	.110	.999	-.33	.27
	Alternative & Disciplinary	-.031	.082	.996	-.25	.19
K-12 Multilevel	Early Childhood/ Elementary	-.100	.108	.885	-.40	.19
	Middle/ Junior High	-.028	.110	.999	-.33	.27
	High	.027	.110	.999	-.27	.33
	Alternative & Disciplinary	-.003	.131	1.000	-.36	.35
Alternative & Disciplinary	Early Childhood/ Elementary	-.097	.079	.733	-.31	.12
	Middle/Junior High	-.025	.082	.998	-.25	.20
	High	.031	.082	.996	-.19	.25
	K-12 Multilevel	.003	.131	1.000	-.35	.36

Note. * indicates statistical significance for the mean difference at $p < .05$.

Early childhood/elementary teachers were more likely to rate the need for support higher than their high school counterparts. Alternative and disciplinary campuses indicated higher needs than early childhood campuses; however the standard deviation size is larger than the other categories' standard deviation.

Summary of Results

The current study was designed to measure teachers' perceptions of administrative supports while considering demographic factors. The data had the potential to identify differentiated administrative supports as needed to specific demographic subsets. The research did identify three areas of statistically significant differences based upon demographic factors; however the effect size was so small as to render the differences unactionable (Cohen, 1988).

Significant differences although small were found when the questions were analyzed by gender. A lower percentage of male teachers perceived the need for administrative supports than their female counterparts. When the survey results were examined by teachers' highest level of educational attainment a small difference was found. A higher percentage of teachers with master's degrees perceived the supports to be more important than their peers.

The last area to suggest a significant difference, albeit small was the type of school where teachers taught. Higher percentages of high school and early childhood teachers both showed a need for administrative support, with early childhood teachers perceiving the need for administrative support slightly higher that their high school counterparts.

The survey results indicated teachers surveyed uniformly need the administrative supports presented. The range of affirmative agreement was from 84.17% regarding

technology to 99.75% regarding discipline when all respondents were analyzed together. No differences were found when the questions were analyzed by experience level, type of certification, teachers' age, race or principal tenure at campus.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

The overarching research problem studied was the need for specificity and teachers' perceptions of lack of administrative support. In past studies teachers have identified lack of administrative support—without giving specific details as to what they mean when using the term—as a causal factor when they consider leaving the profession. To gain understanding of this problem, the current study was conducted to discern the differentiated administrative support needs of demographic subgroups. Differentiated administrative support is the process of identifying and providing the specific supports needed for ensuring the teachers' unique needs are met. The current study was an attempt to identify specific administrative needs as they related to specific subgroups. These findings could allow school administrators to provide focused supports to meet teachers' identified needs.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows: summary of the current study, summary of findings and interpretation of results, limitations, implications in relationship to other researchers' work, recommendations for further study, and conclusions.

Summary of the Current Study

After decades of research calling attention to the teacher turnover problem, mostly through quantitative studies of existing secondary data sets, the profession still lacks an adequate understanding of what teachers need in terms of administrative support (Ellis, Grogan, Levy & Tucker-Seeley, 2008; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2011). The need has

been identified as being related to teachers' differentiated support needs, but actionable understanding about what this differentiated administrative support means among teachers is lacking. There has been little to no research to guide state, district, or local leaders regarding how to improve administrative support for teachers. The nature of what teachers regard as differentiated administrative support is not generally understood by educational administrators seeking to develop and retain more teachers. Writing over 30 years ago Arends (1982) argued:

> Prior to the field work, the researchers had not anticipated that there would be so much consistency and overwhelming consensus among teachers in the public schools and faculty in institutions of higher education about the importance of administrative support. Nor did the researchers realize until they began to interpret study data and seek background research on the topic, that no empirical definition or detailed specification existed about precisely what administrative support meant. (p. 79)

Writing on administrative supports recently, Baker (2012) reported that a "paucity of research" (p. 3) has been made available. Thousands of studies have looked at teacher attrition, teacher retention, yet not one appears to have asked teachers what administrative support means to them.

To gain understanding of this problem, the current study was conducted to discern what differentiated administrative supports teachers perceive they need to continue pursuing their teaching careers. The current study was a survey-based comparative study of teachers working in one of the most highly populated Texas counties to assess their administrative support needs while taking into account demographical differences of the teacher population (McMillan, 2008). A survey was administered to capture

demographic and professional data as well as rankings of teachers' perceptions about their administrative support needs. In order to see if two or more variables are statistically different from each other, a comparative design was used for data analysis (McMillan, 2008).

The survey instrument created for the current study was validated by five expert practitioners. The original document had 12 items, of which three were rejected. The experts suggested one more additional question bringing the final total to 10 questions. To establish reliability, this survey was presented to 50 teachers whose responses were very uniform leading to highly skewed data distributions. Alpha coefficients above .70 are considered to provide a good measure of internal consistency (Santos, 1999). This level or higher is considered acceptable in most social science research (Santos, 1999; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The instrument was proven to have reliability with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .72. For the full study, the invitation email to participate in the survey was sent out once per week for three sequential weeks. The file of the teachers' email addresses contained 21,147 unique addresses. The final number of responses used for the analysis was 809. The completion rate was 99.38%. To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, the Likert-type ratings for the 10 items measuring administrative support were averaged into a single differentiated administrative supports scale score.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation of Results

The two subsets of data used in the analysis were teachers' demographics and perceptions of administrative supports. When scoring the perceptions of administrative supports the majority of the teachers answered affirmatively that the supports were important. The highest measurement for an item was 99.75% (discipline) as agree or

strongly agree, while the lowest measurement for an items was 84.17% (technology) as agree or strongly agree. The results are shown in Table 22. Teachers reported wanting all of the administrative supports options offered. The mean, or average, administrative supports scale score for the 809 completed surveys was 4.54 with a standard deviation of .400.

For the hypotheses, no differences for administrative supports scale scores were found when the questions were analyzed by experience level, type of preparatory training, teachers' age, race, or principal tenure at campus. Statistical differences were found by gender, level of education, and type of school. Male teachers showed less need for administrative supports than their female counterparts. When the survey results were examined by teachers' highest level of educational attainment a small difference was found. Teachers with master's degrees perceived the supports to be more important than their peers with different degrees. The last area to suggest a significant difference, albeit small was the type of school in which teachers taught. High school and early childhood teachers both showed a higher need for support, with early childhood teachers demonstrated a slightly higher need for administrative support than their high school counterparts.

The results indicated that teachers as a group have strong expectations for support from their administrators. The significant differences were few for the demographic characteristics. The potential support options formed a foundational level of understanding for administrative supports by all teachers irrespective of the included demographic factors.

Generalizations

These results provided some interesting alignment with prior studies. Walker and Slear (2011) focused on administrative supports as a factor in improving teacher efficacy. They reported teachers wanted their administrators' support across the demographic spectrum. Johnston (2013) also found teachers overwhelmingly reported the need for administrative supports. Johnston's methodology was similar to the current study. The strength of the response for administrative supports was as robust as the current study. It can be summed up that teachers want administrative support.

Table 22
Total Affirmative Response Rate by Question

Question	Affirmative *n**	Affirmative %
1. It is important to have administrative support to assist me with working with diverse cultures.	697	86.15%
2. An important administrative support is to have access (face to face, email, text or phone as the situation demands) to administration.	801	99.01%
3. It is important to have administrative support with curriculum.	717	88.63%
4. It is important to have administrative support with instruction.	698	86.28%
5. It is important to have administrative support with policy and legal issues.	784	96.91%
6. It is important to have logistical support (such as schedules, building maintenance and staffing) as an administrative support.	783	96.79%
7. It is important to have effective communication of directives from my administrators as an administrative support.	799	98.76%
8. It is important to have technology support as an administrative support.	681	84.17%
9. It is important to have administrative support with student discipline.	807	99.75%
10. Offering access to professional learning opportunities is an important administrative support.	717	88.63%

Note. **Strongly agree* and *agree* responses were summed to generate *n* for each affirmative response cell.

These research results differed from previous research in other regards. Walker and Slear (2011) argued emphatically for a need to provide differentiated administrative support when considering demographic factors, especially age and experience. Johnston (2013) also found similar results when examining experience level and reported less experienced teachers need more support. Tickle (2008) found similar results when examining experience level and concluded that less experienced teachers need more support. This current study reports no differences for the administrative supports scale scores by either age or experience. Even though the previous studies indicated a high need for administrative supports, no clear relationship between varying demographic factors and potential administrative supports has been provided.

The lack of consensus among researchers about what differentiated supports are needed is concerning given the consensus is that teachers want administrative supports. The problem has been demonstrated by teachers citing lack of administrative support as a major reason they leave the field (Combs, 2004; Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Levine, 2005; Urbanski & O'Connell, 2003). The need for various administrative supports has also been demonstrated by Tickle (2008), Walker and Slear (2011), Johnston (2013), and the current study. Teachers reported they need administrative support, but what that means remains elusive and requires leadership by central administrations and campus principals. A point of concern was the statistical difference between teachers by gender. The gender specific issues leading women to report needing more support than men could not be discerned by the current study, and this finding is new to the literature.

Therefore, the implications for moving the field from theory to praxis are significant. There never seems to be enough money in education, yet as reported earlier

the Texas State Comptroller's office reports Texas alone wastes $588,405,600 inflation adjusted dollars per year due to teacher attrition. If the right mix of administrative supports are identified, and the loss of professional teachers is reduced by half, roughly $300 million becomes available for other educational purposes such as teacher and student remediation, smaller class sizes, or early childhood education.

What supports administrators provide or not has a great impact on teacher retention outcomes as seen in previous research. When establishing superintendency and principalship curricula, colleges of education need to embed the idea that school leaders guide a wide variety of teachers, all of whom have administrative support needs. Academia has a duty to prepare administrators to address contemporary problems, including the need for specific administrative supports, in order to reduce high teacher turnover.

Finally, what gets measured, improves. The state of Texas, in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, part 2, chapter 150, subchapter BB, rule 150.1021 mandated central ideas that each districts' principal evaluation system must contain without requiring a mandated measure for either teacher attrition or retention. There is also no mandated measure for measuring the type of administrative support administrators provide. Including these as elements in the code may move this problem to the forefront of school administrators' consciousnesses.

Limitations

The current study was affected by a number of limitations. First, the presence or absence of expected supports was not identified by the participants. Second, the teachers' self-reported perceptions, even if biased or inaccurate, shaped their interactions with their work environments. The survey instrument measured teachers' attitudes

regarding school leadership and working conditions. The current survey study might be limited by self-report bias. Third, the results of the current study might not be generalizable to the population of teachers in all counties in Texas or the nation because the participants represent districts located in only one highly populated county in Texas. Fourth the administrative supports presented in the survey were predetermined. There was no opportunity for open ended responses by the teacher respondents.

Implications and Recommendations

More research needs to be conducted to parse this topic of the need for differentiated supports by teachers until understanding and definition is found to indicate which administrative supports are needed by which subsets of teachers. The implications for future research are multifaceted. It is imperative to obtain a firm understanding of what is important to the teacher because teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions that impact teacher retention and attrition outcomes. First, research regarding the differences between male and female teachers' needs for administrative support is needed. A qualitative study could be conducted to understand the phenomenon from the field.

Second, research needs to be conducted with instruments whose sole purpose is to measure teachers' perceptions of administrative support. Researchers may want to avoid the readily available data sets designed to capture related information but not designed to measure administrative support functions. Including current teachers in future studies may provide ecologically valid results that are based upon teachers' perceptions and experiences and have more meaning and applicability for addressing lack of administrative support. Third, future iterations of the instrument may be checked for reliability and factor convergence and an item addressing professional development could

be tested for inclusion. Allowances should be provided for the teachers to supply additional forms of administrative supports.

Additionally, the content validation panel of experts requested that three support items be removed from the instrument prior to conducting the full study. The items that were removed asked: (a) It is important to have emotional support from my administrators. (b) An important administrative support is to have my administrator buffer me from bureaucracy at the campus, district, state or national level. (c) An important administrative support is to have my administrators buffer me from conflict, both internal and external. It is very interesting to note that these three supports, which the expert practitioners elected to remove from the document, might have enabled the instrument to reflect a higher level of leadership proficiency for the participants. With the exception of working with diverse cultures, the remaining supports included in the current study could be qualified as managerial in nature as a reflection of systems and structures, whereas the eliminated support items reflected leadership-oriented aspects of establishing and maintaining a caring, professional school culture. Therefore, the three deleted questions relating to the importance of establishing school culture would have provided a better picture of true leadership skills in the current study and should be reintroduced to the instrument in a future study as part of validation and factor analysis.

Hopefully, the industry will come to value the current study's findings because the understanding of what administrative supports are remains not clearly defined. There is little previous work to guide the future researcher and very few instruments available to measure the needs and supports of teachers, therefore leaving potential researchers void of this information. The current study may provide that missing piece by which to knit all the disparate outcomes of previous researchers together as part of demonstrating the

need to ensure that administrators can provide support that has a positive impact on teachers' working conditions.

Conclusions

Schools are only as effective as the teachers who work there. The teacher in the classroom today is facing a very different reality from the previous generations. Classrooms are significantly more challenging work environments than they have been in the past because they contain diverse students with discipline problems and low performance who cause all teachers to need increased administrative support (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014). Only by maintaining a veteran staff whose skill set increases year after year can education adequately address the needs of students. Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin's (2004) descriptor of the "revolving door" does not have to be the education industry's reality (p. 77). Teaching can and should be a lifelong calling, not a job to endure until it can no longer be tolerated nor a stop-gap job until some better job or career comes along. The current study has not identified a need for differentiated supports but has identified a need for specific administrative support for the classroom teacher. The teacher corps has an important role to play in establishing a baseline for administrative support. If the teacher corps does not identify specific administrative supports, any help given to teachers may remain substandard.

It must be cautioned that administrative supports do not reside solely in the school house. Institutions that prepare administrators and central offices or administrations must lead and provide the basis and political will for these supports. Central offices must work with local school boards as well as state and federal legislators in supporting

administrative guidelines that will equip all stakeholders to work toward reduction of teacher attrition and teachers' unmet need for differentiated supports.

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Appendix A

Permission to Use Association Databases and Equipment

United Educators Association

September 5,

2013

I, Steven Poole as Executive Director of the United Educators Association, grant Derik Hayenga permission to conduct research using association resources including but not limited to email databases, bulk or mass email software, and our computer servers for secure data storage. I understand this research is being conducted as a partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree at Dallas Baptist University (DBU). I further understand that his proposed research has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with DBU Human Subjects Polices and Guidelines. I also make no claim for myself or the organization to the data, analysis, or subsequent publication of this research.

Respectfully,

Steven Poole

Steven Poole

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Appendix B

Email to Possible Participants

Derik Hayenga in partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree at Dallas Baptist University is conducting research related to teacher attrition. Lack of Administrative Support is one of the top reasons stated by exiting teachers when asked why they are leaving the profession. This study is designed to measure teachers' perceptions as to which administrative supports are most important. No personal information will be gathered that will identify you individually. You will be asked some questions about your background, education and experience level. You will not be asked what district or campus you work at.

This study involves a web based survey hosted by SurveyMonkey.com. This survey has been reviewed by Dallas Baptist University, and meets their rigorous standards for the Protection of Human Subjects. All research will be conducted with the utmost integrity and professionalism, under the guiding principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

The survey should take less than three minutes to complete. Participants will not be compensated for their participation. If you wish to participate in this survey, please click on the link below. Please do not complete this survey during instructional time.

Respectfully,

Derik Hayenga,
Chief of Staff,
United Educators Association,
Doctoral Candidate Dallas Baptist University

Appendix C

Survey Items

Informed Consent

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Derik Hayenga from Dallas Baptist University. You are being asked because you are a teacher working within the targeted area of study. This area was selected as the sample it provides is similar to the teacher demographics of Texas as a whole. The purpose of this study is to better understand what supports teachers need from their administrators. There has been very little research conducted to date on this topic and your participation has the potential to help the profession by giving administrators insights into the supports teachers need. There is no such data in existence today. Derik Hayenga in partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree at Dallas Baptist University is conducting research related to teacher attrition.

Research Procedures: You are being asked to answer a survey. Confidentiality will be maintained. Should you decide to withdraw your responses once entered, there will be no penalty. It will very difficult if not impossible for the researcher to identify and remove an individual's data, as no identifying data is recorded. Please make your wishes known via the addresses provided. The electronic copies and any related printouts of the surveys will be kept in a locked file cabinet for five years. The researcher has the only key to this cabinet.

There will be two sections to the survey: (a) background and (b) a rating of administrative supports. In the first section you will be asked such things as age, education level, gender. There will be no way to identify you as an individual. The second section will ask you questions about 10 administrative supports.

Time Required: The approximate time to take this survey is less than 3 minutes.

Risk: It must be stated that with any participation in research there is the potential for harm to the respondent. Great care has been given to the design of this work to protect each subject. The risk is minimal to you as the participant.

Benefits: There is potential for an intrinsic reward from the knowledge that your participation may have the potential to improve the working conditions and therefore the longevity of careers of those who teach after us.

Confidentiality: Electronic copies and any related printouts of the surveys will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office for five years. The only key to this file cabinet will remain in the possession of the researcher. The data will be kept on two separate password protected computer servers. Access will be restricted through a password protected log in. The researcher is the only person with the password.

Questions about the study: If you would like a copy of the final results, or have questions please contact me, the researcher, or the professors involved at the information listed below.

Researcher: Derik Hayenga
[redacted]
dh@ueatexas.com
[redacted]
Committee Chair: Nancy McLaughlin
3000 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, TX 75211
214 333 5545
Research Coordinator: Suzanne Kavli
3000 Mountain Creek Parkway, Dallas, TX 75211
214 333 6864

Giving of Consent: By clicking the AGREE button I certify that I have read this consent agreement in its entirety. I agree to the terms and conditions contained within. I understand the potential risks and benefits as a respondent. I certify that I am a certified classroom teacher over the age of 18.

1. **My selection below indicates my acceptance of the terms presented in this Informed Consent agreement.**
   - ☐ Agree, I agree to the conditions in the Informed Consent as presented.
   - ☐ I do not agree to the conditions in the Informed Consent as presented.

Submit

Teacher Demographics

In this section questions will be asked about you. This will help the researcher identify which groups of teachers perceive the need for various administrative supports.

2. I have _____ years of teaching experience.

0 Less than 1
0 1-5
0 6-10
0 11-15
0 16-20
0 20-25
0 26-30
0 30+

3. I entered teaching through_____ path.

0 Traditional College
0 Alternative Certification Program

4. My age is _____.

0 18-24
0 25-34
0 35-44
0 45-54
0 55-64
0 65 and older

5. My gender is_____.

0 Male
0 Female

6. My ethnicity is_____.

0 African American
0 Hispanic
0 White
0 Native American
0 Asian/Pacific Islander

7. My Principal has been the Principal at this campus for _____ years

0 Less than one full year
0 One year or more, but less than two
0 Two years or more, but less than three
0 Three years or more, but less than five
0 Five years or more, but less than eight
0 Eight years or more, but less than ten
0 Ten years or more

8. My education level is _____.

0 No Degree
0 Associate
0 Baccalaureate
0 Masters Degree
0 Doctorate

Campus Details

This section is to help the researcher identify the type of school you teach at. This section will help the researcher identify which administrative supports are important in various settings.

9. I teach at a _____ school. (Choose all that apply)

0 Early Childhood
0 Elementary
0 Middle or Junior High
0 High School
0 Alternative
0 Disciplinary

Administrative Supports

What do you perceive as important when it comes to administrative supports? There have been many studies citing lack of administrative support, while few actually explain what supports are needed for teachers to continue in their career? Your input will greatly help shape the future of this conversation.

10. It is important to have administrative support to assist me with working with diverse cultures.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

11. An important administrative support is to have access (face to face, email, text or phone as the situation demands) to administration.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

12. It is important to have administrative support with curriculum.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

13. It is important to have administrative support with instruction.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

14. It is important to have support with policy and legal issues.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

15. It is important to have logistical support (such as schedules, building maintenance and staffing) as an administrative support.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

16. It is important to have effective communication of directives from my administrators as an administrative support.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

17. It is important to have technology support as an administrative support.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

18. It is important to have administrative support with student discipline.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree

19. Offering access to professional learning opportunities is an important administrative support.

0 Strongly Agree
0 Agree
0 Neutral
0 Disagree
0 Strongly Disagree