

A SOCIAL NETWORK STUDY OF SUPPORT TO
RETAIN PRINCIPALS

By

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Abstract: With the increased job complexity and lack of support from central office, principal turnover has increased and ranges from 15 to 30 percent in the United States. This qualitative case study, conducted in a suburban, Midwestern school district, seeks the perceptions of principals who have begun their career and remained in this district for at least five years. Social Capital Theory explains: (1) the underlying social network structure of support for principals, (2) a principal's perception regarding the types of support that promoted their success, and (3) how the supports they received helped them overcome challenges. This study adds to the existing body of literature on Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital and its influence on the relationships which increase principal retention.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For most principals, the demands of the job can be overwhelming (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012; Jacobson et al., 2005; Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2013; School Leader Network, 2014; Stevenson, 2006). For example, schedules, personnel issues, reports, and professional development needs often inundate a principal's schedule even before the school year begins. After school starts, principals face the additional pressures of managing children and adults, preparing reports, conducting evaluations, maintaining discipline, ensuring accountability, and responding to all emergencies that arise. Along with these managerial responsibilities, principals are also expected to be the instructional leader of the building (Cray & Weiler, 2011; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Gray, 2009; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Honig, 2012; Leana, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2012; Shoho & Barnett, 2010).

The complexity of the job and a lack of support have led to increased principal turnover. Principal turnover across the United States ranges from 15% to 30% each year (Beteille et al., 2012; Mitani, 2018). In addition, 50% of all beginning principals quit after their third year of employment (School Leader Network, 2014).

Researchers claim there is not a shortage of individuals graduating from principal preparation programs; instead, there is a shortage of applicants actually entering the profession (Jacobson et al., 2005; School Leader Network, 2014; Stevenson, 2006; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011).

While the job of the principal is overwhelming, the evidence in the literature is clear: principals matter (Branch et al., 2013; Leithwood et al., 2008; School Leader Network, 2014). This finding is important because, even though the teacher is the single most important factor in student learning improvement, findings suggest that the principal is the second most important factor (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Branch et al., 2013; Goldring et al., 2008; Leithwood et al., 2008). In addition, while many researchers agree that principals are important to student achievement (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Clayton et al., 2013; Hitt & Tucker, 2016), Branch et al. (2013) provided evidence that effective principals can raise student achievement as much as two to seven months in one academic year, while ineffective principals can lower student achievement equally as much. Based upon these findings and understandings in the literature, scholars agree that it is important to develop principals into effective instructional leaders. However, many principals enter the job unprepared to meet the challenges of leadership (Jacobson et al., 2005; Stevenson, 2006; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). Therefore, support for principals as they develop leadership skills is essential.

Most of the research on supporting principals addresses support for beginning principals through mentoring programs (Clayton et al., 2013; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Gimbel & Kefor, 2018; Hall, 2008; Schechter, 2014). Mentoring programs can provide much needed feedback as the new principal gains leadership experience. However, other

types of support exist such as coaching, professional development, focus groups, and walk-throughs or instructional rounds. These supports have been shown to be effective as well (Boerema, 2011; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Goff et al., 2014; Hatch et al., 2016; James-Ward, 2011). However, a new body of research looked at relationships and how they influence whether principals stay in their positions or leave to either other schools or out of the profession (Finnigan & Daly, 2017). When principals feel socially connected and supported, student achievement often improves (Daly, 2010; Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Finnigan et al., 2013; Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012; Mizell, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Research indicates that one reason for high rates of turnover is that principals often do not feel prepared for the challenges they face (Beteille et al., 2012; Goldring et al., 2008; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011; Walker et al., 2011). Even though many have completed strenuous preparation programs, the ability to actually maneuver the demands and challenges of the position often develops through time and experience (Babo & Postma, 2017; Brockmeier et al., 2013; Dhuey & Smith, 2018). Additionally, current high-stakes accountability mandates, beginning with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and now Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), demand that principals demonstrate success from the beginning of their tenure in the position. These demands often leave principals feeling overwhelmed.

One potential explanation for sustained, continuous, and effective principal leadership may be the amount and type of support that principals receive (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Peters, 2008). This support can take the form of relationships, or social networks, that principals develop across the district (Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012;

Finnigan et al., 2013; Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015). Specifically, social capital embedded in social networks can provide the resources needed for principals to experience success so that they remain in the profession. According to Lin et al. (2001), there are many types of social capital embedded in social networks including the flow of information, enhanced influence, certification of an individual's social credentials, and reinforced identity and recognition. These embedded resources act as "capital" to help individuals address challenging situations (Lin et al., 2001).

While studies have examined why principals leave (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Branch et al., 2013; MetLife, 2013; Miller, 2013; Mitani, 2018; School Leader Network, 2014), and they have examined relationships between the central office (CO) and principal leadership (Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Finnigan et al., 2013), there is little understanding regarding the influence of principal support networks for beginning principals who have accepted a position and have chosen to remain in a district over an extended period of time. This research is important for understanding how to promote sustained leadership that positively influences student learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to gain a better understanding of the social support network structure of principals in a large suburban district in the Midwest who have begun their principal career and have remained in that same district for a period of at least five years. This study also seeks the perceptions of these principals regarding the types of support that have led to their sustained leadership.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the underlying social network structure of support for these long-term principals?
2. What types of social capital are embedded in these networks?
3. What are these principals' perceptions regarding the types of support that have encouraged them to remain in the profession for five years or more?
4. What challenges have these principals faced, and how have these supports helped them to address or overcome these challenges?
5. How does Social Capital Theory explain the success of these principals?

Epistemological Perspective

Constructivism is the theoretical perspective taken in this case study. More specifically, Creswell (2014) explained, "Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p. 8). Because constructivism relies on participants' views of their world, research questions are broad and open-ended. After gathering information and observing participants in their natural setting, I will interpret the meaning through the lens of Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital.

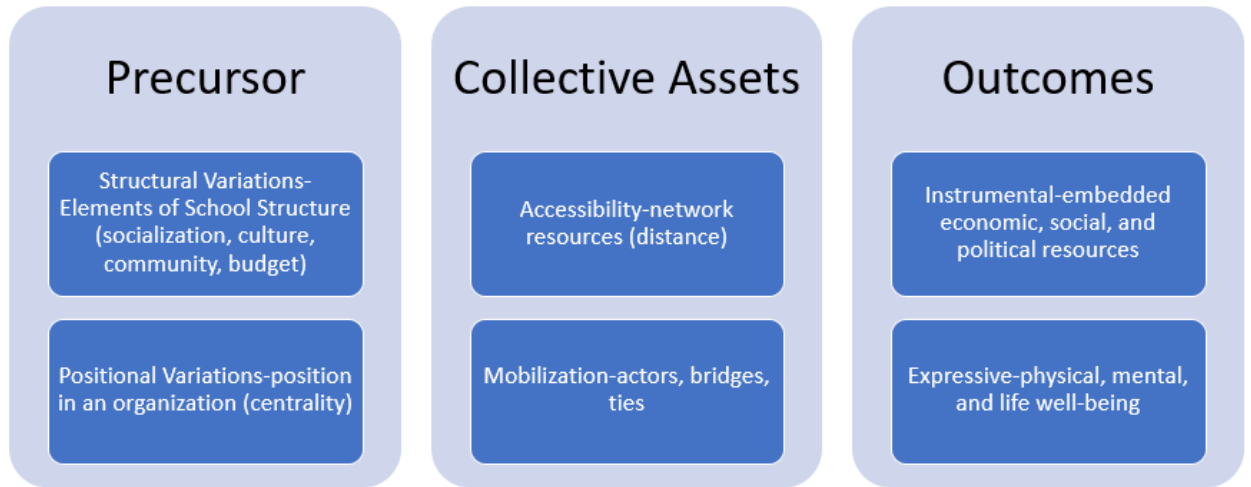
Theoretical Perspective

Daly (2010) explained that "one of the basic conceptual foundations in understanding social networks is the concept of social capital" (p. 4). Lin (1999) defined social capital as "the resources embedded in social relations and social structure which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in purposive action" (p. 35). Lin et al. (2001) explained that there are many types of social capital embedded in social networks and that trust is an important condition for relationship

development. Trust is important because effective school leadership and reform are often contingent upon development of trusting relationships as individuals work collaboratively to achieve organizational goals. Leana (2011) added that building relationships characterized by trust and frequent interactions is highly associated with improved student achievement. Therefore, it logically follows that building strong, trusting relationships is a key factor in principal longevity and success. Further, social capital and a strong professional network have been linked to principals' choice to remain in the profession (Daly, 2010). Lin (1999) hypothesized a comprehensive look at the outcomes of social capital: instrumental and expressive. For education purposes, Finnigan and Daly (2010) defined instrumental outcomes as "social networks [that are] conduits for the circulation of information and resources that pertain to organizational goals" (p. 183). Instrumental outcomes are primarily technical and are based upon "who knows what" (Lin, 1999), and they are important in brokering information that will lead to success. However, instrumental relationships tend to be one-way and not reciprocal. In contrast, expressive outcomes are "social networks [that] reflect patterns of more affect-laden relationships, such as friendships, [that are] more likely to transport and diffuse resources such as social support, trust, and values" (Finnigan & Daly, 2010, p. 183). Expressive outcomes are emotional in nature and tend to be characterized by personal connections that principals make with others versus relationships that result through hierarchy or organizational structure (Lin, 1999). In relation to this study, it is likely that both instrumental and expressive outcomes are important to promote success for sustained principal leadership. Social capital will be explored further in Chapter Two. Below is a visual representation of Lin's theory as applied to an educational setting:

Figure 1

Diagram of Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital



Note. Figure is adapted from Lin, N. (1999). Building a network theory of social capital. *Connections*, 22(1), p. 41.

Procedures

This qualitative case study utilized social network analysis and qualitative data to gain a better understanding of the support provided to long-term principals in a large suburban district in the Midwest. This district has four early childhood centers, fifteen elementary schools, five middle schools, one freshman academy and one high school, for a total of 26 building level leaders in the district. Of these building leaders, nine (35 percent) began their careers in this district and have remained in the district for longer than five years.

Purposeful sampling was utilized to select the nine long-term principals who began their career in this district and have remained for five years or more. Name and position generator social network surveys were distributed to all participants. These long-term principals were asked to list the initials of individuals in the district to whom they go for professional support. They were also asked to rate, on a six-point Likert scale, the

importance of those relationships and frequency of contact. Frequency of contact and importance of relationships are often utilized to determine the strength of relationships (Scott, 2017).

Social network data was analyzed using Ucinet 6 for Windows (Borgatti et al., 2002). The NetDraw network visualization tool was utilized to create sociograms. Means of frequency and importance was calculated to determine strength of relationships (Scott, 2017). Qualitative data included interviews, observations, and document analysis. Nine principals were sought to participate in individual interviews following a semi-structured interview protocol. Interview data provided important insight regarding principal perceptions of the social capital embedded in these networks.

Observations took place on the campus of each principal during faculty meetings, district principal meetings, and meetings with CO administrators. Document analysis included school and district websites, principal evaluation systems, and any documentation distributed to all principals regarding the district's mentoring program. Following Merriam and Tisdell (2015), a constant comparative approach will be utilized to analyze qualitative data. Analysis involved "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read [for] the process of making meaning" (Yazan, 2015, p. 148) to identify codes that emerge. Following open coding, salient themes was identified and then organized by looking for relationships between codes, using axial coding techniques. Triangulation was used to identify potential alternative interpretations of findings.

Potential Significance of Study

When looking at the literature, I found very little tested research in the area of sustained leadership. Therefore, my research will add to the current body of research and also provide insight into the social support systems that influenced these principals to remain in their positions for a sustained period of time.

To Research

As outlined above, the study of supporting principals is important for several reasons. Due to a lack of concrete, viable research in this field, my research will contribute to the current body of research. Very little research has been developed that look specifically at supports that are effective for creating sustained and continuous principal leadership. Secondly, while research is starting to look at social capital in educational leadership (Daly, 2010; Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Dika & Singh, 2002; Finnigan et al., 2013; Liou et al., 2015; Muijs et al., 2010), none specifically look at how relationships, that include a variety of both in-district and out-of-district people, can help principals stay in their positions after their initial first five years.

To Theory

My study will also contribute to a theoretical framework developed by Nan Lin (1999), initially in the area of social sciences. Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital consists of three main parts: precursors, collective assets, and outcomes. Precursors comprise both structural elements in an organization like goals, culture, and physical buildings and positional elements such as someone's position or importance. Collective assets involve accessibility and mobilization. Outcomes have both instrumental and expressive qualities. In the context of supports for beginning principals, instrumental

supports include mentoring, principal leadership programs, coaching, and instructional leader directors. Expressive supports include things like relationships, trust, friendship, and emotions. While precursors and collective assets will not be specifically explored in this research study, my research will support social capital outcomes and can be duplicated for future research studies.

To Practice

This study is significant for retention of qualified principals for several reasons. First, as cited by several authors (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018), our country is in short supply but high demand for administrators. This means that there is a lack of certified personnel willing to enter the profession. In addition, several researchers have conflicting recommendations for supporting principals. Some described only mentoring programs (Daresh, 2007; Gimbel & Kefor, 2018; James-Ward, 2011; Schechter, 2014), while others described a more comprehensive system of support including walk-throughs, principal teams, along with mentoring programs (Boerema, 2011; Fink & Resnick, 2001). Thrown into the mix is emergent research on the importance of relationships in supporting principals (Hite et al., 2005; Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012; Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015; Walker et al., 2011). All of these programs may be helpful, but in a time when funding is critically low and school districts need to become more efficient with less personnel, it is ever important to narrow the focus on what truly effective support looks like.

Definition of Terms

Instrumental outcomes. A part of social capital in which social networks [are] conduits for the circulation of information and resources that pertain to organizational goals (Finnigan & Daly, 2010).

Expressive outcomes. The second part of social capital in which social networks reflect patterns of more affect-laden relationships, such as friendships, more likely to transport and diffuse resources such as social support, trust, and values (Finnigan & Daly, 2010).

Long-term principals. Principals who began their career at a school site and continue to work in the same district.

Social capital. Defined by Lin (1999), the resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions.

Social network analysis. Several authors define this term but it is generally concerned with analyzing data to understand the pattern of relational ties between individuals that are embedded in a social network (Liou & Daly, 2016).

Success for the principals. In this study, success will be defined as remaining at the same district, at the same school site, after the first five years of employment as a principal.

Summary of the Study

Copland (2001) introduced his article by listing a fictional advertisement for a principal. The ad lists 16 qualities the applicant should possess. Examples included, “wisdom of a sage,” “courage of a firefighter,” and “listening skills of a blind man” (p. 528). While this is very humorous, unfortunately it is also very realistic. School districts

across the country are expecting more from principals with little to no support. The next five chapters of this qualitative research will explore how the correct structures of supports sustain principal leadership. In this chapter, I have provided the introduction, problem statement, purpose of study, and five research questions. This research will use case study with the theoretical framework of Nan Lin's (1999) Network Theory of Social Capital.

Chapter Two reviews literature based on the following topics: history of the principalship, successful principalships, principal turnover and its impact on student achievement, challenges to supporting principals, central office and principal relationships, relationships principals have with other people, and the types of supports principals need to sustain their leadership. Chapter Three explains the research methods and procedure in data collection and analysis. As part of data analysis, bias, trustworthiness and limitations of the study are explored. In Chapter Four, data is provided to paint the picture of why the problem of sustained and continuous principal leadership exists. This data includes surveys, observations, interviews, and documents. Chapter Five will analyze the data through the research questions, including the lens of Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital and discuss the conclusions and implications of the research. There will be recommendations for further research in this area.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the last 20 years, the demand for principals increased while the supply of qualified, willing candidates declined. While it is known that principal effectiveness is second only to teacher effectiveness in improving student achievement, there is little research on what supports are needed to improve principal effectiveness. The topics covered in this literature review include reviewing the factors that attribute to principal attrition, the role of the central office in mitigating the challenges to supporting beginning principals, and the types of programs currently used to support beginning principals. The need for this study will be established by looking at gaps in research regarding the need for support of principals in order to sustain leadership in districts.

History of the Principalship

In 2008, the media covered a scandalous story in Washington D. C. No, it was not about the president or some other political figure. Michelle Rhee, Chancellor of Washington D. C. Schools fired 40 principals; however, her decision was not due to poor evaluation results. They were fired due to the provisions in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (United States Department of Education, 2002). Under NCLB, if principals are not meeting performance goals, school districts are mandated to fire them. While this was

widely publicized in Washington D. C., this same practice was being replayed all across America. Historically, principals have had to wear many hats and bear the responsibility of positive student outcomes. However, in the current climate of increased accountability, the reasons for principal turnover have changed. The ripple effect is that now the principal position is less appealing today than it was 20 years ago.

Early Principalship: Mid-1800s to Mid-1900s

Kafka (2009) described the history of the principalship dating back to the mid-1800s. During this time, principals were master teachers who not only taught students, but also managed the day-to-day business of school. By the end of the century, these principal teachers lost their teaching responsibilities and solely became managers of the building. At the beginning of the 20th century, schools increasingly replaced churches as the social hub of most communities. In addition, as industrialization and migration to large cities started to occur, the role of the principal became a more prominent and professionalized position.

Compulsory Education and Sputnik: 1940s to 1970s

After World War II, school became compulsory for every child aged six to eighteen years of age. Then in 1957, the Soviet Union sent the first rocket into space and America panicked. Believing our national security to be at risk, the federal government initiated the National Defense Education Act (United States Department of Education, 1957) in 1957. Schools were charged with developing a more rigorous curriculum that emphasized science and math. This was the first accountability measure handed down from the federal government because it was tied to federal dollars (Gray, 2009). The next large, sweeping federal education reform occurred in 1965 when the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (United States Department of Education, 1965) was enacted by Congress into law. The original intent of the law, which came during a time when President Johnson was dealing with civil rights and equity issues, was to provide federal support to target the learning of children who are underprivileged. ESEA continues to be the single largest fiscal source of federal support in disadvantaged schools. Due to this increase in federal intervention, principals had to be versed in school reform and it was first time they were seen as a change agent (Leithwood et al., 2012).

Age of Accountability: 1980s to Today

The next pivotal change in the principalship came in the 1980s with a true shift from principals who were managers to principals who are instructional leaders. First, Ron Edmonds (1979) published research on effective schools and labeled the principal as the instructional leader (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Then in 1983, one of the most controversial studies, *A Nation at Risk* (United States National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), was released during President Reagan's Administration. This study raised concerns about the quality of public-school instruction that have had lasting ramifications for the last 35 years (Jacobson et al., 2005). President George H. Bush took the idea of accountability in schools further in 1990 through the National Education Goals Panel. Students in America were to be ranked first in the world for student achievement. To achieve this goal, the panel addressed school readiness, graduation rates, and developed competency testing requirements for grades four, eight, and twelve in math, science, history, English, and geography (Gray, 2009). In this era, we first hear about the principal being a transformational leader. To be a transformational leader, principals began to set goals and expectations for their school sites.

Lastly during this era, President George W. Bush passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2002. The role of the principal, again, dramatically changed. This legislation required principals to disaggregate data, meet with teachers about student learning, and increase student achievement, regardless of the student's socioeconomic status, disability, race, ethnicity, or home environment. If schools did not meet targeted student expectations, principals were required to leave that school site (Gray, 2009). Only during President Barack Obama's presidency was this mandate eased. Because of all of these new accountability requirements, it was quickly discovered that principals could not do the job of school reform alone. Principals needed to delegate responsibilities to others in the organization. Therefore, their role changed to be more organization-focused in a shared or integrated leadership model. In this model, teachers and central office staff take on a portion of the responsibility to improve student achievement (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Another discovery was the inability to retain and recruit principals which has led to a shortage of principals (Babo & Postma, 2017). While there is not a shortage of eligible applicants, there is a lack of willingness to become a principal. Just before the end of the Obama administration, No Child Left Behind was replaced by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (United States Department of Education, 2015). The main differences between NCLB and ESSA, under ESSA, states have more flexibility to develop their own goals. Oklahoma has developed their own plan to meet the requirements of ESSA. While there continues to be responsibilities to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students, principals do not bear the sole responsibility of moving students forward. There are a team of stakeholders including parents, teachers, and the student. Lastly, under ESSA, states still have to use academic

achievement for accountability, but can also use other measures such as academic growth, graduation rates, and chronic absenteeism.

The Importance of the Principal

In a joint effort by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) (NASSP/NAESP, 2013), they defined the most important responsibilities of the principal as:

Principals need to be educational visionaries; instructional and curriculum leaders; assessment experts; disciplinarians; community builders; public relations experts; budget analysts; facility managers; special program administrators; and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district officials, unions, and state and federal agencies while being sensitive to the widening range of student needs (p. 2).

While this description seems like an insurmountable task, the principal is an important leader in her/his school building.

Principals Matter

The evidence is clear in many studies over the last ten years: principals have been identified as the primary source of reform efforts (Goldring et al., 2008; Kafka, 2009; Leana, 2011; Orr et al., 2010). These findings further support the understanding that leaders should make instructional leadership their top priority (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Goldring et al., 2008; Hallinger, 2005; Robinson et al., 2008; Shoho & Barnett, 2010). Leithwood et al. (2008) claimed, “there is not a single documented case of a school

successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership” (p. 29). In fact, school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood et al., 2012). Branch et al. (2013) found that “highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student between two and seven months of learning in a single year” (p. 63).

Many authors found both a direct and indirect positive relationship between instructional leadership and improved test scores, and effective instructional leadership can be as much as a quarter of the influence for total school effects which includes things such as having a shared vision, building professional capacity, creating a supportive organization of learning, and facilitating high-quality learning experiences for students. (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; NASSP/NAESP, 2013; Waters et al., 2003) This appears to be even greater in schools that have higher poverty and a more diverse population (NASSP/NAESP, 2013). Principals provide instructional leadership both directly and indirectly by influencing staff motivation, enhancing working conditions, shaping the learning environment, and coordinating instructional practices (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2008; Louis et al., 2010). Organizations must also be careful to not keep ineffective principals because they can lower achievement by the same two to seven months (Branch et al., 2013). Another influence on student achievement is a principal’s years of experience. Students with higher achievement are more likely to have an experienced principal versus a beginning principal (Branch et al., 2013) and several studies suggested that a principal with fewer years of experience has a direct association to declining test scores (Babo & Postma, 2017; Brockmeier et al., 2013; Dhuey & Smith, 2018; Vanderhaar et al., 2007).

Qualities of an Effective Leader

Principals must define the critical components that will raise student performance in light of the current age of accountability (Rammer, 2007). Many studies described the core leadership qualities of principals that influence student achievement (Hallinger, 2005; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2008; Louis et al., 2010; Rammer, 2007; Robinson et al., 2008). One of the first leadership qualities is the ability of the principal to build a vision for the school. This vision should align with the district vision. In the vision, the principal, with the help of a stakeholder group made up of staff members, parents, community members, and, if possible, students, develops goals and expectations. Second, the principal must be able to understand and develop people. Developing people includes providing professional development, building professional capacity, and promoting and participating in teacher learning. Louis et al. (2010) also included allowing time for teachers to collaborate. The next leadership quality is the ability to create or redesign the school building. In this category, principals need to create ideal work conditions in which teachers have a sense of autonomy. In addition, principals may have to restructure and reculture the school by building positive relationships. The last leadership quality is the ability to manage teaching and learning. Not only does the principal need to be able to evaluate good teaching, he/she must also ensure that teaching practices align with the school's vision. Hitt and Tucker (2016) and Robinson et al. (2008) add a fifth quality which is the ability to connect and resource with external partners.

Support for Successful Principalships

In order to know what needs to be improved, it is also important to look at what successful districts are doing well. Fink and Resnick (2001), in a study conducted in the Community School District Two, New York City, provided a multitude of supports to principals which created a successful school district. It was noted that “wherever one goes in the district, teaching and learning are what everyone talks about” (p. 3). Instead of principals having to deal with managerial tasks, they could focus on instructional leadership.

Leithwood et al. (2012) described nine characteristics of high performing districts:

- 1) Widely shared vision,
- 2) Focus on the quality of curriculum and instruction,
- 3) Positive district culture,
- 4) Targeted and phased focus for school improvement,
- 5) Relationships with other schools and stakeholders,
- 6) Emphasis on teamwork,
- 7) Use of data for decision making,
- 8) Job-embedded professional development, and
- 9) Investment in instructional leadership at the district and school level.

Several studies emphasized various forms of professional development and other supports to help principals with sustained, continuous leadership (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Leithwood et al., 2008; Petti, 2010). In a study by Petti (2010), coaching was a large part of the support, but, in addition, the school had monthly meetings, book studies,

professional development, and learning walks. Fink and Resnick (2001) also found that numerous types of professional development were successful in supporting principals. Using some of these same strategies, Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky reduced principal turnover by 70% in five years (School Leader Network, 2014). One of the most common factors in all of these cases is that the supports were varied, individualized, and occurred over multiple years.

Career Paths of Administrators

Farley-Ripple et al. (2012) described six different types of career paths for administrators. First there is self-initiation where administrators were in charge of their own decisions to enter the profession. These individuals see the principalship as a step-up the career ladder, a natural progression, or a long-term career goal (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012). The second career path is recruiting and tapping. Usually, these administrators are asked to apply at another district or they chose to apply for a CO position in their existing district. This was the most common type of career path. The third career path is requesting where the superintendent asks the administrator to change positions. Usually this move is a lateral move to another school site that is not experiencing success. The fourth career path is reassigning where a principal is moved to another school or position without the input of that administrator. In the fifth career path, removing, involves the administrator being removed from their position, usually due to political reasons or poor performance attributed to the principal. This is the career path that results in most principals leaving the profession all together. The last career path is called passing over. This is where an administrator is not hired for a job they desire.

Statistics of Principal Turnover

Many districts face very high rates of leadership turnover. Annual principal turnover rates in school districts throughout the country range from 15-30% each year (Beteille et al., 2012; Mitani, 2018). In a study by MetLife (2013), one-third of principals were very or fairly likely to leave their job as a principal and go into another occupation. Another study indicated that 25,000 principals (or one quarter) leave their positions each year, and 50% of beginning principals will quit during the third year in their role (School Leaders Network, 2014). Not all principals leave the profession. Those who stay in the profession but transfer to another school district tend to do so because they want a school site that has a higher socioeconomic status and higher achievement scores (Beteille et al., 2012).

A common reason for principal turnover is poor job satisfaction. Job satisfaction rate has decreased nine percentage points in less than five years from 68% in 2008 to 59% in 2013 (MetLife, 2013). More specifically, principals, on average, worked as much as 60 hours per week (Mitani, 2018) and half of principals felt under great stress several days a week (MetLife, 2013). Some of the stress is due to principals feeling their control of curriculum and instruction in their buildings has declined during the past decade which can be attributable to the increased accountability and sanctions from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (MetLife, 2013).

Teachers make up a majority of the pool of aspiring school leaders, but due to diverse pressures, they no longer see administration as an attractive career option (Jacobson et al., 2005). In some states, the job is not attractive because the principal only makes 55% more than a beginning teacher and, in some cases, makes only 5% more than

a teacher at the end of their career. This, along with working a longer contract (11-12 months typically) and with less job security, deters many teachers from entering leadership preparation programs (Jacobson et al., 2005).

Turnover Characteristics

Several authors categorized principal turnover differently. The next sections will explain principal turnover in terms of principal, school/student, workplace, and emotional characteristics.

Principal Characteristics

Similar to the push and pull factors outlined by Farley-Ripple et al., (2012), Boyce and Bowers (2016) described two types of principals who leave: satisfied and disaffected. Satisfied principals, similar to descriptions of pull factors, leave their current position to go to another school that has higher socioeconomic status, fewer minority students, and higher achievement. They are also usually recruited to other positions that typically have a better climate and positive attitude toward the principalship, and where they can have more autonomy. Disaffected principals, similar to descriptions of push factors, leave mostly due to poor working relationships and are more likely to either go back to a non-administrator position or leave the profession all together.

Principals are leaving high poverty and low performing schools to move to low poverty, high performing schools. As a result, principals in high poverty, lower performing schools tend to have half as many years of experience as principals in low poverty schools (Beteille et al., 2012); therefore, turnover effects can be lessened when vacancies are filled with principals that have more prior experience. This also leads to more disadvantaged students having unstable leadership (Miller, 2013). In fact, it is

highly unusual for high poverty students to have the same principal throughout their school careers at a single building (School Leader Network, 2014).

When researchers analyzed principal demographic characteristics (race, age, gender), none agree on whether those characteristics contributed to principal turnover (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). Researchers consistently agree that principals' years of experience positively impacts student achievement (Beteille et al., 2012; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Principals with more experience tend to stay longer at one school, and principals with less experience tend to leave the profession all together within four years (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Even though principal turnover is generally regarded as a negative aspect of leadership, ineffective principals are more likely to leave after three years, which may be beneficial to schools (Beteille et al., 2012; Branch et al., 2013). Unfortunately, student achievement takes up to four years to rebound to levels of the previous principal (Beteille et al., 2012).

School and Student Characteristics

Several school factors and conditions can potentially predict principal turnover, such as increases in discipline referrals, low levels of collaboration, and lower school culture (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Stevenson, 2006; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). Suburban and rural schools have principals who change positions more often; however, principals in urban districts tend to leave the profession all together. Also, schools with a larger student population are more likely to have principal turnover; however, it is mixed as to whether this occurs more often in high schools rather than elementary schools. Student characteristics such as high poverty, high minority, high

special education, and low student achievement, these schools tend to see increases in principal turnover (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018).

Workplace Characteristics

Some of the most common workplace characteristics that influence principal turnover are the degree of autonomy in which principals have control over their buildings, the relationships that principals have among staff, CO, and the community, and the changing nature of the position (Jacobson et al., 2005; School Leader Network, 2014; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). A lack of autonomy is attributable to the increase in accountability requirements (Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Accountability pressures change the policy and expectations from CO who then try to control reform efforts in each school site. This, coupled with underfunding of education, has caused great stress on principals. It also creates tension between principals and CO which weaken their relationships. Principals at the lowest performing schools were the least likely to be connected to CO, while beginning principals rarely connected with CO or other principals (Finnigan & Daly, 2017). As we will see in the next section, this can create feelings of isolation.

Emotional Characteristics

Most of the emotional characteristics related to principal turnover deal with trust and socialization. Organization socialization comes from the leader adapting to the organization and the organization adapting to the leader. This is achieved through relationships and trust which tend to be interconnected. Finnigan and Daly (2017) researched the idea of churn in which individuals quickly come and go in a given organization. They found that the greater the churn, opportunities for trust and reciprocal relationships are less likely. Additionally, if trusting and reciprocal relationships cannot

fully develop, school faculty become more distrustful of its leader. As far as relationships between principals and CO leaders, almost a third of principals in lower performing schools stated they felt isolated from others (Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Another emotional factor is job satisfaction, a belief that the job is worthwhile. If principals are more satisfied with their working environment, they often have an increase in enthusiasm which can radiate out to staff members (Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011).

Principal Turnover Impact on Student Achievement

A study conducted by School Leaders Network (2014) described principalship as “being thrown into the deep end of the pool without adequate continued support” (p. 2). In this age of accountability, the expectations of the principal role are becoming increasingly difficult. In a study conducted by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife, 2013), 75% of principals felt the job had become too complex and that most of their responsibilities had changed compared to five years ago. The most difficult roles for principals to deal with include limited availability of human capital, diversity, economic pressures, the need for stability, and the increasing responsibility of schools to address complex social problems (Stevenson, 2006). This extends back to even the 1980s. In 1987, a report called “Leaders for America’s Schools” (Jacobson et al., 2005) was released and pointed toward leadership preparation programs as being the problem. The report claimed that there is not a shortage of leaders who have completed a preparation program but a shortage of willing and quality individuals to apply for leadership positions which has led to the current status of principal turnover (Jacobson et al., 2005; School Leader Network, 2014; Stevenson, 2006; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). This shortage

could be due to not only the complexity of the job, but also a lack of adequate preparation.

Farley-Ripple et al. (2012) and Branch et al. (2013) described principal turnover in terms of “pull” and “push” factors. Push factors are internal forces that encourages the administrator to leave. Most often these forces include personal issues, the emotional and physical toll of the job, and difficult working relationships. Working relationships are the most common push factor that administrators see as not only beneficial but also challenging. Pull factors are forces outside of the position which draw administrators away from the position. Most of the pull factors involve self-efficacy, or the lack of professional development to develop these skills, and the desire for career advancement.

Consequences of Principal Turnover

Research indicates that two of the most important consequences to principal turnover include teacher turnover and negative school climate and culture (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Finnigan and Daly (2017) also stated that principal turnover undermines a consistent vision and set of approaches established by the previous principal and inhibits the formation of relationships among teachers. Not only are there emotional and work-related consequences to principal turnover, but there are also financial consequences. School Leaders Network (2014) estimated that school leadership turnover costs a school district \$75,000, on average. Costs that result from high rates of turnover include principal preparation programs, human resources, internships, onboarding techniques such as coaching or mentoring, and continuing education.

Potential Solutions

Numerous studies (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012; Leithwood et al., 2012; Orr et al., 2010) suggested that “the kids” are what drives individuals to become principals; however, interacting with students does not seem to be a strong enough factor to make them stay. Therefore, understanding factors that lead to principal longevity is an important research focus. Leaders for America’s Schools called for reform in leadership preparation programs by making them more rigorous and lasting longer (University Council for Educational Administration, 1987). This suggestion is supported by other findings in the literature (Jacobson et al., 2005; Orr et al., 2010; School Leader Network). Orr et al. (2010) suggested that, because districts are consumers of leadership preparation programs, they need to “have a say” in how these programs work. They stated that leadership preparation programs should be multi-stage, incorporate more district issues, use monitoring and feedback of graduates, and work with state leaders on policy changes. Jacobson et al. (2005) suggested that, since teachers are the primary recruits of leadership preparation programs, districts should develop a career ladder track to encourage teachers into such programs. Research from the School Leader Network (2014) suggested one-to-one coaching that goes beyond the first two years and above all else, funding needs to be increased. Other studies suggested adding a component that teaches potential principals how to develop trusting, collaborative relationships within the school system (Daly & Finnigan, 2012; Finnigan & Daly, 2017). Besides the leadership preparation program, Daly (2010) and Farley-Ripple et al. (2012) recommended support from district leaders in developing stronger professional networks, not just from CO, but from other principals and even professionals at other districts. School Leaders Network (2014) goes further to

say that principals need “authentic peer networks where principals can learn from other principals the art and practice of leading schools” (p. 2). Lastly, Jacobson et al. (2005) and School Leader Network (2014) suggested that principals need more autonomy and the ability to change their roles or distribute some leadership tasks to others.

Challenges to Supporting Beginning Principals

With such a high rate of principal turnover, positions are more likely to be filled with principals with no previous experience. Because many beginning principals leave the profession within three years (School Leader Network, 2014), there is a special challenge to supporting and keeping them at a school site for a sustained period of time.

Principals experience a multitude of challenges, and they may not feel prepared to face them. The first reaction to becoming a principal is often a reality shock (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Many beginning principals are surprised at the amount of work that needs to be accomplished and the unpredictability of the day. Initially, they are just trying to figure out the dynamics of their school site and determine strengths and needs. In addition to an initial reality shock, principals must be prepared to handle the challenges of dealing with personnel and technical issues. Personnel issues include evaluating teachers and dealing with ineffective or resistant staff. Technical issues typically include budgeting, hiring personnel, and completing reports. Of all these issues, the most common challenge for principals is how to budget (Spillane & Lee, 2014).

Beginning principals also must learn how to balance their personal life with their professional life. This challenge is even more difficult if the principal has young children, an unsupportive spouse, or a long commute. Shoho and Barnett (2010) indicated that even though mentorship is the most common way to support these beginning principals,

this type of support is often not enough. Because higher student achievement is less likely with a beginning principal, it is very important to support new principals and keep them in the same school site for longer than three years with a greater emphasis on more varied types of support.

Central Office and Principal Relationships

Fullan (2001) stated that few reforms have worked because not enough attention has been paid to the important relationship between leadership and transformation. While not much is known regarding the influence of relationships on principal decisions to remain in the profession, research does exist regarding the influence of principal relationships with the central office (CO). Honig (2012) explained that COs were “originally established and have historically operated to carry out a limited range of largely regulatory and basic business functions” (p. 735). However, this command and control approach has created an “us versus them” mentality that has caused division in many school districts (Mizell, 2010). In the new age of accountability, this division has led to disappointing student achievement results. In response, districts must redefine their roles to shift from monitoring and controlling to supporting and collaborating with school principals (Daly & Finnigan, 2011).

Honig et al. (2010) suggested five dimensions to transform COs. These dimensions include 1) learning-focused partnerships with principals, 2) assistance to foster these partnerships, 3) reorganizing and re-culturing CO units (all aspects) to support teaching and learning, 4) stewardship of the process, and 5) evidence-use to make improvements to practices and relationships. This last dimension, relationships, is the focus of research by Liou et al. (2015), Daly and Finnigan (2011), and others as well.

Finnigan and Daly (2010) reported that linkages between central office and site leaders are important for not only school reform but also district reform. The ways that this linkage is important are due to the way information is transmitted from the district office to the school site. Liou et al. (2015) suggested that socially-connected leaders are critical for transmitting the resources and information necessary for successful change.

Therefore, superintendents and CO staff must work tirelessly to develop a culture in which students' interests are a primary focus, and the interests of the CO and school staff are secondary. In order for CO and principals to develop those relationships, CO personnel must be brokers of information to principals for student learning. Effective brokering must involve trust among each group (Finnigan et al., 2013).

Trust, Brokering, and Relationships

There have been many studies looking at the relationships between CO and school leaders. Daly and Finnigan (2010, 2012) studied relationships in terms of social capital. One of the key elements in social capital is the number and quality of ties between actors. Ties represent reciprocal relationships, and the actors in this situation are the CO and school leaders. Ties are important to the flow of information in a district. Daly and Finnigan (2012) found that there are few ties between principals and CO and also few ties among principals at different sites in the district, especially in underperforming schools. Most ties in a school district occurred within a site. For example, ties occurred among CO staff or among school staff in a specific building, but not across CO to a school site or vice versa. School leaders also tended to interact with the same people instead of seeking out new knowledge from less-connected leaders.

Types of communication between actors is also important. In another study, Daly and Finnigan (2011) found that for there to be meaningful reform, leaders must make the choice to interact with other actors from across the school system, with a different knowledge base, in order to develop new ideas. However, several other studies found there were few connections between CO and school leaders and mostly consisted of one-way communication (Finnigan & Daly, 2010; Finnigan et al., 2013; Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015). The communication that was present tended to be more technical (e.g., about budgets, regulations, etc.) and less about teaching and learning. It also centered around work versus emotional ties. In these cases, the work-related relationship increased while the emotional relationships diminished which hindered the trust between CO and school leaders.

Trust between CO and schools is important for many factors. First, trust may affect the relationship between CO staff and school principals. When the relationships between CO and school principals can evolve from monitoring and regulatory to mutual, the exchange of information leads principals to engage more actively in improvement efforts. When there is a culture of trust, risk-taking can occur which can lead to the necessary changes for school reform (Finnigan & Daly, 2010). If this relationship is poor and there is distrust, there may be a decrease in the flow of information about school best practices. Therefore, CO staff become brokers of information and can either increase or restrict its flow. Principals who have a trusting relationship with CO, and therefore occupy a more central position in their network, increase the flow of information and can acquire the resources they need to make improvement. Lastly, trust becomes a huge factor in principal turnover. If there is a lack of trust which results in nonreciprocal

relationships, principals will leave and that will have a trickle-down effect decreasing the level of trust among teachers and other staff (Daly & Finnigan, 2011).

When there is mutual respect and trust within an organization, the CO can help school leaders be more successful in several ways. First, they can help school sites develop goals and benchmarks that align to the district goals. As the CO and school staff identify conditions that impede student learning, that can develop practices that support improvement and hold each other accountable for the results of the students' learning (Honig, 2008). Second, CO staff can help facilitate communication to staff, parents, and community members. CO staff also need to encourage principals to collaborate with each other. However, Daly and Finnigan (2010) warned that just providing directives to “work together” (p. 128) will not result in meaningful collaboration. Instead, they suggested the district develop a process where site administrators who have high achievement work with other site administrators to show them successful learning practices. Lastly, districts must be able to open themselves up to external agencies, such as universities, that can help provide support for site administrators (Honig & Venkateswaran, 2012). Examples of support could include coaching, mentoring, or other forms of professional development.

Types of Support Needed

In light of the new accountability age previously under NCLB and now under ESSA, the role of the principal has changed from site manager to instructional leader. Findings in a study from the Wallace Foundation, suggest that districts have an obligation to help principals in this new role as instructional leader (Honig et al., 2010). Goff et al. (2014) also stated that districts must develop the capacity of principals, dismiss principals

who are not performing well, and improve the quality of applicants. Surprisingly, the idea of providing a wide range of supports has only recently been a part of what districts do, not only for new principals, but also for existing principals.

Cray and Weiler (2011) categorized the types of deficits in which principals may need support into three main categories: demands, emotional, and personnel. Demands include things like practical experience, time management, political issues, and difficult conversations. Emotional deficits include building relationships and developing school culture. Personnel issues include supporting teachers, using data effectively, and knowledge of human capital. In order to meet all of these principal needs, support must be diversified and differentiated.

Fink and Resnick (2001) described a comprehensive principal support program that occurred in New York. Their study found that, in order for principals to be effective instructional leaders, they must create both intellectual and social capital in their school sites. By developing social capital, the principal helps the staff learn to trust and depend on each other in order to expand their knowledge of curriculum needs. With intellectual capital the principal sets expectations of staff by playing a central role in choosing curriculum and evaluating its effectiveness.

Finally, principals must be supported for sustained leadership. Babo and Postma (2017) explained,

If research continues to confirm that competent school principals promote the success of the nation's public school children, then providing them with the appropriate preservice training in addition to continued support and professional development after they assume a principal's position is paramount if they are

going to continue in the position long enough to make a difference in the lives of school children. (p. 125)

Professional Development

The role of the principal is to provide a culture of learning. The principal is also expected to lead teachers in learning new skills that will improve student achievement (Goldring et al., 2012). Mizell (2010) called for superintendents to provide highly-focused professional development building the capacity of principals to increase student performance. Mizell (2010) suggested that, instead of providing large, whole district professional development, schools would work with CO in developing more focused, site-based professional development. Goldring et al. (2012) emphasized that high quality professional development needs to be job-embedded, meet the educator where they are, must be long-term and in multiple formats, and must be scaffolded. Fink and Resnick (2001) supported this understanding by indicating that professional development for leaders must consist of monthly principal conferences, instructional institutes, support groups for new principals, focus literacy support groups, and principal study groups.

Instructional Rounds

Instructional rounds can be referred to by various titles including intervisitation or walk-throughs (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Essentially, instructional rounds involve observations of classrooms by a group of teachers and administrators for the purpose of building a common knowledge of instructional practices (Hatch et al., 2016). Usually there is a supervisor or instructional leader director (ILD) who helps coordinate and facilitate the rounds. Instructional rounds assist principals by providing common vocabulary and a way to develop connections, not only with other principals, but also

with teachers and students (Hatch et al., 2016). For new principals, these provide a lens into what it is like to be a member of the district and an understanding of what is expected as a school leader. Like in classrooms, instructional leader directors provide a goal or problem to be observed and then model instructional leadership. Because principals will be at different places in their development, ILDs can differentiate their support to principals. ILDs can also be a bridge between CO and principals by buffering the demands that interfere with principals' time on instruction. One of the major obstacles for instructional rounds is the amount of demands placed on each ILD, turnover of principals or ILDs which can affect the continuity of services, the principals' readiness to participate in the instructional rounds, and protecting the ILDs' time (Honig, 2012).

Coaching

Another support that has gained momentum in the last several years is coaching. Some studies suggested coaching from external sources (Bloom et al., 2003; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Silver et al., 2009), while others suggested coaching from existing CO staff (Goff et al., 2014; Petti, 2010), or a combination of external coaching and internal mentorship (James-Ward, 2011). Similar to ILDs, coaches support principals as they set goals and objectives. They provide walk-throughs, but also address managerial aspects such as budgets and personnel issues. One of the most important features of coaching is the feedback that coaches provide to principals (Goff et al., 2014). Most of the coaching sessions occur monthly and start with working on those managerial problems which, if dealt with early, can help move principals into instructional issues more quickly. Like ILDs, coaches can also act as brokers for information and help with connecting principals to CO by building relationships. For new principals, this support helped them not feel so

isolated when first starting their job. Some of the obstacles for coaching have to do with the time commitments required for successful coaching. Coaches cannot be overwhelmed with too many principals or too busy in their own jobs, so they can be available to principals. Lastly, CO staff need to take time when matching a coach to a principal. Several factors need to be considered such as previous experience, leadership philosophy, type and level of school, needs of the principal being coached, and the nature of the challenges they faced (Bloom et al., 2003; James-Ward, 2011; Silver et al., 2009). Silver et al. (2009) emphasized “the importance of matching appeared to contribute to the development of positive relationships between the new administrators and their coaches” (p. 225). If this matching does not go well, it can have the opposite effect.

Principal Training and Mentorship

Mentoring programs were nearly non-existent before the year 2000. Because of the “reality shock” that principals encounter when they enter a new position, they need to be nurtured while facing these challenges. Daresh (2007) confirmed that principal mentorship programs must assure that the person mentored will survive the first year or two on the job. However, critics of leadership preparation programs have argued that there is little connection between theory learned in the university classroom and on-the-job experiences (Hall, 2008; Petzko, 2008). There is also a disconnection between what principals perceive as important information to receive in their leadership programs and what university leaders perceive as important for principals to learn on the job. Petzko (2008) recommended that districts and universities work together to align coursework and practice. Mentorships need to extend over time and mentors must be trained in how to mentor.

Boerema (2011) described four types of leadership development: training in skills, feedback, conceptual training, and formal personal growth experiences. While he also lists several types of support that are mostly emotional in nature, his research found that the most important support was being able to count on someone that they could call on at any time. The most common type of support for beginning principals is mentorship. Unfortunately, most mentorships only last through a principal's first year.

Mentoring and coaching are similar but what makes mentorship different from coaching is that mentorships usually involve personnel that exist within the school district, like another principal, and coaching tends to be more "hands-on" by utilizing modelling techniques that focus more on the instructional side of principalship. Mentors help principals create goals and objectives, learn about instructional leadership, become managers, and connect to the community. Like coaching, it is important to take time to formally match the mentor and mentee. In many studies, both the mentors and mentees benefitted from this type of professional support (Boerema, 2011; Hall, 2008; Schechter, 2014). Mentees valued the support, feedback, role clarification, and role socialization. Mentors found a sense of collegiality, increased their job satisfaction, and valued receiving new perspectives.

Theoretical Framework

The use of social capital theory has increased dramatically since the late 1990s. However, the idea of social capital began as early as the 19th century with Karl Marx, who introduced capital in terms of investment in goods and people to gain returns on these investments (Lin, 1999; Lin et al., 2001). In the 1980s, Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman became two leaders in social capital theory through the social sciences (Dika &

Singh, 2002; Lin, 1999; Lin et al., 2001). While the theory of social capital was developed in the 1920's, the first time it was mentioned in print was in 1986 in Bourdieu's book "The Forms of Capital" (Dika & Singh, 2002). Bourdieu's theory of social capital focused on economic, cultural, and social aspects whereas Coleman's theory focused on human capital (Dika & Singh, 2002). Lin (1999) described their work as neo-capitalist theories. Coleman viewed social capital as collective assets; Lin viewed social capital as a relational asset. Bourdieu and Coleman saw network density or closure as a requirement for using social capital. Lin proposed it was more viable to determine what outcomes and under what conditions a better return may occur and whether density does or does not provide opportunities to obtain resources. Lastly, Coleman defined social capital as "any social-structural resource that generates returns for an individual in a specific action" and is "defined by its function" (Lin, 1999, p. 34) which indicates a cause and effect relationship. Lin saw this definition as limiting for purposes of a theory: "a theory would lose parsimony quickly if the conditional factors become part of the definitions of the primary concepts" (p. 35). Therefore, Lin suggested that social capital is rooted in social networks and social relations and must be measured relative to its root and defined social capital as "resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions" (Lin, 1999, p. 35). By looking at these controversies in Bourdieu and Coleman's definitions of social capital, Lin developed his own definition of social capital theory that is widely used today, even in the field of education (Daly, 2010; Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Dika & Singh, 2002; Finnigan et al., 2013; Liou et al., 2015; Muijs et al., 2010).

As defined by Lin, “the notion of social capital contains three ingredients: (1) resources embedded in a social structure; (2) accessibility to these social resources by individuals and; (3) use or mobilization of them by individuals engaged in purposive action” (Lin et al., 2001, p. 58). Lin (1999) described that embedded resources in social networks facilitate the flow of information, influence who plays a critical role in decisions, determine accessibility to resources through social networks and relations, and are expected to reinforce identity and recognition (Lin, 1999). Therefore “social capital can be conceptualized as (1) quantity and/or quality of resources that an actor can access or use through (2) its location in a social network” (Lin, 2000, p. 786). Lin (1999) advised to include both a measure of network locations and embedded resources into any study. Measures looking at both network locations and embedded resources are the core element in his theory of social capital. Embedded resources include what networks an individual has access to and the value of resources people possess in these networks which positively affect the outcome of instrumental actions. Network locations look at both the bridges (how to reach resources that are lacking in one’s social network) and strength of ties (measurement of a bridge’s usefulness). Network locations can determine the likelihood of positive outcomes in expressive actions. Expressive actions are concerned with how to preserve or maintain resources and instrumental actions are concerned with how to search and obtain resources not presently possessed by someone (Lin, 1999). For education purposes, Finnigan and Daly (2010) defined instrumental outcomes as “social networks [are] conduits for the circulation of information and resources that pertain to organizational goals” (p. 183) and expressive outcomes as “social networks [that] reflect patterns of more affect-laden relationships, such as

friendships, more likely to transport and diffuse resources such as social support, trust, and values” (p. 183). Instrumental outcomes are more technical and are based more on “who knows what.” As seen previously, this is important in who is brokering information both to the school sites and from the school sites. Unfortunately, these relationships tend to be one-way and not reciprocal. Expressive outcomes are more emotional in nature and tend to be characterized by more personal connections that principals make with others versus a more work-related relationship. Both are equally important for change and reform efforts to improve student achievement.

Social capital promises to yield new insights by describing why certain people and organizations perform better than others. (Burt, 2000). Daly (2010) suggested that social capital and a strong professional network are linked to principals staying in the profession. Leana (2011) added to this by stating that building relationships characterized by trust and frequent interactions is highly associated with improved student achievement. However, without clear conceptualization, social capital may soon be a catch-all term broadly used in reference to anything that is “social” (Lin et al., 2001, p. 57).

Chapter Two Summary

There is a crisis in America’s schools: a shortage of willing principals to enter the field. It is unclear whether this is due to unrealistic expectations, accountability pressures, or some other factor. What is clear is that effective principals are needed in order to increase student achievement. To alleviate this problem, school districts must plan for the succession of principals who may be leaving the profession and invest in support opportunities for existing principals. The most common and popular method of support is

mentoring. However, mentoring is not enough. Additional support, including professional development, instructional rounds, and coaching is essential in developing the whole principal. In addition, relationships are an important component in determining whether principals stay in the profession or move on to other school districts or other professions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

School reform has, as its primary focus, the enhancement of student performance. Principals and teachers are at the heart of the reform efforts. School reform requires an interconnected approach to change, especially between district and school site leaders (Finnigan & Daly, 2010). School reform can also require change, which can be difficult in any organization (Daly & Finnigan, 2011; Stevenson, 2006). Developing relationships is important in mitigating change due to the need for trust when transferring knowledge about best practices among all school staff (Daly, 2010; Fullan, 2001). This perception changes the old adage of “it’s not what you know, it’s who you know,” to “who you know defines what you know” (Daly, 2010, p. 2).

Statement of the Problem

Research indicates that one reason for high rates of turnover is that principals often do not feel prepared for the challenges they face (Beteille et al., 2012; Goldring et al., 2008; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011; Walker et al., 2011). Even though many have completed strenuous preparation programs, the ability to actually maneuver the demands and challenges of the position often develops through time and experience (Babo & Postma, 2017; Brockmeier et al., 2013; Dhuey & Smith, 2018). Additionally, current

high-stakes accountability mandates, beginning with NCLB and now ESSA, demand that principals demonstrate success from the beginning of their tenure in the position. These demands often leave principals feeling overwhelmed.

One potential explanation for sustained, continuous, and effective principal leadership may be the amount and type of support that principals receive (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Peters, 2008). This support can take the form of relationships, or social networks, that principals develop across the district (Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Finnigan et al., 2013; Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015). Social capital embedded in social networks can provide the resources needed for principals to experience success so that they remain in the profession. According to Lin et al. (2001), there are many types of social capital embedded in social networks including the flow of information, enhanced influence, certification of an individual's social credentials, and reinforced identity and recognition. These embedded resources act as "capital" to help individuals address challenging situations (Lin, et al., 2001).

While studies have examined why principals leave (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Branch et al., 2013; MetLife, 2013; Miller, 2013; Mitani, 2018; School Leader Network, 2014), and they have examined relationships between the CO and principal leadership (Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Finnigan, Daly, & Che, 2013), there is little understanding regarding the influence of principal support networks for beginning principals who have accepted a position and have chosen to remain in a district over an extended period of time. This understanding is important for sustained leadership that positively influences student learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to gain a better understanding of the social support network structure of principals in a large suburban district in the Midwest who have begun their principal career and have remained in that same district for a period of at least five years. This study also seeks the perceptions of these principals regarding the types of support that have led to their sustained leadership.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the underlying social network structure of support for these long-term principals?
2. What types of social capital are embedded in these networks?
3. What are these principals' perceptions regarding the types of support that have encouraged them to remain in the profession for five years or more?
4. What challenges have these principals faced, and how have these supports helped them to address or overcome these challenges?
5. How does Social Capital Theory explain the success of these principals?

Research Design

Constructivism is the theoretical perspective taken in this case study. More specifically, Creswell (2014) explained, "Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p. 8). Because this study seeks to understand the support provided to long-term principals, this study proposes to use Nan Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital to explore the supports that have led to their sustained leadership.

Merriam (1998) defined qualitative research as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). Within the qualitative umbrella, there are many different types of qualitative design, but this research design will utilize case study. Case study is an in-depth design that focuses on a single unit or sets of cases in a bounded system in which insights can be understood (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Stake, 1995). Merriam (1998) explained a technique in which, deciding the boundedness includes a finite number of people involved. Because my participants are long-term principals who began their careers in the same school district that they are still employed after five years, this case is a single entity. Data from observations, interviews and review of documents are then gathered into case records that organize the data into manageable bits of information (Patton, 2015). Lastly, once data are collected and analyzed, the results will be explained through the lens of Lin’s (1999) Network Theory of Social Capital to gain an understanding of the support provided to long-term principals.

Data Collection Strategies

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that “data are nothing more than ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment” (p. 105). Data was collected in the “natural setting at the site where participants experience the issue or problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 185). Following Merriam and Tisdell (2015), a constant comparative approach was utilized to analyze qualitative data. Analysis involved “consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read [for] the process of making meaning” (Yazan, 2015, p. 148) to identify codes that emerge.

Following initial coding, codes were categorized to identify themes that emerge. Additionally, social network data was used to provide a more in-depth understanding of the embedded networks of the participants. Specifically, understanding connectivity and strength of relationships across each participant's social network provided an understanding of exchange and access to social capital. Additional information is provided below. Data included a name and position generator survey, observations, interviews, and documents. Before research began, the district chosen was contacted to obtain permission to access the participants.

Population

Data collection was conducted at a large, suburban district in the Midwest. This district has four early childhood centers, fifteen elementary schools, five middle schools, one freshman academy and one high school, for a total of 26 building level leaders in the district. Of these building leaders, nine (35 percent) began their careers in this district and have remained in the district for longer than five years.

Participants

I used purposeful sampling to select the participants. Merriam (1998) explained that purposive sampling is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). When studying social networks, there are actors or people who influence the relationships in a person's life. Then, there are ties or relationships that connect these people together. There must be enough actors and ties to show relationships in a social network. Therefore, out of the total population of 26 building level, the population size was nine principals who began their careers in the same district as they

are currently employed. Originally, all nine principals were contacted to participate in this study. Of those nine, only five agreed to participate, all of which are principals of either early childhood or elementary schools. The principals interviewed are employed at the same school district to reduce the variables of differing school district's vision and goals.

First, an email was sent to all nine school principals using their email address on the district website to determine their willingness to participate in the research study. Assistant principals or dean of students were not selected. Age, ethnicity, and gender was not a factor that influenced the selection of participants. After five of the nine principals agreed to participate by email, an initial meeting was set by email. During this initial meeting, rapport was established in order to allow the participants to understand the research design and to develop a trusting relationship by having an open, honest conversation. During this meeting, principals also completed the necessary consent forms and were given the name and position generator survey. More about the survey is discussed below.

Name and Position Generator Survey

Social capital theory is “rooted at the juncture between individuals and their relations and is contained in social networks” (Lin & Erickson, 2010, p. 4). Social network analysis has its origins with Jacob Moreno in the 1930s and involves graphical mapping of people's subjective feelings about one another (Daly, 2010). Social network analysis became established in the 1980s and grew to include a professional organization, annual conference, specialized software, and a journal. At a broad level, social network analysis focuses on relationships between actors. Networks consist of a set of nodes or

actors along with a set of ties (Daly, 2010). The more people that a person knows from all levels of an occupational hierarchy, the more likely it is that the person has access to a wide range of potentially useful resources (Lin & Erickson, 2010).

To discover who principals access for information, a name and position generator is often used. When using a name and position generator, respondents are asked to name individuals with whom they identify for a specific relationship, the people they feel closest to, with whom they discuss important matters, and who they can call on for important kinds of social support. This information provides a rich record of the social locations (resources) in the person's network. For the social network analysis in this study, an initial survey (Appendix A) was administered in order to determine with whom the principal goes to for support in their position as building leader. During the initial meeting with principals, the name and position generator survey was given to the participants and its purpose and instructions were given on how to complete it. Participants were then asked to return the survey in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Moolenaar and Slegers (2015) outlined a procedure for the survey to determine the principals' network position within their school district. To assess principals' social network position, the following prompts were included in the survey:

1. To whom do you go to for work-related advice or information?
2. To whom do you go for emotional support related to your job?

Principals indicated whom they ask for work-related advice or information and emotional support by listing the initials of the individual from whom they seek assistance and their position. Principals listed the initials of individuals in the district to whom they go for

professional and emotional support. They also rated, on a six-point Likert scale, the importance of those relationships and frequency of contact. Frequency of contact and importance was utilized to determine the strength of these relationships (Scott, 2017). Ucinet 6 and NetDraw software was used to generate a sociogram, which is a network diagram that presents a visual representation of network ties.

Documents

In contrast to the above survey that is dependent on the opinion of the participants, Merriam (1998) described artifacts as “a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (p. 112). The researcher looked at existing documents and information including school site demographics, blank principal evaluation forms, mentoring information, and any other documents that the district uses to assist principals. Site demographics included socioeconomic status, school population, and number of staff. While the researcher was interested in other documents used to assist principals such as walkthrough forms, none of these documents exist at this district.

Observations

Merriam (1998) described observations as “tak[ing] place in the natural field setting and represent firsthand encounter” (p. 94) with the participants. Observations were set up with the principals during the first in-person meeting. The key elements for observation included the setting, participants, activities, interactions, conversations, and nonverbal communication. While it was preferred to observe a mix of managerial and instructional tasks and administrator meetings where principals received support, most observations either involved site-level meetings or meetings in which the principal shared

leadership activities with others. During these observations, I was a non-participant observer. Merriam (1998) described this as having access to participants but being on the periphery. For the observations, field notes were taken that included a diagram of the environment, a detailed description of the setting, participants, and verbal and nonverbal interactions, and the researcher’s thoughts regarding the activities. In addition, the following protocol was used to record the observation information which included factual, descriptive information and reflective, personal information. An example of the protocol used is below:

Place:	Date and Time:
<i>Descriptive Notes</i>	<i>Reflective Notes</i>

Interviews

Stake (1995) observed that in qualitative interviews, “Seldom is the same questions asked of each respondent; rather, each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell” (p. 65). Five interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol. The advantages of this type of interview is there can be a mix of structured questions to gain specific information from each respondent but also the flexibility to ask follow-up questions more specific to the respondent (Merriam 1998). Interviews were set up after the initial in-person meeting. All interviews were conducted at the principal’s school site in a private location. Interview questions were developed prior to the interview (Appendix B) with additional probing questions asked throughout the interview. In addition to recording date, time, place, and the interviewee’s

name, the interviewer used a recording device and transcribed the recording within three days of the interview.

Data Storage and Security

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) recommended “creat[ing] an inventory of your entire data set” (p. 200). This not only includes raw data from interviews, observations, and artifacts, but also personal reflection of the data. Coding is also recommended as a “sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of data” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 199). I used a key to code participants in order to keep their identity anonymous. All data was numerically labelled and organized in an Excel spreadsheet. A file with the corresponding number was placed into folders on my computer. These documents were kept on a separate hard drive with a backup on another computer. All of these computers and hard drives are password protected. Any paper copies of documents were placed separately from the hard drives in locked cabinets that only I had access to the key to unlock. Data will be securely stored for five years and then destroyed.

Data Analysis Strategies

Merriam (1998) described data analysis as “the process of making sense out of the data” (p. 178). Data becomes a narrative in which the researcher makes meaning. Merriam (1998) has a step-by-step process where data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously.

Survey Data Analysis

In regard to analysis of social networks, researchers look at how individuals are invested in social relations and how individuals capitalize on the embedded resources to

generate a return (Lin, 1999). Social capital can be “conceptualized as (1) quantity and/or quality of resources that an actor can access or use through (2) its location in a social network” (Lin, 2000, p. 786). Using information from the name and position generator surveys, social network data was analyzed using Ucinet 6 for Windows (Freeman et al., 2002). The NetDraw network visualization tool was used to create sociograms. Two different sociograms were created: one that represented the professional networks and one that represented the emotional networks of the participants. Then, bar graphs were created showing the frequency and importance of each principal’s professional network and emotional network. Then, the strength of ties was calculated by taking the mean of the importance of the relationship and frequency of support. The mean of frequency and importance provides an understanding of the strength of relationships within each participant’s network. (Scott, 2017).

Organizing Data

All data, including the name and position generator surveys, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were organized by participant in a notebook. After that, each bit of data was coded using open coding and entered into a spreadsheet, printed off, and placed on separate index cards. These index cards were used to create categories which also lead to themes. This process is explained further below.

Category Construction

Following Merriam (2015), a constant comparative approach was utilized to analyze qualitative data. Analysis involved “consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read [for] the process of making meaning” (Yazan, 2015, p. 148) to identify codes that emerged. After looking at

the social analysis data and creating sociograms and graphs, I reviewed my observation notes and documents and transcribed the interviews. While reading through the transcripts from interviews, observation notes, and documents, I highlighted relevant information, made notes in the margins and started grouping what notes seemed to go together in what Merriam (1998) stated as a “recurring pattern that cuts across the preponderance of data” (p. 179). Next, all the data and margin notes were entered into a spreadsheet. This information was printed out, placed on index cards and coded. Based upon my coded data, I developed categories. The categories that were derived from each set was compared to each other and then merged into one set. According to Merriam (1998), fewer categories help communicate the findings and make the narrative comprehensible. Merriam (1998) suggested that “categories should reflect the purpose of the research. In effect, categories are the answers to your research question(s)” (p. 183). After reading through and categorizing the data, themes emerged.

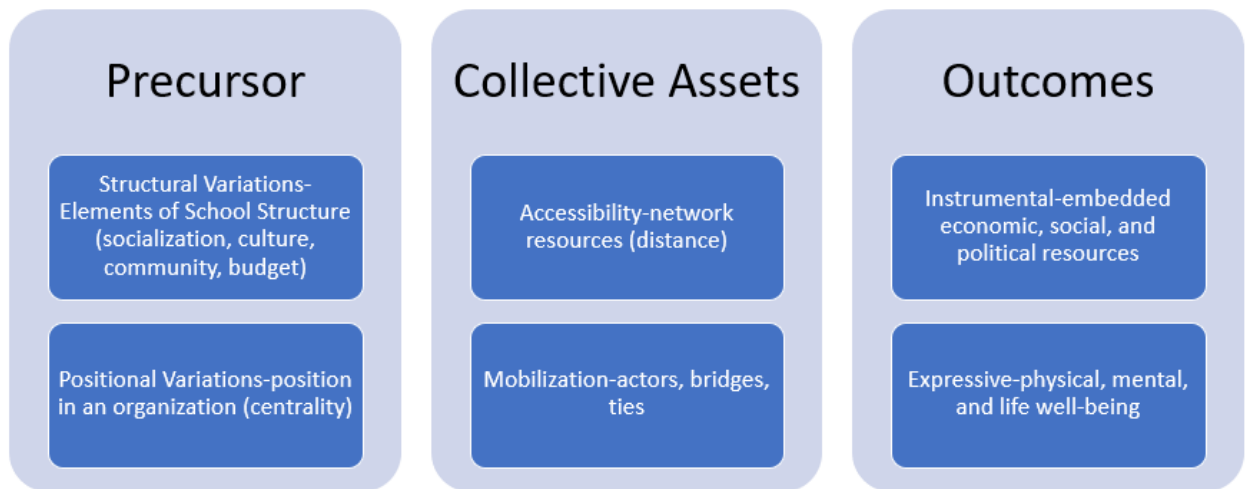
Developing Themes

The index cards were organized into initial themes and reviewed again to see if themes could be combined or eliminated. Triangulation was used to identify potential alternative interpretations of findings. A specific description of steps taken during the data analysis process is provided in Chapter IV. Once themes were finalized, they were viewed through the theoretical framework of Lin’s (1999) Network Theory of Social Capital. Merriam (1998) described this process by using the data to “transcend the formation of categories, for a theory seeks to explain a large number of phenomena and tell how they are related” (p. 192). Lin (1999) conceptualized social capital by using three blocks to explain the causal sequence. In the first block, there are precursors that look at

the social structure and the position of each person in this structure. In the second block, the social capital elements of collective assets include how individuals access and mobilize social capital for specific actions. In the third block, outcomes are broken down into two areas: instrumental, or the external forces of capital and expressive, or the internal forces of capital. While this study was originally focused on the third block which represented the outcomes of social capital, evidence showed that the participants' embedded social networks also included elements of the precursors and collective assets. Below is a visual representation of Lin's theory as applied to an educational setting:

Figure 1

Diagram of Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital



Note. Figure is adapted from Lin, N. (1999). Building a network theory of social capital. *Connections*, 22(1), p. 41.

Trustworthiness

Mills and Gay (2016) described trustworthiness as “addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (p. 555). The following table describes the trustworthiness of the data collected during the observation and interviews. These include things like my relationships with the people interviewed and observed,

triangulation of data, peer debriefing, member checking, thick description, and purposive sampling.

Table 1

Trustworthiness Table

Creditability		
Technique	Result	Examples
Prolonged engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build trust -Develop rapport -Build relationships -Obtain wide scope of data -Obtain accurate data 	In the field from February-March 2020.
Persistent observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Obtain in-depth data -Obtain accurate data -Sort relevancies from irrelevancies -Recognize deceptions 	Observation of participants during on-site visits and interviews.
Triangulation	Verify data	Multiple sources of data including the survey, interviews, observations, and documents.
Peer debriefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Test working hypotheses -Find alternative explanations -Explore emerging design and hypotheses 	Work with other doctoral students and faculty advisor to gather and give feedback during the writing of this dissertation.
Member checking	Test categories, interpretations, or conclusions	Participants received transcribed copies of the interviews to verify accuracy. In addition, participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the conclusions of this study and contribute missing information.

Purposive sampling	Generate data for emergent design and emerging hypotheses	The site was purposefully chosen due to the number of principals who began their career at this district and have remained longer than five years.
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Transferability		
Technique	Result	Examples
Thick description	-Provide a database for transferability -Provide a vicarious experience for the reader	The supports of principals were gathered from direct interviews, observation, survey, and documents that created a picture of the social networks of these principals.

Dependability/Conformability		
Technique	Result	Examples
Audit trail	Allow auditor to determine trustworthiness of study	Interviews, notes, documents, coding cards, emails, and all other communication were readily available for an audit.

Researcher Role

Researcher Bias

While I have never been a principal in a district, I have worked with and interacted among principals for over 20 years. One of the things that drew me to study the supports that CO provide principals was due to my current job as Director of Accountability and Accreditation. As part of my job, I sent an email to principals regarding, what I thought, was a simple task. After receiving numerous emails in return with lots of questions, I realized that all of the principals (minus one) had less than three years of experience. This compelled me to want to study how better to support principals. Because of this fact and my own personal experience, I recognize the bias I might bring

to my study. I interviewed principals from a district in which I am not involved in the evaluation of the principals or have personal or professional relationships with them. Due to using a different school site, the participants may have been more honest in their responses and I was able to objectively gather and analyze the data collected.

Ethical Considerations

Stake (1995) revealed, “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world” (p. 154). In regard to interviews, there is always a risk that interviewees will either not reveal enough for fear of being embarrassed or reveal too much information for fear of retribution later. Surveys have the same repercussions of participants not being truthful. For observations, as much as the researcher tried to blend in with the environment, people may have changed their behavior due to the researcher being present. However, documents were public records and should not pose an ethical dilemma.

Before commencing in my research, IRB approval was obtained. After this, confidentiality and informed consent agreements were created for the participants to sign. All of the documentation, including these agreements, any documents, and all data collected were kept protected. After data collection was completed, there were times that further information or clarification was needed. During these times, this information was relayed through email. This study used data triangulation through multiple sources of data to confirm the same findings. Yin (2018) stated, “When you have really triangulated the data, a case study’s findings will have been supported by more than a single source of evidence” (p. 128). Member checking was also used in which the researcher returned to a participant and verified the information is accurate (Patton, 2015). Lastly, data was

analyzed using analysis software. This software was kept on a secure computer and the results saved to an external hard drive.

Limitations

Limitations in observations can result in the researcher seeming to be intrusive, issues with confidentiality may be present, and something may be missed while the interviewer is recording notes. With interview questions, interviewees may not be completely honest with their answers or they may limit their responses instead of providing a rich, descriptive answer. Some other potential problems include possible reassignment of the principal or departure of the principal before all the data can be collected.

Summary of the Study

There is a crisis in America's schools: there is a shortage of willing principals to enter the field. It is unclear whether this is due to unrealistic expectations, accountability pressures, or some other factor. What is clear is that effective principals are needed in order to increase student achievement (Babo, 2017; Branch et al., 2013; Fullan, 2001; Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood et al., 2012; Vanderhaar et al., 2007). To alleviate this problem, school districts must plan for the succession of principals who may be leaving the profession and invest in support opportunities for principals to keep them employed.

This research will contribute to the limited body of research that currently exists in this area. One area of research that has not been explored extensively is the value of social networking and how these types of networks may help reduce principal attrition. Relationships embedded in trust must increase in order for principals to feel supported and stay in the profession (Daly & Finnigan, 2012). While some work provides a

promising association between tangible supports for leaders, future studies would benefit from research that looks at relational supports of principals that increase student achievement.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain a better understanding of the social support network structure of principals in a large suburban district in the Midwest who have remained in the same district in which they began their principal career for a period of at least five years. This study also sought the perceptions of these principals regarding the types of support that have led to their sustained leadership. The participants were five principals who began their principal career at Century Public Schools [a pseudonym] and have a span of six to fifteen years of employment as a principal in the same district. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is the presentation of the demographic data including a description of the school district, school sites, and participants. The next section reviews the survey given to participants and analyzes their social network structures. The last section will discuss and analyze the qualitative data that was collected through documents, observations and interviews.

Presentation of Demographic Data

Overview of District

Century Public Schools is a large suburban district consisting of four early childhood centers, 15 elementary schools, five middle schools, one freshman academy, one high school, and one alternative school. The district serves approximately 19,000 students in prekindergarten to 12th grade and experiences about three percent growth in enrollment each year. The majority of the district’s race and ethnicity is made up of 61% White, with the next largest group at 13% Hispanic. The district also has a relatively low rate of economically disadvantaged students at 46% and the mobility rate is low at 8%.

Century Public Schools employs approximately 900 teachers with an average of 11 years of experience. For administration, there are 27 principals and 24 assistant principals. All of the middle schools, freshman academy, and high school have assistant principals. None of the early childhood centers nor the alternative school have assistant principals. Ten of the 15 elementary schools have assistant principals.

Table 2

Century Public Schools School Sites Demographics

School Site	Grades	Type of School	Number of Students	Assistant Principal
School A	PreK	Early Childhood	291	No
School B	K-5	Elementary	459	No
School C	PreK	Early Childhood	290	No
School D	K-2	Elementary	705	Yes
School E	PreK	Early Childhood	309	No
School F	PreK	Early Childhood	222	No
School G	K-5	Elementary	409	No

School H	K-5	Elementary	692	Yes
School I	3-5	Intermediate	735	Yes
School J	K-5	Elementary	612	Yes
School K	K-5	Elementary	804	Yes
School L	K-5	Elementary	622	Yes
School M	K-5	Elementary	625	Yes
School N	K-5	Elementary	385	No
School O	K-5	Elementary	435	No
School P	K-5	Elementary	529	Yes
School Q	K-5	Elementary	648	Yes
School R	K-5	Elementary	391	No
School S	K-5	Elementary	550	Yes
School T	6-8	Middle School	1033	Yes (2)
School U	6-8	Middle School	728	Yes (2)
School V	6-8	Middle School	818	Yes (2)
School W	6-8	Middle School	883	Yes (2)
School X	6-8	Middle School	755	Yes (2)
School Y	9	Freshman	1,296	Yes (2)
School Z	10-12	High School	3,844	Yes (10)
School AA	10-12	Alternative	Unknown	No

While some of Century's buildings are newly built, several school sites are older but with new upgraded front facings, new front offices, and signage that is uniform. For example, every office I sat in waiting for my interview or observation had the district emblem (Patriots) hanging behind the front desk. In addition, every building incorporated

some version of the school colors (red and white) in the main entrance. From experience in my own district, this is a marketing and climate strategy used to help parents and students feel that the district is one cohesive unit. Some of these upgrades also enhanced security. All the front offices were accessible from the outside doors, but in order to enter the rest of the building, the secretary or some other person must press a button that releases the door latch.

Century Public Schools was chosen for this study because the district had several principals that would meet the criteria of starting their career and continuing it for at least five years at the same district. Of the nine school site principals that met these criteria, only five agreed to participate. While I originally wanted a variety of principals from both elementary and secondary sites, the five that agreed to participate only came from the elementary or early childhood sites. These sites and the participants are described below.

Overview of School Sites

Observations and interviews were conducted at five sites within Century Public Schools.

School A

School A is an early childhood center that serves approximately 300 students in prekindergarten. The school is located on the northwest side of the district in an area that has seen extensive business growth in the last 10 years. The school was built in 2013 and is set next to an elementary school that serves students kindergarten to 5th grade. There are 14 teachers with an average of 10 years of teaching experience. This school's race and ethnicity mirrors the district with 63% of students identified as White and 9%

identified as Hispanic. This school's economically disadvantaged population is lower than the district at 27% but its mobility rate is higher at 11.5%.

School B

School B is an elementary school that serves approximately 475 students in grades K-5. This school is located in the central west part of the district in an older, established neighborhood. While most of Century Public Schools' newer buildings are located on major roads, this school is tucked into a neighborhood with winding roads that could get you lost without the aid of GPS. The school building is older but the outside front entrance and front office look remodeled. There are 23 teachers with an average of 16 years of teaching experience. This school has a program for English Language Learners so its Hispanic population is higher at 19%. The economically disadvantaged population is also higher at 66.5% but its mobility rate is lower at 6%.

School C

School C is an early childhood center that serves approximately 300 students in prekindergarten. It is located in the southwest part of the district. This area has little business development but many new neighborhoods with larger homes. Like School A, it was also built in 2013 and has an elementary located next door that serves grades kindergarten to 5th grade. There are 13 teachers with an average of 10 years of teaching experience. The majority of this school's race and ethnicity is also White at 60% but the next largest race group is students who identify two or more races at 12%. The economically disadvantaged population is 35% and the mobility rate is 10.5%.

School D

School D is a primary elementary site that serves students in grades K-2. Of the five school sites in this study, this is the largest site with approximately 775 students. It is located in the northwest part of the district. It is an older elementary school that is also adjacent to an intermediate school serving grades 3-5 and a middle school serving grades 6-8. At the primary school there are 39 teachers with approximately seven years of teaching experience. This school also mirrors the district's demographics for race and ethnicity at 56% White and 13% Hispanic. The economically disadvantaged population is 34% with a mobility rate of 6.5%.

School E

School E is an early childhood center that serves approximately 325 prekindergarten students, but also has a small class of kindergarten students due to the overcrowding of a nearby elementary school. It is an older building that used to be an elementary site. It serves the largest square mile radius but is also more rural. The area near the school, which is within an older neighborhood, has business growth with a new Walmart, among other things. There are 15 teachers with approximately eight years of experience. The school's race and ethnicity mirror the district at 64% White and 11% Hispanic. The economically disadvantaged population is 32% and the mobility rate is 8%.

Table 3

Participant School Site Demographics

School Site	Grades	Type of School	No. of Students	No. of Teachers	Years Exp.	Race/ Eth.	Econ. Dis.	Mobility Rate
School A	PreK	Early Childhood	291	14	10	W 63% H 9%	27%	11.5%
School B	K-5	Elementary	459	23	16	W 52% H 19%	66.5%	6%
School C	PreK	Early Childhood	290	13	10	W 60% H 8%	35%	10.5%
School D	K-2	Elementary	705	39	7	W 56% H 13%	34%	6.5%
School E	PreK	Early Childhood	309	15	8	W 64% H 11%	32%	8%

Overview of Participants

Participants from Century Public Schools were purposefully chosen for this study. Of the 27 principals who are employed at Century Public Schools, only nine started their principal career at this district and have remained there for more than five years. After several attempts to recruit these nine principals to participate in the study, five principals agreed to participate.

Four of the five principals are between the ages of 40 and 49 and one is between the ages of 50-59. Four principals identify as White and one as American Indian. Three of the principals have been a principal for 6-10 years and two have been a principal for 11-15 years. One principal has been in education a total of 16-20 years, three have been in education 21-25 years and one for 26-30 years. Of the five principals, four taught for several years before entering administration (average of 15 years) with one who went into administration after four years in the classroom. Four of the five principals previously

taught in other districts with one of those principals teaching out of state in Texas. The other principal's entire career has been at Century Public Schools. All were assistant principals before becoming principals. One was an assistant principal previously at another district other than Century. All five principals have Master's degrees.

Table 4

Participant Demographics

Principal	Age Range	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Yrs. Employed at District	Yrs. Principal at District	Yrs. in Education	Previously Asst. Principal	Highest Degree
EBF	40-49	Female	White	6-10	6-10	21-25	Yes	Master
AGK	40-49	Male	Am Ind	16-20	11-15	16-20	Yes	Master
LOS	40-49	Female	White	6-10	6-10	21-25	Yes	Master
DHC	40-49	Female	White	6-10	6-10	21-25	Yes	Master
MJT	50-59	Female	White	16-20	11-15	26-30	Yes	PhD

Principal School A

School A principal, EBF, is a bubbly person who was very eager to brag about her building. Immediately during our first meeting, she wanted to tell me about her passion for being a principal. She was also very passionate about the importance of the early childhood centers and the vision that was started with the previous superintendent. LOS, principal at School C, and MJT, principal at School E were also involved in developing the early childhood centers and expressed this same passion.

Principal School B

AGK, principal at School B, is a former PE teacher. He has worked hard to become knowledgeable in various aspects of curriculum and intervention. He also is a

great male role model to his students who seem to be lacking that in their lives. He would like to advance his career and maybe obtain his doctorate in the future but feels it is not the right timing. With having younger children who are busy with after school activities, it does not leave much time to further his education.

Principal School C

While LOS is passionate about her love for children and her desire to become an educator, even at an early age, she seemed a little more lost and exhausted than the other principals. She was incredibly honest about her frustrations in dealing with behavior issues. So much so, it has caused her to think about leaving the profession.

Principal School D

DHC, principal at School D, and I immediately had a connection when we met. She inquired about my Italian last name and we discovered that her family and my husband's family were both from New Jersey. I felt like we had always known each other and were old friends. I think I could meet her anywhere and we would instantly strike up a conversation. She repeated to me numerous times about how much she loved being a principal.

Principal School E

MJT is a true believer in the value of early education, having gotten her doctorate in that area. She is older and reserved but still has a spark in her eye when talking about being a principal and working with students. Even though she could retire, she wants to do more and eventually help student teachers first starting their careers in the classroom.

Social Network Analysis

In Social Network Analysis, there are many different aspects to take into consideration when discussing and analyzing networks. The actual survey data and bar charts, in addition to sociograms, will be discussed and analyzed to show professional versus emotional support and the strength of relationships (called ties) among participants.

Survey: Name and Position Generator

A social network survey (Appendix A) was developed for the participants to complete. This survey is based on the most common type of survey used to measure access to social capital, a name and position generator (Lin et al., 2001). During the first in-person meeting, the participants were given a paper copy of the survey with a self-addressed envelope. The survey was explained to the participants, and they were asked to complete it within a week and send it back in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope. All five principals returned the survey within two weeks. The survey consisted of three pages. The first page of the survey consisted of a section that asked basic demographic information: age category, gender, race/ethnicity, how many years employed at the district, how many years a principal at the district, and how many total years employed in education at any district. In the next section, participants were asked to list the initials and position of anyone who provides them with work-related support. In the last section, participants were asked to list the initials and position of anyone who provides them with emotional support. They could list up to nine people for each work-related and emotional support. In addition to the initials and position of those who provide support, principals were asked to rate two different aspects. In the first aspect,

principals were asked to reflect on the frequency of contact with the individual on a Likert-type response scale of 1 (very little) to 6 (daily). The second aspect asked principals to determine how important the relationship was to them on a Likert-type response scale of 1 (not important) to 6 (very important). For the purposes of data discussion and analysis in this study, frequency will be labelled as “f” and importance will be labelled as “i.” While the name generator is restricted to only one dimension of context, asking for the position of each name created a hierarchical element which gave a deeper meaning to the data (Lin et al., 2001).

Once the list of names and positions have been generated, it must be determined whether the data has created a network boundary. Prell (2012) described a network boundary as “the boundary around a set of actors that the researcher deems to be the complete set of actors for the network study” (p. 10). The name and position generator were chosen versus participants selecting names from a roster. This choice was made because it would be almost impossible to determine all of the names needed to create a roster from which participants could choose, especially when participants could list family, friends, co-workers, etc. Because this type of survey creates a one-mode network, there is no network boundary. This leads into determining whether the data presents a complete network. Prell (2012) described a complete network as “an entire set of actors and the ties linking these actors together” (p. 11). For the same reason as above, instead of having a complete network, this data is considered an ego network. An ego network is defined as “a focal actor (called ego) and the people to whom the ego is directly connected” (Prell, 2012, p. 8). When asking the questions in the name and position generator survey, the participants are known as egos and the people they listed to whom

they go for support are known as ego alters. The principals that participated in the study have the following pseudonyms: MJT, EBF, LOS, AGK, and DHC. The ego alters were given an identifier based on four categories: principals (P), central office personnel (CO), school site staff (S), and family or friends (F) and then a number. Even though I am looking at just an ego network, several of the participants chose each other as sources of support. Because the data will not be a complete network, Prell (2012) explained that “one cannot use analyses designed for complete network data, such as centralization and density” (p. 65-66). Instead, I was looking mostly at the strength of ties and the types of relationships embedded in these networks.

Sociograms

After receiving the name and position generator surveys, an asymmetric matrix was created using the matrix editor in UCINET, Version 6 (Borgatti et al., 2002). Prell (2012) described an asymmetric matrix as “one that records the direction of ties in a social network” (p. 14). Since I did not ask the ego alters to also fill out the survey, the information gathered in the survey was not reciprocal and the lines or ties between each are one-directional. In the matrix, senders of support (ego alters) are placed in rows and receivers of support (egos) are placed in the columns. Binary data is used by placing a value in each cell for whether there is the presence of a tie (1) or absence of a tie (0). Ties are determined by how the participants answer the questions of whom they turn to for professional support and emotional support. Once the matrix was created, NetDraw (Borgatti et al., 2002) was used to create sociograms. Sociograms provide a way to visualize “connections linking social actors” (Freeman, 2012, p. 10). In the sociogram, nodes are the symbols that represent the egos and ego alters, and the lines represent ties.

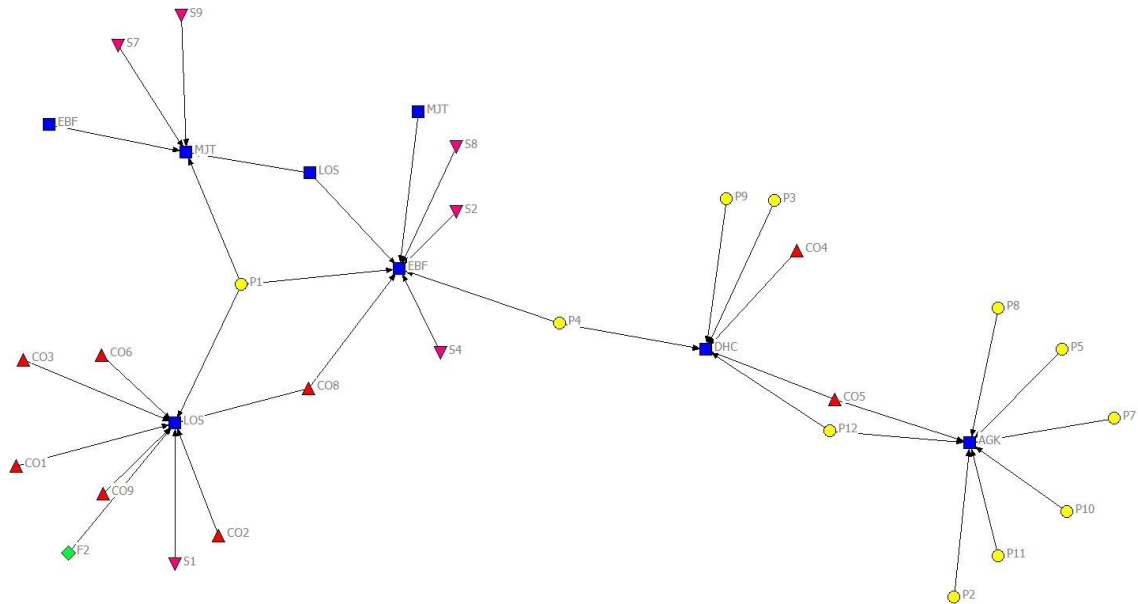
For the purposes of analysis, ego alters were placed into four categories: central office (CO), principals (including assistant principals) (P), school level support (including teachers, counselors, behavior specialist, instructional coach, secretary, and receptionist) (S), and family or friends (including spouses, boyfriends, friends, and family) (F). Color and shape coding delineate egos and ego alters by their position to each other. The principal participants are represented by blue squares, central office personnel by red up triangles, principals as colleagues by yellow circles, school site staff by pink down triangles, and family or friends by green diamonds.

Figure 2 shows the professional support network of the five participants. As seen in this figure, EBF, LOS, and MJT are all connected because they are all early childhood principals. All three are also connected by P1 who is the other early childhood principal, and they frequently chose one another as people whom they go to for professional support. EBF is the only one who connected to any of the other principals in the district. LOS connected professionally to more central office personnel compared to the other principals. She is also the only one who listed friend/family (her boyfriend) as providing professional support, but that may be because he also works in the district. LOS and EBF also chose their central office supervisor as someone who gives professional support. MJT did not choose this person and has the least number of total ties, but they include central office personnel, principals, and school site staff. Because she has the most experience and is closer to retirement, she may not feel the need to seek professional advice like the other principals. EBF has the most balanced support system divided between school site staff, principals, and central office personnel. She is the only one of the early childhood principals that is connected to the other two principals who

participated in this study. This connection was an assistant principal, and both worked at the same school site when EBF was a principal. This assistant principal is now at the same school site as DHC. DHC and AGK are also connected by CO5 who is their supervisor and P12 who is a principal at another elementary site. Each chose principals over central office personnel for support and did not choose school site staff for professional support.

Figure 2

Sociogram Showing Professional Support



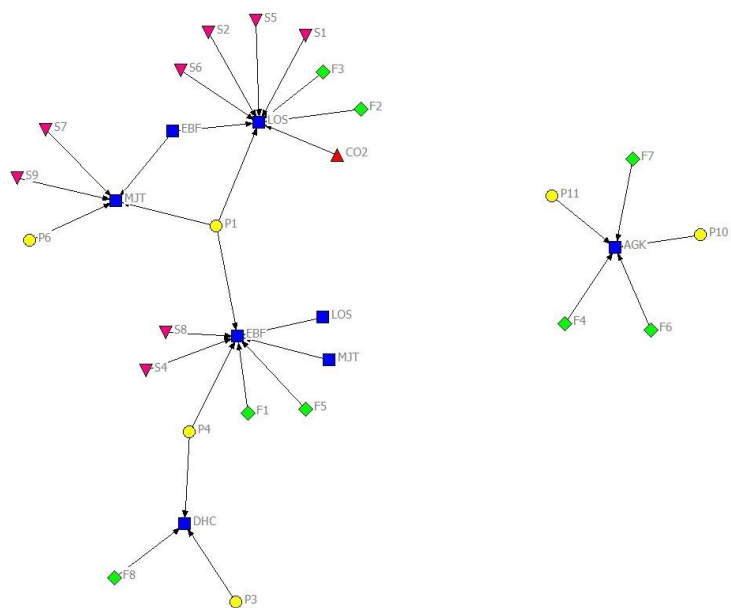
Note: Sociogram showing the social networks of the five participants who sought professional support. The principal participants are represented by blue squares, central office personnel by red up triangles, principals as colleagues by yellow circles, school site staff by pink down triangles, and family or friends by green diamonds.

Figure 3 shows the emotional support sociogram. EBF, LOS, and MJT are just as connected emotionally as they are professionally and still connected to P1, the other early childhood principal. Only two of the five principals rely on central office personnel for emotional support with EBF and LOS only choosing one person each. LOS and EBF rely on family more than MJT, and LOS relies on school site staff for emotional support more

than any of the other principals. Whereas LOS is a bridge between MJT and EBF professionally, EBF is a bridge between LOS and MJT emotionally. Deal et al. (2009) defined bridges as “nodes within a clique or sub-group who connect the group to other groups or the outside network” (p. 24). Like with professional support, EBF connects to DHC through her assistant principal. AGK does not connect to any of the other principals for emotional support in this study. DHC has the least amount of emotional support (n=3) listed as compared to the other five principals.

Figure 3

Sociogram Showing Emotional Support



Note: Sociogram showing the social networks of the five participants who sought emotional support. The principal participants are represented by blue squares, central office personnel by red up triangles, principals as colleagues by yellow circles, school site staff by pink down triangles, and family or friends by green diamonds.

Social Network Support

In addition to sociograms, an excel spreadsheet was used to create bar graphs to compare the frequency of support for each participant to the importance of this support.

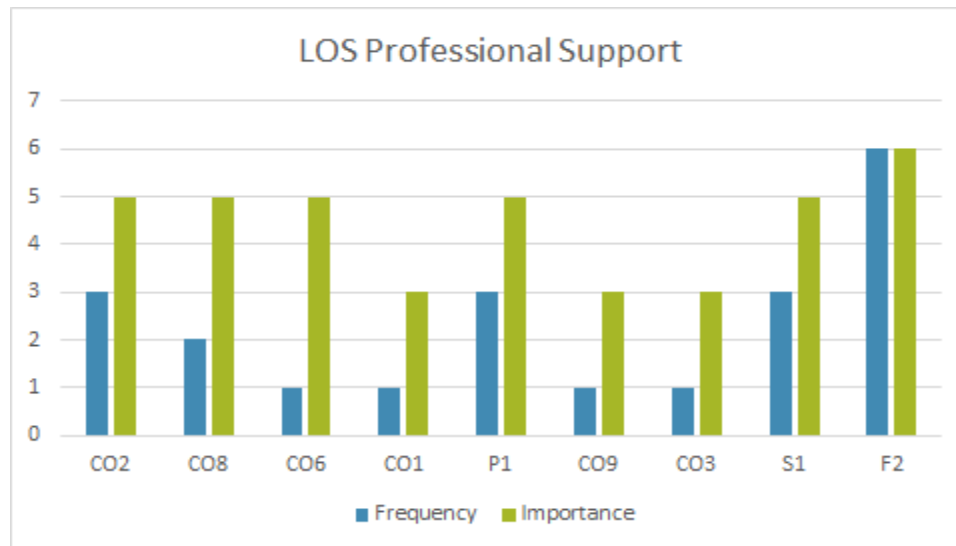
At the beginning of the study, it was assumed that if a relationship is important, it would also be a frequent contact. However, that is not the case for every participant. The next two sections will discuss and analyze the professional support and emotional support in detail.

Professional Support

LOS listed nine people (n=9) who provide professional support, seven of which are central office personnel. All of the CO ego alters were ranked low in frequency but of moderate importance except for one. CO2 was ranked a three for frequency (f=3) and a five for importance (i=5). CO9, CO3, and CO1 were ranked one for frequency (f=1) and three for importance (i=3), CO6 was ranked one for frequency (f=1) and five for importance (i=5), and CO8 was ranked two for frequency (f=2) and five for importance (i=5). Because LOS talked extensively about behavior being an issue of concern in her building and CO2 is in charge of student services, this could be why this central office relationship has more strength than the other CO staff. LOS listed P1 and S1 with the same frequency (f=3) and importance (i=5) ranking. Again, P1 is one of the early childhood principals and S1 is a coach for the school's social-emotional program and therefore assists LOS with discipline issues. The strongest professional relationship for LOS, her boyfriend (f=6 and i=6), would be surprising except that he also works in the same district.

Figure 4

LOS Professional Support



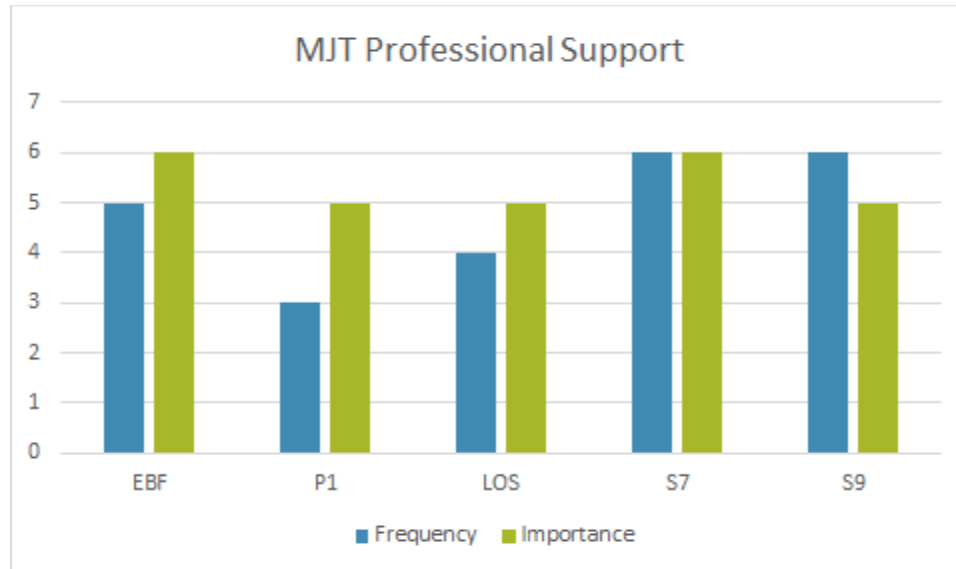
Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that LOS chose for professional support.

MJT listed five people (n=5) who provide professional support. MJT listed two other principals who are also participants in this study (EBF and LOS) and P1 who is also listed as providing professional support by EBF and LOS. All four of these principals are in charge of early childhood centers which accounts for why they go to each other for support. They all vary in how often MJT accesses them but rank high for importance. EBF is ranked as having a frequency of five (f=5) and importance of six (i=6), LOS has a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of five (i=5), and P1 has a frequency of three (f=3) and importance of five (i=5). The other two ego alters listed are school site staff. S9, the counselor, has a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of five (i=5). This may be important since MJT does not have an assistant principal. There is a pattern in this study where the counselor is used frequently to take care of responsibilities usual reserved for the assistant principal. The secretary, who is ranked the highest for MJT's professional support, has a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6). MJT

mentioned in her interview that the counselor is essential in helping her families and her secretary is the glue that sticks everyone together.

Figure 5

MJT Professional Support



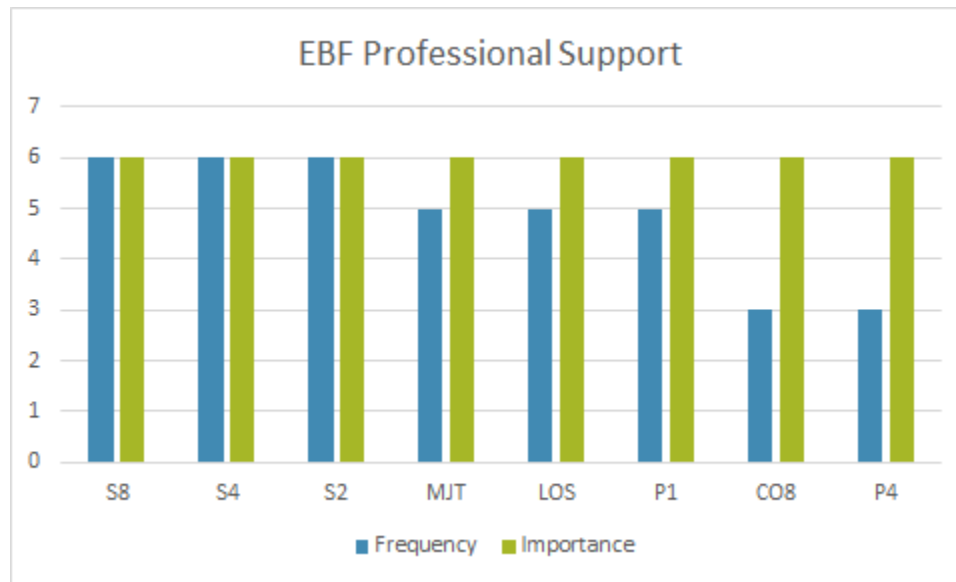
Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that MJT chose for professional support.

EBF listed eight people (n=8) who provide professional support. Like mentioned above, she seeks out the other early childhood principals for support. She seeks out all three of these principals (MJT, LOS, P1) frequently (f=5) and they are all highly important to her (i=6). She also receives professional support from an assistant principal (P4) who, when mentioned in her interview, worked with her at a previous school site. This relationship is not as frequent (f=3) but is very important (i=6). EBF also listed three school site staff, the secretary (S8), receptionist (S2), and counselor (S4), in which she has a very strong relationship. She ranked these relationships as very frequent (f=6) and very important (i=6). EBF mentioned frequently in her interview the value of counseling

resources in the district so it is not surprising that she picked the counselor as important. In addition, she also mentioned lacking an assistant principal, which she previously had at another school site, and therefore must rely heavily on her receptionist and secretary.

Figure 6

EBF Professional Support



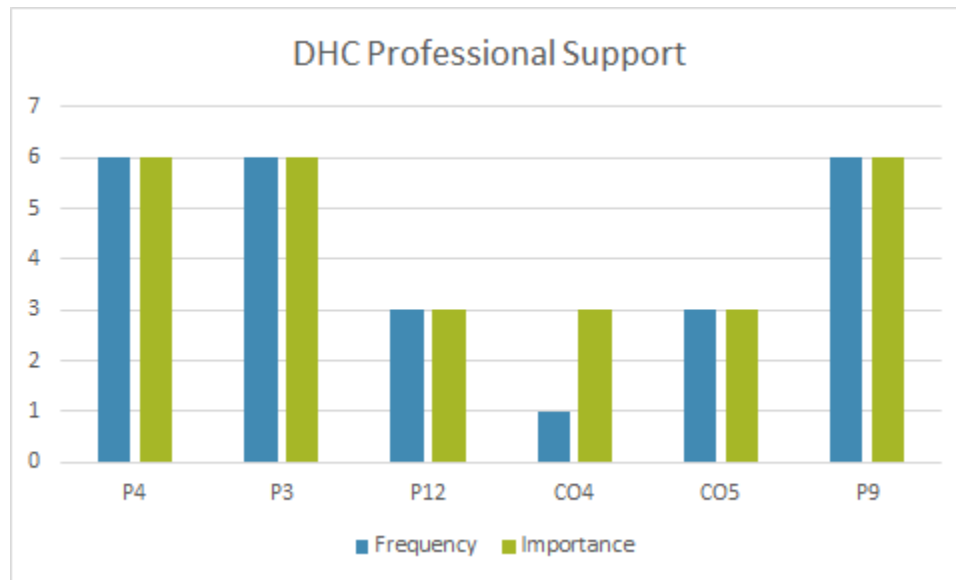
Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that EBF chose for professional support.

DHC listed six people (n=6) with whom she seeks professional support, three of which are principals, two are central office personnel, and one is her assistant principal. She has the strongest ties to her assistant principal (P4) and two of the principals (P3 and P9), ranking frequency as a six (f=6) and importance as a six (i=6). The other principal (P12) and one of the central office personnel (CO5), who is also her supervisor, are ranked a three for frequency (f=3) and a three for importance (i=3). Lastly, she chose another central office person (CO4) for professional support but at a low level with frequency (f=1) and importance (i=3). DHC did mention in her interviews that she does

not mind contacting central office personnel but that they are removed from the everyday life in a school building and therefore cannot always relate to the daily struggles. This may account for why they are of low frequency and importance.

Figure 7

DHC Professional Support



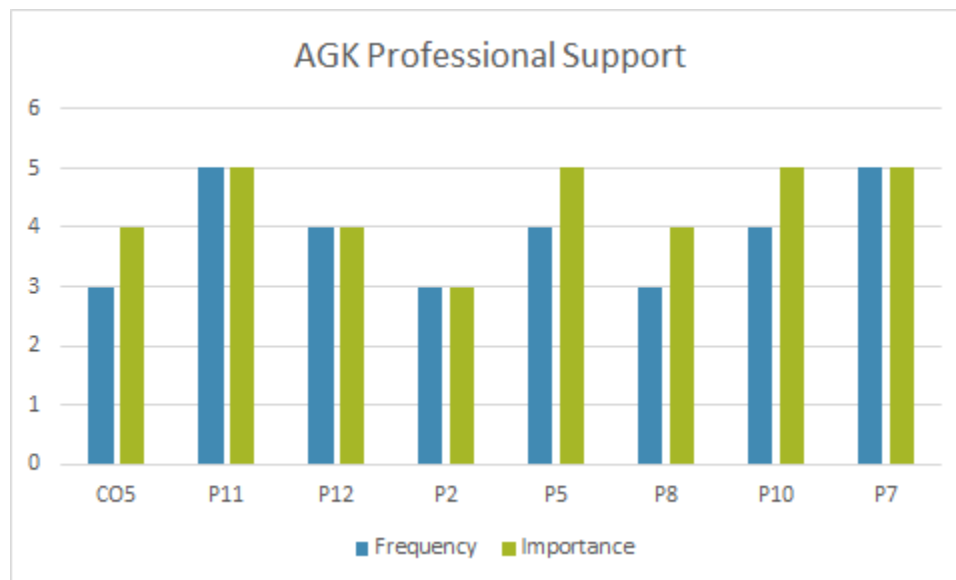
Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that DHC chose for professional support.

Lastly, AGK has eight people (n=8) he listed as for professional support. All of his ego alters are principals except for one central office person. Two of the principals (P11 and P7) rank highest at five for frequency (f=5) and five for importance (i=5). All of the other principals rank lower: P10 and P5 have a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of five (i=5), P2 has a frequency of three (f=3) and importance of three (i=3), P12 has a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of four (i=4), and P8 has a frequency of three (f=3) and importance of four (i=4). Just like DHC, the central office person (CO5) listed on the survey is his supervisor. He ranked the frequency of this relationship at a

three ($f=3$) and importance at a four ($i=4$). AGK admitted in his interview that he has very little experience with curriculum implementation because of his background as a PE teacher. He stated in his interview that he seeks principals that have school sites similar to his own to help him learn more about how to help his teachers and students.

Figure 8

AGK Professional Support



Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that AGK chose for professional support.

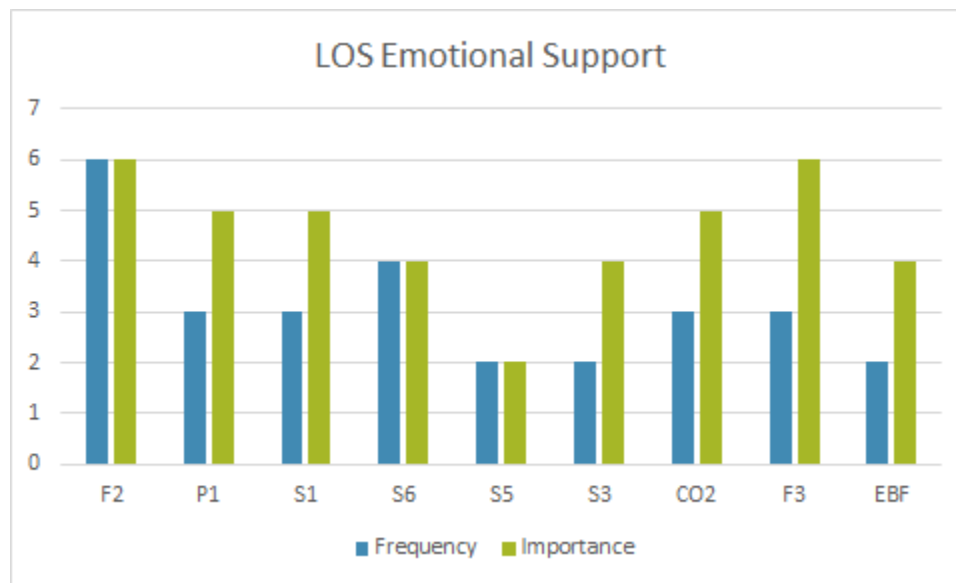
Emotional Support

Again, as with professional support, it was assumed that if a relationship is important, it would also be a frequent contact. However, that is not the case for emotional support either. LOS listed nine people ($n=9$) who provide emotional support. Like with professional support, she chose P1 as providing emotional support with a frequency of three ($f=3$) and importance of five ($i=5$). She also added another early childhood principal, EBF, with low frequency of support ($f=2$) and moderate importance ($i=4$). In

addition to P1 who provides both professional and emotional support, she listed S1, CO2 and F2 who also provide both types of support. These three had the same frequency and importance of emotional support as professional support (f=3 and i=5). F2, her boyfriend, is still the person who provides the most support with a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6). The other people that LOS listed as providing emotional support are three school support staff. The behavior specialist, S3, has a frequency of 2 (f=2) and importance of 4 (i=4), the counselor, S5, has a frequency of two (f=2) and importance of two (i=2), and the lead teacher, S6, has a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of four (i=4). Lastly, her friend, F3, has a frequency of three (f=3) but an importance of six (i=6). Being a principal is very time consuming so while friendships are important, it may be difficult to find time to meet or talk to that person.

Figure 9

LOS Emotional Support

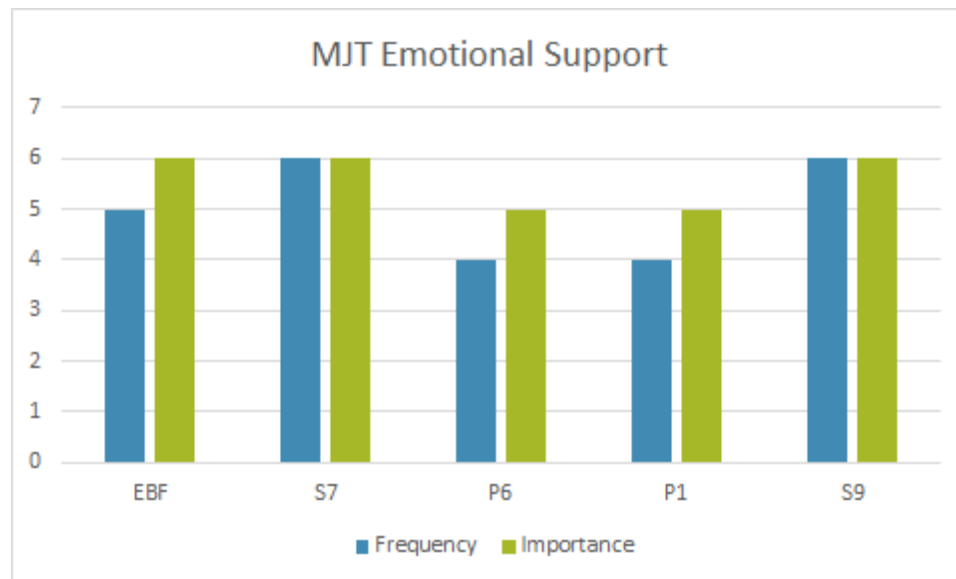


Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that LOS chose for emotional support.

MJT's list of people (n=5) who give emotional support is almost identical to her professional support list. She still listed P1, another early childhood principal, with a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of five (i=5), S9, her counselor with a frequency of six (f=6) and an importance of six (i=6), and EBF, with a frequency of five (f=5) and an importance of six (i=6). Her secretary is again someone she receives the most support from with a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6). MJT listed another principal, P6, as providing emotional support with a frequency of four (f=4) and an importance of five (i=5). MJT did not choose family for emotional support because in her interview, she talked about how her spouse did not understand the nature of school business.

Figure 10

MJT Emotional Support

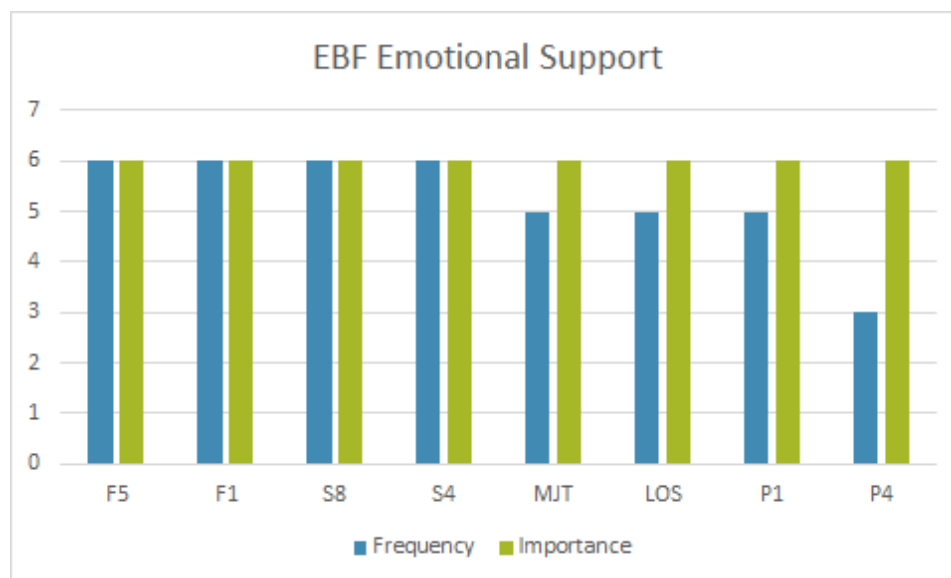


Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that MJT chose for emotional support.

EBF listed eight people (n=8) who provide emotional support. She listed several of the same people for emotional support as she did for professional support with the same scores. This includes the other three early childhood principals, MJT, P1, LOS, all with a frequency of five (f=5) and an importance of six (i=6). EBF also listed the same assistant principal, P4, with a frequency of three (f=3) and an importance of six (i=6), and the counselor and secretary with a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6). For emotional support only, EBF also listed her spouse, F1, and her mother, F5, both providing a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6). She was not very forthcoming with her personal life but when talking about her family in her interview, she stated that she values these relationships.

Figure 11

EBF Emotional Support

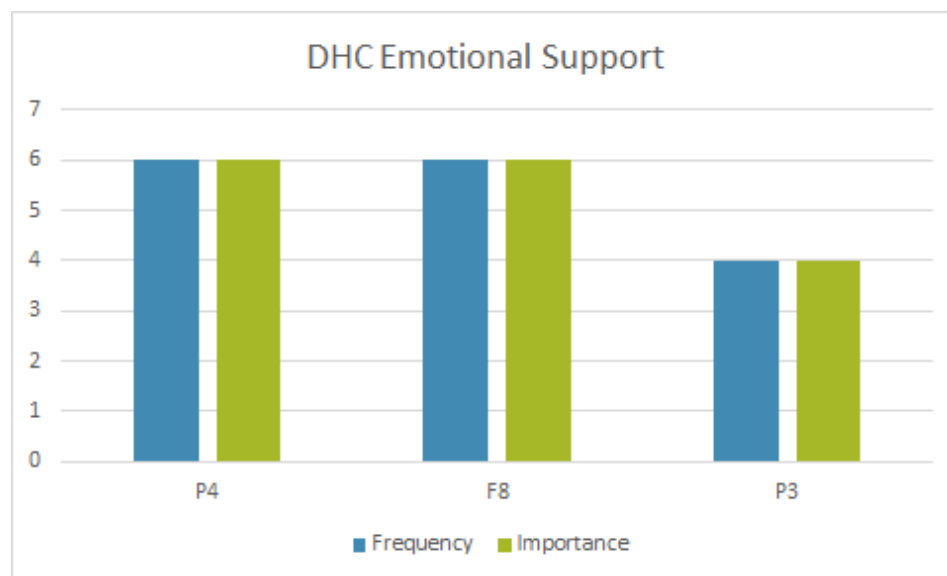


Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that EBF chose for emotional support.

DHC has the least number of people (n=3) listed as providing emotional support. While during our interview she mentioned being from a large Italian family, most of that family live in another state, which could be why she did not list them specifically. DHC has two people with whom she not only seeks professional support, but also emotional support. One is the principal, P3, who provides high professional support but not as high emotional support with a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of four (i=4). She again listed her assistant principal, P4, as the person she goes to the most for support, with a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6). Lastly, DHC listed her spouse as providing high emotional support with a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6).

Figure 12

DHC Emotional Support

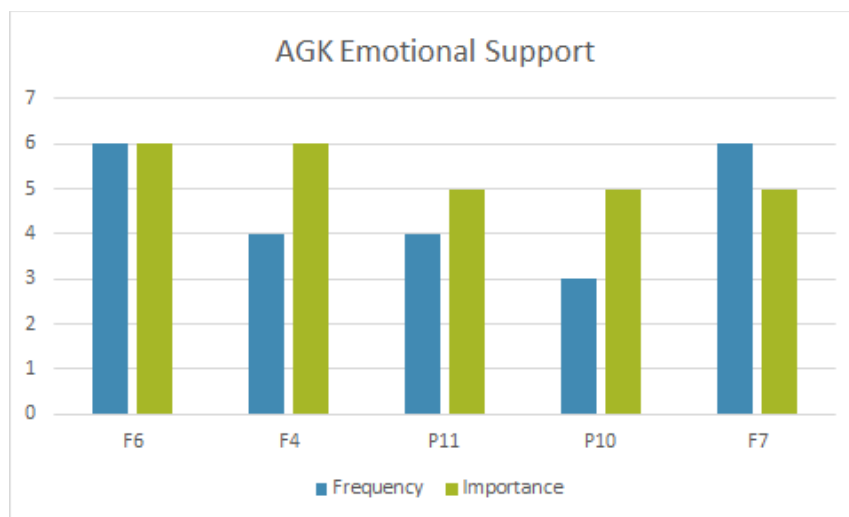


Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that DHC chose for emotional support.

For professional support, all of the participants had a bridge of at least one other person in the study but this was not true for emotional support. AGK was not connected to any of the other four participants when it came to emotional support. He listed three family members or friends and two principals for emotional support (n=5). The two principals, P11 and P10 were also listed under professional support. The ranking was similar for both types of support, with P10 having a frequency of three (f=3) and importance of five (i=5) and P11 with a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of five (i=5). For emotional support only, AGK listed his spouse with a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of six (i=6), a family member with a frequency of four (f=4) and importance of six (i=6), and a friend with a frequency of six (f=6) and importance of five (i=5). AGK mentioned in his interview that his spouse was a school teacher in another district and they can share a school connection with each other as needed.

Figure 13

AGK Emotional Support



Note. This graph shows the frequency and importance scale of ego alters that AGK chose for emotional support.

Strength of Ties

All five of the principals who participated in this study completed all parts of the survey. In Table 5, the first column lists the pseudonym initials of the five principals. The second column lists the position or relationship of the ego alter to the principal. Columns three and six show the frequency of professional and emotional support respectively, columns four and seven show the importance of the relationship in providing both professional and emotional support and columns five and eight show the average of both the frequency and importance of each ego alter to the participants. The purpose of averaging the frequency and importance ratings is to show the relative strength of the relationship or tie. Daly and Finnigan (2012) defined ties as the “social relations among individuals” (p. 497). For example, MJT receives both professional and emotional support from a principal (P1) with a mean score of 4 and 4.5 respectively. She also has another principal (P6) that she listed but this person only provides emotional support with a mean score of 4.5. The first relationship suggests a stronger relationship due to MJT receiving both professional and emotional support versus the second principal who only provides emotional support. The scores from each participants’ survey is listed in Table 5 and will be explained further below. In addition to the table, an excel spreadsheet with the same information as the table was used to create bar graphs that show the difference in professional versus emotional support. The initials “CO” refer to central office personnel. Also, the “coach” listed under LOS refers to an instructional coach.

After the demographic information on the survey, the first section directions were “Please list the initials of the individuals to whom you go for work-related advice or information.” The second section directions were “Please list the initials of the person to

whom you go for emotional support related to your job.” The two sections also explained that the participants were supposed to indicate the importance of the relationship and the frequency in which the interaction occurs.

Table 5

Social Network Analysis Survey Responses and Mean Support

Participant	Relationship	Prof Sup Freq	Prof Sup Import	Mean Prof Sup (Rel. Strength)	Emo Sup Freq	Emo Sup Import	Mean Emo Sup (Rel. Strength)
DHC	asst. principal	6	6	6	6	6	6
	spouse				6	6	6
	principal	6	6	6	4	4	4
	principal	3	3	3			
	CO	1	3	2			
	CO	3	3	3			
	principal	6	6	6			
MJT	principal	5	6	5.5	5	6	5.5
	secretary	6	6	6	6	6	6
	counselor	6	5	5.5	6	6	6
	principal				4	5	4.5
	principal	3	5	4	4	5	4.5
	principal	4	5	4.5			
EBF	mother				6	6	6
	spouse				6	6	6
	secretary	6	6	6	6	6	6
	counselor	6	6	6	6	6	6
	principal	5	6	5.5	5	6	5.5
	principal	5	6	5.5	5	6	5.5
	principal	5	6	5.5	5	6	5.5
	asst. principal	3	6	4.5	3	6	4.5
	CO	3	6	4.5			
	receptionist	6	6	6			
AGK	CO	3	4	3.5			
	family				4	6	5
	spouse				6	6	6
	principal	5	5	5	4	5	4.5
	principal	4	5	4.5			
	principal	4	5	4.5	3	5	4
	principal	3	4	3.5			

	principal	5	5	5			
	principal	4	4	4			
	principal	3	3	3			
	friend	6	5	5.5			
LOS	boyfriend	6	6	6	6	6	6
	principal	3	5	4	3	5	4
	coach	3	5	4	3	5	4
	lead teacher				4	4	4
	counselor				2	2	2
	behavior spec.				2	4	3
	CO	3	5	4	3	5	4
	friend				3	6	4.5
	principal				2	4	3
	CO	2	5	3.5			
	CO	1	5	3			
	CO	1	3	2			
	CO	1	3	2			
	CO	1	3	2			

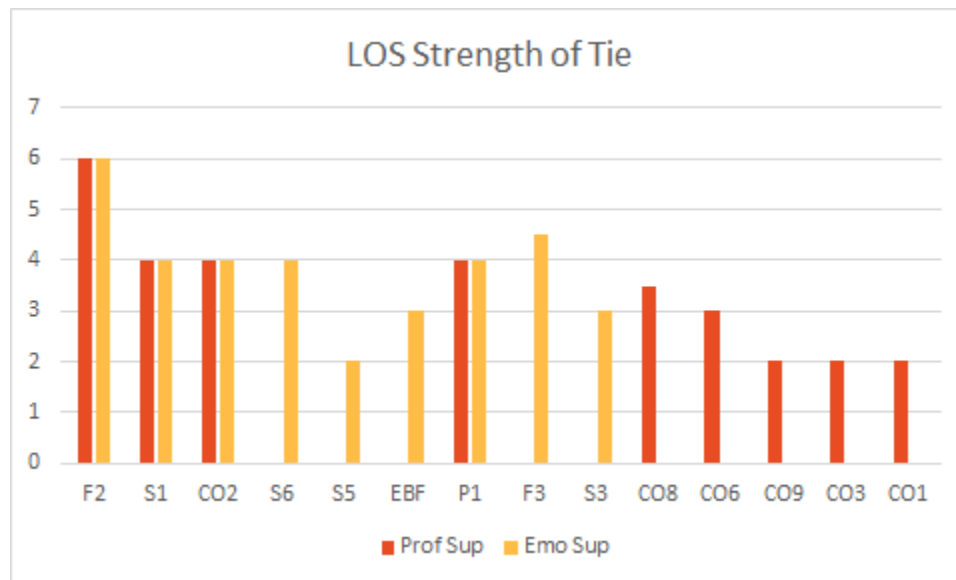
LOS Strength of Ties

Of all five principals, LOS had the most ego alters (n=14) listed for both professional and emotional support. As a contrast to the other four participants, this participant often chose CO personnel (n=6) for support. Also, most of her ties are only moderately strong. Four of her ego alters provide both professional and emotional support. One of the CO ego alters (CO2), who is an assistant superintendent, provided both professional and emotional support with a moderate strength of tie ($\bar{x}=4$) for each type of support. Another early childhood principal, P1, provides both types of support with a moderate strength of tie ($\bar{x}=4$). The other ego alters chosen that support LOS professionally and emotionally are S1, a behavior coach ($\bar{x}=4$). Lastly, the strongest tie is LOS's boyfriend with a mean score of six ($\bar{x}=6$) for both professional and emotional support. There is a significant contrast also of who LOS chose for professional support versus emotional support. The other five CO ego alters, CO9, CO3, CO1, CO6 and CO8

only provide professional support at low levels ($\bar{x}=2$ to $\bar{x}=3.5$). For emotional support, LOS listed three school site staff, a behavior specialist, S3, a counselor, S5, a lead teacher, S6, another early childhood principal, EBF, and a friend, F3, all have low to moderate strength of tie ($\bar{x}=2$ to $\bar{x}=4.5$).

Figure 14

LOS Strength of Tie



Note. This graph shows the mean from the frequency and importance scale for each ego alter that LOS chose for professional and/or emotional support.

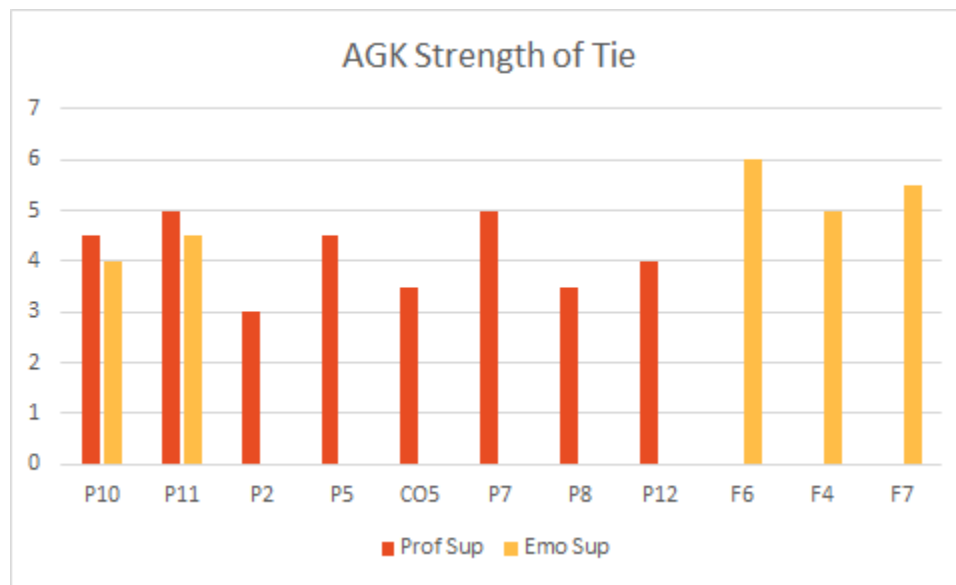
AGK Strength of Ties

AGK had the next most ego alters (n=11). He has the least variety of people listed for support and of the 11 people providing support, seven are principals. Besides DHC, he has the least amount of people who provide both professional and emotional support (n=2). Of the two people, both principals, who provide both types of support, one, P11, is AGK’s strongest relationship tie ($\bar{x}=5$ for professional and $\bar{x}=4.5$ for emotional). The

other principal, P10, provides moderate strength of ties (\bar{x} =4.5 for professional and \bar{x} =4 for emotional). Of the five other principals listed, they all provide only professional support with moderate ties (\bar{x} =3 to \bar{x} =4.5), one of which is AGK's weakest tie. The additional ego alters are a CO person who gives only professional support (\bar{x} =3.5) and three family or friends who give only emotional support but all with strong ties (\bar{x} =5 to \bar{x} =6).

Figure 15

AGK Strength of Tie



Note. This graph shows the mean from the frequency and importance scale for each ego alter that AGK chose for professional and/or emotional support.

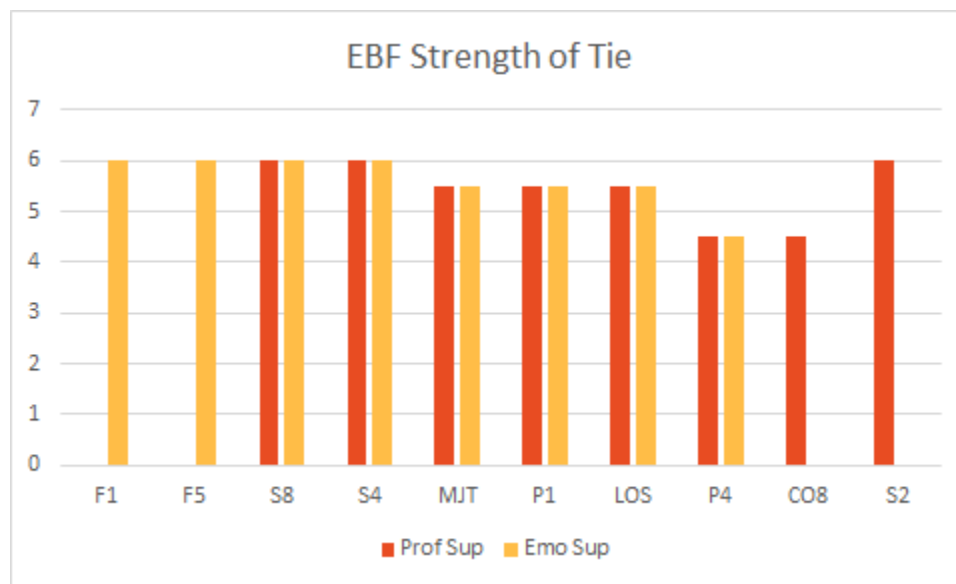
EBF Strength of Ties

EBF listed ten (n=10) ego alters which were also the most eclectic list of the five participants. She also had the most ego alters who provide both professional and emotional support and has strong relationships with all the people she listed. Three

principals, the other early childhood principals in the district, and one assistant principal were listed as having strong ties ($\bar{x}=4.5$ to $\bar{x}=6$). In addition to the four principals providing both types of support, EBF also listed a secretary and counselor in both areas who provide the strongest relationships ($\bar{x}=6$). Family ego alters, her mother and spouse provide only emotional support with strong ties and a CO person and receptionist provide only professional support with strong ties and a CO person and receptionist provide only professional support with the CO person having the weakest relationship ($\bar{x}=4.5$).

Figure 16

EBF Strength of Tie



Note. This graph shows the mean from the frequency and importance scale for each ego alter that EBF chose for professional and/or emotional support.

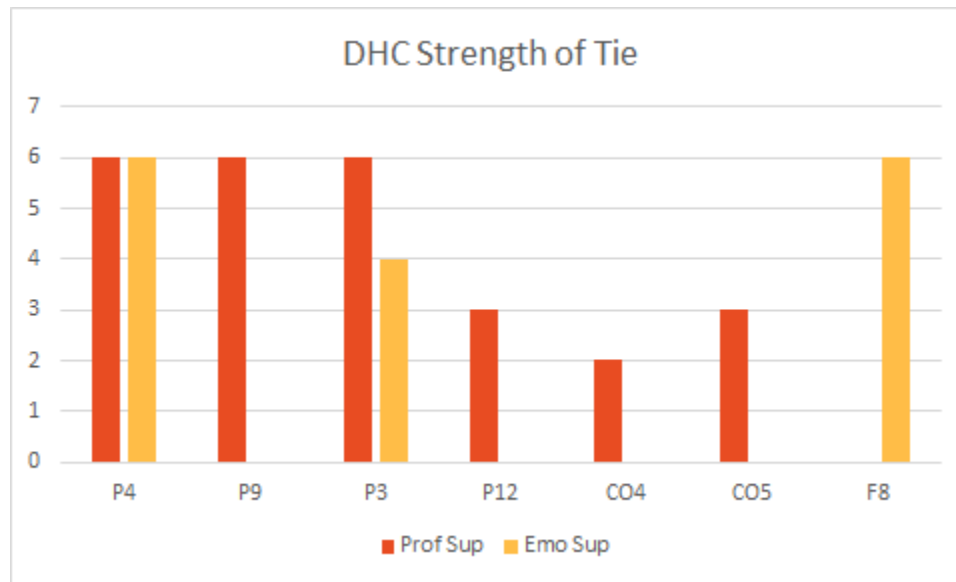
DHC Strength of Ties

DHC had seven total ego alters (n=7), made up mostly of principals. She had the least number of emotional ties (n=3) and like AGK, has only two ego alters, an assistant principal and principal, who provide both professional and emotional support. She has the

strongest relationship with her assistant principal ($\bar{x}=6$) and a CO person was her weakest relationship ($\bar{x}=2$). The other CO person and a principal have moderate ties ($\bar{x}=3$) and her spouse has a strong tie ($\bar{x}=6$) but for emotional support only.

Figure 17

DHC Strength of Tie



Note. This graph shows the mean from the frequency and importance scale for each ego alter that DHC chose for professional and/or emotional support.

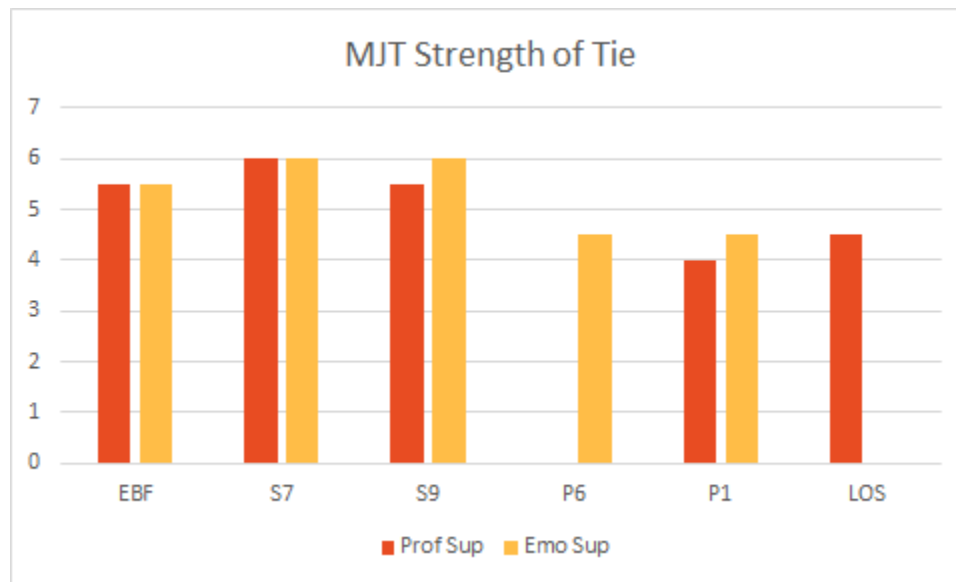
MJT Strength of Ties

MJT had the least amount of ego alters (n=6), four of which are other principals. She is the only one who did not list central office staff as providing support. Similar to the two other principals in this study, three of the ego alters chosen are also early childhood principals. Like EBF, MJT also listed her secretary as providing the strongest relationship ($\bar{x}=6$). Besides her secretary, the next strongest relationship was with her counselor who provided both professional and emotional support ($\bar{x}=5.5$ to $\bar{x}=6$). Of the

principals she chose, two provide professional and emotional support with moderate to high ties ($\bar{x}=4$ to $\bar{x}=5.5$) and one each provides professional support and emotional support with moderate ties ($\bar{x}=4.5$).

Figure 18

MJT Strength of Tie



Note. This graph shows the mean from the frequency and importance scale for each ego alter that MJT chose for professional and/or emotional support.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Merriam (1998) stated that “data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data” (p. 178). Because this qualitative research is a case study, that data comes from interviews, observations, and documents. After collecting and reviewing the social network data of all five participants, observations and interviews were conducted and documents were collected. Merriam (1998) described the process of data collection and analysis as “a simultaneous activity in qualitative research” (p. 151). As data was

collected through observations, field notes were taken not only during the observation, but also after the observation in order to not miss any of my own impressions of what was observed. Each in-person interview included predetermined semi-structured questions in addition to spontaneous questions based on answers given by the participants. The questions used were open-ended in order to capture the most comprehensive answers possible. After recording the interview, I transcribed each interview within 3 days and added my notes taken during the interview and my impressions of what was said during the interview process. Similar to the observations, interviews were scheduled at the end of the first in-person meeting. The interviews were conducted during the day. Unlike the initial meetings and observations, amazingly, none of the interviews were interrupted. The semi-structured interview protocol in Appendix B was used to provide overall structure to the interviews. Depending on the answers, follow-up questions were asked. My phone was used to record each of the interviews, and notes were taken in my dissertation notebook. Lastly, because Century Public Schools has a new principal mentoring program, those documents, along with the district's principal evaluation system (McRel) and district and site data profiles were collected.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended, during the data analysis process, looking at data through the epistemological lens. In Chapter Three, constructivism was chosen as the epistemological lens. One of the main principles of constructivism is that all knowledge is socially constructed. In order to learn, people have to interact with one another. Later in this chapter, this social concept will be discussed further through Nan Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital. Constructivism also seeks to understand where the participants live and work, so all data was collected at their work site.

Categories and subcategories were derived by using the constant comparative method. Merriam (1998) described this method as “the researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set” (p.159). Coding data began with reviewing each piece of data, including each interview transcription, field notes from the observations, and documents collected and maintained in a binder. Notes were made in the margins of each of these documents. These notes took into account the purpose of my study, the epistemological lens, and the theoretical framework of Nan Lin’s Network Theory of Social Capital. I took the interview transcriptions a bit farther and organized quotes into an excel spreadsheet. The cells of the spreadsheet containing quotes were then printed on index cards and placed in piles of similar categories. I then shuffled the index cards again and recategorized them to come up with the final categories. This coded data, along with the margin notes of my observations and documents, became my themes: *career path, climate and culture, challenges, and support (including professional and emotional)*. Each theme is discussed below.

Career Path

The first interview question asked the principals to explain their journey to becoming a principal. Of the five participants, MJT, LOS, DHC, and EBF taught for several years before entering administration (\bar{x} =15 years), but AGK went into administration only after four years in the classroom. DHC, LOS, and EBF have six to ten years of experience as a principal while AGK and MJT have 11 to 15 years of experience as a principal. AGK principal has been in education for 16 to 20 years, DHC, LOS, and EBF have been in education for 21 to 25 years and MJT has been in education

for over 26 years. AGK is the only principal who has spent his entire career at Century Public Schools. LOS was the only principal who taught out of state, in Texas. All the participants were assistant principals before becoming principals with DHC being the only principal who was an assistant principal at another district first, not at Century. All five participants have master's degrees, and one principal, MJT, has her doctorate.

One of the most common threads during the interviews when asking the five principals about why they have stayed in this profession is how much they love being a principal and wanted to become a principal to make a difference. DHC stated, "I love, love being a principal" (DHC interview, 2020). LOS described her role as "I'm not a teacher just in one classroom helping 20-25 students at a time. Now I am helping 300 students and 300 families at a time" (LOS interview, 2020). AGK talked about being a principal in a school site with similar socioeconomic demographics to how he grew up. He feels especially connected to these students due to his childhood background.

When asked what factors have influenced them to specifically stay at Century, they all talked about either being a loyal person or being connected to the students and staff. AGK talked about being from a smaller town which has instilled a sense of openness. He enjoys seeing the growth in students and helping them break cycles with an "understanding that there's more to life than a lot of the bad experiences they encounter on a daily basis outside these walls and outside the hours they're here with us" (AGK interview, 2020). Both MJT and LOS talked about being a loyal person and how they feel committed to their jobs. DHC and MJT also talked about how much they love their staff. DHC stated, "I'm excited to come to work and hear how everyone's weekend was and that type of thing. Those are the things that make me stay" (DHC interview, 2020).

MJT stated, “I have a great staff and families and that’s what keeps me coming back every day is the people I work with” (MJT interview, 2020). EBF talked about the support from the district that keeps her in her position. She stated, “so I think it's just that we have that mutual respect with one another and just they give us great feedback” (EBF interview, 2020).

The most common thread that all five principals talked about was the need to help others, whether it is teachers or students. All of these principals described themselves as servant leaders. LOS again talked about this ripple effect of being a principal “and so when you change peoples’ lives and help them realize that they have worth and purpose and no matter what happens, they impact the lives of their students” (LOS interview, 2020). DHC talked about having an influence over students, “I just love having that influence of looking out for the kids and looking out for my teachers” (DHC interview, 2020). DHC and LOS also shared how they want their teachers to feel supported but also recognize their humanity. LOS expressed this best by saying, “just realize everyone’s on their own journey and it’s ok to make mistakes and just to learn and grow together and that’s what brings them together as a staff” (LOS interview, 2020). Ultimately, for all of the principals, their purpose is all about making a difference in the life of a child. LOS, who has the most difficult time each year convincing herself to stay in the profession shared, “even on the toughest days when I really just want to quit, there will be some little story I hear about a kid and then I’ll change my mind again” (LOS interview, 2020).

One of the last interview questions asked about the future plans of the principals. Most of the principals want to continue being principals even if it was just for the short term. EBF and DHC aspire to end their careers retiring from the principalship. EBF

thinks she would like to retire in ten years but continue to work at Century in a support staff role, but she was not specific about what kind of role. DHC loves her job but worries about the balance between family and work. However, she indicated, “I’m going to be doing this for a while, but I’m kind of taking you know a couple of years at a time” (DHC interview, 2020). AGK discussed either wanting to open a new school or eventually working toward the central office. He also is looking at furthering his education by getting a doctorate, but with his children still being younger, he does not want to take time away from them. He stated, “you know I feel like I have been doing it long enough to know that I have a wealth of knowledge” (AGK interview, 2020). MJT is at retirement age but admits she cannot afford to retire yet. Since she just received her doctorate, she is looking at teaching for a university as a professor. LOS is the only principal who struggles with staying in the principalship. She talked often about how many times she has thought about quitting and doing something else to make more money with less stress. She added that she often stays up late to complete paperwork which then, in turn, makes her tired, “and then something happens and it irritates me. So, then I find myself getting into a position where I’m frustrated. And then I reach out to my support system and I do the venting thing. I then I feel better and it’s like it’s ok” (LOS interview, 2020).

Climate and Culture

Every single principal talked about the “Century Way.” LOS stated, “Just in [Century], it’s support from every direction...you just know that they care” (LOS interview, 2020). EBF described the culture as, “it’s very I would say loving...there are firm expectations but in a very loving way and guidance and support you have from your

upper administration” (EBF interview, 2020). I saw this both when I first met with each of the principals for our initial meeting and when I returned for the observation and interview. When I walked into each building, regardless of whether the school was new or older, the front of the building looked similar, and the Century logo was behind every front office desk. In addition, the color schemes were all the same (red and white) and they even used the mascot (the Patriots) in their signage. The best example of this climate and culture was my observation at School A’s morning assembly called Rise and Shine. Every morning, after students arrived and ate breakfast, teachers would bring the students to a multipurpose room. The room is a large, bright space with a bank of windows on one side. There are no chairs or tables and students sit on the floor in rows while teachers and assistants stand next to their row of students. Some teachers and assistants sat next to children that needed a little extra help staying still and paying attention. EBF, the principal, and the counselor had a PowerPoint on the screen at the front of the room and music playing as students entered. Different parts of Rise and Shine included songs, flag salute, the creed, storytime, social emotional learning and a recitation that took the letters in the word Patriots and came up with the school’s tenets. Everything was themed around Century Public Schools.

I learned what the “Century Way” looks like, but I was eager to learn how the principals learn about it. EBF, who previously worked in a neighboring district, stated that being an assistant principal at Century taught her the “Century Way.” DHC talked about when she came to Century, both she and her assistant principal were new to the district and did not know the “Century Way” which hurt her initially. Even though it was difficult when she first started, she now says, “I really love this school, and I think I’ve

really found my niche with this age group” (DHC interview, 2020). MJT talked about how she and two other principals worked tirelessly together to create the new early childhood centers. When talking about the camaraderie among these principals, she said “I don’t think we would have been as close...we literally worked probably two and three nights a week while we ran our buildings during the day...so I know that’s what did it” (MJT interview, 2020).

District Climate and Culture

Several of the participants mentioned how the previous superintendent had to work hard on improving the climate and culture of the district. As part of this plan, and through bond dollars, the district set up the buildings to look alike, creating a sense of togetherness. But even though the five participants repeatedly mentioned the “Century Way,” they also discussed feeling like the middle man between district expectations and the reality of everyday life at the school site. This is evident when the principals talked about climate and culture. Not only did the principals discuss how the central office supports them but also how they support their teachers and staff. Several of the principals discussed the shift when the superintendent changed a few years ago. None of the participants chose one superintendent to be superior to the other, but that they each had different philosophies. The new superintendent is described by several principals as emphasizing family and being more of an emotional support. The previous superintendent was very forward thinking and was instrumental in creating the branding for the district. However, he also moved principals, especially assistant principals, frequently. I am unsure the exact reason why he did this, but one of the principals suspected it was to give the assistant principals more experience in a variety of settings.

Inadvertently, this movement created stress that DHC described as being stressful not only to the principals but also to the teachers in that building. She explained that she thought the previous superintendent was wonderful but described the new superintendent as “she’s just more of that personal touch, and she really cares about the people that work under her...she knows that if you’re happy, you’re going to do a better job at that school” (DHC interview, 2020). LOS echoed this sentiment, “no matter what, you have support...she backs you” (LOS interview, 2020).

School Climate and Culture

When it comes to their staff, principals know that they must create an environment that is warm and supportive. When the new superintendent started modelling this “family first” philosophy, it inspired DHC to do the same with her staff. One of the first things she did is “after hours I’m not going to be emailing teachers...I’m calling it a day” (DHC interview, 2020). She started letting her staff know that they could be with their family without feeling guilty about being out of the classroom. LOS also described the need to build trusting relationships with teachers and that sometimes that just takes time and getting comfortable with each other and showing your staff that you care. AGK has also worked on building relationships among his staff because “we’re still missing some things...that could make this an impactful place” (AGK interview, 2020). AGK also felt that the relationships should extend to the students. He added “looping” which means that teachers stay with their classroom for two years. This created a situation where teachers and students could develop those relationships and trust that they may lack in their home.

Challenges

Every job presents its own set of challenges. As discussed in Chapter Two, there are several characteristics of principal turnover (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Farley-Ripple et al., 2012; Finnigan & Daly, 2017; Jacobson et al., 2005; School Leader Network; 2014; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Stevenson, 2006; and Tekleselassie & Villareal, 2011). One of those characteristics is school and student factors which includes increased discipline referrals, low levels of collaboration, and a negative climate and culture. Workplace characteristics include a lack of autonomy, few relationships with school staff, central office staff, and community, and the changing nature of the job. Emotional characteristics that can be predictive of principal turnover include trust and socialization. For principals, because of the vast scope of their job, sometimes these challenges can seem insurmountable. For these five principals, there are three major categories of challenges: (1) behavior and student issues, (2) change, and (3) trouble with multitasking.

Behavior and Student Issues

During two of my observations, the behavior and student issues were prominent. LOS was actually about 15 minutes late because of dealing with a behavior issue. In her interview, she echoed her frustration with behavior issues and how to deal with them, “the biggest challenge that is the students have a right to a free education...so when these kids are tearing up the classroom, and you know I can suspend them of course, but at some point a parent is going to say enough is enough, the school is not doing enough for my child” (LOS interview, 2020). I could tell when she was finally ready to meet with me, she was frazzled. Of all five principals, she was the only one who talked frequently about leaving the profession to do something else. In another part of her interview she

talked about being overwhelmed, “because the work was just piling up and dealing with the kids that were having issues at school” (LOS interview, 2020). AGK was also dealing with behavior issues during the entire observation. He had two students in his office, another student that was waiting for him in the counselor’s office, and two more in the front office waiting area. When talking with him after the observation, he emphasized his feeling of obligation to get these students ready for middle school because he was previously the assistant principal at one of the middle schools. He worried that if he did not help the students control their behavior, they would not be successful in middle school and may become another sad dropout statistic.

While AGK was preparing his students to move to middle school because of the grade level of his school, the other principals have students who are just starting school. EBF talked throughout her interview and observation about trauma. While this is definitely a “buzz” word for schools, it is a reality for these principals. EBF is investing in training her teachers, “we’re getting trauma informed” (EBF interview, 2020). But the other thing she would like to see is a therapist in each building. She described this as, “we need to partner with someone in the mental health area and have a therapist on staff for those children who need half-day schooling, half-day therapy” (EBF interview, 2020). DHC also talked about helping teachers with students who have big behavior issues, “I think it helps if the teachers see [assistant principal] and I handling the big behavior cases...if someone was going to get something thrown at them, it will be me or [P4]” Interestingly, neither the mentor principal documents, nor the McRel Evaluation System, address the need to learn how to deal with behaviors. LOS saw the need for

parent training as well. She had created a parent advisory committee and was getting ready to meet with parents and provide parent training.

Change

One of the next challenges pertains to change. These changes included change in personnel, change in instructional expectations, or change in buildings. According to many of the principals, central office personnel change frequently. MJT, who has been in the district the longest, expressed the most frustration with these changes. She stated that many key people have changed over the years and “it’s exhausting and the biggest frustrations for me have been special ed and then this year it’s been finance” (MJT interview, 2020). DHC also mentioned the “unwritten rules” from the central office that, because personnel have changed, she is unsure what to follow. For example, she told a story about snow days. Under their previous leadership, the principals were expected to be in their buildings on snow days just in case a student arrived at school who was unaware that the school was closed. Now, “they’ll say ‘oh we don’t have to do that anymore’...it’s hard not to know what you’re expected to do” (DHC interview, 2020).

The next change that all principals were frustrated with is the instructional expectations. LOS explained this the best, “[the previous superintendent] worked on building a culture of trust. You know, he had to work on that a lot when he first came, and he did that and then we needed to start working on student achievement, he left” (LOS interview, 2020). DHC described frustration with the new curriculum that has been mandated from the central office and what is expected of her teachers every day. She also talked about that, along with that new curriculum, comes new documentation and assessment. DHC sees her role as “I try to be that balance in what...is coming down the

pipe from the state department or the [central office] and trying to be as much of a buffer in easing the level of workload for the teachers” (DHC interview, 2020). MJT sees this change in central office expectations as “wonderful, but I think sometimes our focus will shift and so we’re spinning all these plates...you just try to keep everything going” (MJT interview, 2020). She would like to see the central office provide more frequent feedback so school sites know what is expected. LOS has a different take on the new curriculum because of the expectations in other districts in which she worked. She stated, “in [another district], when there is curriculum, or there are nonnegotiables, it is laid out. This is what we are doing. Everybody is doing it. Period. And if you are not, then you know coaches are put into play. You know the support is provided and if you’re still not doing it...there are consequences” (LOS interview, 2020). However, LOS also stated that teachers who do not want to implement new initiatives will sometimes go to the teacher union and complain and then “the district level will back off a little bit” (LOS interview, 2020). DHC and EBF see all these changes from the central office as stressful for teachers. DHC stated that she has a great relationship with her teacher who is a union representative. She told a story about how she had overscheduled the week for teachers by having RTI meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and an after-school faculty meeting. Once the teacher union representative let DHC know that, she changed the schedule because she is “trying to find a way to take something else off their plate” (DHC interview, 2020). EBF stated that she “want[s] to support my teachers so it’s educating my teachers and then it’s all of us coming together” (EBF interview, 2020). For AGK, because his background was as a PE teacher, the instructional piece was not his strength. He relies on his teacher and explained that he is “really spending that time and that

effort...getting secure in the instructional processes...looking to people for guidance” (AGK interview, 2020).

The last part of the challenge of change comes from moving personnel. As was previously mentioned, the previous superintendent’s philosophy was to move principals and assistant principals so they could gain more experience in different buildings. While the new superintendent does not have the same philosophy, personnel is still being moved. Evidence suggested it is because principals are leaving and assistant principals are moved into those positions or some other reason, like with EBF. She was asked to move buildings because “they see what you’re doing in the ECCs [early childhood centers] and how you take care of things, they ask you to move” (EBF interview, 2020). DHC stated that she “think[s] it’s gotten better about moving people around so you can work with an assistant for a while because you really were together to build trust with teachers and build that culture in the school and if you’re getting a different assistant every year, that makes it really hard” (DHC interview, 2020).

Multitasking

The last challenge for principals is multitasking. LOS described this perfectly, “the time that it takes for me to be the instructional leader, the behavior coach, the behavior specialist, a counselor, the office support staff person, that is overwhelming” (LOS interview, 2020). She described that, if she has to deal with behavior, it can take the whole day, which leaves no time to do any of her other duties. Her typical day sounds like many principals I have interviewed. Because four of the five principals in this study do not have an assistant principal, AGK admitted, “everybody dreads being out of the building because that is usually when the wheels fall off the bus” (AGK interview, 2020).

He talked about how everyone has to come together to lean on each other which was demonstrated during his observation and dealing with behavior issues. Even though all the buildings have counselors or lead teachers, they are not trained as administrators. EBF echoed AGK by saying, “I really honestly feel like every building deserves an assistant principal despite the size” (EBF interview, 2020). AGK and MJT also talked about how time management is a factor. AGK stated, “balancing the time on the instructional and the behavioral and finding time for all the paper pushing and the report completions and the deadlines...are the struggle now” (AGK interview, 2020). MJT mirrored this sentiment by “fighting to maintain...more that I have in the past and it’s getting weary” (MJT interview, 2020).

Professional Support

The last theme that emerged in the data is support. However, it was difficult to combine all types of support into one large category. So, the next two sections will divide support into professional support and emotional support. In this section, professional support is broken down into three subcategories: (1) instrumental support, (2) building or colleague support, and (3) central office support.

Instrumental Support

As mentioned in both Chapter Two and Chapter Three, instrumental supports “are conduits for the circulation of information and resources that pertain to organizational goals” (Finnigan & Daly, 2010, p. 183). For example, Century Public Schools provided a mentor principal when all five principals started their career in the district, even if they were previously assistant principals. These mentors are central office staff who meet regularly with the new principals and provide support or coaching as needed. According

to EBF, “any person that is a new principal gets a mentor principal that they can go to...and they meet once a month” (EBF interview, 2020). AGK echoed this saying, “that’s kind of their [Century’s] standard in when we have a new principal coming in whether you’re a veteran principal or not, has a mentor to kind of go to” (AGK interview, 2020). DHC spoke of her mentor as “just your go-to person [to] call if you need help and it’s another principal and so I’ll still call her” (DHC interview, 2020). MJT fondly remembered her Principal’s Academy and attending a professional development program called Great Expectations, “we would all spend a week in Tahlequah at NSU...and I really bonded with these principals in my group so that they were my go-to support my first few years for sure” (MJT interview, 2020). For school districts the size of Century, a principal mentoring program is a common occurrence due to the amount of turnover each year. In the documents used for the principal mentoring, there are leadership expectations, a list of programs and initiatives, norms, and an example of the agenda for monthly meetings. In the leadership expectations, there are seven categories: character and professionalism, school and office culture, innovation, commitment, excellence and planning, communication, and conflict. In each of these categories are a list of expectations that range from specific tasks (e.g., use AESOP to submit absences) to more philosophical expectations (e.g., reflect from time to time on why you made the choice to be a professional educator). On the list of programs/initiatives for Century Public Schools, it is a daunting list of 14 different items. As a beginning principal, this list seems like it would be overwhelming. It also seems more geared towards elementary principals instead of secondary principals with things like Literacy First and Reading Recovery. The list of norms has eight tasks that include attending monthly principal meetings and how to

handle school cancellation. Lastly, the example of agenda for the first monthly meeting again has a long list of activities that will need to be completed before school starts. The agenda date was the first of August in 2019 which only gave principals two to three weeks to complete these activities. I now understand why DHC stated that it was difficult when she first came to Century Public Schools because both she and her assistant principal were not from Century and therefore did not understand the “Century Way.” Participants explained that it would make things much easier for these beginning principals to have at least an assistant principal who is experienced. However, as I will discuss below, assistant principals tend to be the ones that are moved the most, and not every school site has an assistant principal. In fact, of the five principals in this study, only one (DHC) has an assistant principal.

The next type of instrumental support identified in this study is coaching. Century Public Schools does not have a formal coaching program and only uses central office personnel in a supervisory role. Only one principal, EBF, mentioned coaching from her supervisor saying, “I’m good with coaching or her giving me her opinion and I said I don’t try not to take it too personal” (EBF interview, 2020). While research (Petti, 2010) stated that coaching is an effective method of providing feedback to principals, Century Public Schools does not have a formal coaching program.

Another instrumental support that many principals mentioned is the fact that Century Public Schools has partnered with several outside counseling agencies to provide on-site counseling. DHC called this a “godsend...they fill-in and help...they’re just amazing” (DHC interview, 2020). EBF also stated that this service is very helpful. However, these services are only offered on a limited basis, sometimes as little as one

day a week. DHC would like to see a full-time school psychologist in her building but realizes that is difficult due to budget constraints and lack of adequate number of school psychologists available to hire.

The last instrumental support is professional development. Other than principal's meetings, professional development for principals occurs outside the district. It also appears that every principal has a different focus for his or her own professional needs. EBF stated that they [principals] are allowed to attend professional development but after approval from the district office. Her building has concentrated on trauma and behavior training and a literacy program called LTRS. LOS also talked about how she provides professional development and coaching to her staff which helps her "continue to grow in my leadership skills" (LOS interview, 2020). However, LOS also felt that the district needed to provide more specific leadership training. She described a leadership training at one of her previous districts that had scenarios from different departments: "we had different breakout sessions almost like a workshop and we rotated" (LOS interview, 2020). She felt this type of training helped the principals already have knowledge of what to do when a problem arose.

Building and Colleague Support

The next area of support comes from building or colleague support. These people provide both professional and emotional support. Of all areas in this study, this area had the largest amount of information through the interviews and survey. The bottom line is: principals seek the most support from their fellow principals. Probably the closest bond are the three early childhood principals. MJT described this relationship like sorority sisters. She even goes as far to say that "if I didn't have that [support], I probably

wouldn't stay" (MJT interview, 2020). EBF stated "we meet together once a month...text almost daily" (EBF interview, 2020). Both EBF and LOS talked about how MJT is considered the leader among the early childhood principals because of her experience. LOS goes to MJT for philosophical issues since receiving her doctorate has helped her understand the research behind decisions. However, if she needs detailed information, LOS goes to EBF because "she is very task oriented and gets things done quick" (LOS interview, 2020). DHC mentioned that talking to other principals helps her gain perspective. For example, in adopting a new curriculum this year, she talked with the other principals to see how they were implementing a portion of this mandate "and they're like...we haven't even started on that yet. Don't even worry about it" (DHC interview, 2020). DHC also described talking to other principals rather than central office because "I've tried to talk with like our instructional specialist and although they're very content knowledgeable, I honestly feel like they forget what it's like to be in the classroom and how to manage that all in a day" (DHC interview, 2020). AGK also relies more on other principals but in many different ways. He talked about all of the principals in the district having subgroups. For example, his school is a Title I and EL site, so he bonds with those principals because they go through the same trials. He also stated that, because he is only one of three elementary male principals, they "have a level of camaraderie just checking in on each other or bouncing certain things off" (AGK interview, 2020). He also stated he still goes to the principal at the school he was an assistant principal for help or advice. Both AGK and MJT also rely on their building personnel. AGK, like many principals, relied heavily on his secretary when he first became a principal. He talked about her being "very, very helpful in helping me kind of

understand what some of those sacred cows are and how certain people reacted or handled situations and what parents I needed to be aware of” (AGK interview, 2020). MJT also listed her secretary, along with EBF, as being someone they go to for professional support. During my observation with MJT, she was having a site leadership meeting. This group comprised a lead teacher from each “pod” in the building and the special education teacher. Everyone was very respectful and attentive, and the meeting was run efficiently. MJT was very good about redirecting the group if they got off track and asking them questions instead of dictating expectations. When asked about who she would go to for professional support she said, “I would probably go to this group first if it was about our school and say ‘what do you know about this, what do you think we should do’” (MJT interview, 2020). DHC also has a leadership team that she meets with once a month to “discuss new things coming down the pike from the ESC [in order to] set up procedures for the building” (DHC interview, 2020). While I did not observe this leadership team, I did observe her RTI process. This meeting included the school psychologist, counselor, assistant principal, and then the teacher that was presenting her students’ data. Just like MJT, DHC sat back and let others in the group lead until she contributed something important. It was certainly a well-oiled machine.

Central Office Support

Lastly, several of the principals chose central office personnel as providing professional support. As seen in the social network analysis, several principals use the central office support for professional support. They all talked about the accessibility of central office personnel. DHC talked about if they have an issue “I know that someone is going to come and be my support just like I am to my teachers” (DHC interview, 2020).

A couple of the principals also talked about this idea of central office personnel “catching them doing something wrong.” DHC explained it as “you can ask for help and they’re not going to say ‘well what you are doing is wrong’ and it’s not going to be an ‘I gotcha’... you are actually comfortable going and asking for help” (DHC interview, 2020). LOS discussed how in another district where she was employed, when a principal asked for help, it was handled differently, “in Century the way it [mistakes] is dealt with is this is what happened and this is what we’re going to do to fix it...and you have the support to fix it” (LOS interview, 2020). AGK also talked about how Century has multiple supports. During my observation, he was having to talk to multiple people about the behavior incident. He could not immediately contact his supervisor, so he had to call the Director of Student Services. He explained, “so they work hand-in-hand...I can call her any time if she’s not available then I know I can always call him” (AGK interview, 2020). EBF agreed with AGK about contacting different district personnel. EBF talked about how the district has “allowed [us] to just grow our buildings with great, hands-on curriculum” (EBF interview, 2020). MJT was the only principal who had difficulty with asking for help from the central office. In her perspective, “I would definitely feel comfortable in reaching out to a department head. I’ve been here long enough. My struggle is we’re such a large district, I have lost the ability to keep track of who’s in what role” (MJT interview, 2020). The district uses the McRel Principal Evaluation System which builds on the research of Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003). There are three main areas of leadership: purposeful community, managing change, and focus of leadership. Each of these areas are broken down into additional subareas with a five-point scale assigned to each subarea. While researching which evaluation system the district uses, I found that

none of the principals even mentioned this system which makes it seem it is not valued in this district.

Emotional Support

According to Finnigan and Daly (2010), this support “reflects patterns of more affect-laden relationships” and “are more likely to transport and diffuse resources such as social support, trust, and values” (p.183). Even in the area of emotional support, these principals receive this support from a variety of places: (1) district resources, (2) family and friends, and (3) colleagues.

District Resources

LOS discussed using the employee assistance program to help her through a difficult time. She was also one of the few principals who chose central office staff as providing emotional support. During her interview, she mentioned several people who have helped her while going through some personal issues. During one of these times, she also talked about an incident that happened at the district office which was very frustrating. A report was due that day and she had a difficult time leaving her building to deliver it to the district office. She arrived two minutes before the doors were supposed to be locked, but someone had already locked them. One of the central office staff took care of the situation and helped ease her stress but she explained “it wasn’t about the two minutes, it was the fact that you are not acknowledging what teachers and principals go through in a school day” (LOS interview, 2020). From what several of the principals have said, this is a shift from the previous administration. LOS stated that she can go to many central office staff, even the superintendent “if there’s stuff going on with my family at different times, I feel comfortable texting or calling and saying ‘this is what’s going on’”

(LOS interview, 2020). AGK also noted that he felt validated by the central office when he was “recognized and given that opportunity to become a principal” (AGK interview, 2020).

Friends and Family

The next set of individuals that provided emotional support for the principals were friends and family. AGK and EBF mentioned friends, parents, and church as providing emotional support. Both indicated that they do not talk about school-specific information but it is just someone to pray for them or distract them from what is going on at work. AGK said it was not really about talking to someone but called it a “camaraderie” with his dad, “because sometimes that is all it takes” (AGK interview, 2020). Four of the principals talked about their spouses providing support. AGK mentioned that his wife is also in education, so she understands what he goes through and then he is a sounding board for her during times of frustration as well. DHC and MJT both mentioned their husbands but admitted that, because they are not in education, they do not understand what they go through being principals.

Colleagues

Again, like with professional support, all five principals mentioned how other colleagues support them emotionally as well. DHC, AGK, MJT, and EBF mentioned other principals or site support staff that they call or ask for help on a regular basis. What was interesting about all of these people, each one stated that the reason they go to them is because they “have been in the district for a long time” (DHC, AGK, MJT, & EBF interviews, 2020). Lastly, MJT and LOS talked again about their early childhood

principal peers that they regularly go to for advice and help. This is true for emotional support as well.

Summary

This chapter began with the presentation of demographic data which included an overview of the district, school sites, and participants. Next, social network analysis was discussed based on the name and position generator survey given to the participants. Sociograms and bar graphs were developed which show not only the relationships among participants and the people they chose to list for support, but also the strength of these relationships. Lastly, emerging themes based on the interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed and discussed.

In the next chapter, research questions will be answered along with the discussion of each question in relation to Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital. Findings will also be presented that relate to implications of this research study for theory, research, and practice.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter IV consisted of three sections. The first was a presentation of the demographic data collected in this study including an overview of the district, school sites, and participants. The next section was the social network analysis which took the social network survey and created sociograms and bar graphs that looked at the professional and emotional support of all five participants in addition to the strength of ties those participants have with others. Lastly, was the data analysis that included the interviews, observations, and documents. The data analysis led to the emergence of the following themes: career path, climate and culture, challenges, and professional and emotional support.

Chapter V consists of a summary of the study, a discussion of the findings by answering the research questions and through the theoretical framework of Lin's Network Theory of Social Capital, conclusions, implications through practice, research, and theory and concluding with recommendations for future research and practice.

Overview of the Study

The evidence is clear in many studies over the last ten years: principals have been

identified as the primary source of reform efforts (Goldring et al., 2008; Kafka, 2009; Leana, 2011; Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010). Leithwood et al. (2008) claimed, “there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership” (p. 29). In fact, school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning (Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood et al., 2012). Branch et al. (2013) found that “highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student between two and seven months of learning in a single year” (p. 63).

Many studies described the core leadership qualities of principals that influence student achievement (Hallinger, 2005; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2008; Rammer, 2007; Robinson et al., 2008; Louis et al., 2010). One of the first leadership qualities is the ability of the principal to build a vision for the school. Second, the principal must be able to understand and develop people. The next leadership quality is the ability to create or redesign the school building including building positive relationships. The last leadership quality is the ability to manage teaching and learning.

However, many districts face very high rates of leadership turnover. Annual principal turnover rates in school districts throughout the country range from 15-30% each year (Beteille et al., 2012; Mitani, 2018). A common reason for principal turnover is poor job satisfaction. Job satisfaction rate has decreased nine percentage points in less than five years from 68% in 2008 to 59% in 2013 (MetLife, 2013). More specifically, principals, on average, worked as much as 60 hours per week (Mitani, 2018) and half of principals felt under great stress several days a week (MetLife, 2013). Teachers make up a majority of the pool of aspiring school leaders, but due to diverse pressures, they no

longer see administration as an attractive career option (Jacobson et al., 2005). Research indicates that two of the most important consequences to principal turnover include teacher turnover and negative school climate and culture (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). Finnigan and Daly (2017) also stated that principal turnover undermines a consistent vision and set of approaches established by the previous principal and inhibits the formation of relationships among teachers.

While not much is known regarding the influence of relationships on principal decisions to remain in the profession, research does exist regarding the influence of principal relationships with the central office. In response, districts must redefine their roles to shift from monitoring and controlling to supporting and collaborating with school principals (Daly & Finnigan, 2011). Finnigan and Daly (2010) reported that linkages between central office and site leaders are important for not only school reform, but also district reform. This linkage is important due to the way information is transmitted from the district office to the school site. Liou et al. (2015) suggested that socially-connected leaders are critical for transmitting the resources and information necessary for successful change.

The role of the principal is to provide a culture of learning. The principal is also expected to lead teachers in learning new skills that will improve student achievement (Goldring, Preston, & Huff, 2012). Goff et al. (2014) stated that districts must develop the capacity of principals, dismiss principals who are not performing well, and improve the quality of applicants. In order to do this, there are several ways to support principals. Mizell (2010) called for superintendents to provide highly-focused professional development, building the capacity of principals to increase student performance.

Goldring et al. (2012) emphasized that high quality professional development needs to be job-embedded, meet the educator where they are, must be long-term and in multiple formats, and must be scaffolded. Instructional rounds can be referred to by various titles including intervisitation or walk-throughs (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Instructional rounds assist principals by providing common vocabulary and a way to develop connections, not only with other principals, but also with teachers and students (Hatch et al., 2016).

Another support that has gained momentum in the last several years is coaching. One of the most important features of coaching is the feedback that coaches provide to principals (Goff et al., 2014). Daresh (2007) confirmed that principal mentorship programs must assure that the person mentored will survive the first year or two on the job. However, critics of leadership preparation programs have argued that there is little connection between theory learned in the university classroom and on-the-job experiences (Hall, 2008; Petzko, 2008). While Boerema (2011) also lists several types of support that are mostly emotional in nature, his research found that the most important support for principals was being able to count on someone that they could call on at any time. Mentors help principals create goals and objectives, learn about instructional leadership, become managers, and connect to the community. In many studies, both the mentors and mentees benefitted from this type of professional support (Boerema, 2011; Hall, 2008; Schechter, 2014).

Nan Lin (1999) suggested that social capital is rooted in social networks and social relations and must be measured relative to its root and defined social capital as “resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” (p. 35). Lin (1999) described that embedded resources in social

networks facilitate the flow of information, influence who plays a critical role in decisions, determine accessibility to resources through social networks and relations, and are expected to reinforce identity and recognition (Lin, 1999). Therefore “social capital can be conceptualized as (1) quantity and/or quality of resources that an actor can access or use through (2) its location in a social network” (Lin, 2000, p. 786). Lin (1999) advised to include both a measure of network locations and embedded resources into any study. Network locations look at both the bridges (how to reach resources that are lacking in one’s social network) and strength of ties (measurement of a bridge’s usefulness). Embedded resources are broken down into instrumental and expressive outcomes. Instrumental outcomes are more technical and are based more on who knows what. As seen previously, this is important in who is brokering information both to the school sites and from the school sites. Unfortunately, these relationships tend to be one-way and not reciprocal. Expressive outcomes are more emotional in nature and tend to be characterized by more personal connections that principals make with others versus a more work-related relationship. Both are equally important for change and reform efforts to improve student achievement.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to gain a better understanding of the social support network structure of principals in a large suburban district in the Midwest who have begun their principal career and have remained in that same district for a period of at least five years. This study also seeks the perceptions of these principals regarding the types of support that have led to their sustained leadership.

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the underlying social network structure of support for these long-term principals?
2. What types of social capital are embedded in these networks?
3. What are these principals' perceptions regarding the types of support that have encouraged them to remain in the profession for five years or more?
4. What challenges have these principals faced, and how have these supports helped them to address or overcome these challenges?
5. How does Social Capital Theory explain the success of these principals?

This study also sought the perceptions of these principals regarding the types of support that have led to their sustained leadership. The participants were five principals who began their principal career at Century Public Schools and have a span of six to fifteen years employed as a principal in the same district. Included in the data collection and analysis were the social network analysis based on a name and position generator survey and qualitative data including interviews, observations, and document collection.

Findings

The following section will present the answers to the research questions.

Research Question One

What is the underlying social network structure of support for these long-term principals? Findings suggest that most of the participants chose an equal number of people who provide either professional or emotional support or both, the lowest number being seven and the largest number being fourteen. While all have at least two people who provide both emotional and professional support, some of the participants have as many as six who provide both types of support. This number is relatively small

considering the total number of people listed for each participant. For example, DHC listed a total of seven people who provide emotional or professional support but only two of those provide both types of support. Family and friends were never listed as providing professional support for any participant, except for LOS's boyfriend, who also happens to work for the district. Central office staff were rarely selected for emotional support. LOS was also the only participant who selected at least one central office person who provides both professional and emotional support. In contrast, school site staff were chosen often as providing both professional and emotional support. Findings suggest this is due to the fact that four of the five principals do not have assistant principals to take on some of the workload, and therefore must rely on their secretaries and counselors more often.

However, all of this pales in comparison when it comes to how often participants chose other colleagues (principals and assistant principals) for both professional and emotional support. As indicated in Table 5, colleagues were chosen 2:1 over the other three categories combined. One of the best examples are the three early childhood principals. Data analysis revealed that their social networks were highly interconnected and they chose each other and the other early childhood principal, who was not a participant, for either professional or emotional support or both. Their networks were tightly connected and two-way, often choosing each other for both professional and emotional support. The other two principal's connections were not as tightly connected or two-way. DHC and AGK were only tied to one another by a central office person and another principal, who was not a participant. Like the early childhood principals, they also selected colleagues at a far higher rate than any of the other three categories of people, although they were not as connected to the early childhood principals or to each

other. AGK mentioned in his interview that he tends to seek advice from principals who have a similar population to his own because they can relate to his issues better.

Evidence suggests that professional support occurred most frequently with other principals, school site staff, or central office personnel. Principals offered the primary support followed by school site staff. Central office personnel had much weaker relationships with the participants. This is concerning since research suggested that the flow of information from district personnel to site principals is critical in improving student achievement (Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2012). Professional support was mainly accessed through advice from colleagues or assistance from central office support when there was a problem that occurred. The early childhood principals talked about how they texted each other frequently. MJT also created a shared Google Drive that they all access for information. AGK explained that he could call his CO supervisor anytime if he needed advice. There were infrequent face-to-face meetings with CO staff and other principals during monthly meetings. Some principals mentioned that CO staff would visit the schools at various times during the year but this seemed to be infrequent or only due to some event. Other types of instrumental supports like coaching and professional development were not mentioned as primary sources of support for the participants. For those school sites that have no assistant principal, those participants relied much more heavily on school site staff like counselors and secretaries.

For emotional support, evidence suggests family was a more frequent support for the participants than school site staff or other principals and only one central office personnel were chosen by LOS. Spouses or partners were mentioned in all the interviews, however, MJT did not list her spouse as someone for emotional support because he does

not understand the inner workings of school business. Participants expressed in the interviews how just talking to family either about school problems, or talking about anything but school problems, helped them process through the difficult times in their life. Like with professional support, participants without assistant principals used their school site staff to help with emotional support.

Research Question Two

What types of social capital are embedded in these networks? Nan Lin (1999) defined social capital as “the resources embedded in social relations and social structure which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in purposive action” (p. 35). Century Public Schools, like many districts across the country, struggle financially to provide the types of embedded resources that research indicated is beneficial to keeping principals in the profession and helping them to be effective in their jobs. Some of these resources include mentoring, coaching, instructional director leaders, professional development, and instructional rounds.

While there is a mentoring program in the district in which all five principals participated, none of them boast how this program greatly impacted their careers. Several principals described this program as just a person to whom they could turn to for help or advice in the first few years. Even DHC stated that it was more helpful asking for advice from other principals than her mentor. However, MJT, who has been a principal in the district longer than the others, fondly remembered her time in what she called the Principal Academy due to a professional development opportunity where she spent a week with other principals learning about a program called Great Expectations. None of the principals mention any type of team building or collaboration experiences with other

principals or central office personnel. Based on the documents provided, this type of bonding experience is missing in the current mentorship program.

As far as professional development for principals, many of the principals only cited some beginning of the year district-provided professional development. Otherwise, they must seek out training for themselves outside the district. While none of the principals stated that their central office supervisor was against them seeking this training, they were also not guided or provided opportunities to attend outside professional development together. In addition to the in-district professional development at the beginning of the year, the district provides a monthly principal meeting. From the evidence provided through documents and interviews, these meetings are more informational rather than providing true professional development or any type of team building activities.

In the aspect of coaching, the principals have a central office supervisor. However, none of the principals talked extensively about how this person provided regular or preventative support. EBF mentioned how she is comfortable with her supervisor coaching her or providing feedback. MJT does not seek out this person for coaching saying she does not have any bond or connection to her. AGK and LOS talked about this person as only providing support that is reactionary instead of preventive. Coaching in the traditional sense, as outlined by Petti (2010) needs to be more intentional and proactive. Century Public Schools does not provide instructional director leaders or instructional rounds that has been shown in research to help improve instruction (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Leithwood et al., 2008; Petti, 2010).

Findings suggest that the largest resource that is embedded in these participant's networks is other principals. These principals offer several types of support. The early childhood principals, MJT, LOS, and EBF, offer each other advice, emotional support, and professional expertise. Their social networks are interconnected and during their interviews they all talked extensively about how they help and rely on each other. AGK talked in his interview about seeking advice from other principals in school sites similar to his. DHC has an assistant principal who she relies on for advice and assistance, especially in discipline. The ability for these principals to connect is the one type of resource that not only is utilized the most in the district, it is fostered the least. Evidence shows that there were previous opportunities for principals to create bonds with other principals but this team building-type activity has since given way to providing only the mandatory information needed. Whether this is due to the increase of mandatory programs handed down by the state and federal government or some other reason, is unclear.

Research Question Three

What are these principals' perceptions regarding the types of support that have encouraged them to remain in the profession for five years or more? The dominant support for all the participants to remain in the profession for five or more years are the social networks developed with other principals. As mentioned above, principals seek out other principals for both professional and emotional support twice as often as any other person in their social network. Evidence suggests that having at least one close relationship both professionally and emotionally is important in staying in the profession. The relationship among the early childhood principals is the best example of this support.

Because they all had to work late nights and weekends on a project for the district, they became very close to one another, first professionally but as time went on, emotionally. In the interview with MJT, she even talked about how she did not know if she could make it through some days without their support. Even though AGK and DHC are not included in this tight-knit group, they each have their own people they rely upon heavily for both professional and emotional support. For DHC, it is mainly her assistant principal. For AGK, the principal at the school he was an assistant principal provides this support to him.

Besides the social networks of the participants who help them, many of them talk about their innate desire to help students and families. All the participants reflect the core values of being a servant leader. During the interviews, many of the principals want to make a difference and understand that they affect the lives of not just the 25 students in a classroom, but the hundreds of students in their building. In addition, they want to help their parents and community to thrive. Because behavior and trauma were dominant in many of the principals' daily lives, many of them were developing programs to help their students and parents. LOS was starting a parent support group, EBF was providing trauma-based professional development for her teachers and parents, and AGK was working with his sixth-grade students to reduce behavior before they went to middle school.

Lastly, several of the participants talked about their loyalty to the district. Findings suggest that the climate and culture of the district contributes to this loyalty. The district has worked hard at branding the "Century Way" by updating the buildings using the same colors and mascot through signage, communication, and even in classrooms. An

example of this was during the observation with EBF who was leading rise and shine. All of the language they used during the assembly brought back the idea of everyone being a patriot, the school's mascot. In addition to the common theme of the district, participants increased the climate and culture of their own building by connecting to their staff in a positive way. They genuinely care about them on a personal level, not just professionally. This is also reflected in the change of leadership at the top of the organization. The new superintendent emphasizes "family first" which is echoed by all the principals when relating to their own staff. Through the interviews, findings suggest that the principals not only put family first but also protect their teachers from district initiatives that may be stressful. For example, this was the first year for new curricula after many years without a set curriculum. However, instead of introducing one new curriculum for one subject area, the district introduced several at once. DHC explained that she asked how other principals were handling this situation and decided, based on their feedback, to slow the pace of the district pacing calendar down for her teachers.

When looking at the future of these participants, all of them want to continue their careers in the principalship, even if just temporarily. In the interviews, two of the principals want to retire while still being a principal, two principals want to further their careers but stay in education, and one principal is unsure of her future career. Since research stated the rate of turnover for principals is 15-30% (Beteille et al., 2012; Mitani, 2018), this district must be doing something different to keep their principals longer.

Research Question Four

What challenges have these principals faced, and how have these supports helped them to address or overcome these challenges? Findings suggest the challenges of all

five participants can be broken down into three main categories: (1) behavior and student issues, (2) change, and (3) trouble with multitasking. Behavior and discipline issues were prominent in every observation or interview. While I would have expected this at the secondary level, it was surprising to see these issues even at the early childhood level. EBF attributed most of this to childhood trauma, while AGK also mentioned a lack of positive male role models for many of his male students. Regardless of why principals are having to deal with increased student behaviors, there seems to be minimal support for principals. One of the supports the district has provided is a contract with local counseling agencies in order to have embedded counselors who provide therapy for students. However, as EBF stated, this is not enough. It does not reach all her students and does not always provide the level of support needed for some students. The other support is initiated by the principals themselves which includes professional development for their staff. DHC suggested bringing in more school psychologists, however, like in other states, there is a shortage of these individuals graduating and staying in Oklahoma. The district needs to develop a plan for not only helping principals, but also other school personnel. This may include additional personnel, professional development, and parent training so that parents can be more involved in the discipline process.

Change is something the district can and has directly influenced. The new superintendent has lessened the movement of principals which has helped in stabilizing school sites and alleviating stress among school personnel. However, due to the “unwritten rules” of the district, central office personnel need to clearly define expectations and communicate these expectations not only for new principals, but also existing principals. MJT explained that she would like to receive frequent feedback from

CO. This feedback needs to be reciprocal. For example, the district introduced several new curricula at the elementary level. While I am unsure how much feedback was elicited from site principals, they have struggled with knowing and understanding the expectations of their teachers. LOS has even suggested that if teachers complain enough to the CO, they back off those expectations. This can be frustrating for principals who are trying to support both the CO and their teaching staff.

The last challenge, multitasking, is where the support of their colleagues and the relationships among these principals have helped. As a principal, all five participants described the frustration of juggling many different hats. However, they are able to call on other principals and central office staff to help during these times. LOS related a story of how a small thing, like making sure the central office building is not closed early, helped her to not be as frustrated when reports are due. One consideration for this district would be to have one central office person who helps with some of the more menial tasks like completing reports or managing finances. MJT discussed how, when the central office staff changes, they also change how reports are completed which is confusing and stressful. Having one consistent central office person to help with these could help reduce that stress.

Research Question Five

How does Social Capital Theory explain the success of these principals? One of the best ways to think about social capital comes from Nan Lin (1999) who explained, “The premise behind the notion of social capital is rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected returns” (p. 30). School districts like Century Public Schools must invest in the social relationships with their principals in order to get

the expected return: successful students. Nan Lin's (1999) Network Theory of Social Capital has three major building blocks: (1) precursors, (2) collective assets, and (3) outcomes. How each of these explain the success of principals is discussed below.

Precursors

The first building block for social capital involves precursors. The precursors include a social structure of climate and culture, budgetary restraints, community involvement, and positional variations which describe the position of each person in an organization. Climate and culture are instrumental in providing unity for the principals, staff, students, and community. Leithwood et al. (2012) listed a positive culture as one of the nine characteristics of high performing districts. This is also one of the main reasons for principal turnover (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). As stated above, climate and culture were emphasized by the previous superintendent and continues in the new administration. The principals mentioned numerous times how this "family first" climate has helped reduce their stress and create an atmosphere of trust.

While budget constraints were not directly discussed, many aspects of having a limited budget was evident. For example, there is a lack of personnel, including assistant principals at all schools, full-time embedded counselors and school psychologists, opportunities for team building activities, and quality professional development opportunities. Because there is a lack of personnel to help principals with the many aspects of their job, it also leaves very little time to make connections with the community. While there was some mention of partnership with community entities, it was not extensive. EBF mentioned the partnership with a community counseling service

that provides a part-time embedded counselor. LOS stated that she has wanted for several years to have a parent advisory group but had not had the time to start one.

When discussing the positional variations of the district, there is definitely a hierarchical approach at Century Public Schools. From the lowest level of students and parents, then to teachers, principals, central office staff, and lastly, the superintendent being at the top. Not only is the structure of the district a hierarchy, several principals discussed the top-down mandates. This was more evident this year in the introduction of new curricula for numerous subjects. While there is some delineation of roles for principals, which include an overwhelming amount of work, central office staff responsibilities were much less defined. This caused stress for the principals who did not always know who to go to for help. MJT expressed the frustration of not knowing who to go to because of the turnover in central office staff. With central office staff being crucial in brokering information to principals (Finnigan et al., 2013), it is important for Century Public Schools to be clear in the role and responsibilities of its central office.

Collective Assets

The second building block of social capital is collective assets. These include the accessibility of network resources, or the distance of those resources, and the mobilization of the actors, bridges, and ties. When talking to the principals about network resources, all of the people they listed in the name and position generator survey were all very accessible. Principals mostly accessed other principals and central office staff through phone or text. Even as busy as they are, all of the principals praised the central office for their accessibility. AGK mentioned that his supervisor was available by text or phone almost immediately. For school site staff and family and friends, they were

accessed mostly in person or by phone. What appears to not be accessible are the expectations and social norms that all organizations possess. Many of the principals mentioned that there were unwritten rules that changed year to year. This was confusing to them in understanding what was expected of them and who they need to go to for help.

Mobilization of actors is evident with early childhood principals. Not only do they communicate through phone and text, they also have created a shared drive to help each other with a variety of tasks. MJT even talked about how many of the central office staff know that when one of the early childhood principals contacts them, that person is usually speaking for the group. Bridges are used to access resources or information that the participant does not have access to normally. Besides the early childhood principals, there are not many bridges that were evident in the social network analysis. One of the central office supervisors was a bridge for DHC and AGK since this person is their supervisor. This was the only connection between these two and only for professional support. DHC discussed how much she needed a bridge when she first became a principal at Century Public Schools. Both her and her assistant principal were new to the district and did not understand many of the unwritten rules of the district. While there are many professional bridges, there are fewer emotional bridges. AGK was not connected to any of the other participants for emotional support. The emotional aspect is just as important as the professional because as Lin et al. (2001) discussed, the professional and emotional networks reinforce each other.

As far as social ties, Finnigan et al. (2013) explained that it can be just as important to have both strong and weak ties depending on what type of information needs

to be accessed. Strong ties are associated with increasing student performance and sustaining district initiatives. Weak ties are associated with gaining novel information. Again, the strongest ties are among principals. The five participants seek other principals in their social network 2:1 over central office personnel, school site staff, and family and friends. For emotional support, school site staff and family and friends' ties are stronger. However there needs to be stronger ties with central office staff for both professional and emotional support since they are the ones who broker the information that helps principals to be successful and less frustrated which, in turn, reduces stress.

Outcomes

The third building block of social capital is the outcomes. This is broken up into instrumental and expressive outcomes. Instrumental outcomes are defined as the gaining of added resources, not possessed by the person and can include economic, political, or social returns (Lin, 1999). The expressive outcomes are defined as the ability of a person to maintain healthy physical, emotional, and mental well-being (Lin, 1999). Finnigan and Daly (2010) described instrumental networks as usually following a hierarchy and are a conduit of information while expressive networks are more connected to relationships which support trust and values. Century Public Schools is a typical hierarchy with the superintendent at the top and students at the bottom. Information does flow from the top down; however, advice is typically accessed from other principals. As previously mentioned, there is little in the way of instrumental support from central office. What is available consists of a mentoring program for new principals, monthly principal meetings, and beginning of the year professional development. The instrumental support that is not provided includes some type of team or relationship building time or

professional development that is focused on school needs. In addition, there is not an intentional coaching program or instructional rounds. Both of these programs have been shown to help principals set goals, create a common language and develop connections with others (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hatch et al., 2016).

For expressive outcomes, most principals seek out either other principals, school support staff, or family and friends. Most of these networks are through phone, text, or in person. Political and economic returns were not mentioned by the principals, but emotional and mental health was discussed. LOS is the only principal who mentioned a district program that provides mental health assistance. She took advantage of this service during an emotional time in her life. The other principals mentioned their family, spouses, friends, and school support staff who all provide a shoulder to cry on, a person to talk to, and someone to distract them from the sometimes difficult or stressful nature of the job. The piece that is missing is the central office staff and how they can play a role in providing emotional support.

Discussion

In this study, I wanted to understand what social support network structures keep principals in their position for a sustained period of time. With principal turnover at 15-30% (Beteille et al., 2012; Mitani, 2018) each year, it is impressive that Century Public Schools has nine principals who began their career and are still employed after five years. Because of their success, I wanted to study the social networks of these principals and seek patterns that help them be successful. This includes the resources that are embedded in their social networks. Through social network analysis, observations, interviews, and documents, I found that all the participants have large social networks but connect more

with a small group of principals who provide the most social capital. Liou et al. (2015) suggested that socially-connected leaders are critical for transmitting the resources and information necessary for successful change. While these principals all went through a new principal mentorship program, none relied on their mentor principal or on central office personnel as expected. These findings led to three conclusions about sustained leadership and social networks.

Conclusion One: In this district, shared core values and culture helped support the principals' sustained leadership. Research indicated that two of the most important consequences to principal turnover include teacher turnover and negative school climate and culture (Beteille et al., 2012; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018). In addition, one of the characteristics of a high performing school is a positive district culture (Leithwood et al., 2012). Every principal talked about the "Century Way." Most explained that there were firm expectations but expressed in a loving way. Only one principal thought the district wavered on their expectations, especially if teachers complained loud enough. Evidence suggested the previous superintendent had to work hard at improving the district's climate and culture because the trust had been broken in the community due to questionable practices by the administration prior. However, he primarily achieved this through the appearance of buildings and the branding of the district. He also moved principals and assistant principals often which caused stress for them as well as school staff. Findings showed the new superintendent is more family-focused and has not moved principals or assistant principals. In fact, according to many of the principals interviewed, their preferences and strengths are taken into consideration

before a move is made. All of the principals stated that they were the best fit for their building.

Fink and Resnick's (2001) study found that, in order for principals to be effective instructional leaders, they must create both intellectual and social capital in their school sites. Not only does the district provide a positive school culture and climate, but the role of the principal is to provide a positive culture of learning for their teachers and students. Evidence suggested many of the principals now emphasize developing relationships with their staff and how, now that the district's focus is more on family, they have begun implementing this philosophy in their own buildings. Some principals protected their teachers from the curricula demands of the district by providing more support themselves. Others talked about providing professional development to help their teachers with trauma and behavior. I observed one principal's leadership team but all the principals talked about having lead teachers who provide them crucial information about how teachers are feeling which helps them to be supportive of their staff.

Conclusion Two: Principals seek professional and emotional support more often from their colleagues than from central office personnel, school site staff, or family and friends. Daly (2010) and Farley-Ripple et al. (2012) recommended support from district leaders in developing stronger professional networks, not just from CO, but from other principals and even professionals at other districts. School Leaders Network (2014) goes further to say that principals need "authentic peer networks where principals can learn from other principals the art and practice of leading schools" (p. 2). The evidence is overwhelming that principals seek out other principals for assistance and advice. The principals whom they sought for support were employed at the same district, which is

surprising considering four of the five principals had been employed at other districts. All of these principal connections were informal through mostly phone calls or text. In addition, the principals seemed to seek advice from other principals whose school sites were similar in demographics, programs, and grade level. The early childhood principals sought advice from each other, DHC reached out to her elementary contemporaries, and AGK reached out to other Title I schools and schools with English Learner programs. Some of the principals still spoke to their mentor principal but none of them stated this person was their primary contact. School sites that did not have assistant principals tended to seek out support from their counselors more often than the site that did have an assistant principal. For emotional support, family and friends provided more support but still not as much as other principals. Social network data analysis suggested the central office staff was not as strong of a connection, either professionally or emotionally for these principals, even though they all talked highly of the central office. The main concern was the change in roles of the central office personnel and the lack of any organizational chart that delineated who to contact when needed.

Research suggested that principals at the lowest performing schools were the least likely to be connected to CO while beginning principals rarely connected with CO or other principals (Finnigan & Daly, 2017). As far as relationships between principals and CO leaders, almost a third of principals in lower performing schools stated they felt isolated from others (Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Based on demographic information, all of these school sites, except for one, would be considered high socioeconomic status, low mobility rate, and homogenous for race and ethnicity. While the one school that has low socioeconomic status and a higher English Learner population might be seen as lower

performing, the principal was still very connected to other principals, central office personnel, and family and friends. Social network data analysis suggested there was a moderate to low connection from central office personnel and primarily, except from one outlier, professional in nature. One of the principals stated that this is because the central office personnel are too removed from the school site and therefore do not understand the daily challenges. Another principal stated that, in her opinion, seeking out help or advice from the central office makes her look like a weak leader. This is concerning considering how much information flows from the central office, including this year's new mandates.

Conclusion Three: For these principals, their social networks provided access to resources that promoted their professional growth. Mizell (2010) called for superintendents to provide highly-focused professional development building the capacity of principals to increase student performance. He also suggested that, instead of providing large, whole district professional development, schools would work with CO in developing more focused, site-based professional development. Goldring et al. (2012) emphasized that high quality professional development needs to be job-embedded, meet the educator where they are, must be long-term and in multiple formats, and must be scaffolded. Based on the evidence provided in documents and expressed during interviews with the principals, the only professional development provided by the district is a monthly principal meeting or beginning of the year training. Most of the professional development was initiated by the principals themselves. While this may help them focus on the needs of their building, it may not take into account the larger focus of the district. Traditional professional development, the idea of "sit and get," is not the only type of training that can benefit principals. Fink and Resnick (2001) supported this understanding

by indicating that professional development for leaders must consist of monthly principal conferences, instructional institutes, support groups for new principals, focus literacy support groups, and principal study groups. Additional types of support could include instructional rounds, coaching, and more robust mentoring programs that last longer than one year. While one of the principals mentioned her supervisor being a type of coach, there is no formal coaching program.

However, the most important support that the district could provide as support is people. Evidence suggested that not only did all the principals mention behavior as being a challenge in their job, it was also observed. While all the schools have embedded counselors from an outside agency, this is not enough support for these principals. Not all building sites have assistant principals and therefore must rely on their school counselor to help with behavior. One of the principals would like to see more school psychologists in the district while another suggested a half day of therapy-based instruction for younger students. Behavior issues can be one of the top reasons for the increase in principal turnover (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018; Stevenson, 2006; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). As evidence suggested from one of the principals, this is the main reason she is considering leaving the profession.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following implications and recommendations for future practice, theory, and research will be discussed. These recommendations may help school districts retain principals for longer periods of time which may, in turn, increase student achievement. This is based on the findings at

Century Public Schools' early childhood centers and elementaries but could be transferable to other grade levels and school sites.

For Practice

This study has provided an understanding of the types and amount of support that encourage principals to stay at a school district and in the profession for a long period of time. Researchers consistently agree that principals' years of experience positively impacts student achievement (Beteille et al., 2012; Snodgrass Rangel, 2018) and students with higher achievement are more likely to have an experienced principal versus a beginning principal (Branch et al., 2013). Because of these reasons, it is important for school districts, and even state leaders, to be intentional about how to provide support and what types of support are most beneficial.

While the principals all expressed positive aspects of their job, they still have challenges that are not being addressed. First, with the increase in student misbehavior, principals in this study are ill-equipped and have inadequate amounts of time to deal with these issues. Additional personnel could be key to helping principals become instructional leaders versus compliance managers. This could include assistant principals at all school sites and full-time embedded counselors or school psychologists that have the expertise to deal with behavioral issues. Also, additional personnel in the form of a central office person to help with the mundane tasks of completing reports and paperwork. This would not only help principals have more time to be instructional leaders, but help with the difficulties of multitasking. In addition, opportunities for meaningful professional development in the areas of trauma and behavior could help teachers and principals know how to deal with students who have trauma and acting out

behaviors. Next, when it comes to both change and multitasking, school districts need to create clear organization charts and explicit expectations that are explained yearly. This district has improved morale and reduced stress by not moving principals or assistant principals each year. Lastly, since principals seek out other principals for support, intentional team building practices could help principals make connections to other principals and central office personnel. This seems to be more meaningful than connecting with a mentor principal.

For Theory

As Nan Lin (1999) explained, “The premise behind the notion of social capital is rather simple and straightforward: investment in social relations with expected returns” (p. 30). Social capital theory is just beginning to become an integral part of education research. This study contributes to that body of research by showing how important precursors, collective assets, and outcomes, both instrumental and expressive, are to sustained leadership. By examining the social networks of principals, I applied Lin’s Network Theory of Social Capital to building leaders. Sources of social capital were identified that help explain their longevity. During the precursor stage, a positive climate and culture is a critical first step in principal support. In the collective assets stage, the accessibility of network resources and the mobilization of the actors, bridges, and ties is evident, especially with the early childhood principals. They have a unique bond that was forged during the initial planning of creating early childhood centers. They rely on each other and mobilize resources unlike the other two principals in the study. Lastly, during the outcomes stage, a balance of instrumental and expressive supports is needed. Districts who provide “surface level” support is not enough. Century Public Schools, like many

districts, provide instrumental supports like a mentoring program for beginning principals but there is no intentional support given after that first year. Central office staff provide support in the form of advice but usually as a reactive measure, not preventive. For expressive supports, relationships are a key aspect of keeping principals in their jobs for longer. One principal even stated that she did not think she could continue to come to work every day if she did not have the other principals to help her. As the social network data analysis showed principals rely on each other for both professional and emotional support. Therefore, there is not just one source of social capital that contributes to principal's longevity, but all three stages working together.

For Research

Very little research has been developed that looks specifically at supports that are effective for creating sustained and continuous principal leadership. Secondly, while research is starting to look at social capital in educational leadership (Finnigan et al., 2013; Daly, 2010; Daly & Finnigan, 2010, 2011, 2012; Dika & Singh, 2002; Liou et al., 2015; Muijs et al., 2010), none specifically look at how relationships with a variety of both in-district and out-of-district people can help principals stay in their positions after their initial first five years. This study will help to contribute to that body of research. However, there are additional research opportunities that could further explore how social capital is important to supporting principals. For example, this study suggested an important connection between climate and culture and social capital. In addition, comparative research that looks at various grade level principals and school districts with low socioeconomic levels and low student achievement could contribute to additional factors that may contribute to principal retention. Next, it is important to look at the

connection between social capital and student achievement in this age of accountability. Lastly, studying the social capital needed for beginning principals and principals who left the profession may show additional information about sustained leadership.

Summary

Chapter One explained the problem statement, purpose of study, and five research questions. Chapter Two reviewed literature based on the following topics: history of the principalship, successful principalships, principal turnover and its impact on student achievement, challenges to supporting principals, central office and principal relationships, relationships principals have with other people, and the types of supports principals need to sustain their leadership. Chapter Three explained the research methods and procedures in data collection and analysis. As part of data analysis, bias, trustworthiness and limitations of the study were explored. In Chapter Four, data was provided to paint the picture of why the problem of sustained and continuous principal leadership exists. This data included surveys, observations, interviews, and documents. Chapter Five analyzed the data through the research questions, including the lens of social capital theory and discussed the conclusions and implications of the research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Social Network Survey

Participant Code:

School Code:

Demographics: Please complete the following questions regarding your current demographic information.

1. Please select your age category:

29 or younger 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 or older

2. Please select gender: Male Female

3. Please select the race/ethnicity you identify with most:

American Indian Asian African American Hispanic
 Caucasian Pacific Islander Two or More Races

4. How many years have you been employed at this school district?

0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years
 21-25 years 26-30 years 30-35 years 36 years or more

5. How many years have you been a principal at this school district?

0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years
 21-25 years 26-30 years 30-35 years 36 years or more

6. How many total years have you been employed in the education field?

0-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years 16-20 years
 21-25 years 26-30 years 30-35 years 36 years or more

Social Network: Please list the initials of the individuals to whom do you go to for work-related advice or information? Next to each initial, please indicate how often you seek work-related advice/information from this person and how important this relationship is to you. You may list up to 9 individuals.

Initials of Individual	Position or Relationship of Individual to You	<i>Circle the number that best reflects how often you talk with this individual</i>						<i>Circle the number that best reflects how important this relationship is to you</i>											
		Very Little	1	2	3	4	Daily	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	Important				
1.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please list the initials of the person to whom you go for emotional support related to your job? Next to each initial, please indicate the frequency of contact and how important the relationship is to you. You may list up to 9 individuals.

Initials of Individual	Position or Relationship of Individual to You	<i>Circle the number that best reflects how often you talk with this individual</i>						<i>Circle the number that best reflects how important this relationship is to you</i>					
		Very Little					Daily	Not satisfied				Satisfied	
1.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol and Questions

After the initial in-person meeting with participants to review the purpose of my study, the components involved, timeline for the study, and participants signing consent forms, a follow-up meeting was set up for both the observations and interviews. During the next in-person meeting, the following protocol was used:

Thank you for meeting with me again. I know your time is valuable. Today we will be conducting the interview portion of my study. We discussed the interview protocol before signing your consent forms but I will review this again. I will be asking you a series of questions. Depending on what is discussed, additional questions may be asked as follow-up. I will be using my phone to record the interview as well as take notes. Within the next couple of weeks, I will transcribe the interview, send you a copy to member check, and delete the transcription from my phone.

As you will remember from our last conversation, I am studying the network relationships of principals who started their career at a school district and have continued in that position for at least five years. Before I ask the first question, do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Could you please begin by explaining your journey to becoming a principal?
2. You have chosen to stay in the position of principal for xx number of years. What factors have influenced your decision to continue as a building leader?

3. You have also remained in this building/district for an extended period of time.

What factors have encouraged you to remain in this specific position?

4. What challenges have you experienced in your current position?

5. How have you addressed those challenges?

6. What kinds of supports have you depended upon for addressing those challenges?

7. How successful do you feel regarding addressing those challenges?

8. What supports are available to you when you need advice in your position?

9. What supports are available when you need emotional support?

10. How have these supports been helpful to you?

11. What are your professional goals moving forward?

12. What types of support do you perceive necessary to meet those goals?

13. Is there anything else you wish to share with me regarding your decision to remain in the profession and this position?

Thank you for taking the time today to speak with me.

APPENDIX C

Institutional Review Board Approval



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 02/07/2020
Application Number: IRB-20-53
Proposal Title: A SOCIAL NETWORK STUDY OF SUPPORT TO RETAIN PRINCIPALS

Principal Investigator: Kim Castaldi
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: Kathy Curry
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt
Exempt Category:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

APPENDIX D

Adult Consent Form



School of Education, Health and Aviation

CONSENT FORM

A Social Network of Support to Retain Principals

Key Information

Study Purpose: You are being invited to participate in a study on the social networks of support that retain principals. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the social support network structure of principals who have begun their principal career and have remained in that same district for a period of at least five years. Participants will be asked to share their insights regarding who they seek for both work-related and emotional support in order to remain in their jobs for longer than five years.

Major Procedures of the Study: As a participant in this study, you have been purposefully selected to participate in a name generator survey, observations, and interview, where you will be asked questions regarding general information about yourself, the factors that have helped you remain in the district, and what supports have been available during this time.

Background Information

You are invited to be in a research study of the social networks of support that retain principals. You were selected as a possible participant because you match the criteria of the study. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

This study is being conducted by: Kim Castaldi, Doctoral Candidate, Oklahoma State University under the direction of Dr. Kathy Curry, School of Education, Health, and Aviation, Oklahoma State University.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: As a participant in this study, you have been purposefully selected to participate in a name generator survey, observations, and interview, where you will be asked questions regarding general information about yourself, the factors that have helped you remain in the district, and what supports have been available during this time. The name generator survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The observation should take approximately an hour. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. The observation and interview will be conducted in the location of your choice. I will take field notes during the observation and I will audio record the interview on my iPhone so that I can later transcribe the interview. I will provide a copy of the transcribed interview to you so that you can verify the accuracy and content of the interview.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

There are no direct benefits to you. More broadly, this study may help the researchers learn more about what social networks retain principals.

Compensation

You will receive no payment for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number/pseudonym. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept on an Excel spreadsheet on a computer that is password protected. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed after five years. Your name will not be used in any report.

Because of the nature of the data, I cannot guarantee your data will be confidential and it may be possible that others will know what you have reported. The researchers will make every effort to ensure that information about you



Approved: 02/07/2020
Protocol #: IRB-20-53

remains confidential, but cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your identity will not be revealed in any publications, presentations, or reports resulting from this research study. However, it may be possible for someone to recognize your particular story/situation/response.

We will collect your information through a name generator survey, observation, and interview. This data will be stored on a password protected computer and any paper documents will be secured in a locked filing cabinet. A separate master key that has pseudonyms will remain on the password protected computer. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the code list linking names to study numbers will be destroyed. This is expected to occur no later than five years after the study is completed. The audio recording will be transcribed. The recording will be deleted after the transcription is complete and verified. This process should take approximately three months. This informed consent form will be kept for five years after the study is complete, and then it will be destroyed. Your data collected as part of this research project, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

It is unlikely, but possible, that others responsible for research oversight may require us to share the information you give us from the study to ensure that the research was conducted safely and appropriately. We will only share your information if law or policy requires us to do so.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time. The alternative is to not participate. You can skip any questions that make you uncomfortable and can stop the interview/survey at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your employment at this district.

Contacts and Questions

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research participants at Oklahoma State University has reviewed and approved this study. If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact the Principal Investigator at 918-812-7768, kim.castaldi@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer or would simply like to speak with someone other than the research team about concerns regarding this study, please contact the IRB at (405) 744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have my questions answered. I consent to participate in the study.

Indicate Yes or No:

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study.

Yes No

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____



Approved: 02/07/2020
Protocol #: IRB-20-53

VITA

Kimberly A. Castaldi

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Dissertation: A SOCIAL NETWORK STUDY OF SUPPORT TO RETAIN
PRINCIPALS

Major Field: School Administration

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2020.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Education in School Counseling at Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK in 1998.

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Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Speech-language Pathology at Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK in 1993.

Experience:

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Director of Special Services and Testing, Sapulpa Public Schools, Sapulpa, OK,
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Professional Memberships:

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American Speech-language Hearing Association