12-2013

School TVAAS Rank and Teacher Perceptions of Elementary School Culture in East Tennessee

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A dissertation

Presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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by

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December 2013

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Keywords: School Culture, Instructional Leadership, Leadership Traits, TELL Survey, TVAAS

ABSTRACT

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The focus of this study was a comparison between the perceptions of school culture characteristics as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey taken by school-based licensed educators in Tennessee and each school's overall composite TVAAS score. 9 factor variables were discussed in the literature review. This dissertation was a quantitative study of teachers' perceptions of school culture and TVAAS composite scores.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and individual effects on TVAAS composite scores. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators.

The exploratory question that originated from this study was: Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions in the 9 areas (Community Engagement, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Managing Student Conduct, Use of Time, Professional Development, Facilities and Resources, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support) measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013? In an attempt to answer this question, means were calculated using the TELL Tennessee survey responses for each of the 9 variables. This purposeful sample represents 164 elementary schools in East Tennessee. An ANOVA test was used to determine if a correlation

existed between teacher perceptions in the 9 areas measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey and schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

The results showed no significant difference in the teachers' perceptions of their school's administrator, culture, and overall composite TVAAS data score. The null hypotheses were retained in all 9 survey areas.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to my husband and best friend Andy Irvin. It would have been impossible for me to have finished this endeavor without your support, love, and patience. You are my favorite person, ever. I love you.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my daughter Bonnie Ann. You can do anything, and be anything in the world you want to be, my love. I love you to the moon and back.

Additionally this dissertation is dedicated to my parents Dennis and Bonnie Austin. Thank you for your love and support.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my brother Ben Davis. I will always be amazed by your bravery.

To my grandparents, Bob and Janice Bell. Thank you for more than I could ever tell you.

To my best friends- Ashley Hobbs and Laura Guthrie. Thanks for sticking by me for the past 6 years! I could not ask for better friends.

Thank you to the entire Irvin family. I love you all!

And a special thanks to Holly Flora. You were the first person who ever gave me the idea to pursue this degree in the first place!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Virginia Foley for being the best dissertation chair I could have ever imagined. I began my educational leadership journey with you in January 2008, and I appreciate your encouragement when I graduated with my M. Ed. in 2009 to "just keep going".

Likewise, I acknowledge Dr. Eric Glover for his expertise and ability to make me think outside of the box. I acknowledge Dr. Donald Good for his gift of teaching educational statistics. I acknowledge Dr. Cecil Blankenship for his willingness to serve on my committee. Thank you all for your hard work. It is appreciated, and it will never be forgotten.

I also acknowledge the members of my Hampton and Watauga Cohorts. And I especially acknowledge Eric Howard and Jessica Mills-Winstead.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Darling-Hammond (2003) wrote that "Great school leaders create nurturing school environments in which accomplished teaching can flourish and grow" (p.13). In the field of education it is important to remember that all school stakeholders are interconnected. These connections are vital to the success of students (Zepeda, 2012). Improving instruction through establishing relationships and understanding the role of the principal leads to a positive impact on leadership and school culture. Zepeda wrote "If consistent growth is to occur on an individual or organizational basis, time and effort must be appropriated for the work involved in connecting the dots between supervision, professional development, and evaluation" (p. 28).

School leaders who wish to make a positive impact in their schools must apply the idea that "Leading and learning always go hand in hand" (Fullan, 2003, p. xvi). Fullan called professional culture one of the fundamentals on which principals must focus. Changing the culture of a school can be seen as a moral obligation because of the great impact that leadership has on school culture. However, Fullan stated that a principal's role is not only to be an agent of change but also a beneficiary. Leaders who have a lasting impression on the organizations they lead are able to embed learning as the everyday expectation. School administrators not only encourage teachers to discuss their ideas with each other and try new things, they understand there may be setbacks and mistakes. Principals can help teachers as they develop their instructional practices and skills as educators by recognizing their abilities and the needs they have (Zepeda, 2012).

The TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning) survey is one way the state of Tennessee attempted to understand teachers and educational leaders in Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Education 2013a). This survey was used to collect data on several aspects of school leadership. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee participated in the survey by sharing their thoughts on various school culture categories. The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices involving nine categories. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their school on the following categories: Community Engagement and Support, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Managing Student Conduct, Use of Time, Professional Development, Facilities and Resources, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support (Tennessee Department of Education 2013a).

Purpose of Study

This study was focused on the overall TCAP student growth scores for elementary schools in East Tennessee and their principals' results on the TELL survey. TELL survey results related to how teachers view their principals. Through this research a better understanding of school culture and its connection to testing data was pursued. Finally, the purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions in areas measured by the TELL survey and compare those perceptions according to their schools' level of achievement as measured by TVAAS.

Research Questions

The following research questions were analyzed for each of the purposefully chosen schools in East Tennessee.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of community engagement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of teacher leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 4

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 5

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of use of time as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 6

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of professional development as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 7

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 8

Is there a significant difference in new teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Research Question 9

Is there a significant difference in new teacher perceptions of new teacher support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

Significance of Study

This study was an examination of a purposeful selection of elementary schools in East Tennessee and a comparison of their overall TVAAS scores from the TCAP standardized test with teacher perceptions of school culture based on TELL survey results. This study could be beneficial to principals in other areas of Tennessee or in other states that used the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey. This study could be beneficial to school directors who examine elementary school principal results on the TELL survey and would like to

compare those results to TVAAS data. This research may serve as a guide for school districts to enable them to plan professional development activities for their faculties.

Definition of Terms

The *Definition of Terms* section will serve as a lexicon for this dissertation. It lists selected terms used in this dissertation that may need clarification for the reader.

Achievement Gap: Discrepancies of success among student subgroups.

Best Practices: A variety of strategies to teach students.

Rules for Effectiveness Level Determination: Numerical levels 1-5 which denote school effectiveness as measured by TCAP growth data. (TVAAS, 2013)

- *Level 5, Most Effective*: This level is achieved by schools whose students are making substantially more progress than the Standard for Academic Growth (the school's index is 2 or greater). (TVAAS, 2013)

- *Level 4, Above Average Effectiveness*: This level is achieved by schools whose students are making more progress than the Standard for Academic Growth (the school's index is equal to or greater than 1 but less than 2). (TVAAS, 2013)

- *Level 3, Average Effectiveness*: This level is achieved by schools whose students are making the same amount of progress as the Standard for Academic Growth (the school's index is equal to or greater than -1 but less than 1). (TVAAS, 2013)

- *Level 2, Approaching Average Effectiveness*: This level is achieved by schools whose

students are making less progress than the Standard for Academic Growth (the school's

index is equal to or greater than -2 but less than -1). (TVAAS, 2013)

- *Level 1, Least Effective:* This level is achieved by schools whose students are making

  substantially less progress than the Standard for Academic Growth (the school's index is

  less than -2). (TVAAS, 2013)

Stakeholders: Anyone with an interest in a school or school district. These people include

students, superintendents, principals, teachers, staff members, parents, businesses, and churches.

TELL Survey: Survey was designed to provide school-based licensed educators with data, tools,

and direct support to assist with school improvement. The TELL Tennessee survey included

questions on the following topics: Community Engagement and Support, Teacher Leadership,

School Leadership, Managing Student Conduct, Use of Time, Professional Development,

Facilities and Resources, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support.

(Tennessee Department of Education 2013a). The TELL survey was taken online in 2013 by

school-based licensed educators. Each educator was given an individual code to rank their

school using a Likert scale.

Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS): System is used by Tennessee's school

districts, public schools, and charter schools. Each school receives web-based reporting through

the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). TVAAS data involve student growth

from 4th through 12th grade. They are based on a students' performance on the previous year of

testing and the growth that was achieved over one school year. According to the Tennessee

state website TVAAS offers an objective and precise way to measure student progress and the

value schools and districts add to students' educational experiences

(www.tn.gov/education/accountability).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to East Tennessee elementary schools. These schools all received the link to the TELL survey at the same time. Principals and teachers were all given instructions to take the survey by a specific deadline. To improve the response rate the deadline was pushed back on one occasion. Results of this study may or may not be generalized to other settings.

TELL survey score results were broken down by specific questions and were also divided into the nine broader ranging variables of community engagement, teacher leadership, school leadership, managing student conduct, use of time, professional development, facilities and resources, instructional practices and support, and new teacher support. All teachers and principals were asked to participate in the survey regardless of time employed at a specific school campus.

The Tennessee State Department of Education accepts that the purpose of schooling is student achievement. Student achievement is assessed by standardized tests that identify student strengths and weaknesses. Students may have experienced life stressors such as sickness, family issues, truancy, or transiency during the time of testing that may have affected their test scores negatively.

Another delimitation of this research is the time frame in which this survey was given.

Limitations

Limitations to the study included length of time as a principal in the school that completed the TELL survey. Some principals had been at their schools for many years with their teachers. These teachers may have experienced many years with their principal and know them very well. However, some principals were novice principals during the 2012-2013 school year. These teachers only had one year of experiences with those principals to use as they completed the TELL survey. Likewise, some principals had been newly assigned to a school but had experiences in other schools.

Some administrators encouraged teachers to take the survey and some did not discuss it with teachers, which may account for different percentages of teacher response. Additionally, as with all survey, some teachers and administrators may not have answered the survey truthfully. In some instances questions could have been skipped altogether.

The purposeful sample of elementary schools that participated in the TELL survey in Northeast Tennessee have various rates of TELL survey participation. A minimum of 50% participation was required for data analysis. There was variation in the response rates among schools. Several schools had 100% participation, and some despite a move in the survey date's closure did not.

Overview of Study

This study is presented in 5 chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction, purpose of the study, the research question, and the significance of study. Also included in Chapter 1 are the delimitations, limitations, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature that focuses on principal leadership characteristics as perceived by elementary school teachers and the achievement of their students. Chapter 3 explains the methodology and data collection

process for this study. This chapter also provides specific information about the TELL survey.

Chapter 4 includes the data and analysis of the obtained information. Chapter 5 provides a

summary and recommendations for future practice and research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review is centered on the research of leadership especially as it pertains to school culture in the elementary school setting. The TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning) survey was used to collect data on several aspects of school leadership. In 2011, 77% of school-based licensed educators in Tennessee participated in the survey by sharing their thoughts on various school culture categories (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a). The percentage of educators who took the TELL survey rose to 82% in 2013. The nine categories included in the TELL Survey are: Community Engagement and Support, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Managing Student Conduct, Use of Time, Professional Development, Facilities and Resources, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support. Each of the nine categories is discussed at length in this chapter.

Community Engagement

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices involving community engagement. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their school culture as it pertains to community engagement. The following indicators were addressed on the survey: parents and guardians as influential decision makers, communication with the community, encouraging parent and guardian involvement, proving parents and guardians with useful information about student learning, parent and guardian support of teachers, community member support of teachers, and community member support of the school (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a).

Communication

Community engagement is an area of expertise that principals are expected to entertain and master (Auerbach, 2011). However, many principals may feel ill prepared or unaware of the specific expectations their school districts have for them (Auerbach, 2011). The principal's role as a liaison is vital to the success of a school.

The No Child Left Behind Legislation outlined specific requirements schools would have to meet in order to comply with new mandates (Appleseed, 2008). The idea behind these mandated practices was that parents would be more clearly informed about things such as standardized test scores and, therefore, they become better school partners. Appleseed suggested schools that overcame obstacles such as poverty and improved test scores are the ones that focus on parent involvement and community engagement.

Clearly defined roles for stakeholders are necessary for successfully engaging school communities (Hogue, 2012). Schools must ensure they are relating to families "not as clients, but as partners in school and community improvement" (Ferlazzo, 2011, p. 11). Ferlazzo discussed the need of school administrators to actively engage with the community by making sure that parents are not only told what schools need but how parents may fill those needs. Filling needs is involving the community but not necessarily engaging with the community. Engagement is more of a linking up relationship between people, whereas merely involving the community "envelopes or enfolds" others.

Houston, Blankstein, and Cole (2009) stated that *"A central role of any educational leader is that of an accomplished communicator--one who can relate to diverse communities, promote cooperative interaction, and unify stakeholders around the larger cause of quality education for every student"* (p. 23). Collaboration is one of the hallmarks of leadership, and in

the field of education one of the most notable forms of collaboration comes from community engagement (Danielson, 2007).

Schools that engage community members instead of remaining isolated from school stakeholders experience greater levels of success (Hogue, 2012). Schools must build partnerships with the community in an effort to organize and plan for the future success of students. Principals will be more successful if they involve the community (Gordon & Louise, 2009). Communication with the community that supports a school must be "clear and purposeful" so that relationships are founded on truth and understanding (Houston et al., 2009). Parents and students need to be invited into the decision-making process when appropriate (Witmer, 2005).

Latess et al. (2006) discussed a discourse of silence that occurs when communication is not present between a child's home and school. Latess et al. recommend parent focus groups as one way principals can ensure the parents at their school have input. These focus groups offer valuable opportunities for principals to glean valuable information from their community. In these meetings a principal's role is to ask the right questions and then listen for meaningful feedback. The idea of listening is also found in research by Ferlazzo (2011). He said that the most important factor in communication with parents is listening. Schools communicate the visions and goals they hope to achieve to all school stakeholders and allow parents to give input into school decisions (Frost, 2012).

Luther Burbank High School, an urban school serving 2,000 students in Sacramento, California, uses home visits as one way to know its students more completely (Ferlazzo, 2011) Each summer many of the teachers and counselors go to the homes of their incoming students. The goal of these visits is for school personnel to listen to families and the information they have

about their child(ren) that may help ensure that the child successfully completes high school. Research by the nationally recognized Parent Teacher Home Visit Project (www.pthvp.org, 2012) supports through independent evaluations that many academic benefits can be achieved through these types of meetings.

Collaboration and the fostering of relationships create expected outcomes for schools (Hogue, 2012). Leadership and partnerships are strengthened by collaboration (Auerback, 2011; Hogue, 2012). These positive relationships encourage parent involvement by promoting a feeling of efficacy on the part of parents (Ferlazzo, 2011).

Parent Involvement

Research conducted by Frost (2012) indicated that there is a significant statistical correlation between parent and principal perceptions of communication and school culture. This study was conducted in a large metropolitan school district with principals representing 56 schools and 11,765 parents. Frost stated that in this age of accountability engaging the community is vital to the success of schools in America. Strong community partnerships can be responsible for changing a school's climate into a place where all school stakeholders are engaged.

School administrators are often called upon to lead changes within a school that involve all school stakeholders (Latess, Curtain, & Leck, 2006). As a group parents can sometimes be overlooked or excluded by schools as important stakeholders. Relationships are the foundation of effective education (Witmer, 2005). Witmer wrote that if a student has healthy and productive relationships with parents and teachers, it will heavily contribute to success in the classroom. The success that schools experience includes student success (Hogue, 2012). Research suggests

that if teachers perceive that their school has high levels of parent involvement, it is positively associated with student achievement (Gordon & Louis, 2009).

When parents and guardians are seen as decision makers, it creates a partnership between the people of a community and the school (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). Through two-way communication, encouraging parent involvement, and letting parents know about what their child needs to know, the community schools serve may be seen as more supportive of the school. One way to improve communication is to begin school years with prearranged visits to students' homes (Ferlazzo, 2011).

Often, the only time a teacher makes contact with a parent is when something is wrong. Teachers may call regarding behavior or missing homework to let parents know their child is not meeting school expectations. If the aim of a school is to create strong bonds with parents and community members and thus improve student achievement, this approach does not work (Ferlazzo, 2011). Those connections are not the right kinds of connections. The right kinds of connections are the ones that are built on relationships, listening, welcoming, and shared decision making (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002). These connections are able to produce many benefits for the students in a school that include improved grade point averages and scores on tests, improved attendance, enrollment in more difficult classes, improved social skills, and better behavior at school and home (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002).

One study conducted in Philadelphia by the Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) and the Alliance Organizing Project responded to concerns about encouraging parent involvement (Yanoff et al., 2001). These concerns were communicated by state legislators, teacher union leadership, the Philadelphia school district, parents, children, and school staff

members. The focus groups included interviews with students, teachers, parents, principals, administrators, social workers, counselors, nonteaching assistants, and other school staff. The findings of this study revealed that all nonadministration school stakeholders desired opportunities that allowed them to be included more frequently in policy development and more supported when policies were implemented (Yanoff et al., 2001). Johnson (2013) reported that she is "convinced that we can develop better, more practical, more long-lasting solutions if we widen the circle of dialogue on education reform" (p. 20). Through involving school stakeholders and inviting their ideas and possible solutions, principals and school administrators demonstrate that they "value and respect" what the members of the community have to offer (p. 20).

Teacher Leadership

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for teacher leadership. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their school culture as it pertains to teacher leadership. The following indicators were addressed on the survey: teachers are recognized as educational experts, teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction, teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues, teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles, faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems, taking steps toward problem solving, teachers as effective leaders, selecting instructional materials and resources, devising teaching techniques, setting grading and student assessment practices, determining professional development content, student discipline procedures, school budget, selection of new teachers, and the school improvement plan (www.telltennessee.org, 2013).

Recognition as Educational Experts

The idea of teacher leadership is a relatively new concept (Kiranh, 2013). Research on the topic is gaining momentum as the importance of teacher leadership continues to grow. The demands on school administrators are high and often impossible to meet (Danielson, 2007). These demands include being instructional leaders in areas where the administrator has limited knowledge. Relying on the expertise of teachers is necessary to ensure schools are improving. Studies on teacher leadership have become increasingly popular since the 1980s (Kiranh, 2013). Despite the relatively recent research on teacher leadership, it has been linked closely to school effectiveness. In short, Kiranh reports teachers are one of the key elements of school effectiveness, effective learning, and school development.

Danielson (2007) said that teaching is considered by some to be a flat profession. In many instances the job of the accomplished 20-year teaching veteran mirrors that of the 1st-year novice. While many teachers are happy to spend their careers in the classroom, others experience a sort of "professional restlessness" (p. 14). It is important to note that teacher leadership does not necessarily equal aspirations of school administration roles. Senge (1999) described three types of leaders. He wrote that the executive leader works above the workers, the line leader works with the workers, and the network leader works among and between everyone in an organization. Network leaders often do not have a formal position within the organization. They exhibit pure leadership rather than management. Danielson reported "School districts that want to improve make a wise investment when they cultivate and encourage teacher leaders, because they are in a position to take the long view and carry out long-range projects" (p. 14). This makes sense because of the nature of the idea of tenure in a teaching position versus the tenure of an administrative position. Teachers stay in their positions much longer on

average than school administrators, which in many ways makes them the "custodians of the school culture" (p. 15). The "instructional memory" of teacher leaders can be invaluable to school administrators (Danielson, 2007).

Implemented in 2011 as a part of Race to the Top (RTTT) the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) is a teacher evaluation model used in Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013b). This evaluation model has been constructed to ensure that all students receive the highest quality classroom instruction possible. The TEAM model includes leadership requirements for teachers that accompany the more traditional items on the rubric such as "classroom environment, lesson planning, and classroom instruction" (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013b) The TEAM evaluation rubrics outline the requirements for the highest score on a Likert scale with a 5 as the highest score. The high score of a 5 for teacher leadership is reserved for a teacher who is active and consistent as a contributor to the school community by assisting and or mentoring other teachers. This includes that a teacher is able to "successfully engagement in three or more of the following: collaborative planning with subject and/or grade level teams, actively leading in a Professional Learning Community (PLC), coaching/mentoring, supervising clinical experiences , and leading data driven professional learning opportunities" (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013b)

Curtis (2013) argued that the newly implemented Common Core State Standards support the idea that not all teachers are the same. Curtis defined a teacher leader by the roles and responsibilities that teachers who are the most effective in classrooms use. Teacher leaders use these effective practices and collaborative points of view to improve their schools. Due to new expectations of students, teachers who have the highest level of success in the classroom should be elevated to higher ranks as teachers.

The vision of what teacher leadership can and should look like is varied across school districts; however, the need for teachers to serve as leaders is a constant (Curtis, 2013). Protheroe (2006) reported that teachers "want to work in schools where they have the time and opportunity to work with other professionals— and where they are supported and appreciated by their principal." (p. 47)

Teachers are Trusted to Make Decisions

Teacher leaders who serve their schools in formal leadership roles are those who hold positions such as department chair, master teacher, or instructional coach (Danielson, 2007). These positions are all types of instructional coaches due to the nature of the relationships they establish with their peers and administrators. Informally, teachers can become leaders because of their ability to:

emerge spontaneously and organically from the teacher ranks. Instead of being selected, they take the initiative to address a problem or institute a new program. They have no positional authority; their influence stems from the respect they command from their colleagues through their expertise and practice. (Danielson, 2007, p.14)

There appears to be a type of "soft power" when examining the relationship between teacher leaders and other teachers (Eddy-Spicer, 2013, p. 151). Of this type of power Eddy-Spicer said:

The exercise of *soft power* relies on influence and affiliation through consensual, collaborative work rather than the exercise of coercion or force through hierarchical *hard power* to achieve institutional aims. The soft power explored here lies in the discursive actions of senior teachers in a team of teachers,

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examining in particular the teacher-leader, a senior teacher appointed to lead the

team in two settings, a long-standing curriculum group that the teachers

themselves organized, and a newly created workshop that the school

administration required teachers to convene as part of a reform initiative. (p.151)

Teachers as Leaders

A new approach to leadership may be looking at leadership working from the inside out

as opposed to from the top down (Stewart, 2013). Fullan (2007) wrote of effective leaders at any

level that the true "litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes people's commitment to

putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but

above all it is collective mobilization" (p.9). Gordon and Louis (2009) wrote that principals with

more diverse leadership teams are more open to community involvement. Danielson (2007)

contended:

Effective teacher leaders are open-minded and respectful of others' views. They

display optimism and enthusiasm, confidence and decisiveness. They persevere

and do not permit setbacks to derail an important initiative they are pursuing. On

the other hand, they are flexible and willing to try a different approach if the first

effort runs into roadblocks. (p.16).

Teacher leadership occurs when administrators and school districts allow teachers to have

direct involvement in school decisions. This proves valuable when working with all categories

of students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a). Research has shown that school

leadership that is committed to closing the gaps is more likely to actually do so (CAESL, 2004).

Improvement has been shown in educational research amongst administrators who establish

leadership teams and involve teachers in new learning activities (CAESL, 2004).

School Leadership

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for school

leadership. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their

school culture as it pertains to school leadership. The following indicators were addressed on the

survey: the faculty and leadership have a shared vision, an atmosphere of trust and mutual

respect, teachers are comfortable raising issues and concerns important to them, school

leadership consistently supports teachers, teachers are held to high professional standards for

delivering instruction, facilitates using data to improve student learning, teacher performance is

assessed objectively, teachers receive feedback that improves teaching, teacher evaluation

procedures are consistent, school improvement team provides effective leadership. Additionally,

educators were asked if school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns

about the following: leadership issues, facilities and resources, use of time, professional

development, teacher leadership, community support and involvement, managing student

conduct, instructional practices and support and new teacher support (telltennessee.org).

City (2013) stated that "Now more than ever, school leaders must focus their priorities to

make strategic use of the resources they have" (p. 10). School leadership is facing numerous

changes to which principals must adapt. These changes include things such as teacher evaluation

models, common core implementation, and closing student achievement gaps.

School Leadership and Gap Closure

Every year students across America take part in standardized achievement tests. Their scores are then compiled and analyzed, and administrators are able to compare districts, schools, and even individual teachers (corestandards.org). These data are the vessels by which some schools maintain their funding and stay off of the at-risk list for their individual state. There are also subgroups of data that are examined by states and schools. These subgroups include students whose ethnicities are not White, students with low economic status, and students who are receiving special education services (CAESL, 2004). Achievement gaps, however, do not only show up in standardized testing. They are also evident in class grades, course selections, dropout rates, and college-completion rates (Education Week, 2011).

A 2011 report on student achievement showed that some ethnic subgroups are still underperforming their White counterparts (Time, 2011). The goal is not only to ensure that all students are making gains or improvements each year, but that all types of students are achieving excellence in education (Education Week, 2011). Closing the achievement gap was most famously charged to American schools and administrators in the NCLB act (CAESL, 2004). This legislation also brought with it an emphasis on achievement testing that the United States had never seen before. The achievement gap exists because the economic, social, and cultural obstacles that many students face are real and difficult (CAESL, 2004). The ability to measure students in all four major subject areas (math, science, social studies and English-language arts) is critical as research is conducted to see how American students compare to other nations and to themselves from year to year (CAESL, 2004).

CAESL (2004) stated that the role of the principal proves vital in closing the achievement gap. Principals must have a mantra of excellence for all and expect that all students will be held

to high standards. School administrators play an important role in the success of all students.

The Northwest Central Region Educational Laboratory (NCREL) has written this statement in

regards to ensuring that all students receive high-quality instruction:

> Students of every race, ethnicity, language, and income need the skills and tools
>
> to compute, critique, and create at high levels. We must agree to identify and
>
> employ initiatives that hold the greatest promise for moving all students—
>
> including students of color, poor students, rural and urban students, and second-
>
> language learners—to high levels of achievement. (p. 2)

The ELL achievement gap has seldom improved for the better part of 2 decades—

however, it currently seems to be a very important goal of all administrators and school districts

(Webley, 2011). Now that school and system-wide data has been disaggregated, it is even more

glaringly obvious that the way ELL students are educated needs to be reformed (Education

Week, 2011). The Hispanic population in the United States continues to grow. With that

growth, the need to accommodate for ELL children has also grown. Presently, Hispanic people

make up 16% of the US population, and by 2050 that percentage is expected to rise (Education

Week, 2011).

CAESL (2004) found schools that are successful at closing the achievement gap have a

common identifying characteristic: an effective and efficient school administration. However,

school leaders find themselves in a position they have never been in before. Often the states

whose schools are experiencing the largest growth in English Language Learners (ELL) are the

ones who may be least able to accommodate for them due to lack of resources and experiences.

As the United States receives more and more ELL students, school districts need to find a way to support schools' changing demographics and school improvement data (NCELA, 2004).

School Leadership and Communication

Previous findings as well as nationwide research show that good teaching conditions have been positively associated with improved student achievement (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a). Instructional practices and supports that are commonly found in schools that are closing ELL gaps are those practices and supports that are led with visionary leadership (CAESL, 2004). Schools that close gaps have leaders with specific goals in mind. The Wallace Foundation (2013) reported that both district and school leadership are important as connections are made between educational reform initiatives and the consequences they hold for students.

The rigor of the curriculum that students are expected to meet may prove to be one of the most important components that administrators can examine as they strive to close their student achievement gaps. Major changes in curriculum and instruction are coming to the United States, and many are already here. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are new standards being adopted by many states in America. These standards take strands of learning and build on ideas from kindergarten through high school across math, literacy, science, and social studies. The general purpose of these standards is to standardize expectations across the United States and help students be college and career ready upon graduation (The National Governors Association, 2013). New assessments that will be used for testing include the Partnership for Assessment and Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment starting with the 2013-14 school year and the Constructed Response Assessment (CRA).

In 2013 Metlife conducted a survey of 500 principals that found that 9 out of 10

principals say they should be responsible for everything that happens to a child at school (Harris

Interactive, 2013). Principals also say their jobs are not as enjoyable as they have been in the

past. Some participants in the study blamed the need for principals to close gaps by meeting the

needs of diverse student populations and implement new school initiatives with decreased budget

funds.

School Leadership as Instructional Leaders

The creation of principals who are strong instructional leaders is among some school

districts top priorities. This push to find and possibly mold strong principals comes with the

findings of current research that sturdily links principal assignment to student achievement

(Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). Mendels and Mitgang wrote this on the topic of the importance of

principals as instructional leaders:

> Principals today must be instructional leaders, hearkening back to public
>
> education's early days when heads of schools were called "principal teachers."
>
> Instruction leadership requires principals to be consummate team builders who
>
> can shape a vision of success for all students, cultivate leadership in others, help
>
> teachers upgrade their skills, and use data to foster school improvement. (p. 22)

Managing Student Conduct

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for managing

student conduct. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their

school culture as it pertains to managing student conduct. The following indicators were

addressed on the survey: students understand expectations, students follow rules for conduct, faculty understands expectations, administration enforces rules, administrators support the efforts of teachers, and the environment is safe (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a).

Expectations

Boyd (2012) spoke of a gulf that seems to exist between teachers and administrators on the subject of student behavior. There are several factors that play a role when looking at managing student conduct. These include administrators, teachers, and students, thus; everyone within the school setting is "expected to model and encourage appropriate behavior" (Goodwin & Miller, 2012, p.82). Many more teachers need help with establishing classroom norms and expectations for behavior than those who do not (Boyd, 2012). Behavior issues that arise in classrooms are often from teachers who have not yet strengthened their skills as disciplinarians. School leaders must take on the responsibility of "ensuring a consistent, schoolwide system for preventing misbehavior…on school grounds" (p. 62).

Boyd suggests that one of the solutions to this problem is for administrators and teachers to spend time together establishing a building-wide discipline system (Boyd, 2012). Preparedness on behalf of the principal and teacher are vital to student success in the classroom. Schools that experience high achievement even though many of their students may be living in high-poverty areas appear to involve students in peer mediation (Goodwin, 2012). The administrator's role is to create an oasis of safety and, again, create a school-wide approach to behavior expectations.   Instructional time that is lost due to student discipline problems may create an environment where students cannot learn due to chaos and possibly dangerous activities (Boyd, 2012).

Marzano (2000) found that positive classroom culture is related to teachers' positive

relationships with students. These relationships lead to higher achievement (Cornelius-White,

2007). Just as Gordon and Louis (2009) reported that academics are improved by community

collaboration, "youth at risk for school failure need community and school supports to reduce the

likelihood of developing delinquent behavior" (Shippen, Patterson, Green, & Smitherman, 2012,

p. 296)

Use of Time

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for school use of

time. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about school culture

as it pertains to use of time. The following indicators were addressed on the survey: reasonable

class size, time to collaborate, minimal instructional interruptions, sufficient non instructional

time, sufficient instructional time, minimal paperwork, and teachers are protected from other

duties (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a).

Class Size

Class size is one of the few variables in American education that appears to have the

ability to impact student learning and be mandated by government policies (Whitehurst &

Chingos, 2011). Mandates in over 20 states have placed incentives on class size reduction

(CSR). However, the current economic uncertainty has led many school administrators to

reconsider putting large amounts of budget monies into smaller class sizes. This dissonance

between the push for smaller class sizes and the lack of funding has led to a stronger demand for

research in this area. However, the research that is desired by educational leaders to aid in their decisions in this area is often deficient or inconclusive.

Currently, many researchers are debating suitable teacher and student ratio numbers (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). Research addressing class size shows varying outcomes (Roza & Ouijdani, 2012). Roza and Ouijdani found two views in particular that tend to surface in research. The first view is that class sizes are rising and that this is not good for public education. This viewpoint is often taken by the media for political reasons. When examining results of certain researchers it can be suggested that the outcomes for small class sizes are beneficial most notably in early grades and with minority students (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). These results are often cited in isolation, which causes outcomes to appear more beneficial than when examined in context. Council of Chief State School Officers wrote that some research presented that the effects of smaller class size may suggest no significance.

The second viewpoint is taken by people such as school administrators struggling to find money in budget accounts (Roza & Ouijdani, 2012). Small class sizes cost more money, and due to less money in school budget accounts it is often difficult for school administrators to keep classes small. There is a need to repurpose the funds to ensure all students are successful and all of the other aspects of the school are maintained. Therefore, school administrators may use funds that have formally been used to keep classes small to meet other needs in the school setting.

Insufficient Instructional Time

Insufficient instructional time occurs in many classrooms (Kennedy, 2006). The reasons for insufficient instructional time can come from various sources including lack of collaboration time, paperwork, and extracurricular duties (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a). Kennedy (2006) wrote that teachers often do not have time to plan and collaborate because they are busy creating materials. This time would be better used planning and reflecting on their teaching practices.

<center>*Professional Development*</center>

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for professional development opportunities. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about school culture as it pertains to professional development opportunities at their school. The following indicators were addressed on the survey: sufficient resources, sufficient time, data driven, aligned with the school improvement plan, differentiated to meet individual teacher needs, strategies to improve community involvement, deepens content knowledge, time for reflection, follow-up, time for collaboration and refinement, enhances ability to meet diverse student needs, and improve student learning. The survey also included a section for teachers to indicate which types of professional development opportunities they need (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a).

Shields and Lewis (2012) wrote that the most important factor in student achievement is teacher effectiveness. Many school districts across America are eager to find ways to develop the skills their teachers possess (Cross, 2012). Darling-Hammond, Wei, and Andree (2010) found that although research indicates professional development is important to the improvement

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of student learning, that often it does not meet individual teacher's needs. Professional learning needs to be ongoing and collaborative to truly be effective. Research also shows that only a limited number of teachers receive individualized training that meets the diverse needs of their students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010).

Just as poorly executed teaching can cause student behavior problems in the classroom, poorly planned professional development for teachers can also cause negative outcomes (MacFarlane, 2012). There is a growing need for teachers to receive professional development that equips them with the knowledge to deliver lessons that are heavy in a core content and able to meet the needs of diverse students (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Teachers who receive opportunities for quality professional development are likely to improve student achievement in their classrooms (Cross, 2012). Giving teachers an opportunity to attend professional development trainings within the context they work is a key to successful instructional improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Fullan, 2001). Fullan (2001) wrote that "the single most important factor ensuring that all students meet performance goals at the site level is the leadership of the principal—leadership being defined as the guidance and direction of instructional improvement" (p. 126). Giving principals, coaches, and teachers time to collaborate and discuss student data creates an environment with context (Cross, 2012; Fullan, 2001). Fullan (2001) stated that through collaboration in PLCs schools create, "Opportunities to learn through study groups, action research, and the sharing of experiences in support groups which create real supports for principals so that the complicated and difficult problems of instructional leadership can be addressed" (p. 126).

Facilities and Resources

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for school facilities and resources. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their school culture as it pertains to facilities and resources. The following indicators were addressed on the survey: access to appropriate instructional materials, access to appropriate technology, access to appropriate communication technology, office equipment and supplies, support personnel, school environment is clean and well maintained, and the physical environment (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a).

Another factor that has been shown to close achievement gaps is the proper management of facilities and resources (CAESL, 2009). Ensuring that students have access to current and quality textbooks, school supplies, and counseling services is a factor that could be easily overlooked, especially in a school with limited resources. Student subgroups such as ELL students are more likely to have a disadvantage as a "result of more subtle environmental factors", and even what are called "opportunity gaps". Opportunity gaps occur when poor children do not have the same access to: the same educational resources at their homes, healthy food to eat, and healthcare (Education Week, 2011). Administrators who consider these factors are more likely to see a close in the achievement gap for their students.

Technology

Advancements in technology have an impact on society in many areas including education (Keengwe, 2013). Research conducted on the best ways to integrate technology into the classroom have begun due to an increase in technology devices. This time in education has been called a digital age due to the increased availability and use of technology devices.

Keengwe stated that currently there is a complex transformation happening in our educational system and that there is a need for teachers incorporate the use of technology into instruction.

Godzicki, Godzicki, Krofel, and Michaels (2013) stated that students were more likely to listen and respond in the classroom setting when teachers used technology in the lesson. When technology such as computers, laptops, iPods, iPads, interactive whiteboards, and document cameras supported lesson plans used by teachers students were more likely to be engaged. The data collected from a study of teachers using technology in their classrooms concluded that when students felt teachers used technology in the classroom they were more likely to engage in classroom activities. Based on the results of an action research project, Godzicki et al. concluded that students were more motivated and engaged in learning when using technology.

Support Personnel

The CCSS focus on creating a job force that is college and career ready by the time they leave high school (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013b). However, some polls show there is an unbridged gap between students who would like to attend college and graduate and those who actually do graduate (Bridgeland & Bruce, 2011). School support personnel such as guidance counselors are in a unique position to help students achieve these goals. Guidance counselors have a unique ability to create systems that foster student success and bridge gaps to challenges facing America today. Bridgeland and Bruce stated that counselors could potentially solve the problems represented by college and high school dropouts by bridging the gap between students' hopes for their futures and what they will need to accomplish. Counselors also have the ability to address the gap of student potential to fill labor market needs because of their ability to see these needs and how students might best be prepared to fill these needs.

Environment

The current state of some schools' environments in the United States is in disarray (Maletz, 2012). Schools are facing difficult decisions about how and if to renovate their buildings to progress the state of the buildings to what is appropriate for student learning. Retrofitting and revamping buildings costs money that many school systems do not currently have to spend. However, school buildings and layouts do make a difference to student learning and achievement (Woolner, McCarter, Wall, & Higgins, 2012). Woolner et al. found that the physical space can make it difficult to reflect and make changes due to an inability to see environments in new ways.

Instructional Practices and Support

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for school instructional practices and support. School-based licensed educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their school culture as it pertains to instructional practices. The following indicators were addressed on the survey: assessment data is available in time to impact instructional practices, teacher use of data, curriculum is aligned to Common Core State Standards, teachers work in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), provided support translated to improvements in instructional practices, teachers are encouraged to try new things, assigned classes that maximize success, and level of teacher autonomy to make decisions.

Data Use

The use of data and a push for schools to be data-driven is the message that many schools are hearing (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). The importance of data, especially for timely data, is

vital when looking at a teacher's and a school's areas of effectiveness (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2004). To optimize the results of data schools collect, many administrators are being trained in the area of data meetings (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). These meetings focus on areas of weakness for students and attempt to fix the problems in the classroom. The use of data meetings is a way for school stakeholders to address the problem, not just the symptom.

What is clear from the last 20 years of educational research is that data can help educators figure out where they problems may be, but data alone will not solve all of the problems and gaps (City, 2013). In order for data to be used by teachers to inform instruction, administrators must use some form of formal collaboration. For many schools this form of collaboration comes through the establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Professional Learning Communities

DuFour and Mattos (2013) stated that "the most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning is to create the collaborative culture and collective responsibility of a PLC" (p. 34). In a professional learning community (PLC) members come together to create the meeting agenda in a type of "collective inquiry" (p. 34). The teams that are formed from the creation of PLCs establish norms for each meeting that set specific expectations for all members who attend. PLCs shift the focus from an individual's teaching style and focus on the evidence that students are learning and it is vital that interdependence and mutual accountability are present to ensure teams are effective.

PLCs focus on the response that will be used in order to meet the needs of students. Wiggins and McTighe (2007) wrote that "schools exist to cause learning that is intellectually

vital, generative of future self-directed learning, personally meaningful and productive, and socially valuable" (p.12). The responsive nature of these meetings enables educators to collectively take responsibility of students and data (Louis et al., 2011). PLC meetings create opportunities for teachers to share teaching practices. These opportunities support new teachers and create opportunities for teacher leaders to gain experience as they lead their peers (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Lppescu, & Easton, 2010). PLC meetings are purposeful and follow a set agenda. However, one of the most important aspects of a PLC meeting is the ability of a principal to give teams evidence of student achievement to improve their teaching (DuFour & Mattos, 2013).

Aligning Curriculum

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) standards are a group of standards comprised of strands of learning that follow students from kindergarten through 12th grade (www.commoncore.org). These standards have been adopted by 46 states and the District of Columbia. The requirements of the CCSS aim to improve the ability of all students to be college and career ready. In order to ensure that students are ready for high levels of reading in the workplace, students in all grades will read more difficult texts and take more accelerated math classes by the time of their graduation (Shanahan, 2012). The CCSS require more complex tasks and text based student responses than what is currently being taught in American schools. Currently, only about 70% of American students are able to meet state standards and enter higher educational tracks. It has been researched that of the 70% of successful students who graduate from American high schools 40% must enter remedial classes when entering college. Most of

these students who enter these remedial classes will not graduate (Complete College America, 2012).

<center>New Teacher Support</center>

The TELL survey rubric lists indicators on a variety of best practices for new teacher support. Newly licensed school-based educators in Tennessee were asked questions about their perceptions and opportunities for support as new teachers. The following indicators were addressed on the survey for new teachers: being formally assigned a mentor, attendance of seminars specifically for new teachers, attention to workload, planning time with veteran teachers, opportunities to observe other teachers, formal time to be with your mentor during school hours, orientation for new teachers, and regular communication with administration (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013a).

Mentoring

Lortie (1966) compared new teachers to a type of Robinson Crusoe, fighting through a desert island and facing challenges alone. Today this theme still exists when examining the experiences of the first years of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Despite the long history of the study of new teachers and the changing expectations of the profession, several ideas persist. One idea is that the first few years of teaching are an undeniably intense time of learning as ideas of teaching are applied, and another is that the first years of teaching can be incredibly lonely for the new teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). To fight the loneliness that so many new teachers feel many educational leaders and policy makers have proposed the idea of mentoring programs.

In the 1990s approximately 40% of new teachers reported that they had participated in a mentoring program as a new teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). By 2008 the numbers rose and

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were up to nearly 90%. Ideas about what mentoring should look like shifted over the years. Feiman-Nemser wrote that mentoring has been seen as a bridge in the past to link a new teacher's understanding to the application of teaching and learning.

Attention to Workload

It is often difficult for new teachers to have reduced workloads because in the profession of teacher everyone is basically doing the same thing (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Sheilds et al. 2003) found that reduced workloads for new teachers are virtually nonexistent. The reality for new teachers is often the opposite of what research suggests they experience in their first few years as a teacher. New teachers often find themselves with the largest class sizes, the worst behavior problems, larger numbers of students with special needs, extracurricular duties that exceed what their veteran counterparts are required to do, and limited access to textbooks and materials (Shields et al., 2003).

Planning Time with Veteran Teachers

New teachers need time to collaborate with veteran teachers (www.telltennessee.org). This time to collaborate with veteran teachers needs to be more than just an informal or quick meeting; meetings need to occur within a collaborative professional learning community (PLC) (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). For decades the challenges that idealistic new teachers face against the bureaucratic nature of established schools and teachers has been chronicled in numerous publications. The plight of the new teacher struggling to make relationships is one that is echoed in educational literature.

Opportunities to Observe

The idea of schools having mentor programs that are informal and lack organization and expectations give new teachers a person to meet with casually and have unstructured discussions about school events. However, this type of mentoring that is not categorized by anything more than a loose friendship may not be enough for new teachers. When mentors lack training and are unsure of specific goals and expectations of the relationship they attempt to establish with their mentee there is no guarantee that new teachers get the help they need (Breaux & Wong, 2003; Johnson, 2012).

Communication

New teacher support is a necessity for those schools that wish to close gaps in education. Research shows that high teacher turnover is detrimental to the success of students (CAESL, 2004). A 2008 NCELA study reported that only 29.5% of teachers have the specialized training required to properly teach ELL students (2004). Without specialized training, teachers must learn as they go, which inevitably negatively affects their ELL students. Those principals who are committed to recruiting, keeping, and fostering the understandings and development of new teachers are more likely to close ELL achievement gaps (CAESL, 2004).

Summary

Chapter 2 is a review of interrelated literature. The review of literature was completed on school culture as it is evaluated by the TELL survey. The TELL survey was used to examine school culture in nine areas including: Community Engagement and Support, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Managing Student Conduct, Use of Time, Professional

Development, Facilities and Resources, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher

Support. Knowledge of these school culture characteristics and the related affects the

characteristics could have on an educational setting were presented. Chapter 3 contains a

description of the methodology for this study. Chapter 4 describes the data analysis, and Chapter

5 is a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future educational study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was an examination of the relationships between teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership in elementary schools in East Tennessee and student TVAAS data. The purpose of this study was to look at relationships between TELL survey data and TVAAS student growth data as measured by TCAP and whether school culture and leadership have an effect on student growth data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate results of the relationship between teacher perceptions of school culture and overall TVAAS scores.

A quantitative framework was used to compare significant relationships of teacher perceptions of culture and student growth data. Included in this chapter are: The Research Questions and Null Hypotheses, Instrumentation, Population, Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Summary. A quantitative framework was used to examine the possible relationships among leadership, school culture, and overall student growth scores that include numeracy and literacy. A quasi-experimental design was used in this study because public data already existed and collecting additional data was not necessary.

The following research questions and corresponding null hypotheses were addressed during the study.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of community engagement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of community engagement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of teacher leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of teacher leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{03}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 4

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{04}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 5

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of use of time as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{05}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of use of time as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 6

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of professional development as measured

by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{06}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of professional development as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 7

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{07}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 8

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{08}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Research Question 9

Is there a significant difference in new teacher perceptions of new teacher support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{09}: There is no significant difference in new teacher perceptions of new teacher support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

Instrumentation

The data on school culture for this study were collected from the TELL Tennessee Survey conducted in 2013 by the Tennessee Department of Education. The 2013 TELL Tennessee Survey is a survey of school-based licensed educators. The survey included questions on the following topics: Community Engagement and Support, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Managing Student Conduct, Use of Time, Professional Development, Facilities and Resources, Instructional Practices and Support, and New Teacher Support. Teachers answered questions using the terms: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, and don't know. TELL Survey questions were answered anonymously and cannot be traced back to the survey taker.

Sample

The population used in this research involved school-based licensed educators in the East Tennessee region. These teachers taught at the elementary school level during the 2012-2013 school year. In 2011, 77% of school-based licensed educators responded to the TELL Survey. The percentage of educators who took the TELL Survey increased to 82% in 2013. Of the

74,676 school-based licensed educators in Tennessee 61,341 took the TELL Survey in 2013. An alphabetical list of all counties in East Tennessee was assembled. From this list every other elementary school was chosen. The purposeful sample of elementary schools in East Tennessee included 164 schools. The TELL Tennessee Survey required at least 50% of teachers to respond to the survey in a particular school to yield results. In small school populations a minimum of five teachers were required to respond to the questions in order to yield results. Of the 164 schools selected, 14 did not have TELL data available on the telltennessee.org website. It is supposed that 50% of teachers in those schools did not participate in the survey and therefore data were not reported. At least 30 schools were desired to represent the numbers reported on the TVAAS website for overall achievement. These schools are described as a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for overall achievement. Categories for 1 or 2 were combined to represent a group of 30. The category for 3 was represented by a group of 41 schools. Categories for TVAAS scores of 4 or 5 were combined to represent 79 schools. One hundred fifty schools in East Tennessee are represented by this study.

Data Collection

A request was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval to collect data from the TELL Tennessee Survey data and the overall TVAAS scores received by a purposeful sample of elementary schools in East Tennessee. The IRB determined that the proposed research and data collection did not meet the FDA or the DHHS definition of research involving human subjects. Therefore, this research was exempt from IRB approval. The survey data collected were taken from the Tennessee Department of Education's TELL Tennessee website, and the Tennessee Department of Education's TVAAS website. TELL Tennessee data

were compiled for each of the nine categories on which data were collected. 2013 TELL Tennessee percentages from each of the nine categories were averaged to find a mean percentage. The mean percentages for each school in each of the nine surveyed categories that responded with strongly agree or agree were multiplied by 3.5. The mean percentages for each school in each of the nine surveyed categories that responded with a strongly disagree or disagree were multiplied by 1.5. Those scores were added together to produce a number value for each of the 150 schools in the purposeful sample. Those number values were used in an ANOVA analysis with public TVAAS data. No names were collected for this study.

The data on overall (literacy, numeracy, science, and social studies) school TCAP student growth data were taken from the public TVAAS website. Schools were given a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 depending on student growth on the TCAP standardized test for 2013.

Data Analysis

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1 or 2; 3; and 4 or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. The population of the study was school-based licensed elementary school educators in a purposeful sample of East Tennessee educators who responded to the TELL Tennessee survey in 2013. The data were analyzed using an ANOVA test and provided a statistical analysis of school culture data that were collected by the TELL Tennessee Survey and TVAAS data. Data were collected and compiled to show an overall school score for student growth. All research questions were addressed using ANOVAs. All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance.

Summary

Chapter 3 outlines the research design of the study, the research questions, null hypotheses, instrumentation, participating population, the procedure used for data collection, and data analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate results of the relationship between teacher perceptions of school culture and overall TVAAS scores. The teacher population consisted of elementary school teachers in East Tennessee. The study consisted of nine research questions with nine null hypotheses. Summaries of data analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The research questions and hypotheses introduced in Chapters 1 and 3 are addressed in Chapter 4. The data were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance test (ANOVA). These data were analyzed using SPSS for Windows. An ANOVA test was conducted on elementary school teachers' perceptions of their schools' culture and their principals' leadership characteristics, and the overall TVAAS composite score for 150 purposefully selected elementary schools in East Tennessee.

The demographics of the teachers who took this survey are school-based licensed educators. All educators involved work in East Tennessee. A list of counties in East Tennessee was taken from www.tn.gov. The school districts involved in this study represent a sample of schools in Tennessee. City school districts included in this study were Bristol City, Elizabethton City, Greeneville City, Kingsport City, and Rogersville City schools. The schools in this sample included schools that are designated as Title I and non-Title I.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of Community Engagement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Community Engagement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The factor variable was Community Engagement. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = 1.514$, $p = .223$. Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Community Engagement as assessed by η^2 was small (.020). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of Community Engagement. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of Community Engagement

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.195	.21984
3	41	3.231	.17094
4 or 5	79	3.263	.17966

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of Teacher Leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Teacher Leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The factor variable was Teacher Leadership. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = .463$, $p = .630$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Teacher Leadership as assessed by η^2 was small (.006). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of Teacher Leadership. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of Teacher Leadership

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.2037	.16697
3	41	3.2412	.18635
4 or 5	79	3.2449	.22507

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of School Leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{03}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of School Leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The factor variable was School Leadership. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = 1.079$, $p = .343$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of School Leadership as assessed by η^2 was small (.014). The results indicate

that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of School

Leadership. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS

composite scores are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of School Leadership

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.2013	.18630
3	41	3.2539	.17782
4 or 5	79	3.2542	.17097

Research Question 4

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of Managing Student Conduct as

measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their

overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{04}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Managing Student

Conduct as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or

5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among

overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite

scores. The factor variable was Managing Student Conduct. The dependent variable was the

response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = 1.899$, $p = .153$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Managing Student Conduct as assessed by η^2 was small (.025). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of Managing Student Conduct. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of Managing Student Conduct

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.2063	.22457
3	41	3.2599	.21152
4 or 5	79	3.3034	.25340

Research Question 5

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of Use of Time as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{05}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Use of Time as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The factor variable was Use of Time. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = 0.27$, $p = .974$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Time as assessed by η^2 was small (.000). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of Use of Time. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of Use of Time

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	2.9173	.21852
3	41	2.9278	.29399
4 or 5	79	2.9161	.27332

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of Professional Development as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{06}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Professional Development as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The factor variable was Professional Development. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = .891$, $p = ..421$. Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Professional Development as assessed by η^2 was small (.012). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of Professional Development. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of Professional Development

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.0323	.22247
3	41	3.0837	.17892
4 or 5	79	3.0862	.19148

Research Question 7

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of Facilities and Resources as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{07}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Facilities and Resources as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The factor variable was Facilities and Resources. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = .089$, $p = .915$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite

scores and school culture in the area of Facilities and Resources as assessed by η^2 was small (.001). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of Facilities and Resources. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of Facilities and Resources

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.1843	.19141
3	41	3.1868	.15787
4 or 5	79	3.1708	.25226

Research Question 8

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of Instructional Practices and Support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{07}: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Instructional Practices and Support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey between schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite

scores. The factor variable was Instructional Practice and Support. The dependent variable was

the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based

educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = 1.212$, $p = .301$. Therefore, the null

hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite

scores and school culture in the area of Instructional Practice and Support as assessed by η^2 was

small (.016). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to

perceptions of Instructional Practice and Support. The means and standard deviations for the

three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 8.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of Instructional
Practice and Support

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.1750	.11082
3	41	3.1902	.14513
4 or 5	79	3.2166	.13789

Research Question 9

Is there a significant difference in new teacher perceptions of New Teacher Support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

H_{07}: There is no significant difference in new teacher perceptions of New Teacher Support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among overall school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The factor variable was New Teachers. The dependent variable was the response to the TELL Tennessee survey questions by Tennessee licensed school-based educators. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(2,147) = 1.183$ $p = .309$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of New Teachers as assessed by η^2 was small (.016). The results indicate that TVAAS composite scores were not significantly related to perceptions of New Teachers. The means and standard deviations for the three different groups of TVAAS composite scores are reported in Table 9.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of TVAAS Composite Scores in the Area of New Teacher
Support

TVAAS Scores	N	M	SD
1 or 2	30	3.1483	.30118
3	41	3.2273	.23271
4 or 5	79	3.2251	.23107

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter includes the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations that can be made for use by persons seeking information regarding school culture and leadership as it relates to TVAAS data. School culture and leadership are widely understood to have effects on student growth. The purpose of this study was to examine relationships among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS data score for the 2012-2013 school year and compare their scores to teacher perceptions of school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey. The study was comprised of school-based licensed elementary educators and administrators in East Tennessee. The purposeful sample of schools included title and non-title elementary schools in East Tennessee.

Summary of Findings

There were 150 elementary schools in this study. Each elementary school was analyzed by nine research questions that represented the nine categories measured by the TELL Tennessee survey in 2013. The following research questions were analyzed for each of the purposefully chosen schools in East Tennessee.

There was one null hypothesis corresponding to each of the research questions. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationships among school culture as measured by the TELL Tennessee survey and TVAAS composite scores. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a significant relationship existed among TELL survey data and

TVAAS student growth data as measured by TCAP and whether school culture and leadership have a relationship with student growth data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate results of the relationship between teacher perceptions of school culture and overall TVAAS scores.

A quantitative framework was used to compare significant differences and to examine the possible relationships among teacher perceptions of leadership, school culture, and overall student growth scores which include numeracy and literacy. A quasi-experimental design was used in this study because public data already existed and collecting additional data was not necessary.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of community engagement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 1 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Community Engagement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Community Engagement showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant relationship between teacher perception of Community Engagement and their overall TVAAS scores.

This is contradicted by the research conducted by Frost (2012) who reported that engaging the community is vital to the success of schools in America. Community Engagement

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is a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and supporting student academic growth.   Hogue (2012) reported that schools that engage community members instead of remaining isolated from school stakeholders experience greater levels of success.

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of teacher leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 2 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Teacher Leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Teacher Leadership showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant relationship between teacher perception of Teacher Leadership and their overall TVAAS scores.

This is contradicted by the research conducted by Danielson (2007) who reported that teacher leadership does not necessarily equal aspirations to become school administrators. School systems that wish to invest in their future should nurture and cultivate teacher leaders. A strong program to develop Teacher Leadership is a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and supporting student academic growth.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 3 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of School Leadership as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of School Leadership showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant relationship between teacher perception of School Leadership and their overall TVAAS scores.

This is contradicted by CAESL (2004). CAESL stated the role of the principal proves vital in closing the achievement gap. School administrators play an important role in the success of all students. School Leadership is an essential part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and supporting student academic growth.

Research Question 4

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 4 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Managing Student Conduct as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore, the null

hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Managing Student Conduct showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant difference in teacher perception of Managing Student Conduct based on their overall TVAAS scores.

Marzano (2000), Boyd (2012), and Cornelius-White (2007) reported otherwise. Their research states that teachers need support from principals in order to learn the most effective ways for managing student conduct. Through a teacher's ability to manage student behavior a positive relationships and thus positive culture is established. These relationships lead to higher achievement by students. Managing Student Conduct is a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and supporting student academic growth.

Research Question 5

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of use of time as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 5 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Use of Time as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Use of Time showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant difference in teacher perception of Use of Time based on their overall TVAAS scores.

This is contradicted by the research reported by Whitehurst and Chingos (2011). They reported that class size (which falls under the category of Use of Time on the TELL survey) is

one of the few variables in American education that appears to have an ability to impact student learning. Use of Time is a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and supporting student academic growth.

Research Question 6

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of professional development as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 6 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Professional Development as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Professional Development showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant difference in teacher perception of Professional Development based on their overall TVAAS scores.

Shields and Lewis (2012) wrote that the most important factor in student achievement is teacher effectiveness. Many school districts across America are eager to find ways to develop the skills their teachers possess (Cross, 2012). Darling-Hammond et al. (2010) found that although research indicates professional development is important to the improvement of student learning, that often it does not meet individual teacher's needs. Research also shows that only a limited number of teachers receive individualized training that meets the diverse needs of their students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). There is a growing need for teachers to receive professional development that equips them to deliver lessons that are heavy in a core content and

able to meet the needs of diverse students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Teachers who receive opportunities for quality professional development are likely to improve student achievement in their classrooms (Cross, 2012). Professional Development that is useful to teachers is a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and promoting student academic growth.

Research Question 7

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 7 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Facilities and Resources as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Facilities and Resources showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant difference in teacher perception of Facilities and Resources based on their overall TVAAS scores.

This is contradicted by the research conducted by CAESL (2009) that reported one factor that has been shown to close achievement gaps is the proper management of facilities and resources (CAESL, 2009). Principals must ensure that students have access to current and quality textbooks, school supplies and counseling services is a factor that could be easily over looked, especially in a school with limited resources. Management of Facilities and Resources is

a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and supporting student academic growth.

Research Question 8

Is there a significant difference in new teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 8 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of Instructional Practices and Support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of Instructional Practices and Support showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant difference in teacher perception of Instructional Practices based on their overall TVAAS scores.

DuFour and Mattos (2013) reported otherwise. They stated that "the most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning is to create the collaborative culture and collective responsibility of a PLC" (p. 34). Instructional Practices and Support is a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture and supporting student academic growth.

Research Question 9

Is there a significant difference in new teacher perceptions of new teacher support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013?

The ANOVA results for research question 9 showed no significant difference in teacher perceptions of New Teacher Support as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey among schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS score in 2013. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between overall TVAAS composite scores and school culture in the area of New Teacher Support showed a small effect size. The results indicate no significant difference in teacher perception of New Teacher Support based on their overall TVAAS scores.

CAESL (2004) reported contending research when they wrote new teacher support is a necessity for those schools that wish to close gaps in education. Research shows that high turnover is detrimental to the success of students. Those principals who are committed to recruiting, keeping, and fostering the understandings and development of new teachers are more likely to close some student subgroup achievement gaps. New Teacher Support is a vital part of creating and sustaining a positive overall school culture supporting student academic growth.

Recommendations for Practice

School-based administrators must have ways to find out how teachers perceive all areas of school culture. Much research supports that principals must be instructional leaders who are able to empathize with classroom teachers. On the topic of educational leadership and culture, Schlechty (2009) wrote:

There are no matters more important for those who would lead the transformation of schools than those associated with the building of civic capacity and social capital. And there are few other matters related to the improvement of education

that are so heavily dependent on the presences of courageous, informed, sensitive, and responsive more leaders…(p. 206)

It is widely researched that teacher perceptions of school culture and instructional leaders do either positively or negatively impact student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fullan, 2007, 2008; Schlechty, 2009; Zepeda, 2012). Auerbach (2003) wrote that one of the most vital roles of an instructional leader is that of a liaison among school stakeholders. When examining this study it is important to note that there is a discrepancy between the outcome of this research and the outcome of others who have conducted similar studies. I was surprised by the outcome of my research. Substantial research suggested that strong instructional leaders contribute to higher student growth scores. However this was not seen in the outcome of this study.

After looking through the research of others in the area of school leadership and then conducting my own, I have several recommendations for practice.

- The results of a survey such as the TELL are perhaps not as important as the questions themselves.
- Additionally those questions can create conversations that can transform school culture and create purposeful dialogue among teachers and school leaders.

Greenleaf (1977) wrote about leadership from the perspective of a servant. He wrote that people positively respond to leaders who have been chosen due to their ability to serve others. From that perspective it can be surmised that people respond differently to different types of leaders. Northouse (2007) outlines the many types of leadership that can occur in various entities. With the understanding that leaders have various leadership styles, it could be deduced that across East Tennessee there would be a significant difference among schools that scored a 1,

2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS data score based on their overall mean scores for teacher perceptions of school culture according to the TELL survey. Due to the dissonant nature of these two outcomes it may be useful for leaders to use other types of survey tools to collect perception data.

Recommendations for Further Research

These findings are not supported in the literature and therefore raise questions that could be explored with additional research.

- Is there a significant difference in TELL results in different regions of the state?

- Is there a significant difference in TELL results in urban and rural school districts?

- Is there a significant difference in principals' perceptions of themselves and teacher perceptions?

- Is there a significant difference in TELL survey results in schools with new school building administrators as compared to veteran school building administrators.

My research results posed several questions. Some of these questions include: Did all teachers understand the questions to mean the same thing? Were teachers around East Tennessee all given the same directions to take the TELL Tennessee survey from their school administration? Did all teachers understand that they were answering these questions about their building level administration and not system-wide administration?

- A study that could be conducted in the future may be to examine the way teachers were given instructions to take the survey. This type of study would allow researchers to examine what teachers were told about the survey ahead of time,

and the importance placed on the survey by schools and districts. Additionally some teachers may have been given extended time during the school day to take the survey at their leisure while some were not offered extra time.

- Additional research could be conducted as a case study on a single school district.

- Further research may be conducted to compare these perception data collected from school-based licensed educators to other school stakeholders. The perception data taken from the TELL survey do not take into account school stakeholders other than teachers. Perhaps a wider scope could be useful in collecting school culture perception data.

- A qualitative study consisting of teachers and administrators could be conducted to chronicle perceptions at several schools that received a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on their overall TVAAS growth score.

- Participants could be asked about their feeling about their school culture in ways that allow teachers to speak openly about the way they feel instead of having to choose their answer from a predetermined Likert scale.

- This research may be able to provide more extensive and insightful information about school culture than can be provided by the TELL Tennessee survey. The study of school culture is broad in nature and it may contribute to educational research to examine with more depth individual schools and their stakeholders.

Conclusions

School culture has been widely researched. It is accepted that a school-based principal serves in a multi-faceted leadership role. One of the most important parts of this instructional

leadership role is that of leading a school to a culture that supports all stakeholders. For

instructional leaders to be effective they must know how they are perceived. To do this it is

necessary to collect perception data from school stakeholders. Finding the correct tool to

measure school stakeholder perception can help instructional leaders positively impact school

culture and thus improve student growth scores. The TELL survey as it is currently written may

not be that tool. My research suggests that the measure of school culture is not as important as

the questions it may ask and the conversations to which it may lead.

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