

A Qualitative Study of High School Administrators' Experience with Professional Development

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Abstract

The research on professional development for administrators is minimal, and there is even less research on professional development for high school administrators (Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020). The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the personal experience of high school administrators with professional development. The researcher sought to understand the changes in high school administrators' professional skills and professional knowledge after participating in professional development. Additionally, the researcher explored the impact of professional development on high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position.

This qualitative study used a phenomenological design utilizing interviews to collect data. This study will contribute to the literature and local practice by providing the experience of high school administrators with professional development in two suburban, large school districts. During the data analysis process, the participant interview data was studied. The data showed the majority of high school administrators believed professional development changed their professional knowledge, professional skills, and desire to remain in an administrative position. An additional finding was that administrator professional development is often missed or not executed with the same fidelity in which professional development for teachers is conducted. Professional development for administrators is typically focused on the “what” and “how” of the job rather than on developing leadership capacity.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Zak, who truly made it all possible. Thank you for believing in me, taking on so much so I could take classes, and for your humor throughout this program. This would not have been possible without your patience and support. I also dedicate this dissertation to my children, Kaden and Kinsley, who have been my motivation. You endured me attending Zoom classes in the basement once a week for two years, which made the rest of our time together all the sweeter. I hope this process showed you that you can do anything you set your mind to, even if it is challenging. To my parents, Gary and Diana, thank you for stepping in to support me and my family during this time-consuming process. Thank you for showing me the value of education and for encouraging me to complete this goal. I would be remiss to not thank my dear friend, Lauren Wilson, for your continual encouragement, eagerness to help, and for believing in me. To my teammates both past and present, thank you for picking up extra supervisions to allow me the time to attend classes. Each day is brighter because of you, and I am constantly thankful for your friendship and camaraderie.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A school principal, commonly referred to as an administrator, is tasked with creating a mission and vision to drive school progress forward, management, connecting with the community, instructional leadership, budgeting, communication, and providing teachers with professional development (Sharif, 2020). Administrators promote student learning and teacher growth, so administrators must be supported with relevant, timely, and applicable professional development (Leithwood et al., 2008).

Professional development for administrators needs further research (Grissom & Harrington, 2010). The current literature does not clearly define what administrator professional development should teach, how it should be provided, nor how administrator professional development effectiveness could be evaluated (Grissom & Harrington, 2010). Administrator professional development should not be centered on managerial tasks or delivering information for administrators to pass on to teachers (Grissom & Harrington, 2010). Unfortunately, the uncertainty of what administrator professional development should contain has led to irrelevant and inadequate professional development opportunities for administrators (Levin et al., 2019).

The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Learning Policy Institute engaged in a nationwide research project to explore administrator turnover. In a 2020 report summarizing the research, Levin et al. found high-quality professional development opportunities support administrator retention. As part of this research, the Learning Policy Institute surveyed 424 secondary school administrators and found numerous barriers to high-quality professional development for administrators, including

lack of time, lack of money, and irrelevant professional development opportunities (Levin et al., 2020). Fifteen percent of surveyed administrators shared that professional development was geared more toward teachers than administrators (Levin et al., 2020).

School districts must provide administrators with professional development opportunities to best support, develop, and retain high-quality administrators (Levin et al., 2020). The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), a revitalization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2015, defined professional development as “activities that provide educators with the knowledge and skills to assist students in being successful” (Department of Education, 2015). The ESSA continued to state that professional development activities should be ongoing, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and student-centered (Department of Education, 2015, p. 295). The ESSA contains the phrase professional development 79 times and intentionally includes administrators and school leaders in the list of educators who require professional development.

The role of an administrator has changed drastically over the past twenty years. One item remains the same: administrators lead the school. Schools need high-quality administrators to drive the mission and vision forward, support students, and develop and retain excellent teachers (Levin, 2021). High-quality administrators attract, grow, and retain high-quality teachers who provide a robust education to all students. Administrators ensure every student can access educational opportunities, develop a culture of growth and improvement, and empower staff to become leaders (Levin, 2021).

Background

The National Center for Education Statistics (2020) reported 90,900 public school administrators during the 2017-2018 school year. About 22% of all administrators served in a secondary setting, while 9% served in a combined elementary and secondary school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) (2023) reported 1,911 public school administrators during the 2021-2022 school year. Of the 1,911 administrators state-wide, 283 served as high school principals, and 342 served as high school assistant principals (KSDE, 2023).

The suburban county in Kansas where this study was conducted contained six school districts. Two of the six school districts were comparable and were participants in this study: District X and District Y. District X (2022) had an early childhood (EC) center, 21 elementary schools, nine middle schools, five high schools, a center for specialized programs, and an alternative high school. Enrollment during the 2021-2022 school year for EC-12 was 22,421 (District X, 2022). The district reported 1,888 certified staff and 66 building-level administrators district-wide. At the time of this study, each of the five high schools had a principal, assistant principal of curriculum and instruction, assistant principal of activities, and an athletic director.

District Y (2022) has an EC center, 34 elementary schools, five middle schools, five high schools, an alternative high school, and a center for specialized programs. Enrollment during the 2021-2022 school year for EC-12 was 29,715 (District Y, 2022). The district reported 2,144 certified staff and 75 building-level administrators district-wide. At the time of the study, each of the five high schools had a principal, three assistant principals, and an athletic director.

Table 1*Number of High School Administrators*

| Location | Number of Building-Level Administrators | Number of High School Administrators |
|------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Kansas | 1,911 | 625 |
| District X | 66 | 20 |
| District Y | 75 | 25 |

Note. Building-level administrators include any principal or assistant principal working in a K-12 school. High school administrators are any principal or assistant principal working in a 9-12 school.

Statement of the Problem

The role of high school administrators has drastically changed from building managers to instructional leaders, team builders, coaches, and change agents (Alvoid & Black, 2014; Grissom et al., 2021). In addition, principals serving post-COVID might require different skills and knowledge than past principals as COVID created new challenges for administrators to navigate (Grissom et al., 2021). The changes have created a gap between administrators' skills and the skills they need to succeed (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Many administrators have determined their jobs are no longer sustainable when examining the changing expectations and insufficient training and support (Alvoid & Black, 2020). Administrators receive training through professional development and onboarding; however, the literature reveals little understanding of the knowledge and skills administrators need to be successful (Grissom et al., 2021). In addition, although some administrators receive professional development, the simplicity of the professional

development does not satisfy the complexity of administrators' jobs (Alvoid & Black, 2014). The lack of appropriate, relevant, and timely professional development for administrators is detrimental to the success of administrators, schools, and students (Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020).

So far, the literature on professional development for administrators is minimal, and there is even less research available on professional development for high school administrators (Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020). Gümüs & Bellibas (2020) stated the current research on administrators' professional development is focused on content and quality while ignoring the impact of professional development on administrators' leadership practice in school management and influencing student achievement. While professional development for most educators is focused on content and managerial tasks, the professional program for administrators in most districts lacks a focus on specific knowledge and skills (Hubbard et al., 2006). Furthermore, very limited studies have been conducted to examine the impact of professional development on high school administrators' professional knowledge and skills.

In a meta-analysis, Levin and Bradley (2019) stated administrators often leave their jobs due to inadequate professional development, and the administrators who have continual professional development, such as mentoring, are less stressed and stay in their positions longer. Professional development has been designed to improve administrators' self-efficacy and satisfaction (Calacone, 2015). The impact of professional development on administrators' desire to remain in leadership continues to have varied effects (Levin & Bradley, 2019). The literature shows some correlation between inadequate professional

development and administrator turnover; however, it is unclear if participating in professional development could support administrator retention (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the experience of high school administrators with professional development. Professional knowledge and professional skills are necessary for administrators to be successful leaders and managers in a high school setting. The researcher sought to understand the changes in administrative professional skills and professional knowledge at the high school level after participating in professional development. Additionally, the researcher explored if professional development impacted the desire to remain in an administrative position.

Significance of the Study

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (Department of Education, 2015) clearly stated that professional development should be provided to both teachers and administrators. The act defined professional development to be activities that provide educators with the knowledge and skills to assist students in being successful (Department of Education, 2015). However, the act did not provide direction to examine the impact of professional development. Professional development for teachers is widely studied, while the impact of professional development on administrators is largely unknown (Calcone, 2015; Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020). As a result, there is a need for research that examines administrators' professional development and the impact it may have on administrators' professional skills, professional knowledge, and retention. Professional knowledge and professional skills equip administrators to be successful managers and leaders in the high school setting (Gill, 2012). Additionally, the growing turnover rates in education have

created a necessity to understand if professional development can impact the retention of administrators (Grissom et al., 2021). This study seeks to contribute to the literature and local practice by providing a reflection on high school administrators' experience with professional development in two large suburban school districts.

In addition, during the interview process, administrators discussed how, if at all, professional development impacted their desire to remain in an administrative position. The study could be of interest to local school district leaders as the turnover rate in administration is high. One in five administrators left their position in the 2008-2009 school year and the 2012-2013 school year (Goldring & Taie, 2014). While there has not been an increase in the turnover rate, the stagnant statistics over five years indicate a systemic issue that has not been solved (Goldring & Taie, 2014). School districts should be vested in retaining administrators as high school administrator turnover impacts student learning, teacher experience, and teacher performance (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Regarding local practice, the study could shed light on if existing professional development helps to improve high school administrators' professional knowledge and professional skills and increase their desire to remain in an administrative position in the local setting.

Delimitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined delimitations to be “self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (p. 134). The following delimitations were used to narrow the scope of the study:

1. The study was conducted at two school districts in suburban Kansas.

2. The participants involved in the study were serving as high school principals and assistant principals at the time of the study.
3. The data collection method was interviews.
4. The interviews were conducted during the fall of 2023.
5. The researcher did not have a personal working relationship with any participants.

Assumptions

Assumptions are “postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 135). The following assumption was made for this study:

1. The participants were honest and truthful in their responses.

Research Questions

This qualitative study utilized a central question. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated the “central question is a broad question that asks for an exploration of the central phenomenon or concept in a study” (p. 133). The central question for this study was, “What are high school administrators' experiences with professional development?” Creswell and Creswell (2018) described sub-questions as narrowing the focus of the study yet leaving open the questioning. The sub-questions that guided this qualitative study were:

RQ1. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional knowledge after participating in professional development?

RQ2. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional skills after participating in professional development?

RQ3. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position after participating in professional development?

Definition of Terms

Definitions of terms used in this study are included to establish a common language and prohibit misinterpretations. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) state that terms used repeatedly throughout a study should be defined. The following terms were used in the study:

Demotion. When a principal moves to a lower ranked position in education (Bartanen et al., 2019).

Exit. Occurs when a principal leaves the profession (Bartanen et al., 2019).

High school administrator. Job titles within high school administration include principals and assistant principals (University of Massachusetts Global, 2021).

High-quality. Adhering to an excellent standard of measure; of superior quality (Dictionary.com, 2023)

Instructional capacity. Resources for teaching used to support instruction and the ability to effectively implement the resources to engage students and further learning (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2013).

Instructional leadership. Leading learning communities and motivating teachers to create safe learning environments for students (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001).

Professional development. Activities that provide educators with the knowledge and skills to assist students in being successful (Department of Education, 2015).

Professional knowledge. Job-related information acquired through sensory input (reading, watching, listening, touching, etc.) and familiarity with factual information and concepts (Boulet, 2021).

Professional skill. Ability to apply job-related knowledge in specific professional situations; developed through practice (Boulet, 2021).

Professional learning community. “An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.” (Solution Tree, n.d.)

Promotion. When a higher ranked job in education is attained (Bartanen et al., 2019).

Transfer. Occurs when a principal leaves a school and moves to another school (Bartanen et al., 2019).

Turnover. Occurs when an administrator voluntarily or involuntarily does not return to the same school the next school year (Rangel, 2018).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation contains five chapters. Chapter one included an introduction to the study, background information, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and definitions of terms. Chapter two provides a literature review of the nationwide teacher shortage, professional development, the role of a high school administrator, and how administrators impact the instructional capacity of teachers. Chapter three describes the

study's methodology, including the research design, selection procedure for participants, data collection procedures, role of the researcher, and limitations of the study. Chapter four outlines the results and findings of the qualitative study. Finally, chapter five summarizes the study, implications for action, suggestions for further research, and the conclusion.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Professional Development

Professional development was defined in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015 as, “activities that provide educators with the knowledge and skills to assist students in being successful”. Professional development can also be referred to as professional learning. ESSA included educators in the definition of professional development, and educators referred to teachers, administrators, school leaders, and support personnel.

The federal government allocates more than one billion dollars yearly for professional development (School Leaders Network, 2014). In this allocation, 91% of funds are designated to support teachers, while 9% is allocated to support administrators. This proportion is also reflected in the data from The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) who found public schools employ 91% teachers and 9% administrators. The School Leaders Network (2014) said the application of professional development funds often does not follow the provided proportions. The School Leaders Network (2014) continued to state school districts would be considered negligent if they did not provide teachers with professional development opportunities throughout the school year; however, administrators are frequently left out of professional development considerations, thus having to find growth opportunities independently.

The Necessity of Professional Development

Professional development for administrators is necessary for school improvement. Davis and McDaris (2022) found that professional development can be what they term

instantly positive and generate growth when specifically designed for administrators. Learning must begin with professional development for administrators as they guide teachers' learning through facilitating professional development (Zimmerman, 2011). Calacone (2015) also found that "systems leaders must take an active role in providing access to meaningful professional development" for high school principals (p. 85).

Meaningful professional development as a support and retention strategy for high school administrators is important as a 2017 national survey in the United States indicated nearly 18% of principals vacated their positions from the year before (Levin et al., 2019). In a 2019 study, Levin et al. found professional development to be a strategy to support administrators. Grissom and Harrington (2010) indicated that exploring the impact of different types of professional development can guide school districts in decision-making. Professional development can provide administrators the assistance to succeed and remain in leadership roles. System leaders should have a vested interest in providing positive experiences for administrators (Levin et al., 2019).

The Unnecessity of Professional Development

Not all professional development opportunities are effective (Kaplan Learning Center, 2023). Kaplan Learning Center (2023) shared that the ineffectiveness of professional development has permeated through the opinions of educators. Many educators now see professional development to be more negative than positive. If professional development is not practical or effective for educators, resources such as time and money are wasted (Will, 2022). Davis and McDaris (2022) found that professional development must be created for and geared toward administrators for administrators to find the professional development impactful. More than half the states

in the United States require new administrators to complete a mentoring program, yet the program is often not done with the fidelity needed for it to positively influence the new administrators (Gill, 2012).

While many professional development programs are well-intended, administrators lack the necessary time to devote to new learning (Scott & Rarieya, 2011). Often, administrators must leave their buildings to engage in professional development. Scott and Rarieya (2011) found administrators experienced guilt when leaving their buildings to focus on professional development. Administrators must often seek out professional development opportunities on their own time, which is already limited (School Leaders Network, 2014).

In a 2018 publication, Sebastian et al. analyzed seven time logs from 68 principals across a two-year span. Principals recorded the time they spent working in nine domains: building operations, finances, community or parent relations, school district functions, student affairs, personnel issues, planning and setting goals, instructional leadership, and professional growth (Sebastian et al., 2018). Principals also reported whom they were working with on the different tasks. On average, principals engaged in work in five different domains daily, tasks were sustained for about 30 minutes each, and principals spent only 23% of the day working alone (Sebastian et al., 2018). The average workweek was reported to be 50 hours, although time reported supervising student activities was not accounted for (Sebastian et al., 2018). The domain engaged in the least frequently was finances (4.39% of the workday), and the most common domain was student affairs (21.48% of the workday). Principals reported spending 5.18% of their time on professional growth each day, and typically professional growth was logged at the end of

the day and end of the week (Sebastian et al., 2018). Sebastian et al. (2018) explained the time allocated for school district functions, instructional leadership, and professional growth varied the most from day to day.

The Reality of Professional Development

The School Leaders Network (2014) conducted interviews and research regarding principal professional development. Through their study, they found many districts host meetings for principals focused on disseminating information about initiatives, policies, and expectations. These meetings focused on the "what" of initiatives and rollouts rather than the "how" of leading change (Hubbard et al., 2006). Most commonly, administrators experience professional development through lectures or workshops. Daresh (1987) found lecture-based professional development to be the least effective. Daresh (1987) administered 192 surveys to practicing administrators to gauge their preferences for the modality of professional development. Participants shared lecture-based professional development such as institutes or workshops provide little opportunity for administrators to give input for topics presented, have minimal two-way communication with presenters, and have the lowest impact on principals' knowledge and skills.

Many school districts provide adequate support for administrators during their first year through mentoring and ongoing professional development opportunities. However, beyond the first few years on the job, administrators are often left out of professional development (School Leaders Network, 2014). Tirozzi (2001) stated, "ongoing professional development is episodic at best."

Professional Development Desired by Administrators

Administrators experience professional development in a variety of ways. Administrator meetings vary from an intentional focus on professional development, or a mix of administrative information and some professional development, to meetings focused on content administrators will pass on to classroom teachers (Gates et al., 2020). While managerial tasks and activities are part of administrators' daily duties, administrators shared the necessity for an intentional focus on professional development (Calacone, 2015).

Wilson and Clayton (2020) interviewed nine first-year assistant principals to understand their perceptions of professional learning experiences. The interviews were semi-structured, and the authors noted the importance of this approach so the discussions were conversational and could shift as the interviews progressed. The researchers found the assistant principals felt their professional development was to prepare them for a principalship role rather than their current role. The assistant principals desired more targeted, timely professional learning to assist them with current tasks or situations (Wilson & Clayton, p. 32).

Principals shared that feelings of isolation contributed to job dissatisfaction and the desire to leave their positions (Johnson, 2005). To support and retain administrators, school districts must combat the isolation administrators experience. Administrators are tasked with more than one person can appropriately handle, so professional development should involve developing shared leadership and developing leadership teams (Johnson, 2005). Professional development focused on "high-leverage practice areas" such as

instructional coaching, building strong relationships, creating a collaborative culture, and personnel management can yield positive impacts (Grissom et al., 2021).

Types of Professional Development

Mentoring or Coaching. Sutchter et al. (2017) explained high-quality professional development programs for administrators are problem-based and field-based or contain on-the-job coaching from an experienced administrator. Administrators reported coaching or mentoring as the most valuable learning experience, although continuous mentoring or coaching is unlikely to occur in many states (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Mentoring programs are weakened whenever mentors are not meaningfully selected or well-trained (Sutchter et al., 2017). The School Leaders Network (2014) said mentoring improves administrators' instructional skills when mentors and mentees are intentionally matched based on mentee needs, the experience of both parties, and leadership style. Mentors should focus their support on the specific needs of their mentees (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2013).

Gill (2012) states over half of the states in the United States require mentoring for new administrators. Unfortunately, mentoring typically becomes a "buddy system" with a weak association to a district's needs (Gill, 2012). Mentoring is most successful when the coach focuses on instructional leadership (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Mentors require training and resources to support their mentees. The School Leaders Network (2014) reported mentoring is typically implemented with new principals, so the impact of mentoring on seasoned administrators is unknown. However, mentoring reduces isolation and builds leadership capacity, so mentoring has the potential to impact administrator retention amongst experienced administrators positively.

Malone (2002) explored different implementations of administrator mentoring programs across the United States. In Santa Cruz County, California, a "grow your own" initiative created a mentor and apprentice relationship between a school's head principal and assistant principal. The existing hierarchical structure was used to support the current practice of both administrators while building the skill set of the assistant principal (Malone, 2002). In Albuquerque, New Mexico, new principals can voluntarily sign up for a mentoring program. Malone (2002) explains the new principals create a list of practiced administrators they know and trust who are then asked to serve as mentors. This voluntary program possesses a minimum requirement for the participants to meet with their mentors three times throughout the school year to make progress on a self-created plan. Even with the minimal requirements, participants in the program indicated they found mentoring valuable, had formed professional relationships with their mentors, and would recommend the program to other new administrators (Malone, 2002).

A school district in New York took a more time-intensive approach to administrator mentoring. Willen (2001) explained new principals were matched with experienced principals. The pairings attended a beginning of the year kickoff event and then met weekly for the remainder of the school year. The frequency of connection in this model showed new administrators the necessity of collaborating with colleagues regularly (Willen, 2001). The new administrators who completed the mentoring program shared that they were not hesitant to reach out to a colleague for support, to ask questions, or to seek advice (Willen, 2001).

Networking or Professional Learning Communities. Augustine et al. (2009) stated that 95% of leaders said they learn more from peers while working than from

formal learning opportunities. Networking allows school leaders to engage in job-specific training and learn from other administrators. Administrators who are part of networks or professional learning communities experience opportunities to share best practices, collaborate on problem-solving, and engage in self-initiated learning (Sutcher et al., 2017). Anderson et al. (1996) explained the best learning occurs when knowledge and skills can be applied in real-world or on-the-job experiences. Professional learning communities allow administrators to discuss authentic situations and learn from the experience of one another.

The San Diego Unified School District administrators engaged in ongoing professional learning communities to discuss case studies, visit schools, and experience peer coaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The principals experienced reflection, analysis, and problem-solving that assisted them in improving their schools. The continuous nature of the network or professional learning community also allowed administrators numerous resources to connect with for guidance at any time.

The School Leaders Network (2014) noted networking could be ineffective whenever participants lose focus, do not engage regularly, or turn gatherings into social opportunities. In 2014, the School Leaders network surveyed 163 principals who met monthly throughout the year as a professional learning community or network. Of the surveyed principals, 98% said the monthly networking met their professional learning needs (School Leaders Network, 2014). Ninety-seven percent of responding principals returned to their current school, which is 41% higher than retention rates for principals not receiving professional development and 20% higher than the 2014 national average (Goldring & Taie, 2014). A network of principals in Hillsborough, Florida, set student

improvement goals together (School Leaders Network, 2014). This group outperformed similar schools in Florida by nearly 40 points, indicating the positive power of administrator networking.

Professional Development and Self-Efficacy

Calacone (2015) studied the relationship between professional development and self-efficacy for New York high school principals in their first five years. Data were collected through interviews with twelve principals. The principals shared that mentoring and networking were the most effective forms of professional development. Calacone (2015) also found the professional development needs of high school principals changed throughout the first five years of principalship.

Professional development for administrators is necessary for school improvement (Furrow, 2022). Furrow emphasized professional development is essential in increasing self-efficacy. Principals with higher self-efficacy are typically better leaders and thus positively influence student growth and achievement (Furrow, 2022; Zimmerman, 2011). In a study conducted in Indonesia, Anselmus Dami et al. (2022) found professional development increased principal self-efficacy related to instructional leadership. When principals' self-efficacy increased, their work satisfaction increased and their desire to leave the profession decreased (Anselmus Dami et al., 2022).

Professional Development in Other Countries

In five countries that outperform students in the United States, the government invested in mentoring and professional development for both teachers and school leaders (Tucker, 2011). These investments increased student achievement and lowered both teacher and administrator turnover. Stewart (2013) found countries that raised the

academic performance of their students focused on providing their administrators with professional development to match the redefined responsibilities of instructional leaders.

England's government developed the National College for School Leadership in 2000 (National College, 2010). The National College (2010) developed a competency framework that explained the skills administrators with varied years of experience must have. Schools whose head principals participated in the National College's program improved faster than schools whose principals did not participate (National College, 2010). England also utilizes outstanding school leaders to work directly with underperforming schools (Stewart, 2013). Underperforming schools that partnered directly with effective leaders saw improved achievement at both the primary and secondary levels (Office for Standards in Education, 2010). The National College now endorses professional development of on-the-job skills rather than emphasizing coursework (Stewart, 2013).

In Singapore, professional development for administrators is extensive and is frontloaded before educators are permitted to serve in a leadership role (Stewart, 2013). Singapore identifies talented teachers and directs them into career paths as master teachers, curriculum specialists, or administrators. Teachers are provided professional development opportunities and are then moved to assistant principal roles (Stewart, 2013). Once the assistant principals have shown promise and strength as leaders, they may interview with the Ministry of Education to be eligible to enter the Leaders in Education program at the National Institute of Education (Stewart, 2013). This program engages leaders in professional development full-time for six months. The intense program includes a two-week overseas assignment, knowledge creation to design a

successful school, and a knowledge application that consists of a six-month placement at a school to improve a specific program or aspect of the school (Stewart, 2013). After successfully completing the Leaders in Education program, the Ministry of Education assigns the trained principals to schools. The principals are continually evaluated and provided with additional professional development to ensure they make progress in their schools both academically and in alignment with the school's vision and mission (Stewart, 2013).

Stewart (2013) also examined the professional development practices for principals in Shanghai, China. Both principals and teachers from highly successful schools work directly with weaker schools to improve leadership, school culture, and quality of instruction (Stewart, 2013). Principals and teachers spend time weekly at partner schools to establish clear goals to be accomplished in a two-year period. Some highly effective principals may be asked to oversee more than one school during this process (Stewart, 2013). This job-embedded mentoring structure has created a systemic improvement in academic achievement and quality of instruction (Stewart, 2013).

Gümüş & Bellibas (2020) explored professional development in Turkey. The authors described the vast amount of information available regarding teachers' professional development (Gümüş & Bellibas, 2020). Conversely, Gümüş & Bellibas (2020) explained an extreme lack of information about administrators' professional development and its impact on leadership practices. In Turkey, there is no formal collegiate program for aspiring administrators to pursue. Typically, strong teachers are promoted to principal positions. The Ministry of National Education controls public education and provides some professional development opportunities to administrators,

although they are not well attended due to the limited offerings (Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020). Gümüs & Bellibas (2020) surveyed 130 principals in Turkey to understand their practices and if the professional development they attended affected self-efficacy. The data showed a statistically significant ($\beta = 0.253, p < 0.001$) positive correlation between principal professional development and enhanced leadership practices directed toward teaching and learning (Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020, p. 1163). Principals with more professional development experience in a year rated higher levels of self-efficacy. Finally, the two positive correlations lead Gümüs & Bellibas (2020) to conclude that principals in Turkey need access to professional development to improve their knowledge and affect teacher and student growth.

Shah et al. (2011) conducted a study of 31 secondary principals in Pakistan. The purpose of the study was to understand the impact professional development had on the principals. The research participants completed a closed-ended questionnaire, and the researchers found professional development positively impacted the principals' performance in school, academic, and personal management (Shah et al., 2011). The study participants indicated they would benefit from more professional development regarding financial management, decision-making, and community relations. As a result of the study, Shah et al. (2011) recommended financial professional development for all principals and additional pre-service training for all potential future principals regarding national educational policies and organizational commitments of principals.

Scott and Rarieya (2011) studied the mentoring program provided to first-year administrators in Alberta, Canada. The program contained a formal and informal portion. In formal mentoring sessions, experienced principals presented various relevant

educational leadership topics, such as working with school boards, staff evaluations, staffing, and school culture (Scott & Rarieya, 2011). The informal portion of the program allowed new administrators to connect with their mentors at any time to obtain support, guidance, and assistance in problem-solving (Scott & Rarieya, 2011). The program participants indicated a shortcoming of the mentoring program was the topics were more focused on managing schools rather than effective leadership (Scott & Rarieya, 2011).

Role of Administrators

Sharif (2020) listed the duties of an administrator: create a mission and vision, interpret and apply policies, run the school budget, oversee operations, manage day-to-day interactions, connect with the community, communicate, provide ongoing professional development for staff, and facilitate teaching and learning. Administrators also play a crucial role in shifting instruction to incorporate a whole-child approach that includes social-emotional learning (Sutcher et al., 2017). Administrators engage in work in a wide variety of topics with numerous stakeholders throughout the workday (Camburn et al., 2010; Grissom et al., 2013; Sebastian et al., 2018).

Educators assuming a role in administration are trained to be managers rather than instructional leaders (Tirozzi, 2001). The role of administrators has shifted from “books, boilers, and buses” to a focus on improving teaching and learning (Gill, 2012). Since 2000, federal policy changes have impacted the role of school leaders; the three significant federal policies include No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and Every Student Succeeds Act (Grissom et al., 2021). These policies have placed a greater emphasis on student achievement, common academic standards, graduation rates, and educator evaluation, thus creating more accountability for school administrators.

According to Grissom et al. (2021), the shift in policy includes “accountability for groups that were not previously emphasized.” Grissom et al. (2021) noted the most significant change in the role of principals occurred in the emphasis on educator evaluation, creating a need for more time spent in classrooms and around improving instruction.

Administrators must now evaluate instruction, provide specific feedback, mentor, and coach teachers (Grissom et al., 2021).

Sebastian et al. (2018) explained the shift in the role of administrators to evaluate teachers, implement effective professional development for teachers, and build the leadership skills of teacher leaders further complicates the difficult workload administrators have. The Aspen Institute (2022) stated the COVID-19 pandemic added more responsibilities to the principal as schools now have a greater need for high-quality digital learning experiences. Additionally, the students in post-pandemic schools experience greater anxiety and depression, thus creating different needs for school staff to address (Aspen Institute, 2022). The Aspen Institute (2022) stated:

The role becomes untenable when principals are faced with a litany of disparate responsibilities and when system leaders gloss over the requisite depth and mastery are required for the job. Unilateral, expansive responsibility for a principal is [not] a sustainable leadership model.

In order for principals to find success in their ever-changing roles, school systems must redesign how to support principals through professional development and authentic support (Aspen Institute, 2022).

Role of High School Administrator

High school administrators hold complex and intricate positions working with a larger staff and more students than most elementary and middle school administrators. Haines (2007) listed 25 responsibilities of an administrator, and the number of students and staff in the building extrapolates the obligations at the high school level. The needs of students have grown as societal pressures on adolescents have increased over the years (Levin et al., 2019). The role of the high school administrator has expanded to meet the ever-changing needs of students, and administrators must be able to lead instruction and continuous school improvement (Sutcher et al., 2017). Administrators must also balance the implementation of technology with sound pedagogy. Technology constantly improves and changes; administrators must interpret how this impacts curriculum and instruction (Tirozzi, 2001). Administrators must also determine how to appropriately incorporate technology while maintaining the safety of children (Ahn et al., 2011). Smale et al. (2021) explained technology can make students susceptible to cybercrimes, cyberbullying, and inappropriate usage.

Tirozzi (2001) explained that secondary administrators are challenged with changing demographics, outdated school buildings, and unsuitable curricula for today's youth. By 2025, 61% of population growth in the United States will come from Hispanic and Asian populations (Tirozzi, 2001). Administrators will be tasked with developing and equipping teachers with the resources and strategies necessary to educate a highly diverse population of students (Tirozzi, 2001). High school administrators' numerous responsibilities impact their ability to find adequate time to focus on instructional leadership (Levin et al., 2019).

Administrators' Influence on Instruction

Administrators act as instructional leaders by ensuring the teaching and learning process includes a comprehensive curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments of learning (Tirozzi, 2001). The most effective administrators strengthen teachers' instructional practice through feedback, offering meaningful professional development, creating an environment where critique is accepted and welcomed, and focusing on data to influence instructional decisions (Sutcher et al., 2017). Administrators are tasked with providing effective professional development opportunities for teachers (Grissom et al., 2021). Krasnoff and Education Northwest (2015) explained professional development impacts teachers' instructional practice.

Administrators who are instructional leaders influence the instructional capacity of teachers (Sutcher et al., 2017). The San Diego Unified School District built the instructional leadership of its administrators by engaging in coaching. The administrator and coach visited numerous classrooms briefly to observe student learning and teacher instructional methodology. Next, they discussed what was observed and brainstormed steps to improve instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). This approach allowed principals to reflect on their leadership and develop actionable steps to implement to assist teachers. Instructional coaching can be used to support new teachers and can be provided continuously through professional development (Desimone & Pak, 2017).

Administrators' Influence on Student Learning

Leithwood et al. (2008) stated school leadership, or administrators, have the second largest influence on student learning. The classroom teacher has the largest impact. Student growth or achievement is typically between 12-20% when controlling all

external factors, and administrators account for one-quarter of the progress, contributing to between 5-7% of growth (Creemers & Geezigt, 1996). Administrators indirectly influence instruction and student learning through their influence on staff motivation, working conditions, and beliefs (Leithwood et al., 2008). Grissom and Bartanen (2019) stated administrators influence student learning outcomes through their impact on hiring and retaining effective teachers. Administrators impact all teachers in a school, thus impacting all students. Given the magnitude of the effect of an administrator, administrators are one of the most important factors contributing to student learning (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004).

Grissom et al. (2021) found an effective administrator can impact student achievement by 0.13 standard deviations in math and 0.09 standard deviations in reading. This equates to 2.9 months of learning in math and 2.7 months of learning in reading. An efficient way to positively impact student achievement is to invest in making a principal more effective (Grissom et al., 2021). While this approach is simplistic, Grissom et al. (2021) explained:

Indeed, given not just the magnitude but the scope of principal effects, which are felt across a potentially large student body and faculty in a school, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership (p. 43).

Administrator Turnover

The average number of years of experience for a principal has declined from 10 to seven years from 1988 to 2016; additionally, more than half of principals had less than five years of experience in 2016 compared to eight years of experience in 1988 (Grissom

et al., 2021). This means fewer experienced principals are serving as educational leaders. In 1988, 19% of principals had three or fewer years of experience, which increased to 31% in 2016 (Grissom et al., 2021). Grissom et al. (2021) also found a decrease in tenure at a school from 1988 to 2016. On average, in 1988 a principal spent 6.2 years at the same school, and in 2016 that number had decreased to 4 years. More experienced principals are more effective than newer principals (Grissom et al., 2018); therefore, administrator turnover can negatively impact student achievement.

Reasons for Turnover

In an educational setting, turnover occurs when an administrator voluntarily or involuntarily does not return to the same school the next school year (Rangel, 2018). Bartanen et al. (2019) explained principal turnover could be categorized into four distinct groups: transfers, exits, promotions, and demotions. The principal's reason for leaving is considered a transfer when they move to another school, an exit when they leave the profession, a promotion when a higher ranked job in education is attained (head principal position or district office leadership), or a demotion when moving to a lower ranked position in education. Bartanen et al. (2019) examined principal turnover data in Missouri and Tennessee, and exits were the most common reason for turnover in both states. In Missouri, from 2001 to 2015, 39 percent of principal turnover was due to an exit. From 2007 to 2015 in Tennessee, 42% of turnover was due to an exit. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported turnover data for 114,330 administrators from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2012-2013 school year (Goldring & Taie, 2014). Goldring and Taie (2014) reported 78% of principals stayed in their position, 6% transferred to a different school, and 12% left administration (exits or demotions). Another five percent

of principals had left their 2011-2012 position, but their occupational status in 2012-2013 was unknown (Goldring & Taie, 2014). Approximately 38% of public school principals and 30% of private school principals who left the principalship retired (Goldring & Taie, 2014).

Horng (2009) found most principal turnover comes from intra-district transfers rather than from firing. Administrators may seek a more desirable working environment and make lateral moves. Educational salary schedules for teachers and administrators are rigid, so administrators have no monetary incentive to change buildings within a school district (Horng, 2009). District leaders may move administrators to new buildings to improve failing schools. The least effective principals may be transferred out of a low-performing school and replaced with highly effective principals to make a more positive impact (Horng, 2009). Bêteille et al. (2012) noted principal termination accounts for a small turnover percentage.

Johnson (2015) identified that administrators leave their positions because they feel they cannot make a difference for children. The administrators identified four barriers: workload and extreme focus on managerial tasks rather than leadership, personal costs affecting overall well-being, policies inhibiting decision-making, and isolation on the job (Johnson, 2005). Isolation is extrapolated in a school leadership position as administrators cannot turn to teachers (their subordinates) or supervisors (their bosses) to discuss problems and job-related challenges (School Leaders Network, 2014).

High school administrators' responsibilities extend beyond the 9-to-5 workday, inhibiting administrators from maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Levin et al., 2019; Tirozzi, 2001). Administrators' responsibilities have increased, yet the incentives to

assume a leadership position have not changed (Tirozzi, 2001). The imbalance in responsibility and compensation has created a challenge in recruiting high-quality administrators (Tirozzi, 2001). The role of an administrator has dramatically shifted in the last 20 years, and the increased responsibility coupled with a lack of support may contribute to a more significant number of administrators leaving the profession (Grissom et al., 2021).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) sought to collect data regarding administrator attrition. Specifically, NCES wanted to determine how many principals from the 2011-2012 school year worked in the same school and position in the 2012-2013 school year (Goldring & Taie, 2014). The NCES mailed surveys to 9,200 schools to include any principal who replied to the 2011-2012 survey. Goldring and Taie (2014) reported a 99.7% response rate from public schools and a 96.3% response rate from private schools. The survey results showed administrators who did not engage in professional development were 1.4 times more likely to leave their school the following year than administrators who received professional development (Goldring & Taie, 2014). In a 2012 survey, MetLife also identified professional development to impact administrators and retention. Principals who experienced professional development were 14 percent more satisfied with their jobs and 7 percent less likely to leave their jobs than their peers who did not experience professional development (MetLife, 2012).

Administrator Turnover Affects Teachers

Calacone (2015) found numerous administrators leave their leadership roles after three years, and nearly half leave education after five years. The instability of administrator turnover causes teachers to have a less favorable view of the school and

their classroom conditions (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Teachers often decide where to teach and how long to stay at a school based on the school's leadership (Superville, 2014). Researchers at the Learning Policy Institute reported that teachers found administrator support to be one of the most critical factors impacting their decision to remain at a school or in the educational profession (Podolsky et al., 2016). Principal turnover correlates with teacher turnover and lower student achievement growth (Béteille et al., 2012; Grissom et al., 2021). Béteille et al. found (2012) principals prefer to work in what Béteille refers to as easy-to-staff schools, which frequently are of higher socioeconomic status, contain fewer minority students, are safer, and have less absenteeism.

Béteille et al. (2012) conducted a longitudinal study of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS), the fourth-largest school district in the nation. In 2008, the MDCPS served nearly 352,000 students, 90% identified as either Hispanic or African American, and 60% qualified for free or reduced lunches. During the five-year observation period, there were between 360 and 400 schools in the district (Béteille et al., 2012). The researchers found teachers are 17% more likely to leave their school in years when they have a new principal. Steinberg (2000) echoed the adverse effects of principal turnover and noted turnover in leadership disrupted improvement efforts, reduced buy-in from teachers and staff, led to unclear goals, and created instability in the workplace. When school leadership succession was not planned, schools were more likely to not progress despite efforts made by classroom teachers (Leithwood et al., 2008).

Bartanen et al. (2019) found a decrease in teacher retention following a principal turnover by comparing the teacher retention rates for comparable schools that did and did

not experience principal turnover. In Missouri, there is a decrease in teacher retention by 1.4% and a decrease of 2.6% in Tennessee (Bartanen et al., 2019). Statistically, this impact is modest. Across five years, this translates to a need to hire one new teacher in Missouri and two new teachers in Tennessee (Bartanen et al., 2019). The impact of principal turnover on teacher retention is not significant enough to determine that principal turnover is detrimental to teacher retention.

Administrator Turnover Affects Student Achievement

Administrators' effect on student achievement is mainly indirect (Grissom et al., 2021). Administrators influence instruction, school culture, hiring, and safety; all these areas impact student achievement (Grissom et al., 2021). Teachers affect all students in their class while principals influence all students in the building.

Miller (2013) studied principal turnover in North Carolina. Miller found that student achievement results declined in the years before a principal transition. Bartanen et al. (2019) wanted to determine if the decrease in student achievement before a principal leaves a school drives turnover and wanted to isolate the impact of a principal's exit. The researchers found student achievement in math and reading began to decline two years before a principal left and continued for two years after the transition. Student achievement data returned to pre-transition levels (two years before a principal departure) by the fifth year after the turnover occurred. The only exception in this pattern of decline and increase is in the case of principal demotion. When principal turnover was due to a demotion, student achievement data reached its lowest point in the year before the transition and began increasing after the transition (Bartanen et al., 2019). This finding indicates not all administrative turnover is harmful. Grissom et al. (2021) echoed the

findings of Bartanen et al. (2019), stating the replacement of an ineffective administrator with an effective administrator can positively affect a school.

Grissom et al. (2021) sought to examine how a principal's effectiveness impacted student achievement. The authors established a principal's effectiveness based on supervisor evaluations and teacher surveys. When a principal's effectiveness is raised by one standard deviation, or from the 50th to the 84th percentile, student achievement increases by 0.13 standard deviations in math and 0.09 standard deviations in reading (Grissom et al., 2021). Kraft (2020) examined the impact of increasing principals' effectiveness. Kraft (2020) found that replacing a below-average principal with an above-average principal produced a 0.18 standard deviation growth for students in math. This effect is more significant than in 70% of math and 50% of reading interventions studied in 747 academic studies (Kraft, 2020).

Bartanen (2020) studied principals in Tennessee. On average, students in Tennessee missed 9.9 days of school per school year, and 13% were chronically absent. Bartanen (2020) found that average principals (75th percentile or higher) had students who attended 1.4 more days of school per year than a below-average principal (25th percentile). Above average principals had four percentage points less chronic absenteeism, meaning students who miss more than 10 school days in a year (Bartanen, 2020).

Organizational Instability

Administrative turnover does not provide the consistency needed for steady organizational improvement. The School Leaders Network (2014) explained on average, it takes an effective principal five years to enact a vision, improve the instructional capacity of teachers, and positively impact a school's performance. A new administrator

can take up to three years to regain progress in mathematics and English language arts (Béteille et al., 2012). Bartanen et al. (2019) explained that the impact on the school depends on whether the replacement administrator is more or less effective than the predecessor.

Administrator Turnover in Schools of Poverty

Through their research, Béteille et al. (2012) learned the adverse effects of principal turnover can be smaller when vacancies are filled with an experienced principal. High-poverty schools are less likely to hire an experienced principal; thus, they experience more negative effects of principal turnover (Béteille et al., 2012). High-poverty schools are half as likely than middle-class schools to retain the same administrator over six years (Branch et al., 2009). The highest-poverty schools experience an administrative turnover rate of 25%, while the lowest-poverty schools' administrative turnover rate is 21% (Grissom et al., 2019).

Grissom et al. (2021) stated the administrative turnover rate is higher in schools that serve lower-income students, low-achieving students, and students of color. The authors suggested administrative turnover may exacerbate existing inequities among schools. Schools with high principal turnover rates often have other characteristics commonly associated with low student achievement rates, such as fewer resources, more novice teachers, and a lower socioeconomic status population. Lower-income schools are heavily and negatively impacted the most by principal turnover.

Teacher Turnover's Impact on Administrator Pool

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 0.57 hires for every open position in education at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. The national teacher shortage

may lead to an administrator shortage as many administrators typically serve as classroom teachers before assuming a school leadership position. The Illinois Principal Association (2023) reported the number of educators completing the requirements to become a principal had dropped by over 75% from 2011 to 2021. In Illinois, the number of principal program completers per year does not meet the state's demand for vacant administrative positions (Illinois Principals Association, 2023).

Summary

The role of an administrator has changed drastically over the past few decades, but the structure and implementation of professional development of administrators have remained stagnant. Turnover amongst administrators has become more frequent. Leadership stability in schools is beneficial as administrators directly influence teachers and indirectly impact students.

Chapter 3

Methods

This study was conducted to investigate the impact of professional development on high school administrators. This chapter includes a description of the research design, setting, selection of participants, sampling procedures, and instruments. Additionally, this chapter will discuss data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability, trustworthiness, the researcher's role, and limitations of the study.

Research Design

The researcher applied a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is used to provide insight into individuals and phenomena (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The specific design was phenomenological research using interviews to collect data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained that phenomenological research involves collecting participants' shared, lived experiences about a phenomenon. This study explored a systemic view of professional development by studying the perceptions of high school administrators on how professional development impacted their professional knowledge, professional skills, and desire to remain in an administrative position.

Setting

The study took place in an affluent, suburban county in Kansas including two public school districts. The choice of District X and District Y was purposeful due to their proximity, size, and similar structures at the high school level. The two school districts are located within the same county covering 480 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The county contains five school districts, and the two districts selected for this study are the second and third largest (Kansas Department of Education, 2022). The

two school districts contain five high schools with four or five administrators in each building.

District X has an early childhood (EC) center, 21 elementary schools, nine middle schools, five high schools, a center for specialized programs, and an alternative high school. During the 2021-2022 school year, enrollment for EC-12 was 22,421 students (District X, 2022). The district reported 1,888 certified staff and 66 building-level administrators district-wide. At the time of this study, each of the five high schools had a principal, assistant principal of curriculum and instruction, assistant principal of activities, and an athletic director.

District Y has an EC center, 34 elementary schools, five middle schools, five high schools, an alternative high school, and a center for specialized programs. During the 2021-2022 school year, enrollment for EC-12 was 29,715 students (District Y, 2022). The district reported 2,144 certified staff and 75 building-level administrators district-wide. At the time of the study, each of the five high schools had a principal, three assistant principals, and an athletic director.

Table 2 shows the socioeconomic demographics statewide in Kansas as well as in Districts X and Y during the 2021-2022 school year for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. County-wide demographic data are included in the table. The county data account for the entire population of 619,195 people, not only those of school age. Socioeconomically, District X and Y's populations vary.

Table 2*Socioeconomic Data*

| Location | Total Number of Students K-12 | Economically Disadvantaged | Non-Economically Disadvantaged |
|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Kansas | 479,743 | 43.2% | 56.8% |
| County | | 5.9% | 94.1% |
| District X | 22,869 | 6.8% | 93.2% |
| District Y | 26,278 | 32.4% | 67.6% |

Note. District and state data adapted from *2021-2022 KSDE Data Central - Kansas*

Education Reports. Retrieved from: https://datacentral.ksde.org/report_gen.aspx. County data adapted from *U.S. Census Bureau* (2022).

Table 3 depicts the race demographics statewide in Kansas as well as in Districts X and Y during the 2021-2022 school year for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. County-wide demographic data are included in the table. The county data account for the entire population, not only those of school age. Of note, Districts X and Y serve students of a variety of racial backgrounds, and the demographic proportions are different in the two districts.

Table 3*Race Data*

| Location | White | African American | Hispanic | American Indian /Alaska Native | Hawaiian /Pacific Islander | Asian | Multiracial |
|------------|-------|---------------------|----------|---|----------------------------------|-------|-------------|
| Kansas | 62.5% | 6.7% | 21% | 0.7% | 0.2% | 2.8% | 6% |
| County | 78.1% | 5.3% | 8.5% | 0.4% | < 0.5% | 5.5% | 2.8% |
| District X | 68.7% | 3.6% | 6.6% | 0.3% | 0.1% | 15.3% | 5.4% |
| District Y | 62.3% | 9.1% | 19.8% | 0.3% | 0.1% | 2.3% | 6.2% |

Note. District and state data adapted from *2021-2022 KSDE Data Central - Kansas*

Education Reports. Retrieved from: https://datacentral.ksde.org/report_gen.aspx. County data adapted from *U.S. Census Bureau* (2022).

Sampling Procedures

The population for the study consisted of high school administrators that had experience with professional development. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated criterion sampling allows participants to be selected based on meeting a particular criterion. The administrators were selected for this study using criterion sampling as participants worked in comparable districts within the same geographic region. Participants were explicitly chosen for their high school administration experience and professional development experience after becoming an administrator. All participants served as high school administrators for at least one year before participating in the study. The study sample included fourteen high school administrators from two suburban school districts in Kansas. There were seven administrators from each district. At the time of the study, the administrators were either principals or assistant principals. Three participants from

District X and two participants from District Y were principals at the time of the study. Four participants from District X and five participants from District Y were assistant principals at the time of the study.

Instruments

The researcher collected data through interviews. The researcher asked participants open-ended questions. Creswell and Creswell (2018) said the purpose of open-ended questioning is to “elicit views and opinions from the participants.”

Interview Protocol

The researcher developed the interview questions based on a literature review conducted by the researcher. Members of the expert panel from the Graduate School of Education at Baker University and the Deputy Superintendent in District X reviewed the initial draft of the interview questions. Upon receiving feedback, the researcher revised the interview questions. Next, the researcher conducted a pilot interview with the Executive Director of School Administration in District X. The pilot interview clarified when follow-up questions were necessary. Based on this experience, the researcher added appropriate follow-up questions to the interview protocol. For example, a follow up question regarding how professional skill or knowledge changed based on professional development experience was added.

All participants were asked the same set of questions (Appendix F). The primary interview questions were designed to elicit responses addressing the central research question: What are high school administrators' experiences with professional development? The researcher collected demographic and setting information from participants through a Google Form prior to the Zoom interview. The interviews

contained six questions. The researcher asked participants to share what professional knowledge and skills high school administrators should have. Participants were also asked if professional development has changed their professional knowledge and skills. The interviews concluded with two questions about the impact of professional development on administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position and if there is anything the participants wanted to add about professional development. The questions given to participants allowed the researcher to understand the impact of professional development on high school administrators in neighboring, similar districts.

Data Collection Procedures

Before data collection, the researcher completed an Institutional Review Board (IRB) request through Baker University on August 9, 2023 (Appendix G). The Baker University IRB committee approved the request on August 25, 2023 (Appendix H). The researcher completed an Application to Conduct Research in District X (Appendix B) on April 11, 2023. The Research Review Board in District X approved the research request on May 2, 2023 (Appendix C). The researcher completed an Application to Conduct Research in District Y (Appendix D) on August 25, 2023. District Y's Director of Assessment and Research approved the research request on September 1, 2023 (Appendix E).

After the researcher received approval to conduct research from Baker University and District X, the researcher collected contact information for all high school administrators from the district website. Then, the researcher emailed a recruitment letter to all high school administrators in District X (see Appendix A for the recruitment email). The Director of Assessment and Research in District Y emailed all high school

administrators the recruitment letter. A total of 45 high school administrators were contacted. The recruitment letter included a description of the study, the purpose of the study, an invitation to participate, and a consent form (Appendix I).

Seven high school administrators from both District X and District Y signed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study. Participating administrators were contacted through their preferred method of contact, email or phone, to schedule one interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. The researcher conducted all the interviews over Zoom, a video conferencing tool. The researcher used the record feature in Zoom (2022), which creates multiple output files: a video recording, an audio recording, and a transcription of the audio recording. Zoom transcribes the audio into sections with timestamps to indicate when in the recording the text was recorded. The transcripts were editable. The researcher tested the Zoom tools to ensure video and audio recordings worked properly. Each interview was both video and audio recorded. The researcher utilized voice recording on an iPhone as a secondary tool to record the interviews. The researcher interviewed participants individually.

The researcher followed an interview protocol for each participant maintaining internal consistency (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). See Appendix H for the interview protocol. Each interview began with an opening statement containing the purpose of the study and an explanation of anonymity. The researcher explained that participants could review the interview transcript to ensure data validity. Participants were given a chance to ask the researcher questions. During the interview, the researcher elicited more information when necessary by asking participants to elaborate on their responses. Each

interview was transcribed verbatim, and all interview recordings and transcripts were securely saved for five years after the completion of the study.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Qualitative data analysis allows the researcher to take transcribed, raw data and move to clear, organized responses to research questions (Rubin & Rubin 2012). Rubin and Rubin (2012) explained eight steps to qualitative data analysis. These steps included transcribing interviews, coding the text for relevant themes or concepts, sorting coded data, summarizing grouped data based on themes, combining concepts to explain a theme, and finally generalizing beyond the sample population.

Step 1. To begin the data analysis, the researcher obtained a text transcript of each interview from Zoom, a video conferencing tool.

Step 2. To verify accurate transcripts, the researcher compared the video recording of each interview to the transcribed text. The researcher edited the transcripts verbatim to ensure accuracy.

Step 3. Once the researcher verified the transcripts, each participant was emailed a copy of the transcript to complete a member check.

Step 4. After the researcher and interviewee verified each transcript, the researcher uploaded the transcripts to Quirkos. Quirkos is an online software used for analyzing qualitative data for research. The program assists researchers in coding, categorizing, sorting, and analyzing conceptual themes within the data.

Step 5. The researcher then read each transcript and coded the text. According to Saldaña (2015), a code is a word or short phrase that summarizes or symbolizes a portion of text. The researcher used descriptive coding to record demographic data and structural

coding to analyze responses to specific research questions (Saldaña, 2013). Descriptive coding briefly summarizes the topic of a text in a word or phrase and is commonly used when analyzing interview transcripts (Saldaña, 2015). Saldaña (2015) explained that structural coding categorizes and codes data to highlight similarities, differences, and connections.

Step 6. After the first-cycle coding, pattern coding was implemented to group coded text by concept. Miles and Huberman (1994) explained pattern coding as a second-cycle coding strategy used to group coded texts into a smaller number of sets or themes.

Step 7. According to Drisko (2020), synthesis involves combining data and results to find patterns and conclusions. Using the results from the two cycles of coding, the researcher synthesized the data by modifying and developing common patterns, trends, and concepts and creating themes.

Step 8. Finally, the researcher examined how the themes could be generalized or applied to other populations. The researcher discussed the potential impact of professional development on high school administrators.

Reliability and Trustworthiness

Reliability refers to the extent to which a study could be repeated and yield the same results in repeated attempts (Howell et al., 2005). Stahl and King (2020) defined trustworthiness as when readers have confidence in the researcher when reading the study.

To ensure the reliability of the study, the researcher followed the interview protocol. This was done to establish the internal consistency of the interview process. Reliability was also maintained by following the same steps to analyze each transcript. In

addition, the researcher documented all procedures and processes to enable others to follow the procedures in the future (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This thorough documentation helped to establish trustworthiness.

The researcher attempted to establish the credibility of the study by allowing participants to review their interview transcripts. This process is referred to as member checking, and Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained that member checking “ensures the truth value of the data.” All transcripts were updated to reflect the changes suggested by the participants.

The researcher also focused on the study's transferability. Merriam (1998) described transferability as the ability to apply a study's findings to other situations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that the researcher's responsibility is to provide adequate contextual information about the study to enable readers to transfer the study to alternate populations. To increase the transferability of the study, the participants selected were from two school districts in the same county with similar structures at the high school level. The researcher included a detailed description of the setting to provide context.

Researcher's Role

Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that good qualitative researchers disclose how their biases could impact the interpretation of the study. At the time of the study, the researcher was an assistant principal at a high school in a suburban school district in Kansas. The researcher held a minor in leadership studies, a bachelor's degree in secondary mathematics education, a master's degree in educational administration, and was a doctoral candidate in educational leadership.

The researcher's past and current roles may have influenced how the researcher perceived the interviews and interpreted the data, and the researcher's experiences with professional development as a high school administrator may also have influenced the interpretation of the data. For example, the researcher has served in multiple assistant principal positions and has experienced professional development in all the roles. The professional development opportunities had a different impact on the researcher in each of the administrative roles the researcher was in. The researcher was mindful throughout the interview and analysis processes of any preconceived understandings and perceptions of professional development's structure, carry-out, and impact on high school administrators. The researcher intended to remain impartial throughout the study to ensure unbiased interviewing, data analysis, and conclusions.

Limitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) expressed the importance of declaring limitations to help the reader avoid misinterpreting the study findings. The study had the following limitations:

1. Only high school administrators were recruited as participants. Therefore, the findings of this study should not be generalized to elementary or middle school settings.
2. The study results are limited to the input from participants in a suburban county in Kansas. The results of this study may not be applicable in urban or rural settings.
3. Participants may have had selective memory or exaggerated during the interview process.

Summary

The professional development experiences of high school administrators were explored in this study. Participants were selected using criterion sampling, and data were collected through individual interviews. After data collection, the data were analyzed and synthesized to determine common themes. Finally, the researcher interpreted the data to form conclusions.

Chapter 4

Results

The results of this study are provided in this chapter. The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore high school administrators' experience with professional development. The researcher utilized a qualitative approach. The specific design was phenomenological research using interviews to collect data. The central research question was, "What are high school administrators' experiences with professional development?" Three sub-questions guided the research. This chapter presents key findings related to the three research questions.

Fourteen practicing high school administrators were interviewed for this study. Each participant engaged in an interview on Zoom, and each participant's transcript was coded and analyzed for this study. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the high school administrators' experiences with professional development as well as an explanation of themes that emerged from the coding and analysis of the interviews.

Participant Information

Of the fourteen study participants, seven currently work in District X and seven work in District Y. Seven participants were female and seven were male. Five participants presently occupied a head principal position while nine were serving as assistant principals. All participants were white and were between the ages of 35 and 52. Participants have been in an education career field for between 11 and 30 years with between two and 24 years of experience in administration.

Findings Related to Research Question 1

The first research question was about the changes in high school administrators' professional knowledge after participating in professional development. Participants identified a total of 27 types of professional knowledge they should possess as high school administrators. Participants were then asked if professional development changed their professional knowledge. The participants identified 21 types of professional knowledge that were changed due to professional development. The following types of professional knowledge were most mentioned by participants. The frequency of the types of professional knowledge mentioned is listed in parentheses:

- law (4)
- school safety (4)
- working with adults (4)
- knowing signs of struggle or behavior change (3)
- educating and motivating teachers (3)
- what makes teachers effective (3)
- human resources (3)
- school finance (3)
- system organization (3)
- working with students (3)

Participants also mentioned discipline, assigned duties, curriculum, decision-making, educational standards, teaching and learning, working through a situation, teacher appraisal, social-emotional learning strategies, supervision, and working with families were pieces of professional knowledge that were changed by professional development.

Figure J1 in Appendix J displays the professional knowledge participants said were changed by professional development.

When prompted about how professional development changed their professional knowledge, participants shared various reasons displayed in Table 4. Table 4 details how professional development changed the high school administrators' professional knowledge. Table 4 includes the frequency with which participants mentioned a reason.

Table 4

Reasons Why Professional Development Changed Professional Knowledge

| Reason | Frequency Mentioned |
|---|------------------------|
| Gained Knowledge or Strategy | 31 |
| Developed a Better Understanding or Awareness | 7 |
| Through Collaboration | 6 |
| Keeps Focus on Kids | 1 |
| Established Consistency Across the District | 1 |

Note. Participants may have listed multiple ways professional development changed their professional knowledge.

The most common way professional development changed participants' professional knowledge was through knowledge or strategy gain. Participant X3 shared how gaining new strategies related to school safety by saying, "Just being aware of obviously the issues that schools face nowadays and getting guidance on practical skills and strategies to ensure safety and respond to needs when they come up." Participant X3 further shared that professional development can impact professional knowledge when

"going from the awareness piece of those needs to more action-oriented...not just admiring a problem...but being proactive."

The second most frequent way professional development changed participants' professional knowledge was through developing a better understanding. Participant X2 explained professional development helped them develop a better understanding. Participant X2's professional knowledge was changed by "[giving] me the language to both recognize and describe what's going on so that I can help."

Participants listed 27 types of professional knowledge high school administrators should possess, indicating the wide variety of knowledge pieces administrators must be aware of to be successful. Participant X2 explained there is a steep learning curve when transitioning from being a classroom teacher to becoming a high school administrator. Participant X2 stated, "I think the things we don't know coming into [administration] that we would never encounter in the classroom; I think that's where some of [the] professional development we get as administrators is most impactful."

The participants determined that 59.15% of the professional knowledge they listed was changed by professional development, and 40.85% of participants' professional knowledge was not changed by professional development. The participants selected 18 types of professional knowledge that were not changed due to professional development. Of the 18 pieces of professional knowledge not changed due to professional development, the list below displays the most commonly mentioned items. The number in parentheses represents the frequency the knowledge piece was mentioned by participants as not being changed due to professional development:

- educating and motivating teachers (5)

- organization (4)
- time management (3)
- school finance (3)

Participants also shared their professional knowledge of discipline, culture, connections, management, working with students, law, working through a situation, instructional strategies, appraisal, supervision, human resources, teaching and learning, working with adults, and curriculum was not changed due to professional development. Figure J2 in Appendix J displays the professional knowledge participants said were not changed by professional development.

When prompted why professional development did not change their professional knowledge, participants explained various reasons displayed in Table 5. Table 5 displays why professional development did not change the high school administrators' professional knowledge. Table 5 includes the frequency with which participants mentioned a reason.

Table 5*Reasons Why Professional Development Did Not Change Professional Knowledge*

| Reason | Frequency Mentioned |
|--|------------------------|
| Not a Topic Addressed in Professional Development | 10 |
| Professional Knowledge Changed Through Learning On-The-Job | 10 |
| Professional Knowledge Changed Based On Experience | 5 |
| Professional Development Was Not Personalized | 2 |
| Early Coursework Changed Professional Knowledge | 2 |
| Colleague Reassurance Changed Professional Knowledge | 2 |
| Personal Research Changed Professional Knowledge | 1 |

Note. Participants may have listed multiple reasons professional development did not change their professional knowledge.

Professional development for high school administrators is often generalized rather than personalized. However, Participant X1 also explained they are provided professional development specific to their role as an athletic director and is not always invited to professional development that impacts other areas of their job as an assistant principal, such as assisting teachers with instruction or curriculum. Each administrator's role is different and very specific. Participant X2 explained, "I learned more from a former colleague in two weeks of working with him than in five years of any kind of professional development." Participant X2's sentiments were echoed by participants 15 times, indicating on-the-job learning and experience are what changed professional knowledge, not professional development. Participant X6 explained their professional

knowledge has not changed due to professional development. Instead, professional development has "just reinforced what I already knew."

In summary, professional development changed high school administrators' professional knowledge (59.15%) more often than it did not change high school administrators' professional knowledge (40.85%). The list of professional knowledge types that high school administrators should know is vast, and professional development allows high school administrators to gain knowledge, gain strategy, and develop a better understanding, often through collaboration. There are pieces of professional knowledge that are not topics in professional development, and on-the-job learning coupled with experience are primary reasons professional development did not impact high school administrators' professional knowledge.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

The second research question was about the changes in high school administrators' professional skills after participating in professional development. Participants identified a total of 23 professional skills they should possess as high school administrators. Participants were then asked if professional development changed their professional skills. The participants identified 17 professional skills that were changed due to professional development. The most mentioned professional skills changed by professional development include (the number in parentheses represents the frequency in which a skill was mentioned):

- communication (6)
- de-escalation (5)
- people skills (5)

- leadership (4)

Participants also shared that professional development changed their professional skills of listening, giving feedback, negotiation, digital skills, building consensus, remaining calm, team building, building relationships, saying no, collaboration, analyzing data, building a master schedule, and providing effective professional development. Figure J3 in Appendix J displays the professional skills participants said were changed by professional development.

When prompted about how professional development changed their professional skills, participants shared various reasons displayed in Table 6. Table 6 displays how professional development changed the high school administrators' professional skills. Table 6 includes the frequency with which participants mentioned a reason.

Table 6

Reasons Why Professional Development Changed Professional Skills

| Reason | Frequency Mentioned |
|---|------------------------|
| Gained Knowledge or Strategy | 23 |
| Developed a Better Understanding or Awareness | 5 |
| Through Collaboration | 5 |
| Through Reflection | 1 |
| Established Consistency Across the District | 1 |
| Through Non-Examples | 1 |

Note. Participants may have listed multiple ways professional development changed their professional skills.

The most common reason professional development changed high school administrators' professional skills was through gaining knowledge or strategy. Participants often referred to impactful professional development opportunities being centered around collaboration. Participant Z3 elaborated on the impact of a collaborative environment by saying, "As long as the collaboration is built around mutual trust and respect...there's an unlimited amount of knowledge that one can gain and develop from those types of collaborative conversations." Another collaborative structure of professional development occurs in the formal mentoring process. Numerous participants praised the mentoring approach. Participant X2 explained when new administrators are paired with experienced administrators, both administrators benefit from learning from one another.

Participants reported that 62.5% of professional skills were changed by professional development while 37.5% of professional skills were not changed by professional development. The participants selected 12 professional skills that were not changed due to professional development. The most mentioned professional skills not changed by professional development include (the number in parentheses represents the frequency the skill was mentioned):

- communication (4)
- problem-solving (3)
- de-escalation (3)

Participants also shared that professional development did not change their professional skills of multitasking, team building, leadership, people skills, time management, pedagogy, analytical skill, applying knowledge, and building a master schedule. Figure

J4 in Appendix J displays the professional skills participants said were not changed by professional development.

When asked why professional development did not change their professional skills, participants explained various reasons displayed in Table 7. Table 7 displays why professional development did not change the high school administrators' professional skills. Table 7 includes the frequency with which participants mentioned a reason.

Table 7

Reasons Why Professional Development Did Not Change Professional Skills

| Reason | Frequency Mentioned |
|--|------------------------|
| Professional Skills Changed Through Learning On-The-Job | 13 |
| Not a Topic Addressed in Professional Development | 6 |
| Professional Knowledge Changed Based On Experience | 4 |
| Professional Skills Changed Through Informal Collaboration | 1 |

Note. Participants may have listed multiple reasons professional development did not change their professional skills.

Participant X7 elaborated on the lack of impact by saying professional development is often centered on "new initiative[s], or nuts and bolts, or something that we're rolling out. And there's not a lot of strategy. Sometimes, there's not a lot of strategy behind the how. It's just...the what." Participant X7 continued to explain that sometimes the best way to expand professional skills is by "going through something and then debriefing and learning from it afterward. Then thinking about how I would change my practice or how I would do some things similar next time." Participant X2 echoed the impact of on-the-job learning and experience when they said, "It ends up being on-the-

job learning trumps the [professional development] session, although the [professional development] session provided a framework."

In summary, professional development changed high school administrators' professional skills more often (62.5%) than it did not change high school administrators' professional skills (37.5%). Professional development changes high school administrators' professional skills by allowing them to gain knowledge, gain strategy, and develop a better understanding often through collaboration. The leading reason professional development did not change high school administrators' professional skill was because professional skill was changed through on-the-job learning or experience. Additionally, six different professional skills were not topics covered through professional development.

Findings Related to Research Question 3

The third research question was about high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position after participating in professional development. Participants were asked if any professional development experience influenced their desire to remain in an administrative position. Nine participants (64.29%) shared that professional development changed their desire to remain in an administrative position. Five participants (35.71%) explained professional development did not change their desire to remain in an administrative position.

Participants shared six reasons when asked why or how a professional development experience influenced their desire to remain in an administrative position. Figure J5 in Appendix J shows the reasons participants shared for how professional development influenced their retention. Table 8 displays why professional development

influenced the high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position.

Table 8 includes the frequency with which participants mentioned a reason.

Table 8

Reasons Why Professional Development Influenced Retention in Administration

| Reason | Frequency Mentioned |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Source of Motivation | 4 |
| Provided Meaningful Collaboration | 3 |
| Provided Reassurance | 3 |
| Created Personal Growth | 3 |
| Confirmed "The Why" | 2 |
| Made Administrator Feel Valued | 1 |

Note. Participants may have listed multiple reasons professional development influenced their desire to remain in an administrative position.

Participant X1 explained their experience with collaborative professional development opportunities such as state-wide athletic director conferences. Participant X1 identified those conferences as influential in their desire to remain in an administrative position. Participant X1 referred to the reassurance and confirmation of why they wanted to be an administrator by stating,

I'm not the only one that experiences these things. And just being able to hear speakers, learn, and then talk to my peers...[it] kind of cemented this is what I want to do. This is where I want to be.

Participant Z3 echoed the influential sentiments of professional development by saying, "Every professional development opportunity reminds me of why I do what I do. It fills my cup. It gives me back my passion to do what I'm doing."

Two participants shared the importance of "the why" in remaining in an administrative position. To them, retention in administration is grounded in the reason they decided to become administrators. Participant X5 explained, "That's why I do what I do to help people with their stories, and to be a, you know, part of their part of their {stories}." When professional development connects high school administrators with their ability to impact students and teachers, it can effectively influence retention.

Professional development can also have no impact on high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position, as shared by five (35.71%) participants. Participants shared two reasons when asked why or how a professional development experience did not influence their desire to remain in an administrative position. Figure J6 in Appendix J shows the reasons participants said why professional development did not impact their retention. Table 9 displays why professional development did not affect the high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position. Table 9 includes the frequency with which participants mentioned a reason.

Table 9*Reasons Why Professional Development Did Not Influence Retention in Administration*

| Reason | Frequency Mentioned |
|---|------------------------|
| Other Reasons for Staying in Administration | 6 |
| Had The Opposite Effect | 1 |

Note. Participants may have listed multiple reasons professional development did not influence their desire to remain in an administrative position.

Participant X7 explained professional development was a strong recruiting factor in their decision to come to District X. Participant X7 explained,

I do feel more supported in District X for my own continuous growth because there's an emphasis placed on [professional development]. So I'm hopeful that maybe long-term, I'll want to stay in the district or in this role. But I wouldn't leave. That wouldn't be a determining factor in me staying or going either. But it has been a reason why I came.

While professional development brought Participant X7 to District X, they have not had a professional development experience that influenced their desire to remain in an administrative position. Similarly, professional development would not be a determining factor for them to leave administration.

In thinking about their professional development experience, Participant X2 talked about how much professional development administrators facilitate for teachers. Participant X2 said, "Most professional learning convinced me I never wanted to be an administrator. Who would want to do that?" Participant Z5 further explored the idea of professional development motivating high school administrators to stay in an

administrative position. Participant Z5 articulated, “I want more of that reinforcing why I’m doing what I’m doing. I haven’t yet had that opportunity as a practicing administrator.”

In summary, the majority of high school administrator participants (64.29%) said professional development had influenced their desire to remain in an administrative position. The most common reasons for the impact on retention were because professional development provided motivation, reassurance, collaboration opportunities, and fostered personal growth. The 35.71% of high school administrator participants who determined professional development did not influence their desire to remain in an administrative position explained other factors kept them in an administrative role.

Additional Observations

Numerous participants emphasized their desire for more professional development as high school administrators. They noted most professional development efforts are focused on teachers. Participant X7 explained, “Most days, it’s not about us,” and Participant Z7 said, “There’s a lot [of professional development] for our teachers and not a whole lot for our administrators.” Participant Z1 further explained the role of administrators in facilitating professional development for teachers. Participant Z1 said, “I think we, as administrators, are often the ones doing all the things and creating professional development for others. But we forget that we need it too.” Administrators focus their attention on providing quality and impactful professional development for their teaching staff. However, Participant X4 explained, “I don’t feel like we often put forth the classroom environment for our leaders that would be okay with for teachers and students in our classroom. So there’s some missed opportunities.”

Multiple study participants expressed a desire for professional development for high school administrators to be more personalized. Participants Z5 and Z6 both articulated the delivery of professional development is geared toward the masses of administrators, sometimes trying to reach administrators who serve elementary, middle, and high school administrators. While there are similarities in the role of administrators, there are many nuances that make serving as an administrator in a high school different than serving as an elementary school principal. Participant X2 explained, “I think that we still, as administrators, have too much of a one size fits all approach to professional learning.”

Numerous study participants shared that professional development needs to have purpose and meaning for it to be impactful. Professional development is desired by high school administrators. As Participant Z1 explained, “We’re teachers. We like to learn.” Participant Z1 continued to explain that professional development can reinvigorate high school administrators. Participant Z1 said professional development can “remind you to get your head in the clouds...why do you do this and learn and grow and feel like you’re making progress. I just think it’s important for other overall health of our career.”

Summary

Professional development changed high school administrators' professional skills more significantly than professional knowledge. Participants reported 62.5% of professional skills and 59.15% of professional knowledge impacted by professional development. The most common reason professional development did not change high school administrators' professional knowledge and skills is because on-the-job learning was more impactful. Secondly, professional development did not include topics related to

various professional knowledge and skills that high school administrators identified they should have.

Participants were asked if a professional development opportunity influenced their desire to remain in an administrative position. Nine participants (64.29%) said professional development had influenced their retention while five participants (35.71%) said professional development did not influence their retention. Impactful professional development experiences related primarily to participants' motivation for becoming administrators. The participants who shared professional development did not influence their retention connect with other reasons to stay in their positions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (Department of Education, 2015) clearly stated that professional development should be provided to both teachers and administrators. However, the act did not provide direction regarding how to examine the impact of professional development. Professional development for teachers is widely studied, while the impact of professional development for administrators is largely unknown (Calacone, 2015; Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020). This study was conducted to investigate the impact of professional development on high school administrators. Chapter 5 contains a study summary, an overview of the problem, a reiteration of the purpose statement and research questions, a review of methodology, findings, findings related to the literature, recommendations for the future, and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

This study was conducted to investigate the impact of professional development on high school administrators' professional knowledge, professional skill, and desire to remain in an administrative position. This section includes the purpose of the study, research questions, methodology, and major findings of the study.

Overview of the Problem

The literature on professional development for administrators is minimal, and there is even less research on professional development for high school administrators (Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020). Gümüs & Bellibas (2020) stated the current research on administrators' professional development is focused on content and quality while ignoring the impact of professional development on administrators' leadership practice.

While professional development for most educators is focused on content and managerial tasks, the professional program for administrators in most districts lacks a focus on specific knowledge and skills (Hubbard et al., 2006). Furthermore, very limited studies have been conducted to examine the impact of professional development on high school administrators' professional knowledge and skills. The literature shows some correlation between inadequate professional development and administrator turnover; however, it is unclear if participating in professional development could support administrator retention (Levin & Bradley, 2019).

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore high school administrators' experience with professional development. The researcher sought to understand the changes in high school administrators' professional skills and professional knowledge after participating in professional development. Additionally, the researcher studied the impact of professional development on administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position.

RQ1. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional knowledge after participating in professional development?

RQ2. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional skills after participating in professional development?

RQ3. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position after participating in professional development?

Review of the Methodology

The researcher applied a qualitative approach. The population for the study consisted of high school administrators. The administrators were selected for this study using criterion sampling as participants worked in comparable districts within the same geographic region. Participants were explicitly chosen for their high school administration experience and professional development experience after becoming an administrator. The researcher collected data through interviews. The researcher asked participants open-ended questions utilizing interviews on Zoom, an online video-conferencing software. Zoom generated transcripts, and the researcher edited transcripts for accuracy. Participants were sent a copy of their transcript for member checking. Once finalized, the transcripts were uploaded into Quirkos, a data analysis software. Each transcript was separately analyzed and coded.

Major Findings

The major findings of this study closely correlated with each of the research sub-questions. All findings correlated with the central research question. The findings display experiences from 14 high school administrators in District X and District Y and should not be generalized to administrators across both districts.

The first research sub-question asked participants what are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional knowledge after participating in professional development? Participants shared types of professional knowledge that were changed due to professional development. The most prominent changes were gaining knowledge or strategy or a better understanding of the topic. Participants also explained why professional development did not change their professional knowledge. The most

common reasons were that some of the professional knowledge topics listed were not covered in professional development and that on-the-job learning, rather than professional development, created the change in professional knowledge.

The second research sub-question asked participants what are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional skills after participating in professional development? The study participants listed professional skills high school administrators should have. The most common reasons participants stated for how professional development changed their professional skill was by gaining knowledge or strategy, developing a better understanding, and deepening learning through collaboration. Participants also explained why professional development did not change their professional skills. Administrators shared that on-the-job learning and experience were what changed their professional skills, not professional development. Additionally, some of the professional skills listed were not topics of professional development.

The third research sub-question asked participants what are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position after participating in professional development. The participants explained professional development gave them motivation, reassurance, collaborative opportunities, and opportunities for personal growth. All these outcomes positively impacted their desire to remain in an administrative position. Alternatively, the participants shared why professional development did not change their desire to remain in an administrative position. They explained there were other compelling reasons, outside of professional development, to stay in an administrative position. The participants shared the professional development opportunities they participated in did not connect with why

they chose to be administrators. If professional development impacted their connection with students, with developing leaders or serving as a mentor, it would have changed their desire to remain in an administrative position. Professional development did not provide motivation to continue as an administrator.

The central research question was, *what are high school administrators' experiences with professional development?* To explore high school administrators' experiences with professional development outside of professional development's impact on their professional knowledge, professional skills, and retention, the researcher asked participants to share anything related to professional development. It was found that administrator professional development is often missed or not executed with the same fidelity in which professional development for teachers is conducted. Professional development for administrators is typically focused on the “what” and “how” of the job rather than on developing leadership capacity. The one-size-fits-all approach to administrator professional development is ineffective due to the varying needs of administrators.

Findings Related to the Literature

The role of high school administrators has drastically changed from building managers to instructional leaders, team builders, coaches, and change agents (Alvoid & Black, 2014; Grissom et al., 2021). The changes have created a gap between administrators' skills and the skills they need to succeed (Alvoid & Black, 2014).). Professional development is needed to support administrators in gaining appropriate knowledge and skill to be successful. Gümüs & Bellibas (2020) stated the current research on administrators' professional development is focused on content and quality

while ignoring if professional development impacts administrators' leadership practice. This study investigated professional development related to high school administrators. The researcher aimed to gain a deeper understanding of high school administrators' perceptions of the impact of professional development on their knowledge, skills, and retention.

The School Leaders Network (2014) explained school districts host meetings to distribute information about policies, initiatives, and expectations. These types of meetings contribute to the professional knowledge of high school administrators. Participant X2 echoed this finding by explaining there are some topics all administrators “need to get at the same time with the same language so we can march in the same or similar direction as a system of schools.” For example, school safety was mentioned by numerous participants as professional knowledge they should know. When a district rolls out new protocol or technology to support school safety, it is imperative all administrators receive the same information to ensure implementation is done with fidelity.

The research from Grissom and Harrington (2010) indicated administrator professional development should not be focused on managerial tasks or delivering information for administrators to pass on to teachers. Hubbard et al. (2006) explained this concept as meetings focusing on the “what” of initiatives and rollouts rather than the “how” of leading change. Participants in the study agreed with these findings. While some information must be shared broadly with all administrators to ensure fidelity of implementation, study participants expressed a desire for their professional development to surpass managerial tasks and focus more on instructional leadership. Participant X7

explained, “I also think that a lot of that is a new initiative, or it's nuts and bolts, or something that we're rolling out...Sometimes, there's not a lot of strategy behind the how.”

While participants reported the majority of their professional knowledge was changed by professional development, every participant explained at least one piece of professional knowledge was not changed by professional development. Participant X2 explained professional development often “gave just a little bit of inroad and then work with my teammates gave me the most leverage.” Participant X2, as well as other participants, referred to informal, on-the-job learning with colleagues as more impactful than professional development. Study participants explained a disconnect between professional development and continued mentoring opportunities with on-the-job learning. This aligns with Sutchter et al. (2017) who found high-quality professional development for administrators is problem-based, field-based, or contains on-the-job coaching. The study participants and Sutchter align with Augustine et al. (2009) who found nearly all, 95%, of administrators said they learn more from their peers than from formal learning opportunities.

The literature shows some correlation between inadequate professional development and administrator turnover (Levin & Bradley, 2019). One study participant shared this view and explained professional development caused the participant to question a career in administration. However, the majority of participants explained professional development has influenced their desire to remain in an administrative position. Participants shared professional development often provides motivation and reassurance thus having a positive impact on their retention. Participant Z3 explained the

impact of professional development by stating, “Every professional development opportunity reminds me of why I do what I do.”

Study participants also explained professional development supports their personal growth and makes them feel supported in their roles as administrators. The effect of these high-impact professional development opportunities aligns with Levin et al.’s (2020) research that found high-quality professional development opportunities supported administrator retention. Professional development must be created specifically for administrators for administrators to find the professional development impactful (Davis & McDaris, 2022).

Nine study participants articulated a need for more meaningful professional development for high school administrators. Participants explained teachers are often the primary focus of professional development, and administrators are not afforded the same learning opportunities as teachers. This finding is consistent with the research of The School Leaders Network (2014) who stated school districts would be considered negligent if they did not provide teachers with professional development opportunities throughout the school year; however, administrators are frequently left out of professional development considerations, thus having to find growth opportunities independently.

Conclusions

This study aimed at understanding high school administrators’ experience with professional development. This study examined the changes in high school administrators’ professional skills and professional knowledge after participating in professional development. Additionally, the researcher explored if professional

development impacted the administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position. The majority of study participants shared their professional knowledge, professional skill, and desire to remain in an administrative position were all changed by professional development. Therefore, this study can be utilized by school district leaders to support high-impact, meaningful professional development for high school administrators.

Implications for Action

This study demonstrates the complexity of the job of high school administrators. The professional skills and pieces of professional knowledge high school administrators should possess are broad, numerous, and varied. While many participants listed the same professional knowledge or skills needed in their positions, no participants produced identical lists. The findings of this study support the unique needs of each administrator. To best support each administrator, professional development should be personalized. District leaders should inquire about the professional development needs of high school administrators to tailor professional development to desired topics. The needs of a high school administrator early in their career will be different from those of a seasoned veteran.

Prior research supports the meaningful impact of mentoring on administrators. Participants found mentoring valuable, therefore mentoring should be promoted as an effective form of professional development for high school administrators. Adequate mentoring often occurs for first year administrators, but beyond the first year on-the-job, mentoring is severely lacking. Mentoring can also promote connectedness, develop trusting relationships, and establish support systems. Mentoring has the potential to

increase professional knowledge, professional skill, and support administrator retention.

The merits associated with mentoring are compelling and should be considered.

When executed intentionally and purposefully, professional development can impact the retention of high school administrators. The study participants shared that if professional development could connect with their purpose for becoming an administrator, it could have a positive effect on retention. Many administrators chose to pursue administration to work with both students and teachers in a supportive role. Professional development should correlate with administrators' desire to serve, connect, and lead.

Recommendations for Future Research

Participants in this study represented two school districts in the same county. All participants in this study were white. Future research should be conducted to explore the impact of professional development on high school administrators of minority backgrounds. A comparison regarding the experience of high school administrators of varying backgrounds could be compelling and produce insights into both successes and areas of growth. High school administrators of minority backgrounds are often underrepresented in leadership positions, so an analysis of the impact of professional development on high school administrators of minority backgrounds could influence support and retention.

This study explored the changes in high school administrators' professional knowledge and skill from professional development. Participants then explained how professional development changed their professional knowledge or skill. It is recommended that future research explore the different types of professional

development to determine which types yield the most positive results. Grissom and Harrington (2010) indicated an exploration into the impact of different types of professional development can guide school districts in decision-making, saving school districts time and money.

Often professional development for high school administrators is generalized and does not address the unique needs of schools or individual administrators. Study participants articulated a desire for personalized professional learning. The participants shared they would like to provide feedback and input to share what they need to be successful. Participant X4 said, “What somebody thinks we need and what I think I need or what I want in the moment are often not on the same page.” It is recommended that future research explore desired content for high school administrator professional development. Additionally, consideration and research about on-demand, personalized professional development opportunities for high school administrators should be explored.

Concluding Remarks

The role of a high school administrator continues to evolve and change to meet the demands of ever-changing students and communities. It is vital for school districts to provide high school administrators with the necessary professional development to equip leaders with the professional knowledge and skill needed to be an administrator in a high school setting. Professional development can positively impact high school administrator retention when it is purposeful, administrator focused, and meaningful.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Invitation to Participate

Dear High School Administrator,

My name is Anne Kastelic, and I am currently a high school assistant principal in Blue Valley and a doctoral student at Baker University. I am studying how professional development impacts high school administrators' professional knowledge, professional skills, and retention. I am seeking high school administrators to participate in the study to help me gain an understanding of high school administrators' experiences with professional development.

High school administrators who have served one or more years in a high school administrative position are eligible to participate. I would like to interview you regarding your role as a high school administrator. If you choose to participate in the study, you will have a single 30-45 minute Zoom interview scheduled at your convenience. The interviews will be scheduled in August or September, but I am flexible with your availability. There are general demographic information questions (completed via [Google Form](#)) followed by six questions about your experience with professional development. Following the interview, you will have the opportunity to review your responses. There are no risks associated with your participation; should you decide not to participate, there will be no repercussions.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to participate. I look forward to talking with you soon!

Anne Kastelic
Baker University Doctoral Candidate
annekkastelic@stu.bakeru.edu

Appendix B. Application to Conduct Research in District X

Thanks for filling out [Request to Conduct Research](#)

Here's what was received.

Request to Conduct Research

Please complete this form to request to conduct research within the [REDACTED] School District. All research requests are brought before the [REDACTED] Research Review Board on a quarterly basis. Individuals or organizations are not permitted recruit or solicit data from any member of the [REDACTED] Schools' Community (e.g. staff, students, family members) without approval from the [REDACTED] Research Review Board.

Due dates to be added to the 2022-2023 quarterly meeting agendas:

9/7/2022 to be added to the 9/22/2022 Quarter 1 Meeting
 11/2/2021 to be added to the 11/15/2022 Quarter 2 Meeting
 2/15/2023 to be added to the 2/28/2023 Quarter 3 Meeting
 4/19/2023 to be added to the 5/2/2028 Quarter 4 Meeting

Email *

annekkastelic@stu.bakeru.edu

Name *

Anne Kastelic

Email address *

annekkastelic@stu.bakeru.edu

School/Organization/University *

Baker University

Phone number & best time to contact *

816-686-4843, any time

What is the purpose of the research study? Note: responses are limited to 200 characters). *

The purpose of the research study is to gain an understanding of the impact of professional development on high school administrators' professional knowledge, professional skills, and retention.

Is this research study affiliated with an University or Organization? If so, identify the University/organization, department, and advisor (contact). If this study is funded, please provide the name of the funding agency. *

Baker University, School of Education, Dr. Jim Robins

Name of any [REDACTED] staff you have consulted about the proposed research and names of any specific schools you are requesting to involve...

Consulted Dr. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Requesting involving all five high schools' administrators. Ideally at least 5 high school administrators agree to participate.

Please provide a description of the research, including impact on student and staff (e.g. procedure, time commitment, potential consequences, etc.). Note: responses are limited to 600 characters.

Procedure: An invitation to participate will be sent via email to all high school administrators. Interested participants will engage in an interview. Individual interviews will be conducted via Zoom. High school administrators from neighboring, similar districts will also be invited to participate. Interview data will be analyzed to synthesize themes about the impact of professional development on high school administrators. Time Commitment: 45 minutes. Potential Consequences: There are no potential consequences due to the anonymity provided to individual participants and the school district.

What data is/are to be collected and how?

Data will be collected via interviews conducted using Zoom. The Zoom transcription feature will be utilized to capture each interview in text format.

Attach copies of all data collection instruments. *

Submitted files

 Word Interview Protocol - Anne Kastelic.docx

Where and when will the research activities and/or data collection take place?

Interviews will take place on Zoom during the summer of 2023.

How will you obtain subject permission?

All high school administrators will receive an email including a description of the study, the purpose of the study, an invitation to participate, and a consent to participate form. Permission will be gathered through this process.

Attach copies of all subject and if applicable, subjects' parent/guardian/family permission.

Submitted files


 Word Invitation to Participate - Anne Kastelic.docx

Why should this research study be considered? Please provide a succinct synopsis of the review of literature and identify the benefit to [REDACTED] Schools (return on investment). Note: responses are limited to 600 characters. *

The current literature on PD for administrators is minimal, and there is even less research on professional development (PD) for high school administrators (Gümüs & Bellibas, 2020). The current research on administrators' PD is focused on content and quality while ignoring if PD impacts administrators' leadership practice. The study could be of interest to school district leaders as the turnover rate in administration is high. While there has not been an increase in the turnover rate, the stagnant turnover statistics indicate a systemic issue that has not been solved (Golding & Taie, 2014).

Attach a copy of the IRB approval (do not include the entire research proposal sent to the IRB; proof of approval).

Submitted files

 PDF Anne letter - Anne Kastelic.pdf

If you have any other documents to submit for review, please attach them here.

No files submitted

Appendix C. Research Approval by District X

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 3:23 PM
To: "Kastelic, Anne K." [REDACTED]
Subject: Research Review Board

Hello, Anne.

The Blue Valley Research Review Board has approved your research proposal.

We do ask the following:

1. Our standard practice when soliciting participation is an initial email and then one follow-up email. Please do not send more than two emails to ask your colleagues to participate.
2. When you send the email to high school administrators, please mention that your study has been approved by the Blue Valley Research Review Board, and copy Adam and me.

Congratulations on getting on one step closer to the finish line!

Best,
Kelly & Adam

Appendix D. Application to Conduct Research in District Y

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE [REDACTED] SCHOOL DISTRICT [REDACTED]

□

Please complete this form and attach the pertinent details regarding your proposal.

Date 8-25-23

Anne Kastelic

(Name)

annekkastelic@stu.bakeru.edu

(email)

(Mailing Address)

(Telephone)

(City)

Kansas

(State)

(Zip)

The research is for:

Master's

Ed.D. ☒

Other

Specialist

Ph.D.

Project Title or Descriptor:

A Qualitative Study of High School Administrators' Experience with Professional Development

Has the project been submitted to a committee on human experimentation?

Yes ☐

No ☒

If no, please explain:

Do you have an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for your research?

Yes ☒

IRB #

See attachment

No ☐

If no, please explain:

Participant Description:

Number of Schools

Number of Students

Number of Teachers

5 HS
admin.
total

Type of Research Design: Qualitative

Anticipated Dates:

Beginning

August 2023

Ending

September

2023

Final Report Available

December

2023

Appendix E. Research Approval by District Y

From: Kastelic, Anne K. <A[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, August 25, 2023 2:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Research Request

NOTICE: Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

[REDACTED]

I hope this email finds you well. I just received official approval from Baker and wanted to send everything over to you for consideration.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need further information.

Thank you for your consideration,

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Friday, September 1, 2023 at 10:31 AM
To: "Kastelic, Anne K." <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Research Request

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender.

Perfect.

Would you like me to send this to HS lead principals only? Or their associates too?

From: Kastelic, Anne K. <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, September 1, 2023 10:37 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Research Request

NOTICE: Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Head and associates would be wonderful!

Thank you!

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Friday, September 1, 2023 at 10:47 AM
To: "Kastelic, Anne K." <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Research Request

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender.

Ok. Sent. Have a great weekend.

Appendix F. Interview Protocol

Opening Statement

Thank you for participating in a research study exploring the impact of professional development on high school administrators. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will focus on professional development's impact on your professional knowledge, professional skills, and desire to remain in an administrative position. The session will be video recorded, and the contents will only be available to the research committee and me.

No personable, identifiable information will be used in this study. All participant and school district names will be changed to pseudonyms. You may decline to respond at any time. Following the interview, you will have a chance to review the transcript of your responses. If you feel your experiences are not accurately represented, you may make changes to your answers. You may discontinue participation in this study at any time. If you stop participation, your responses will not be used in the study. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

Interview Questions

Demographic and Setting Questions

Participants completed [a Google Form](#) to answer this section of questions.

Central Question: What are high school administrators' experiences with professional development?

Two key vocabulary items are present throughout this interview: professional knowledge and professional skill. Here are the formal definitions:

Professional knowledge: Job-related information acquired through sensory input (reading, watching, listening, touching, etc.) and familiarity with factual information and concepts. For example, knowing the signs of suicide represents professional knowledge.

Professional skill. Ability to apply job-related knowledge in specific professional situations; developed through practice. For example, knowing how to intervene to support students who show signs of suicide represents professional skill.

Professional knowledge refers to the what while professional skill refers to the how. Please keep in mind the definitions of professional knowledge and professional skill as we progress today.

RQ1. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional knowledge after participating in professional development?

1. As a high school administrator, what professional knowledge do you think you should have?
2. After participating in professional development, has your knowledge of _____ (use knowledge listed in #1) changed?

Follow Up Questions. If the participant answers yes, then ask:

- a. Could you tell me about how it changed?
- b. Could you describe your experience or give me another example?

Follow Up Question. If the participant answers no, then ask:

- a. Can you elaborate on why professional development has not changed your knowledge of _____ (use knowledge listed in #1)?

Repeat question 2 for all the professional knowledge they mentioned in question 1.

RQ2. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' professional skills after participating in professional development?

3. As a high school administrator, what professional skills do you think you should have?
4. Based on your professional development experience, has your skill of ____ (use skill listed in #3) changed?

Follow Up Questions. If the participant answers yes, then ask:

- a. Could you tell me about how it changed?
- b. Could you describe your experience or give me another example?

Follow Up Question. If the participant answers no, then ask:

- a. Can you elaborate on why professional development has not changed your skill of ____ (use skill listed in #3)?

RQ3. What are the changes, if any, in high school administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position after participating in professional development?

5. In thinking about your professional development experience, was there any professional development opportunity that influenced your desire to continue in an administrative position?

Follow Up Questions. If the participant answers yes, then ask:

- a. What happened? What changed?
- b. How did it change?

Follow Up Question. If the participant answers no, then ask:

- a. Can you elaborate on why professional development did not influence your desire to continue in an administrative position?
- 6. Is there anything you would like to add about professional development?

Closing Statement

This concludes our interview. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Do you have any final questions about the research study or about the interview today? You will be allowed to review the transcript of your responses. If you feel your experiences are not accurately represented, you may make changes to your responses.

Participants will be provided with the researcher's contact information.

Appendix G. Application to Conduct Research for Baker University



IRB Request

Date 8-9-23

IRB Protocol Number _____
(IRB use only)

I. Research Investigator(s) (students must list faculty sponsor)

Department(s) _____

| Name | Signature | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. <u>Anne Kastelic</u> | | Principal Investigator |
| 2. <u>Dr. Jim Robins</u> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check if faculty sponsor |
| 3. <u>Dr. Li Chen-Bouck</u> | <small>Digitally signed by Li Chen-Bouck Date: 2023.08.01 10:43:59 -05'00'</small> | <input type="checkbox"/> Check if faculty sponsor |
| 4. _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Check if faculty sponsor |

Principal investigator contact information

Phone

Note: When submitting your finalized, signed form to the IRB, please ensure that you cc all investigators and faculty sponsors using their official Baker University (or respective organization's) email addresses.

Email annekastelic@stu.bakeru.e

Address

Faculty sponsor contact information

Phone

Email james.robins@bakeru.edu

Expected Category of Review: ☐ Exempt ☒ Expedited ☐ Full ☐ Renewal

II. Protocol Title

A Qualitative Study of High School Administrators' Experience with Professional Develc

III. Summary:

The following questions must be answered. Be specific about exactly what participants will experience and about the protections that have been included to safeguard participants from harm.

A. In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore high school administrators' experience with professional development. The researcher sought to understand the changes in high school administrators' professional skills and professional knowledge after participating in professional development. Additionally, the researcher explored if professional development impacted the administrators' desire to remain in an administrative position.

B. Briefly describe each condition, manipulation, or archival data set to be included within the study.

There are no conditions, manipulations, or archival data involved in this study.

IV. Protocol Details

A. What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.

A copy of the protocol is attached. Participants are asked about any changes in their professional knowledge, professional skills, and desire to remain in an administrative position after participating in professional development. There are no questionnaires or additional instruments involved in this study.

B. Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical, or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

There is no psychological, social, physical, or legal risk involved in the participation of this study.

C. Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

There is no stress to subjects involved in participation of this study. If a participant is uncomfortable, they can leave the study at any time.

D. Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.
They will not be deceived or misled in any way.

E. Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.
There will not be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive.

F. Will the subjects be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.
The subjects will not be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading.

G. Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?
Approximately 40 minutes of time will be asked of each subject.

H. Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.
The subjects will be 12-15 current high school administrators in [REDACTED] school districts. They will be contacted via email. A written solicitation is attached. The written solicitation briefly describes the study, the 40 minute Zoom interview, and an overview of the interview questions.

I. What steps will be taken to insure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?
All participants will be invited to participate in study via email. All high school administrators in the participating districts will receive an email solicitation with a consent form, and it states clearly in the email solicitation that the participation is completely voluntary. There is no participation requirement. There are no inducements.

J. How will you insure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

Participants will sign a written consent form prior to participating. A written consent form is attached.

K. Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

No aspect of the data will be made part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject.

L. Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer? If so, explain.

A record of participation will not be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer.

M. What steps will be taken to insure the confidentiality of the data? Where will it be stored? How long will it be stored? What will be done with the data after the study is completed?

All participants will be given a pseudonym throughout the entire process. During data collection, data analyzation, data interpretation, and reporting data, pseudonyms will be used. The data will be digitally saved during and after the completion of the study. The data will be stored for five years after the completion of the study. After five years, the data will be deleted.

N. If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no risks to the subjects or society.

O. Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

No data from files or archival data will be used.

Appendix H. Research Approval Letter for Baker University



Baker University Institutional Review Board

August 25, 2023

Dear Anne Kastelic and Jim Robbins,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at skimball@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4563.

Sincerely,

Scott Kimball, PhD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Jiji Osiobe, PhD
Tim Buzzell, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix I. Consent to Participate

Research Title: A Qualitative Study of High School Administrators' Experience with Professional Development

Researcher: Anne Kastelic

Advisor: Dr. James Robins
School of Education
Baker University
jrobins@bakeru.edu

My name is Anne Kastelic, and I am a doctoral student at Baker University. I am conducting research on high school administrators' experience with professional development. I am interviewing high school administrators.

You will be asked 6 questions about the impact of professional development on your professional knowledge, professional skills, and desire to remain in an administrative position. You may decline to answer any question at any time. You may also discontinue your participation in the study for any reason at any time.

All personally identifiable information will be kept confidential. You will be given a pseudonym for the purpose of the study. Interview transcripts will be password protected and only my designated researcher advisor and analyst will have access to the raw data. You will have the opportunity to perform a member check in which you will be able to review your interview transcript to ensure your data accurately describes your perceptions.

Consent to Participate:

I understand that my participation in this research study is completely voluntary. I also understand that I am able to discontinue my participation within this study at any time for any reason. I understand that the principal researcher can be contacted at AnneKKastelic@stu.bakeru.edu should I have any questions or wish to discontinue my participation.

I have read and understand the above statement. By signing, I agree to participate in the research study. The Baker University Institutional Review Board approved this study on August 25, 2023 and will expire on August 25, 2024 unless renewal is obtained by the review board.

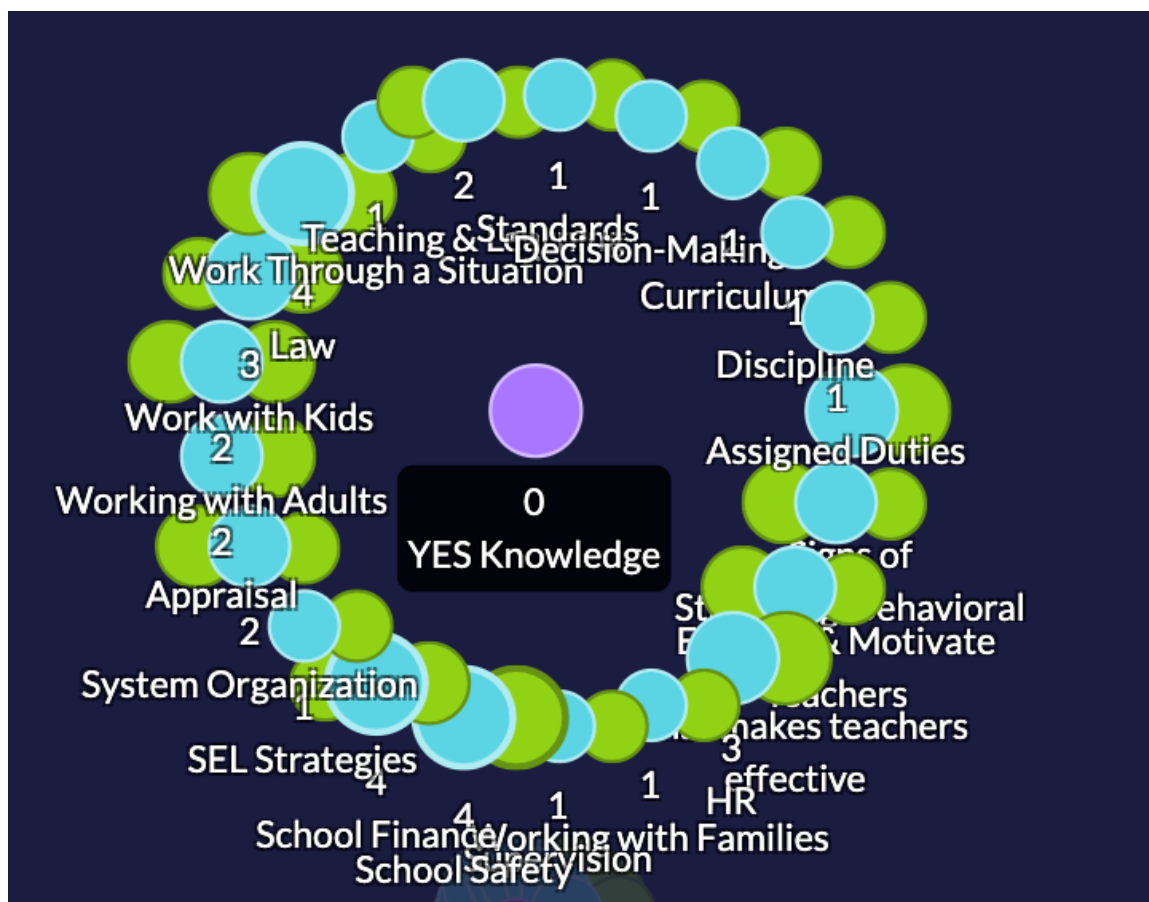
Participant Signature _____ **Date** _____

Appendix J.

The researcher utilized Quirkos to code and analyze interview transcripts. The figures included below visually display the findings of the interviews.

Figure J1

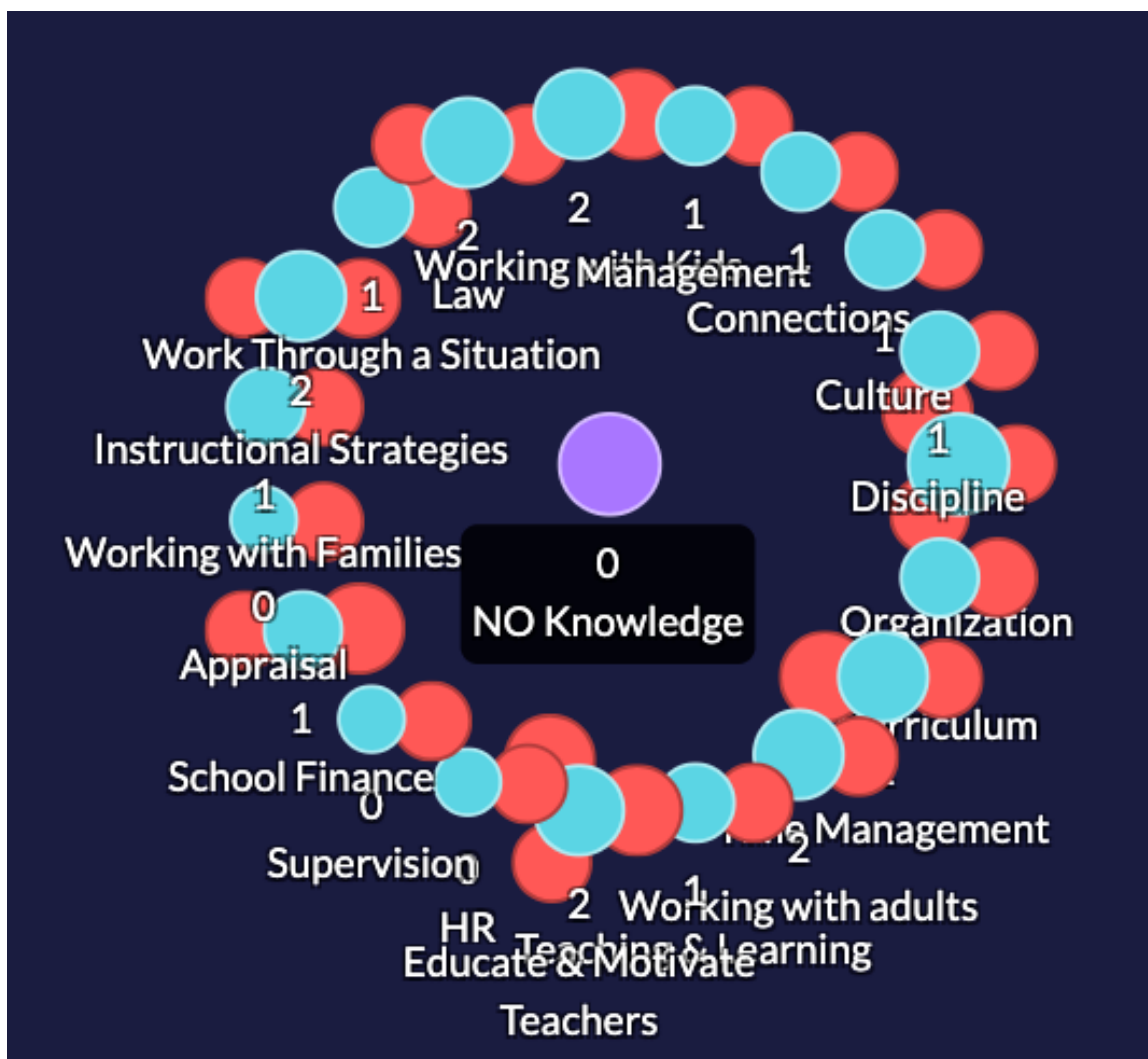
Professional Knowledge Changed by Professional Development



Note. This figure was retrieved from Quirkos and captures the various pieces of professional knowledge participants found to be changed by professional development. Each blue circle represents a piece of professional knowledge, and the number by it shows the frequency it was mentioned during interviews. The green circles represent how professional knowledge was changed.

Figure J2

Professional Knowledge Not Changed by Professional Development



Note. This figure was retrieved from Quirkos and displays the various pieces of professional knowledge participants said were not changed by professional development. Each blue circle represents a piece of professional knowledge, and the number by it shows the frequency it was mentioned during interviews. The red circles represent why professional knowledge was not changed.

Figure J3

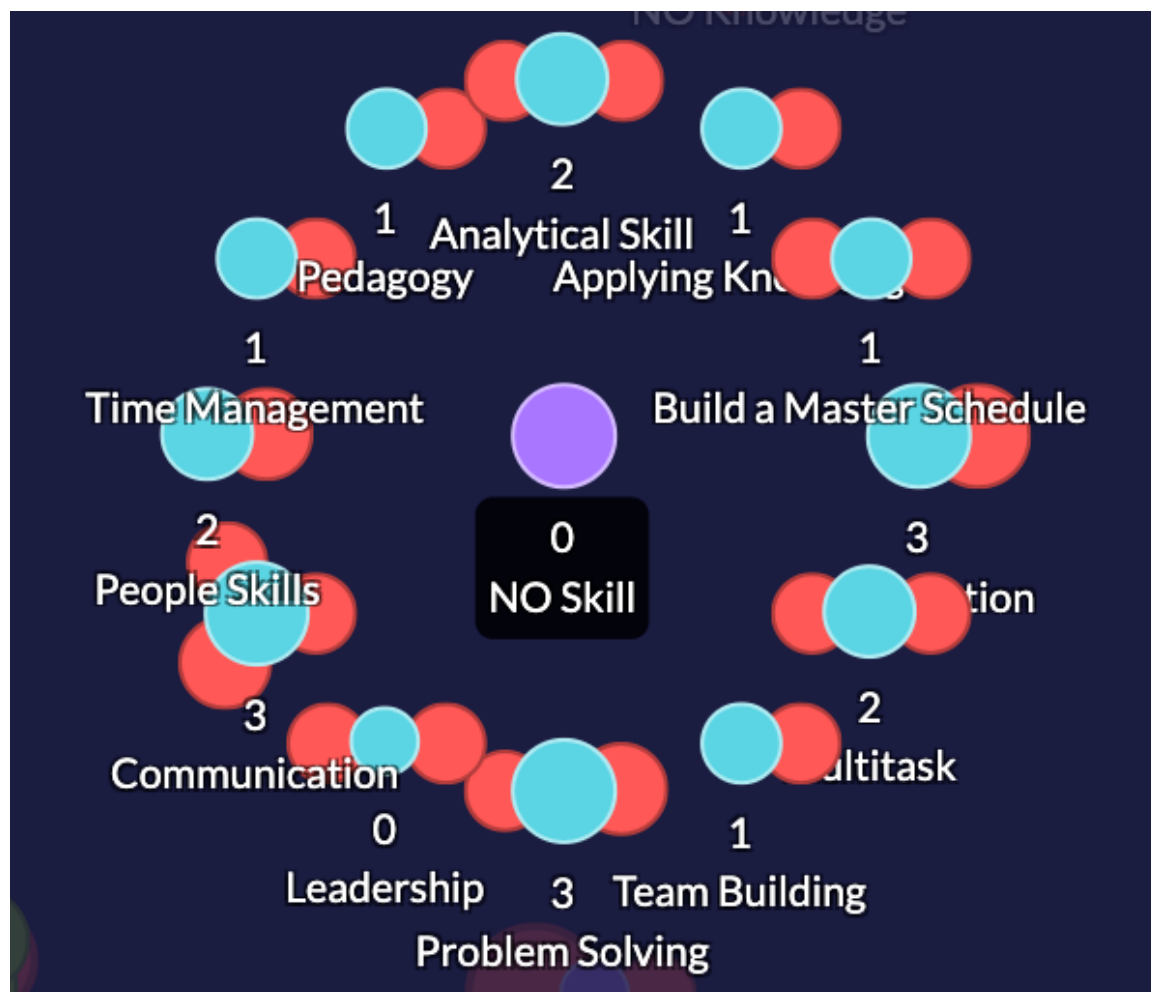
Professional Skills Changed by Professional Development



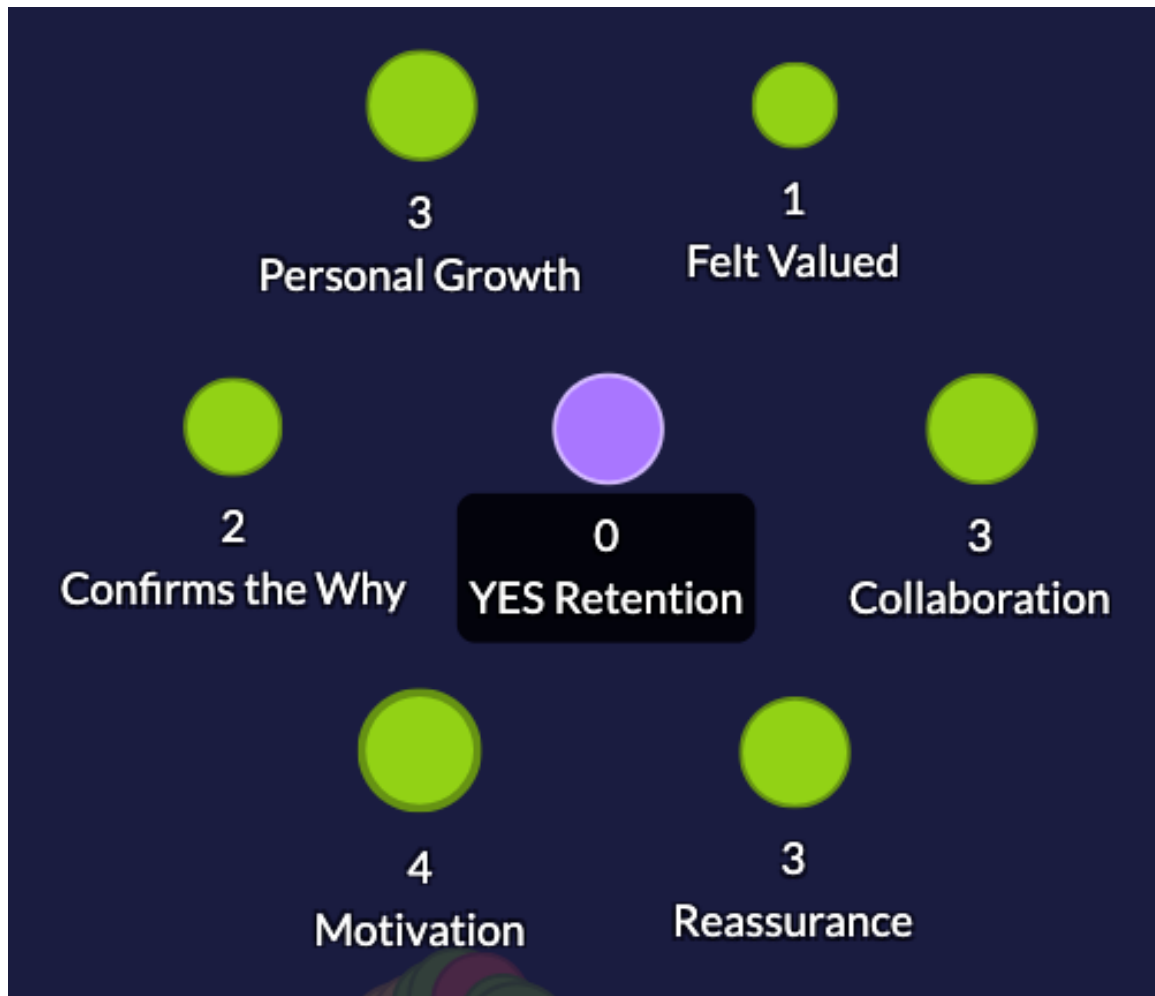
Note. This figure was retrieved from Quirkos and captures the professional skills participants stated were changed by professional development. Each blue circle represents a professional skill, and the number by it shows the frequency it was mentioned during interviews. The green circles represent how professional skills were changed.

Figure J4

Professional Skills Not Changed by Professional Development



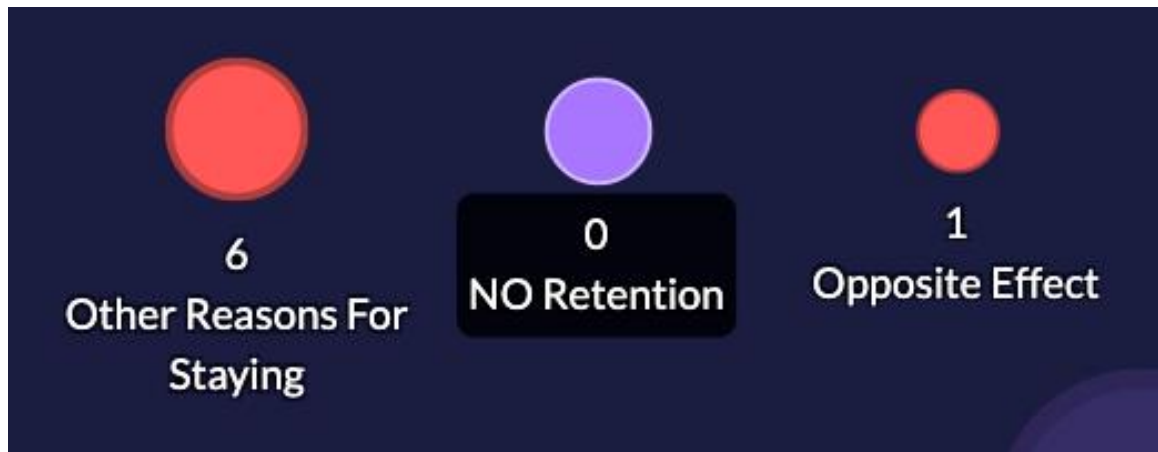
Note. This figure was retrieved from Quirkos and shows the professional skills participants said were not changed by professional development. Each blue circle represents a professional skill, and the number by it shows the frequency it was mentioned during interviews. The red circles represent why professional skills were not changed.

Figure J5*Why Professional Development Impacted Retention*

Note. This figure was retrieved from Quirkos. Each green circle shows how professional development changed participants desire to remain in an administrative position. The number represents the frequency the reason was mentioned by participants.

Figure J6

Why Professional Development Did Not Impact Retention



Note. This figure was retrieved from Quirkos. Each red circle displays the reasons participants shared that professional development did not change their desire to remain in an administrative position. The number represents the frequency the reason was mentioned by participants.