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Terra Smith

December 2014

A QUALITATIVE STUDY: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO  
SUPPORT THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVELY  
CERTIFIED TEACHERS

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the  
Faculty of the College of Education  
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education  
in Professional Leadership

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO  
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An Abstract  
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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore instructional leadership support strategies that supported the professional growth and retention rates of beginning teachers with zero to three years of teaching experience, particularly alternatively certified beginning teachers. Over the last decade in Texas public schools, approximately 50% of beginning teachers have received their initial teacher certification through a fast-paced alternative teacher certification program. It is critical that alternative certified teachers in Texas receive additional instructional support from school principals during the first few years of service to leverage their success and retention in the classroom.

This qualitative study incorporated an online survey and one-on-one interviews related to instructional leadership support strategies that principals provided to all beginning teachers. Beginning teachers, both traditional and alternatively certified at each campus, participated in an online survey to gather their perspective on how instructional leadership strategies on their campus influenced their professional growth and decisions to remain at their campus. The study's findings supported the importance of building relationships and giving feedback with all beginning teachers to foster professional growth. This study also showed a need for increased instructional leadership in the areas of classroom instruction and classroom management to all beginning teachers, especially for beginning teachers who are alternatively certified.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

The nation is currently experiencing the highest level of student accountability because of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB required schools to show proficiency in math and reading for all students by 2014 through state assessments. Identified within school reform studies are two groups of educators that have the most profound impact on positive student learning outcomes: classroom teachers followed closely by school principals (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004) . Each group of professionals is vitally important to overall student performance. Studies indicate that school leaders need to ensure that the professional learning of each group is differentiated and provided in meaningful ways to ensure positive outcomes in student learning.

School principals are fully responsible for the teaching and learning on their campus for both students and teachers. School principals are also accountable and responsible for the financial and physical operations of their campus. School principals must also attend to the myriad of student discipline incidents on the campus. All the while ensuring every student is receiving high quality instruction that is rigorous and differentiated to ensure positive student learning outcomes.

Effective school principals acknowledge that they cannot afford to lead a school alone. The key is building leadership capacity into both assistant principals and teacher leaders in order to create an environment that is conducive to both teaching and learning for all stakeholders (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

The Wallace Foundation (2013) states that effective principals perform the following key activities:

1. Shape a vision of academic success for all students.
2. Create a climate hospitable to education.
3. Cultivate leadership in others.
4. Improve instruction.
5. Manage people, data and processes to foster school improvement. (p.4).

Through instructional leadership strategies, structures and processes, the school principal can facilitate the above activities in a consistent and focused manner to create a learning-focused school environment. In order to have a learner-focused school environment, it is necessary to have fully functioning and diverse instructional leadership teams whose driving force is providing meaningful learning opportunities for both teachers and students. The school principal will need to mandate that all teachers be engaged in professional learning opportunities differentiated based on each teacher's level of experience, instructional knowledge and level of effectiveness in the classroom. Just as it is expected and required that classroom teachers create differentiated learning activities for students to generate positive student learning outcomes, the same expectations will be held for classroom teachers and campus leaders. For the instructional practitioners effective learning requires the following process: acquisition, application and reflection (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). This process is the same for learning any new information, skill or instructional practice (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Without ongoing professional growth in the teacher population there will be a lack of growth in student achievement (Breidenstein, Fahey, Glickman, & Hensley, 2012).

## **Statement of Problem**

Staffing concerns remain a constant in schools labeled as low-performing by state or federal standards. Often it is hard to find highly qualified educators that want to work in low-performing schools in urban and rural areas (Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley, & Wilson, 2003). There is a trend that campuses identified as low-performing or difficult to staff may see an increase in teachers receiving their certification through alternative certification programs (Wayman et al., 2003). Through an alternative certification program, the main requirements for a candidate's entry into the program are a bachelor's degree and a commitment to teach students. Each alternative certification program takes different routes in preparing candidates for the classroom. The trend revealed in current research is the preparation model is significantly condensed in terms of time and complexity compared to a traditional four-year college teacher preparation program causing (Baines, McDowell, & Foulk, 2001). Due to the condensed model of teacher preparation "alternative certification teachers to denote concerns about their classroom readiness and for some, demonstrate inadequate skills in instructional delivery" (Wayman et al., 2003, p. 38). For the purpose of this research study, alternative programs will be defined as programs that "employ teachers as teachers of record before they complete training" and alternative certification will be defined as "reduced training for entry into teaching" (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2008, p. 66).

## **Purpose of Study**

The intent of this qualitative study was to explore instructional leadership strategies that supported the professional growth and retention rates of beginning teachers

with zero to three years of teaching experience, particularly alternatively certified beginning teachers. Since alternatively certified teachers may have limited teacher preparation before becoming a teaching of record, the responsibility of teacher preparation shifts from the pre-service program to the school principal. In this qualitative study alternatively certified beginning teachers, traditional certified beginning teachers and administrators from three urban, middle school campuses participated in on-line surveys to gather insight on the instructional leadership strategies that are used to support professional learning and its influences on teacher retention. Each campus principal participated in semi-structured interviews to provide their perspectives on the influence of their instructional leadership support on the professional growth of its beginning teachers and how it influenced retention of beginning teachers, particularly alternatively certified beginning teachers. The reason for using both interview and survey data is to gauge whether the instructional leadership practices are perceived by school principals, the school leadership team and beginning teachers as successfully facilitating and fostering professional growth in alternatively certified teachers in order to meet the needs of all learners within the school.

### **Significance of Study**

It has been reported in several studies that hard-to-staff schools rely heavily on alternative certification programs to staff their vacancies due to difficulty in recruiting certified and experienced teachers (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007; Morgan & Kritsonis, 2008; Opfer, 2011). A hard-to-staff school is generally characterized by the following: (1) comprised of minority students, (2) teaching staff comprised of less experienced and qualified teachers, (3) students less likely to perform on grade level, (4) students more

likely to be on free and reduce lunch, and (5) teachers unsatisfied with work conditions (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007; Ingersoll, 2003; Morgan & Kritsonis, 2008; Opfer, 2011; SERVE, 2006). The widespread belief in education is that the above factors make schools difficult to staff; thus, student learning outcomes suffer (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007; Ingersoll, 2003; Morgan & Kritsonis, 2008; Opfer, 2011; SERVE, 2006).

It is necessary for school principals to engage in purposeful recruiting of the most qualified candidates to fill vacancies. In order to retain and grow their current administrators and teachers, school principals will need to provide deep and varied professional development opportunities to support the learning of all practitioners on the school campus. There is a pressing need to study how effective school principals coordinate the professional learning opportunities of beginning teachers, especially alternatively certified teachers, in order to improve teacher retention rate and the quality of learning in the classroom.

### **Research Questions**

1. What instructional and classroom management strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team provide all beginning teachers during their first three years of service?
2. What additional instructional leadership strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team implement to further support beginning alternatively certified teachers in support of their professional development?



3. What are the campus principals' and school leadership teams' perceptions of the influence of their instructional leadership support on the professional growth and retention rates of alternatively certified classroom teachers?
4. How do beginning teachers, who are traditionally certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team for their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?
5. How do beginning teachers, who are alternatively certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team on their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?

### **Research Design**

This qualitative study used online surveys and guided interviews with predetermined topics to gather data. The three campus principals individually answered eleven open-ended questions via telephone or through written response. Principals were given the option of responding by telephone or written response based on what was convenient to their schedules. Telephone interviews were scripted by the researcher. The three principals and thirteen campus administrators from the participating campuses completed an online survey related to the instructional leadership strategies that are used for all beginning teachers, with zero to three years of experience, employed at their respective campuses. The online survey addressed traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers as a whole and separately. Nineteen teachers in their first three years of service were surveyed regarding their perspectives on the school leadership team's

instructional leadership strategies impact on their professional growth and how it influenced their decision to remain on their current campus. The data collected from all data sources was examined for common findings using text analysis through a word repetition technique (Ryan, 2003) to determine the most prevalent instructional leadership strategies used at the participating campuses.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

For campuses that are considered hard-to-staff due to poor academic performance and/or student demographics comprised of majority minority students from low-income backgrounds who are primarily at-risk for not graduating high school, the leadership role a principal serves is critical in the professional growth of its entire teaching staff (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). If a school wants to improve teaching and learning, it will need to begin first with developing teachers (Feinman-Nemser, 2012). School principals will need to pull from the Moral Leadership theoretical framework, Distributed Leadership theoretical framework, Learner-Centered theoretical framework and the Transformational theoretical framework because all acknowledge the premise of school principals and teachers working collaboratively to improve teaching and learning with the focus on improving student learning outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Demarest, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2001; Spillane, 2006).

All four frameworks view leadership from a non-hierarchical perspective and advocate for shared leadership in improving schools, which is a break from traditional business frameworks that have long influenced how school systems operate (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Demarest, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2001; Spillane, 2006). Additionally, both the Moral Leadership Framework and the Learner-Centered Framework acknowledge

that each school has different needs and the educators within the building should be able to utilize their professional discretion through active collaboration with teachers to create a plan of action that will lead to continuous improvement (Demarest, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2001).

### **Scope**

This qualitative study was conducted in a large urban school district located in the Gulf Coast region of Texas. Three middle school campuses were selected due to their student demographics which included: the majority of students enrolled were minority students, a high percentage of at-risk students, a high percentage of students on free and/or reduced lunch. Each participating campus had at least 30 percent of the teaching staff with three or less years of teaching experience. A total of sixteen campus administrators participated in the study and included the three campus principals. Nineteen beginning teachers participated in this study which included four beginning teachers ,who were traditionally certified, and fifteen beginning teachers, who were alternatively certified. This qualitative study is based on the instructional leadership practices of instructional leadership teams in three urban middle school campuses with approximately 50% percent of the beginning teachers classified as being alternatively certified. A limitation of this study is the low number of teacher and school administrator participants, which does not allow the results of the qualitative study to be generalized to other settings. The online surveys were completed the last two weeks of the school year in which teachers' and school administrators' perspectives may have been influenced due to the timing of the surveys. Another limitation is the campus principals at the participating campuses in this study had professional relationships with the investigator

and their instructional leadership strategies were known and shared with the investigator prior to the launch of this qualitative study. The qualitative study cannot reflect or represent the many complex issues and problems that may arise in educational institutions. This qualitative study should not be used as a generalization of the best instructional leadership practices for all principals desiring to improve their schools.

### **Definition of Terms**

1. *Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)* - pulls together a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas every year. This information is put into the annual AEIS reports, which are available each year in the fall. The performance indicators are:
  - Results of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), Prior to 2011-2012 School year;
  - Results of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Beginning in the School year of 2011-2012;
  - Participation in TAKS or STAAR Assessments;
  - Exit Level TAKS Cumulative Passing Rates;
  - Progress of Prior Year TAKS Failures;
  - Results of the Student Success Initiative;
  - English Language Learners Progress Measures;
  - Attendance Rates;
  - Annual Dropout Rates (grades 7-8, grades 7-12, grades 9-12);
  - Completion Rates (4-year longitudinal);
  - College Readiness Indicators;

- Completion of Advanced/Dual Enrollment Courses;
- Completion of the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program;
- Participation and Performance on Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Examinations
- Texas Success Initiative (TSI)- Higher Education Readiness Component;
- Participation and Performance on the College Admissions Test (SAT and ACT), and
- College-Ready Graduates;

Performance on each of these indicators is shown disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, special education, low-income status, limited English Proficiency status (since 2002-03), at-risk status (since 2003-04, district, region and state), and beginning in 2008-09, by bilingual/ESL (district, region, and state, in section three of reports). The report also provides extensive information on school and district staff, finances, programs, and student demographics. No accountability ratings were released in 2012 due to the new STAAR assessment (Texas Education Agency, 2012).

2. *Alternative Certification Program* – program that hires uncertified teachers as teachers of record before completing teacher certification requirement (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2008).
3. *Alternative Certification* – a teacher certification that requires less time and abbreviated education coursework to become a certified teacher (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2008).

4. *At-Risk student* -is defined by the Texas Education Agency (2012) as a student at risk of dropping out of school who is under 21 years of age and who meets the following criteria:

- is in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten or grade 1, 2, or 3 and did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or assessment instrument administered during the current school year;
- is in grade 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12 and did not maintain an average equivalent to 70 on a scale of 100 in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum during a semester in the preceding or current school year or is not maintaining such an average in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum in the current semester;
- was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years;
- did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument administered to the student under Subchapter B, Chapter 39, and who has not in the previous or current school year subsequently performed on that instrument or another appropriate instrument at a level equal to at least 110 percent of the level of satisfactory performance on that instrument;
- is pregnant or is a parent;
- has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with Section 37.006 during the preceding or current school year;
- has been expelled in accordance with Section 37.007 during the preceding or current school year;

- is currently on parole, probation, deferred prosecution, or other conditional release;
- was previously reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to have dropped out of school;
- is a student of limited English proficiency, as defined by Section 29.052;
- is in the custody or care of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or has, during the current school year, been referred to the department by a school official, officer of the juvenile court, or law enforcement official;
- is homeless as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11302, and its subsequent amendments; or
- resided in the preceding school year or resides in the current school year in a residential placement facility in the district, including a detention facility, substance abuse treatment facility, emergency shelter, psychiatric hospital, halfway house, or foster group home.

5. *Differentiated Instruction* - is defined by Diane Ravitch as a form of instruction that seeks to “maximize each student’s growth by recognizing that students have different ways of learning, different interests, and different ways of responding to instruction” (2007, p.75). Furthermore, Ravitch contends that differentiated instruction in practice comprises, “varying learning activities and materials by difficulty, so as to challenge students at different readiness levels; by topic, in response to students’ interests; and by students’ preferred ways of learning or expressing themselves”(2007, p.75).

6. *Hard-to-Staff School* - is a school that has a pattern of yearly teaching vacancies.

It generally has the following characteristics: located in an unfavorable rural or urban setting, high-numbers of minority students, larger percentage of students performing below grade level and a lack of resources or educational materials (Opfer, 2011).

7. *Job-embedded professional development* - is professional development or learning opportunities identified by either a school administrator or classroom teacher that can be immediately used and applied in the classroom by teachers in order to directly improve student learning outcomes ((Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010)

8. *Learning –Focused Leadership* - is when school leadership’s primary focus is to create a school environment in which learning is a mandate for all individuals on campus: students, parents, teachers, administrators and clerical staff. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the campus leadership to remove any barriers or obstacles that inhibit the learning process for individuals. School leaders that have created a learner-focused environment placed “concentrated effort on clarifying learning improvement priorities, building team-oriented cultures, and anchoring improvement work to data” (Portin et al., 2009, p. 5).

9. *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* - is the current version of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 in which the primary goals are to improve student achievement and close the achievement gaps. The NCLB act was proposed by former President George W. Bush and passed with strong bi-partisan support in 2001. The act requires states to develop assessments in both math and



reading to measure basic skills. The NCLB did not set any national achievement standards; student achievement standards were left to each state to determine.

Each year, states are mandated to monitor whether student achievement thresholds are met by state assessments in order to continue to receive federal funding. Sanctions are levied against districts and schools not making adequately yearly progress.

10. *Professional Learning Community (PLC)* - is a job-embedded structure in which educators are committed to using student achievement data, student work samples, teacher action research and research-based protocols to engage in “on-going processes of collective inquiry” to improve student achievement at the campus level (R. Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2008, p. 14).

11. *State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* - is the new state assessment beginning in the 2011-2012 school year that replaced the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The STAAR program at grades 3-8 will assess the same subjects and grades that were assessed on TAKS. At high school, however, grade-specific assessments will be replaced with 15 end-of-course (EOC) assessments: Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English I reading and writing, English II reading and writing, English III reading and writing, World Geography, World History, and U.S. History (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of Literature**

Education policy in the United States has evolved over the past 50 years yielding state accountability systems that mandate all students to learn at high levels. The consequences for not achieving these prescribed goals often place schools, districts in dire situations for the following school year. National education policy has evolved from specialized programs such as Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 and Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) in 1970 aimed at helping students in poverty utilizing Title I funds and aiding students with special needs, respectively, to a federal program, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that relies on high-stakes testing to determine the ‘fate’ of both schools and students (Demarest, 2010). Principals are now creating a climate in which they need to go beyond being just a building principal. They are evolving into instructional leaders that ensure classroom teachers receive the appropriate support and resources in order for all students to be successful academically.

School principals are ultimately held accountable for ensuring that their students meet the standards set by the state through standardized testing. School reform studies have identified two groups of educators that have the most profound impact on positive student learning outcomes: classroom teachers followed closely by school principals (Leithwood et al., 2004). School principals must develop campus-based structures and processes to support the instructional practices of novice teachers, particularly alternatively certified classroom teachers (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Effective principals understand that in order to carry out the complex tasks of education they will need to encourage assistant principals and teachers to assume

instructional leadership roles to ensure all students are learning at high-levels (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Building the capacity of teachers to be better practitioners helps to create a culture of life-long learning that has a positive impact on student achievement (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Classroom teachers and school principals have the largest influence on whether a student will be academically successful (Leithwood et al., 2004). School principals must be able to gauge the level of expertise in curriculum, instruction, assessment and classroom management of any classroom teacher on their campus (Linda Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). School principals who are not knowledgeable about their teaching staff and their instructional capabilities will find it difficult to provide appropriate professional development and teacher mentoring activities to ensure that all students are learning at high levels (Breidenstein et al., 2012).

### **Theoretical Frameworks of Schooling**

Theoretical frameworks provide the mental maps for how people operate and interact with each other in any given organization. Thomas Sergiovanni (1994) believed “underneath every school culture is a theory, and every school culture is driven by its theory. Efforts to change school cultures inevitably involve changing theories of schooling and school life” (p.3). Overtime Sergiovanni advocated for schools to operate under a moral leadership framework; however this was a departure from the business theories that have dominated the operation of school systems. A moral leadership framework relies on being student-centered and teaching through diverse methods to meet the varied needs of students. Schools have traditionally operated under theories of schooling that largely relied on hierarchal structures and roles that influenced how schools operated. Until the latter part of the twentieth century, schools operated on

different business models that stressed the consistency and process of roles, tasks and products that were carried out in schools (Sergiovanni, 1994). Policy analysts and school reform activists must consider the mental maps from which educators operate and determine how to change those maps before true reform can happen. Attention must be given to identifying and modifying the current theoretical frameworks in place in order to effectively address the complexities in schools such as: diverse student groups that require additional educational services, large groups of over-age students and widening achievement gaps between Caucasian students and students of color.

For centuries, public schools have adapted and operated from variations of business-based theoretical frameworks such as: the Pyramid Theory, the Railroad Theory, and the High-Performance Theory. These theories have served as the primary operating structures of public schools (Sergiovanni, 1994). The components of the Pyramid Theory are based on a hierarchal system, with an executive manager at the top, mid-level managers and those to be managed at the bottom (Sergiovanni, 1994). This theory works well in organizations that need minimal complexities to create a standard product (Sergiovanni, 1994). When applied to schools, the Pyramid Theory would require a standard method of learning both in terms of output and input because deviations from the standard operations are strictly prohibited (Sergiovanni, 1994). Schools operating under the Pyramid Theory would not be able to adjust and adapt their instructional practices to meet the needs of students with varied learning needs, which would potentially lead to low student achievement (Sergiovanni, 1994).

The Railroad Theory is based on the premise that in a large organization, there is need for control from the principals, which is achieved by standardizing operations to

mitigate potential issues when a multitude of roles and responsibilities are occurring simultaneously (Sergiovanni, 1994). This theory works best in an organization where tasks and products are predictable and can be consistently delivered (Sergiovanni, 1994). When applied to schools, the Railroad Theory can be seen in the instructional delivery programs campuses set-up and scripts for classroom teachers to follow (Sergiovanni, 1994).

The High Performance Theory is the most evolved theory from which schools have operated. This theory distinguishes itself from both the Pyramid and Railroad theories in that it is less about hierarchy and prescriptive actions and more on setting high standards and allowing managers more autonomy in determining the actions needed to meet those standards (Sergiovanni, 2001). When the High Performance Theory is applied to schools, the state education agency is responsible for setting the accountability standards to which a school will be held, however these standards as well as the assessment of the standards are derived from the state curriculum (Sergiovanni, 2001). The High Performance Theory when applied to schools, teachers are expected to carry out curriculum of which they had no input and may not reflect the current capabilities of their students, which will eventually be reflected in a state assessment results at the end of the year (Sergiovanni, 2001). Teachers in this theoretical framework do not have the ability to use their professional discretion to choose which standards to teach and which to abandon (Sergiovanni, 2001). Teachers are required by law to teach curriculum that may not be in the best interest of their students by preparing them to be college and career-ready because the standards are often written by state and other authorities that may not hold the same perspectives as a classroom teacher (Sergiovanni, 2001).

When schools operate under any of the following business theories: Pyramid Theory, the Railroad Theory or the High Performance Theory, it will cause stress to the employees carrying out their respective duties (Sergiovanni, 1994, 2001). In both the Pyramid and Railroad Theories, school principals have to be skilled in motivating employees to perform their assigned tasks well, or the end product will be deemed faulty. Under both theories keeping employees' moral up to maintain productivity is vitally important (Sergiovanni, 1994). It also becomes the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that the framework under which the school operates is done with fidelity because if one part of the system falters it will throw the whole system out of balance (Sergiovanni, 2001). Thus, according to both theories the quality of the end product would suffer (Sergiovanni, 2001). The translation for schools is when student achievement falters then a person within the system has failed to perform (Sergiovanni, 2001). The Railroad Theory and the High Performance Theory both isolate the "workers" (school teachers) from collaborating directly with the "managers" (state education policy-makers). In the absence of collaboration, "planning *what* will be done and *how* it will be done" particularly in the development of state curriculum and state assessments creates a divide that permeates into the classroom and therefore affects the students. (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 33).

The premise behind the Moral Leadership Framework is that schools operate on what is best for students and that the relationships between school principals and classroom teachers have to be one of shared accountability, trust and doing what is right for students (Sergiovanni, 1994). Sergiovanni (1994) strongly believed theory "functions like mindscapes by providing us with images of reality that dictate what is and what is

not the case. Our theories, in other words, have led us to create the kind schools we now have” (p. 3). Sergiovanni (1994) proclaimed that if we want different schools that better fit the needs of our students, it would be necessary to create new theories that will allow educators to effectively navigate the complexities that exist in education and ultimately achieve success for students.

Sergiovanni (1994) argues that school leadership theories need to shift direction from singular control and accountability by the school principal to a broader theory in which school principals share responsibilities, control, and accountability with classroom teachers. This will allow for a change in mindscape for educators that will impact the functions of educators at all levels and change the hierarchy of a school campus. The critical dialogue regarding classroom performance cannot occur between school principals and classroom teachers due to the fear of retaliation by the more powerful school principal (Sergiovanni, 1994). Schools can begin to operate off a theoretical framework that is grounded in collaboration, critical dialogue and shared accountability, then the hierarchy that exists in schools would be less influential in how classroom teachers and school principals engage in critical dialogue(Sergiovanni, 1994).

Distributed Leadership Theory by James Spillane (2006) takes the notion of shared leadership even further by going beyond identifying the roles and responsibilities of the formal and informal leaders but also on the interactions of all the leaders in the school to successfully achieve school improvement. Spillane (2006) described Distributed Leadership Theory as a framework that focused on the “how” of leadership and the importance of understanding the everyday nuisances of the collective interactions

between teachers, teacher-leaders, administrators and students as their actions embodied what it took to improve teaching and learning.

Spillane (2006) describes three critical elements of distributed leadership:

1. Leadership *practice* is the central and anchoring concern.
2. Leadership practice is generated in the *interactions* of leaders, followers, and their situation; each element is essential for their practice.
3. The *situation* both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice. (p.4)

Spillane (2006) further states that school leadership is not an individual pursuit but rather a collective effort that is led by the school principal. A school leader should make endeavors to empower others as leaders by seeking input in developing campus improvement plans, creating school committees to allow for teachers to have input in school decisions and creating new teacher leader positions for school improvement.

A recently emerging theoretical framework for schooling is the Learner-Centered Framework, by Demarest (2010) and it focuses on capacity building at all levels of the educational system in order to improve schools. In the Learner-Centered Framework, in order to improve student learning outcomes, it is necessary to build capacity in the three core components: teachers, students and, content (Demarest, 2010). All three components interact within the classroom; ideally each are equally supported but more than likely one or more components becomes restricted during the learning process (Demarest, 2010). In order for students to learn at high levels, this theory requires educators to re-think learning in terms of how students interact with curriculum and the curriculum should be multifaceted to prepare students for college and careers (Demarest,



2010). Additionally, the Learner-Centered Framework is based on expectations that all students can learn at high levels, but it also takes into consideration that this is an area in which teachers will need to build capacity first by believing all students can learn and by learning instructional strategies to ensure learning is occurring (Demarest, 2010).

In the Learner-Centered Framework, the school support structure, which includes school principals and school districts, is key in building the capacity of classroom teachers and students. This theory requires school principals and school district administrators to work collaboratively to build the capacity of teachers through “chains of assistance” replacing the notion of “chains of command” that are present in hierarchical structures that dominant school systems (Demarest, 2010, p. 56). A school that is operating under a this framework creates support structures and opportunities for teachers to: reflect on their content knowledge and instructional strategies, analyze student learning trends, and increase their toolbox of instructional practices through collaboration with other teachers (Demarest, 2010). The creation of professional learning communities both in a school and in central office creates structures to build capacity for all employees that is focused on improving student learning outcomes.

The Transformational Leadership Theory builds upon the three previous leadership theories presented and is a model in which the leader continually works on developing and building the capacity of its employees in order for the organization to successfully reach its goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A transformational leader works with employees individually to align their individual goals and objectives with the organization’s goals and objectives; therefore, as the individual employee’s capacity grows then the organization as a whole benefits (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A critical

component of the transformational leadership framework is how the leader provides support, mentoring and coaching to its employees, which can cause employees to perform beyond the employer's expectation because of the individualized attention given (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

In the Transformational Leadership Theory there are four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualization consideration. Idealized influence means a leader serves as a role model in terms of ethics and moral actions to his/her colleagues as well as an influence on his/her colleagues to have persistence in their work (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A leader that is transformational connects with his/her employees because they tend to be charismatic, intelligent, warm, considerate and relatable (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A transformational leader motivates his/her employees to be the best they can be and to continue to work even during difficult times because the employee feels his/her leader is trustworthy and reliable (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Inspirational motivation is how transformational leaders provide meaning and challenge to the daily work of their employees (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Intellectual stimulation is the creative and collaborative method that a transformational leader utilizes in solving problems and crises within an organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A transformational leader motivates his/her employees to be the best they can be and to continue to work even during difficult times because the employee feels his/her leader is trust-worthy and reliable (Bass & Riggio, 2006). During times of distress, a transformational leader will reach out to employees to gain an understanding of the situation and then will provide structures and processes to

intellectually stimulate employees to collectively find creative solutions to organizational problems (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Individualized consideration is the manner in which the transformational leader works with employees differently based on their needs and desires (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The Moral Leadership theoretical framework, Distributed Leadership theoretical framework, Learner-Centered theoretical framework and the Transformational theoretical framework all acknowledge the premise of school principals and teachers working collaboratively to improve teaching and learning with the focus on improving student learning outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Demarest, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2001; Spillane, 2006). All four frameworks view leadership from a non-hierarchical perspective and advocate for shared leadership in improving schools, which is a break from traditional business frameworks that have long influenced how school systems operate (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Demarest, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2001; Spillane, 2006). Both the Moral Leadership Framework and the Learner-Centered Framework acknowledge that each school has different needs and the educators within the building should be able to utilize their professional discretion through active collaboration with teachers to create a plan of action that will lead to continuous improvement (Demarest, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2001). The four theoretical frameworks provide similar perspectives on how school principals should work collaboratively with teachers, particularly beginning teachers, on providing different types of instructional support in order to improve teaching and learning for the students they teach (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Demarest, 2010; Sergiovanni, 2001; Spillane, 2006).

## **History of School Reform Movements**

Since the inception of public schools, the American public has viewed them as the institutions responsible for shaping children into productive citizens and preparing students to be active members of the workforce (Reese, 2007). The mandate of what a public school should be responsible for providing to students has largely been influenced by the societal needs of the time (Reese, 2007). In recent decades more families have both parents working full-time, there is an increased need for schools to provide extended hours to care for students (Sedlak, 1995). This results in an additional expense that schools often cannot afford on their school budget and have to use alternative sources of funding to provide this service (Sedlak, 1995). American society has become dauntingly more complex, so has the burden on American public schools to meet those needs (Sedlak, 1995). Public schools have approached each new challenge by implementing new programs and creating new personnel, but little structural change has occurred within the public school system (Sedlak, 1995).

The structural changes needed in public schools are both financial and physical in order to better meet the needs of students and families in today's modern society. Reforming school finance allows schools to be funded in a manner that correlates with the vast services that they are having to provide to its diverse clientele (Sedlak, 1995). The physical structures of schools will need to be modified to have the school be more than just a series of classrooms and offices in order to accommodate the non-traditional services schools have begun providing (Sedlak, 1995). In schools that are pre-dominantly low-income, the school itself becomes a community center where social services are often provided to those in need (Sedlak, 1995).

In the last two centuries, American public schools' responsibilities have greatly evolved. Beginning around 1850, public schools were primarily responsible for the assimilation of immigrant children into American culture (Graham, 1995). In the 1920s public schools had to assist students moving from rural and small town communities to urban and suburban settings, and a drastically different way of life emerged for these students (Graham, 1995). Beginning in the 1950s and through the 1970s, public schools were responsible for the education of high percentages of impoverished students while implementing desegregation programs in which White students and Black students were required to be taught in the same school for the first time (Graham, 1995). In the 1970s public schools focused on the creation of career and technology programs to prepare students for careers in the workforce upon graduation from high school (Graham, 1995). It was not until the 1980s that public schools began to focus on education programs that required all students to learn at high levels to be both college and career-ready (Graham, 1995). Public education took a dramatic shift around this time; for the first time public policy-makers were interested in "what and how children were taught and what and how much they learned" (Graham, 1995, p. 6). Public policy-makers began to scrutinize the instructional practices of teachers and the learning outcomes of students (Graham, 1995).

National school policies have evolved from the 1960s to present-day from a position of promoting educational equity to standards-based education to one of educational accountability based on high-stakes testing (Demarest, 2010). The overall goal of each national policy agenda was to improve schools for students based on a particular premise such as programs that focused on the needs of low-income students. In the 1960s, President Johnson's "War on Poverty" brought forth "early federal

initiatives to promote educational equity” that “included a combination of categorical program grants and civil rights mandates” (Demarest, 2010, p. 3). While concurrently, states underwent school finance reform and began the difficult process of desegregation of public schools (Demarest, 2010). Public schools had to determine how to meet the federal regulations of providing equitable instructional programs to all students regardless of race or income, which was a grave departure from how public schools had operated historically (Demarest, 2010).

In 1965, the federal government created Title I as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act with the aim of providing supplementary services to economically disadvantaged students around the nation that attended school in low-income districts (Demarest, 2010). Five years later in 1970, the federal government created a program for students with special needs called the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) that provided schools with additional funds for resources and also created required service standards for students with special needs (Demarest, 2010). Though more resources were being funneled to public schools, there was no dramatic change in the “core practices of teaching and learning for all students” (Demarest, 2010, p. 4).

During the time period of the 1960s to 1970s the national belief was if resources and funds were spread more equally the quality of public education would improve nationally (Demarest, 2010). During the 1960s and 1970s the federal government’s role was minimal in terms of whole-wide school reform policy in that its focus was on providing funds through grants and federal programs such as Title 1 for poor districts to use as leverage in creating equitable learning environments for students (Demarest,

2010). National evaluations of the Title 1 program found that the academic impact on participants was minimal and that these students remained academically behind non-participants of the Title I program (Manna, 2008). National early reform policy ignored the components and processes of teaching and learning, and by focusing solely on funding additional resources, many students continued to receive a sub-par public education (Demarest, 2010).

By the 1980s national policy towards improving public education was directly influenced by the 1983 publication, *A Nation At Risk*, written by a commission established by the U.S. Secretary of Education, that succinctly declared the United States public education system had a “mediocre educational performance” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5). The response to the dismal report was that national policy became infused with components of the standards-based educational reform movement that proclaimed higher education standards would lead to the U.S. being able to maintain its economic competitiveness globally (Demarest, 2010). States were directly influenced by the standards movement that led to: more challenging graduation requirements, implementation of standardized testing, allocation of increased funds to education and rigorous teacher certification standards (Fuhrman & National Society for the Study of Education, 2001).

The standards movement also coincided with educational research findings that “the whole education system, not just the education for the disadvantaged, was less than optimal and needed to be transformed” (Demarest, 2010, p. 6). The entire education system for all students needed to be revamped to meet the needs of all learners in order for all to experience educational excellence (Demarest, 2010). Different educational

groups based on content areas began to formulate national standards for curriculum and instruction with the goal of providing an agreed-upon framework of standards that could align the 50 states' educational programs (Demarest, 2010). By the end of the standards-movement, there were established national standards for different content areas, but there was no federal mandate that required states to adapt or adjust state curriculum standards (Demarest, 2010). Most states strengthened their curriculum standards but not all states had an accountability system to demonstrate students' learning (Demarest, 2010).

Though national assessment programs existed during this time there were no federal mandates requiring states to use them (Demarest, 2010). State policy makers had to invest in state standardized testing systems to create an accountability system to measure student learning (Demarest, 2010).

Standardized assessments are important indicators that demonstrate student proficiency of the taught curriculum as well as student groups that are underperforming. States that have instituted state assessments have shown over the last 50 years that there has not been a substantial amount of change in student achievement for minority or low-income students, which are the demographic groups historically targeted by national educational policies (Demarest, 2010). Historical data shows that most public schools do not do well at educating all students. Rather affluent students tend to be educated at high-levels and only pockets of minority students are the recipients of high quality educational programs (Demarest, 2010).

Different stakeholders for the past century have been advocating for public school reform often due to public belief that schools are not adequately meeting the various needs of its clientele and students are not fully college or career-ready when they



graduate high school (Reese, 2007). Reese (2007) explained “over the past century, schools have become multi-purpose institutions, which is why they are so easy to criticize and forever in need of reform” (p. 217). Public schools have myriad responsibilities that are constantly evolving which make it increasingly difficult to adequately carry out all responsibilities. School reform efforts in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on school programming changes, improving standards of curriculum and instructional delivery for core content areas. The NCLB Act of 2001 shifted the focus away from the standards-based movement to a school reform movement focused on increased accountability based on standardized test scores and more rigid staffing requirements for classroom teachers (Berry, Darling-Hammond, & Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, 2006).

One premise behind the rationale of the NCLB Act is that student achievement scores on standardized tests would likely improve if schools were required to only hire and staff highly qualified teachers (Grimmett, 2012). The NCLB Act (2001) requires that all teachers be highly-qualified by meeting the following standards: bachelor’s degree, full state certification and demonstrated competency in the content areas they teach (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006, p.15). This is the first federal law that aims to undercut the pattern of poor and minority students being taught by uncertified and unqualified teachers (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Districts had to expand efforts to recruit qualified individuals to teach in high-need and often hard-to-staff schools to meet this mandate (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Though the majority of states report that their schools are staffed with highly-qualified teachers, this news should be viewed with caution since each state sets their own standard for what it means to be

highly-qualified (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). States can assign the highly-qualified label to a teacher that has recently enrolled in a teacher preparation program despite not having demonstrated any competencies of a teacher of record (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, in 2002 believed that it was important for lengthy traditional teacher preparation to be significantly modified in structure and length to quickly place highly qualified teachers into classrooms (Grimmett, 2012).

An explosion of alternative teacher certification programs in the United States began operating shortly thereafter to address the teaching shortage that existed in both rural and urban areas of the country. The emergence of alternative certification programs brought forth passionate arguments of educators which targeted the premise behind alternative certification programs being slimmed down versions of their own traditional programs and would ultimately harm teacher quality and effectiveness in the classroom (Grimmett, 2012). Opponents of NCLB essentially believed the components of the act created an opportunity for traditional education programs to be overhauled and the professionalism associated with teaching to be under assault by allowing teachers to become certified with minimal preparation (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). This perspective was further reinforced by other researchers that believed NCLB placed a higher emphasis on teacher's content knowledge, which was determined by successfully passing state certification tests (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Kaplan & Owings, 2003). Versus using other forms of assessment which evaluate a teacher candidate had knowledge of a specific content area, pedagogy and other professional skills associated with teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Kaplan & Owings, 2003).

Darling -Hammond & Berry (2006) discovered that Texas and Georgia consider a teacher highly-qualified if they pass certification tests and have a bachelor's degree in a field close to what they teach. Teacher candidates in some alternative programs in Texas lack evaluation requirements on actual teaching skills or performance. Teacher candidates only have to pass a content-area test and a test on the professional responsibilities of Texas educators to qualify for a teaching certificate (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). The trend to lower the teacher certification standards was furthered by the federal government. The U.S. Department of Education in 2002 released a report that suggested states should reconsider the teacher certification process by removing educational course work and student teaching requirements to ease the bureaucratic regulations involved with teacher certification (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006).

Many educators were skeptical of this suggestion because numerous research studies have shown that student achievement is positively impacted when students are taught by teachers who are well-prepared through traditional teacher certification preparation programs (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Advocates for high-quality teacher preparation programs strongly believe teacher candidates should be held to higher certification standards in order to be better prepared to effectively teach students with diverse learning needs and more academic challenges that may impede their academic success (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Darling-Hammond & National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2000).

The ultimate cost for schools and school districts not meeting the standards set by NCLB meant each could face both financial penalties and sanctions against them by both the state and federal government ( Dufour & Marzano, 2011). A component of NCLB is that schools would demonstrate continual improvement in student achievement data until all students were proficient in mathematics and reading by the academic year of 2013-2014 (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

### **History of Alternative Teacher Certification Programs**

An alternative certification program as defined by Roach and Cohen (2002) are programs designed for individuals that hold a bachelor's degree and desire teacher certification in an abbreviated time span of less than the traditional four to five years to complete. A benefit of alternative certification programs is that teacher candidates are employed as teachers of record with the ability to earn income while taking coursework to earn their teaching certificate (Grimmett, 2012; Roach & Cohen, 2002). Opponents of alternative teacher certification programs have argued that alternative routes to teaching certification have de-professionalized teaching and created an atmosphere of de-regulation in education that has caused teacher quality and effectiveness to suffer which ultimately harms student achievement (Grimmett, 2012).

There has been wide debate among education policy makers and education researchers on the role that alternative teacher certification programs serve in the debate of professionalization of teaching versus de-regulation of teaching in the United States (Grimmett, 2012). Those that argue for professionalization of teaching believe that teacher quality and teacher effectiveness lie within the following components: teacher certification should be attained through a traditional, university-based teacher preparation

programs that are accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE), ongoing professional development for all teachers, requiring teachers to teach within their certifications, and the teaching profession should be controlled by knowledgeable educators that have studied teaching and learning extensively (Grimmett, 2012; Rotherham & Mead, 2004). De-regulation of teaching proponents argue that teacher quality and teacher effectiveness will improve if the following occurs in education: adapting and/or removing education course work with no direct correlation to the improvement of teaching, easing teaching certification requirements by reducing the length of time and coursework required in teacher preparation programs to allow for a wider pool of teacher candidates, expansion of alternative routes to teaching certification, a higher priority placed on content knowledge than educational coursework and greater flexibility given to principals in staffing vacancies (Rotherham & Mead, 2004). Though NCLB was meant to enhance the professionalism of teaching by requiring teachers to be “highly qualified”, it also supported the de-regulation of teaching by allowing individuals enrolled in an alternative certification program to be hired by schools, despite not having completed the alternative certification program (Grimmett, 2012).

Many believe that the United States is in a teacher shortage crisis based on lack of teachers both in quantity and quality. This belief creates a definitive need for teacher alternative certification programs to increase the number of teacher candidates in the hiring pool (Dangel & Guyton, 2005). The teacher shortage beliefs continue to exist despite statistics that show on average more than 200,000 new teachers graduate from traditional teacher preparation programs ready to join the teaching work force (Grimmett,

2012). The concern over teacher shortages may be because each year there are nearly 200,000 vacancies across the nation as a result of teachers leaving the profession, increased number of teachers retiring and an increase in the student population in schools leading to an increase in teaching vacancies (Levine, 2010).

In 2008, the American Association for Education Employment conducted a survey of 62 teaching fields and found that 37 were deemed as either being in “considerable shortage” or “some shortage” (Grimmett, 2012, pp. 37–38). These fields included: mathematics, bilingual education, sciences and special education (Grimmett, 2012,). The shortages become critical shortages when the vacancies are located in hard-to-staff schools in urban and rural areas (Grimmett, 2012). Prior to alternative certification programs being developed, hard-to-staff schools were staffed through emergency certification permits being issued to individuals to teach with minimal support provided (Grimmett, 2012). The argument for alternative certification programs versus emergency certification is that teachers would be better recruited, trained and prepared for the classroom increasing their odds of being successful and retained in the classroom (Grimmett, 2012).

Alternative certification programs began to develop in the 1980s in the form of emergency certification programs to address teacher shortages in hard-to staff schools (Grimmett, 2012). The growth of alternative certification programs was the highest in areas of the country that had the most difficulty recruiting and staffing qualified teachers (Grimmett, 2012). Feistritz and Haar (2010) found that 50 % of teachers in California, Texas and New Jersey were certified through alternative routes in 2005.

Grossman and Loeb (2010) reported that in 1985 only 275 teachers were alternatively certified but by 1995, the number had grown to 6,932. Then in 2005 the number had dramatically grown to 59, 000 (Grossman and Loeb, 2010). By 2005 “more than one in five of all new teachers qualified via alternative routes” (Grimmett, 2012, p. 35). The alternative certification phenomenon influenced educational researchers to engage in a critical and multifaceted dialogue about the effectiveness of alternative teacher certification programs since the mid-nineties when there was a sharp increase in alternative certification programs being operated in the United States (Dangel & Guyton, 2005; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002).

One cause of concern regarding alternative certification programs is the wide-variations of each program and the goals that drive the recruitment and preparation of teacher candidates. Across the United States, alternative certification programs are operated by school districts, universities, regional service centers, private companies, community colleges, and about 50% of the alternative programs are operated by higher education institutions ( Feistritzer & Haar, 2010). Since 1990, The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) has produced an annual report on the different types of alternative certification programs operated across the United States and the NCEI has also developed a classification system of the different types of alternative certification program in operation in the United States (Grimmett, 2012). The classification system developed by NCEI to describe the different models of alternative certification programs is based around the following criteria: premise for establishing the program, program operators, and the admissions criteria for teacher candidates (Grimmett, 2012).

According to the classification system created by NCEI, the predominate alternative programs in the United States in 2006 were classified as a Class A, Class B, Class C, Class D, and Class E (Feistritzer & Haar, 2010). Class A alternative programs are designed with the focus on successful individuals with a bachelor's degree in an area other than education (Feistritzer & Haar, 2010). These programs do not recruit based teacher shortage areas, grade levels or subject areas, and it is required for teacher candidates to participate in educational coursework before and throughout the school year and have a trained mentor for an entire school year (Feistritzer & Haar, 2010). Class B alternative certification programs are similar to Class A in the type of individuals they recruit, but their program focus is narrowed by only recruiting teachers in areas of critical shortages either by content area and grade levels (Feistritzer & Haar, 2010). Class B alternative programs additionally provide teacher candidates with educational coursework and a trained mentor for support (Feistritzer & Haar, 2010). Class C alternative certification programs are designed by the state and/or school districts and tailor coursework and field experiences based on analysis of teacher's candidates' transcripts (Feistritzer & Haar, 2010).

In the last decade there has been a decrease in the number of Class C programs being offered by school districts and a distinct increase in these programs by higher education institutions (Feistritzer & Haar, 2010). Class D alternative certification has the same criteria as Class C, but program design is the responsibility of universities or colleges. The last of the most prevalent programs is Class E, which are post-baccalaureate programs that are operated and housed at a university or college. There are no federal regulations that guide the operation of alternative certification programs. No



two alternative certification programs are alike and variations are great within each program in terms of length of time to complete and course of study vary (Spooner, 2005).

An example of a private company that runs alternative certification program is Teach for America (T.F.A.). Spooner (2005) and Grimmer (2012) both view Teach for America as a well-regarded alternative certification program because the organization has a highly-selective recruitment strategy that identifies candidates from academically prestigious universities who have a proven academic record and a passion to work with underserved students in rural and urban communities. Most alternative teacher certification programs are not as highly selective in their admissions (Spooner, 2005). Some alternative certification programs target teacher candidates who are mid-career changers, current paraprofessionals or college graduates that decide after graduation to pursue teaching (Spooner, 2005). Proponents of alternative certification programs argue that these type of individuals potentially offer “employers a workforce that has more diversity and more content/subject matter expertise” (Spooner, 2005, p.4). Proponents of alternative certification programs argue that mid-career changers tend to “be more mature, have a diverse range of life experiences, and typically have a sound work ethic” (Spooner, 2005, p. 4). These individuals may have a better ability to demonstrate to students how the academic knowledge and skills being taught apply to the real world (Spooner, 2005).

### **Alternative Teacher Certification Programs and Hard-to-Staff Schools**

The importance of ensuring that every student has an effective and highly-qualified teacher is critical in ensuring that student learning outcomes improve. The nation is currently experiencing the highest level of student accountability because of the

NCLB Act (2001). Staffing schools that have been identified as being in need of improvement by either the federal or state government has proven difficult because of the lack of highly qualified educators who want to work in low-performing schools located in urban and rural areas (Wayman et al., 2003). Campuses identified as low-performing or hard-to-staff have seen an increase in teachers that are receiving their certification through alternative certification programs (Wayman et al., 2003).

Individuals that complete an alternative certification program are only required to have a bachelor degree and a desire to teach. There is no federal regulation that guides the operations and policies of alternative teacher certification programs, but research has shown that the preparation model is a drastic contrast in terms of time and complexity than a traditional four-year college teacher preparation program (Wayman et al., 2003). The level of readiness for the classroom in first-year teachers has been studied by several researchers and each has found that there is a drastic difference in the perception of readiness for the classroom by teachers from traditional preparation programs and teachers from alternatively certification programs (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Wayman et al., 2003). Teachers from alternative teacher program certification programs are likely to have concerns about their classroom readiness and for some alternatively certified teachers, this will translate into low quality instructional delivery. (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Wayman et al., 2003).

Due to teacher shortages in hard-to-staff schools alternative certified teachers are often the individuals that fill these vacancies right before school starts. Several research studies have indicated that a hard-to-staff school is generally characterized by the

following characteristics: 1) comprised of minority students and (2) teaching staff comprised of less experienced and qualified teachers, (3) students less likely to perform on grade level, (4) students more likely to be on free and reduce lunch, and (5) teachers unsatisfied with work conditions (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007; Morgan & Kritsonis, 2008; Opfer, 2011; SERVE, 2006). The widespread belief in education is that the above factors make schools difficult to staff with traditionally prepared classroom teachers (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007; Morgan & Kritsonis, 2008; Opfer, 2011; SERVE, 2006).

It is necessary to ensure that when alternative certified teachers are working in hard-to-staff schools they have strong instructional supports and processes to lean on during their first years of teaching (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007). Research has shown that supporting both novice and experienced teachers with school structures such as professional learning communities allows teachers to learn from and through each other (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007). A collaborative learning culture in a demanding work environment creates a support system that allows for school problems to be resolved in a collective manner and provides a school-wide support system that increases the odds of retaining quality teachers (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007).

### **Alternative Certification Programs in Texas**

Alternative certification programs in Texas began in 1985, but did not gain traction until the 1990s; and by 2005, 50% of teachers gained their initial certification through an alternative route (Grimmett, 2012). In the State of Texas, the minimum requirements for admission to an alternative certification programs is for an individual to have a grade point average of 2.5 and a bachelor's degree; no experience with working with children is necessary (Baines et al., 2001). The Texas Board for Educator

Certification policy contends that field experience is a necessary component of a teacher preparation program to expose teaching candidates to diverse student populations in order to observe, model and employ teaching practices with diverse group of students (Baines et al., 2001). Alternative certification programs generally require less than half of the required education courses of a traditional program, including field experiences, so the likelihood of having any real meaningful field experience involving student teaching is low (Baines et al., 2001). The real field experience occurs in August when the teaching candidate is now a fully employed teacher after completing their two to four week summer required education coursework (Baines et al., 2001). A major concern that opponents of alternative certification programs have is how well a summer intensive program addresses the following classroom concerns: classroom management, student motivation, meeting diverse students' learning needs, assessment, and working with parents (Baines et al., 2001).

When comparing the amount of requirements, coursework, and time involved in a traditional Texas teacher preparation program to those of an alternative Texas teacher preparation program, it is clear that a traditional teacher preparation program is more selective and rigorous than the alternative route (Baines et al., 2001). In the State of Texas, an alternative program requires a teacher candidate interested in teaching English to have only 24 total college credit hours in English versus a traditional program that requires the candidate to have a minimum of 36, with the majority of those courses in upper division English. Aside from content requirements, alternative programs require candidates to have 24 hours of education course work compared to 54 to 79 college hours related to teaching and learning for candidates in a traditional program. (Baines et

al., 2001). A teacher candidate in a traditional teacher preparation is engaged in education coursework and field experiences three to three and a half years versus a teaching candidate in alternative program who is only required to spend between two and six months on education coursework (Baines et al., 2001).

In Texas a teaching candidate in a traditional program is expected to acquire at minimum 500 hours of student teaching experience before entering the classroom as a solo teacher versus a teaching candidate in an alternative certification program is not required to have any student teaching experience prior to entering the classroom as a full time teacher (Baines et al., 2001). Furthermore, a teaching candidate in a traditional preparation program is subjected to multiple check-points throughout a three year process by multiple individuals at the university-level before each major step in the program to ensure that teaching candidates are ready to move forward (Baines et al., 2001). For teaching candidates in alternative certification programs, there are no check-points, and instructional professional support comes from an assigned mentor from the program to assist the teaching candidate through the year (Baines et al., 2001).

Accountability for the success of teacher candidates in traditional teacher preparation programs and in alternative certification program is also very different. Higher education institutions in Texas are monitored by Texas State Board of Education Certification (SBEC) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) on the success of teacher candidates in passing their certification examinations (Baines et al., 2001). It is critically important for colleges and universities to have full confidence in their teaching candidates' ability to pass the necessary examinations because of the potential impacts to the school's teacher preparation

program accreditation (Baines et al., 2001). Texas alternative certification programs have no accountability held over them from NCATE or SBEC because they are independent and are allowed to self-monitor, which allows teaching candidates in these programs to take the certification exams numerous times until successful (Baines et al., 2001).

Traditional university-based teacher certification programs are closely monitored by both SBEC and NCATE on the success of their teacher candidates on their state exams, high failure rates on state exams can cause university programs to lose their teacher accreditation abilities (Baines et al., 2001)

In 2008, the State of Texas conducted an audit of all alternative certification programs operating in Texas, and a major conclusion cited by the state auditor was that improvements in oversight process of all alternative certification programs was needed to ensure that teaching candidates were meeting all requirements in order to receive teaching certificates (Keel, 2008). The audit report found that in the academic year of 2006-2007 there were 26,576 teaching certificates issued and 14,536 of those certificates were issued to teaching candidates from alternative certification programs (Keel, 2008). Therefore, 55% of teaching certificates during the academic-year of 2006-2007 were issued to alternative certified teachers (Keel, 2008). The audit report called for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to strengthen its evaluation process on alternative certification programs and improve its procedures for collecting and validating its performance data (Keel, 2008). Prior to 2005, no on-site visits had been made to any alternative certification programs, and the authority of overseeing alternative certification programs was the responsibility of SBEC, which was done primarily by electronic performance reports sent to SBEC (Keel, 2008). Oversight of alternative certification programs was

transferred in 2005 to the TEA in order improve the monitoring of the alternative programs (Keel, 2008).

Despite the transferring of oversight to the TEA, the audit found major concerns with regulation of alternative certification programs in the following areas: comprehensive monitoring of all aspects of alternative certification programs, secure management of teacher candidates of personal data, variation of programming in alternative certification programs, lack of oversight in ensuring the validity of participants meeting state requirements prior to receiving full certification, and not following the review process of new alternative certification process according to Texas Administrative Code (Keel, 2008). The audit uncovered that the TEA did not verify if the self-reported data from alternative certification programs was correct in terms of teacher candidates that had been marked as ‘completers’ had actually completed all program requirements (Keel, 2008). The monitoring system in place did not allow for the TEA to catch these errors; therefore, teaching certificates were issued to technically unqualified individuals (Keel, 2008). The audit report stated there was risk of unqualified individuals being placed in the classroom as teachers because of these major error in monitoring (Keel, 2008). In the State of Texas, an alternative certification programs’ accreditation is based solely on self-reporting of the number of individuals that have completed the program by meeting state requirements, so if the numbers of completers are falsely reported then the accreditation ratings by TEA are not accurate as well (Keel, 2008).

Additional concerns reported in the audit were the performance reports submitted by alternative programs that were not submitted by the state deadlines nor were they

independently verified for accuracy (Keel, 2008). The performance reports are the foundation of how the TEA determines if alternative certification programs are effective in the preparation of teacher candidates (Keel, 2008). Delayed and inaccurate performance reports from alternative certification programs will have a direct impact on how the TEA evaluates the programs annually. TEA did not have a formal and documented process of determining which alternative programs should be prioritized for an on-site visit, even though an informal process did exist (Keel, 2008). Texas Administrative Code requires that alternative certification programs receive on-site visits every five years, and in 2008, 54% of alternative certification programs due for a review had yet to receive one (Keel, 2008). This allowed for alternative certification programs to have the authority to self-regulate with minimal intrusions from state officials.

The final two areas of concern in the audit report focused on the variation in programming in alternative certification programs in conjunction with the number of individuals that were denoted as completers but had actually not meet state requirements (Keel, 2008). The rules that govern alternative certification programs are meant to allow for flexibility, but the audit makes clear that the wide-range of flexibility creates an environment of inconsistency in the areas of: admission criteria, curriculum design and delivery, field experiences, or mentorship (Keel, 2008). It was also noted in the report that district leaders and principals were pleased with the operations of alternative programs and believed that the long-term success of a teacher was not solely the responsibility of the alternative certification program but rested with the teacher as well (Keel, 2008).



Though the audit found that several alternative certification programs reported inaccurate data by marking individuals as completers who had not actually meet requirements, the report went on further to state that the TEA could not issue any sanctions against those programs because it does not have the authority to enforce compliance with state laws and regulations imposed by the Texas Education Agency (Keel, 2008). The lack of regulations guiding alternative programs concerning record maintenance also limits the TEA in ensuring that teaching candidates are meeting the state requirements for certification (Keel, 2008).

Dr. Michael Ramsay, a research specialist for the Texas SBEC, conducted a comprehensive study on teacher education programs from 2008 to 2012 focusing on the following areas: certification of teachers by certification routes, employment of teachers by certification routes, teacher retention by certification routes and uncertified teachers teaching under permits. Ramsay's study indicated a 7.6 percent increase of teaching candidates receiving alternative certification during the years of 2008- 2012 (Ramsay, 2013c). During the same period of time, the study found that there was a decrease in individuals receiving certification through traditional, university-based teacher preparation programs (Ramsay, 2013c). The study ultimately concluded that during this period the majority of teacher candidates received their initial certification through a traditional, university-based teacher preparation program (Ramsay, 2013c).

Proponents of alternative certification programs argue that these programs add diversity to the teaching pool in terms of ethnicity, age and work experience than traditional preparation programs provide (Hammerness & Reininger, 2008). In the State of Texas during the years of 2008-2012, the alternative certification route produced the

highest percentage of both males and African Americans in comparison to other routes (Ramsay, 2013b). The number of Hispanic/Latino teachers being produced by both alternative certification programs and traditional university preparation programs were roughly the same; each type of program contributed approximately 25% of the new teacher work force (Ramsay, 2013b). According to a SBEC study using data from 2008 - 2012, the average age of an alternatively certified teacher at completion was 33 years old in comparison to the average age of an individual at completion of a traditional university-based program being 27 years old (Ramsay, 2013a).

SBEC also conducted a study that examined the employment trends of teachers based on certification routes between 2008 and 2012. SBEC determined that teachers certified through alternative routes were employed at a significantly higher rates than teachers prepared through traditional programs (Ramsay, 2013e). From 2009 and beyond, overall employment rates for teachers declined (Ramsay, 2013e). The study showed the trend of higher employment rates for alternatively certified teachers continued from 2009-2012 (Ramsay, 2013e).

The Ramsay study analyzed teacher retention and attrition from 2008 - 12 on teachers from all certification routes. Ramsay found that after one school year teacher retention rate was above 90% for all teachers, regardless of their certification route (Ramsay, 2013h). Every subsequent year after the initial first-year retention rates began a slight decline and by the fifth year teachers that were certified by traditional teacher preparation programs had the highest retention rates at 77.4% (Ramsay, 2013h). In comparison, alternatively certified teachers in their fifth year had a retention rate of 69.6% (Ramsay, 2013h).

An additional state study was conducted between the years of 2009-2012 on beginning and experienced teacher attrition in small and large school districts.

The data revealed that smaller school districts had higher rates of attrition with beginning teachers than larger school districts (Ramsay, 2013f). In the academic year of 2011-2012, there was a sharp increase in the attrition rate of beginning teachers in districts with more than 50,000 students where the attrition rate rose from 11.9% to 17% (Ramsay, 2013f). Another state study on teacher attrition and new hires noted that each academic year between 2003 and 2010, the state of Texas gained more teachers than it lost (Ramsay, 2013d). In the academic year of 2011-12 teacher attrition rates exceeded the rate of new hires (Ramsay, 2013d). The State of Texas lost more teachers than it gained (Ramsay, 2013d).

It is clear that alternatively certified teachers will have a continued presence in Texas public schools. The data from various reports from the SBEC indicate an increase of alternatively certified teachers, and their employment in schools continues to be significant (Ramsay, 2013a, 2013b). A benefit of alternative certification programs is the increasing diversity in the teacher pool due to higher rates of certification for both males and African Americans than other certification routes (Ramsay, 2013b). Research has also indicated that alternative certified teachers do not have a strong staying power in the teaching profession beyond five years (Ramsay, 2013h). Studies have shown that alternatively certified teachers may need additional instructional support to improving their retention rates within the professions (Amrein-Beardsley, 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

One of the primary arguments for the need to have alternative certification programs nationwide is that there is a teacher shortage in critical areas, and schools are often forced to place certified teachers in content areas in which they are not certified in order to fill vacancies (Ramsay, 2013g). This practice is defined as teaching out-of-field (Ramsay, 2013g). A study conducted in Texas showed that during the academic year of 2011-2012, 13.7% of all teachers were teaching out of their field and only 8.5% of the 13.7% held a standard teaching certificate (Ramsay, 2013g). At the high school level, 21.8 % of teachers were teaching out-of-field and only 14.2% held a standard certificate in another content area (Ramsay, 2013g). At the middle school level, 22.5% of teachers were teaching out-of-field with 17.1% being certified. The elementary school level had the lowest percentage of out-of-field teachers at 6.5% for the 2011-2012 academic year (Ramsay, 2013g). One concerning data point that was in the report is the content area that had the largest percentage of out-of-field teachers was high school level Bilingual/ESL with 92% with only 79.6% certified in another content area (Ramsay, 2013g).

Another study examined the number of uncertified teachers from 2008 -12 who were teaching in Texas schools and did note the percentage of those teachers gradually decreased for all grade levels and most subject areas (Ramsay, 2013i). Bilingual/ESL and Self-Contained classes at the high school were the exception, which saw an increase of uncertified teachers being assigned classes in these areas (Ramsay, 2013i). Indicated in the report is that even after the No Child Left Behind Act, Texas schools are still placing out-of-field and uncertified teachers into classroom (Ramsay, 2013i).

Ramsay (2013) revealed a trend of school principals engaging in the practice of placing certified teachers to teach content areas in which they are not certified; or in the worst case scenario, principals opt to place uncertified teachers to fill vacancies that are difficult to fill, such as Bilingual/ESL or special education classes(Ramsay, 2013g, 2013i). Since the oversight of alternative certified programs in Texas is relatively weak, it becomes even more critical that school principals provide structured support to alternative teachers during the first few years of teaching in order to improve both student learning outcomes and increase the overall retention rate of this group of teachers (Keel, 2008).

### **Alternative Teacher Certification Impact on Teacher Quality**

Many research studies have investigated the impact of teacher quality and teacher effectiveness and its direct impact on student achievement (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Loughran, 2010; Strong, 2011). Defining teacher quality has been widely debated among educational researchers and policy-makers over the last decade (Strong, 2011). The various definitions of teacher quality can be categorized in the following ways: teacher qualifications based on state certifications and college degrees, personality or psychological aspects of a teacher, effective instructional strategies used by teachers, or teacher's ability to improve student learning through student achievement data (Strong, 2011). Teacher effectiveness is defined by whether the teacher is able to demonstrate that all students are learning at high levels by student achievement data (Strong, 2011). Teacher effectiveness and teaching quality cannot be measured without analyzing student learning both through classroom observations and student achievement data (Strong, 2011).

Federal education policy-makers use the definition of teacher quality based on whether a teacher has attained state certification in the content area he/she will teach and if the individual has a degree in that content area (Strong, 2011). The belief is that if a teacher is state certified and has a college degree in the content area he/she teaches, then student achievement should rise due to the teacher's qualifications (Strong, 2011). This belief was further established by the NCLB Act (2001) that mandated public schools staff only highly qualified teachers by the 2005-2006 school year (Strong, 2011). States were allowed to determine the criteria of highly-qualified, which was generally aligned to state certification requirements (Strong, 2011). The federal law provided the impression that public schools were largely staffed by unqualified teachers and student learning was negatively impacted (Strong, 2011). Many states complied with the mandate in order to avoid losing federal funding to schools (Strong, 2011).

Education-based researchers have conducted many studies to determine how a teachers' personal attributes contribute to their quality and effectiveness as a teacher (Strong, 2011). When examining personal attributes in relation to teacher quality and effectiveness, the studies involve subjectivity from those involved with the studies and should be taken into consideration when educators utilize these research findings (Strong, 2011). In a study conducted by Paul Witty in the 1950s, he reviewed more than 12,000 letters from children, who responded to his question to describe a teacher that had the most impact on them, and discovered the top three most common adjectives used to describe these teachers were: cooperative, kind and patient (Strong, 2011).

In later studies, students continued to use adjectives that denoted teachers as being friendly and warm as attributes of quality teachers (Strong, 2011). One study that

spanned over 15 years and focused on surveying undergraduates and graduates on the qualities of teachers that had helped them reach success, students provided characteristics that were a mix of personal attributes and instructional practices (Strong, 2011).

Students' perspectives on teacher quality is important because often these students become teachers themselves and transfer those personal beliefs of teacher quality into their own teaching practices (Feiman-Nemser, 2012).

Education reformers define teacher quality primarily on the basis of instructional practices that are based on student-centered pedagogy (Strong, 2011). Many school-reform organizations have created both curriculum and instructional practices based on research that if implemented, will be effective and will improve student learning outcomes (Strong, 2011). Improvement of learning “engages students as active participants in their own learning and enhances the development of complex cognitive skills and processes” (Strong, 2011). By implementing rigorous, relevant and student-centered instructional practices, school reformists believe student learning will be positively impacted (Strong, 2011).

Teacher effectiveness is defined by whether a teacher can produce positive student learning outcomes through instructional practices (Strong, 2011). A research study on teacher effectiveness by Gary Fenstermacher and Virginia Richardson focused on the distinction between “*good teaching* (the worthiness of the activity) and *successful teaching* (the realization of intended outcomes)” and what the study determined is that “*quality teaching*” is the combination of both (Strong, 2011). The researchers went on to state that assessing teacher quality must also take into consideration the following factors: “state of the learners, the character of the social surroundings, and the availability and

extent of the opportunity to teach and learn” (Strong, 2011). The teaching and learning in the classroom are influenced not only by the teacher but also the students involved in the learning process (Strong, 2011). Loughran (2010) stated, “that teaching influences learning and learning influences teaching, the way it is done, offers insight into the science of educating” (p. 36). Pedagogy can be defined as “the relationship between teaching and learning” and this is critically important when examining quality instructional practices (Loughran, 2010, p. 36).

Research has been conducted in examining the impact on teacher quality and effectiveness on teachers that have been certified through traditional and alternative certification routes and the results have been varied (Strong, 2011). The majority of studies have found a positive relationship between teachers that have attained state certification through traditional certification programs when linked to student achievement (Strong, 2011). A study conducted by Linda Darling-Hammond in Houston, Texas in which five years of student achievement data of 4,000 fourth and fifth grade students linked to both certified and uncertified teachers found that students who had uncertified teachers had lower student achievement gains (Strong, 2011).

Several studies have found that student achievement tends to be higher in mathematics when students are taught by traditionally and fully certified teachers (Strong, 2011). In North Carolina, a study of 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade math teachers, examined the year-long mathematics achievement data of 36 teachers with half certified in math and the other half certified, but teaching out of their field of certification (Strong, 2011). The study showed that students that had a certified math teacher demonstrated significantly higher achievement at the end of the school year (Strong, 2011). A research



study conducted by Linda Cavalluzzo in Miami-Dade examined a data-base of over 100,000 high school student achievement profiles in mathematics and determined that having a fully certified teacher in mathematics was a strong predictor of higher student achievement in mathematics (Strong, 2011).

An exception to this was found in a study conducted in which uncertified teachers and emergency certified teachers demonstrated no marked difference in student achievement profiles when compared to traditional certified teacher (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). One reason offered by the researchers for the lack of difference in student achievement profiles was that the study was conducted in a low-performing and high-poverty district that was a hard-to-staff district, and both certified and uncertified teachers were carefully screened to ensure they had strong teaching abilities and knowledge of content matter (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). A different study conducted in San Diego, California found that elementary students taught by emergency certified teachers had higher student achievement rates in mathematics and reading than those students that were taught by traditional certified teachers (Strong, 2011).

Researchers in New York examined teacher effectiveness by analyzing student achievement among uncertified teachers, alternatively certified teachers and certified teachers in 10,000 middle and elementary school teachers in both mathematics and reading to determine what impact certification had on student learning outcomes (Strong, 2011). The study's results demonstrated greater differences within student achievement within each group than between the groups, leading the researchers to conclude that certification was less of indicator of student performance than how teachers preformed on the job (Strong, 2011).

Researchers have also examined the impact that alternative certification programs have on teacher quality and teacher effectiveness but the results have been inconclusive because of the variety of alternative certification programs in the United States (Strong, 2011). One widely known alternative certified program that has been studied by researchers is Teacher For America (T.F.A.), known for its recruitment of Ivy League students that have strong content expertise and a passion to work in urban and rural settings, but little to no education coursework during their undergraduate course (Strong, 2011). Several studies have examined how effective T.F.A. teachers are in comparison to traditional certified teachers and uncertified teachers in producing positive student achievement gains. It is important to note that T.F.A. teachers are staffed in hard-to-staff schools located in urban and rural areas that often have low student achievement profiles and should be taken into consideration when examining their level of effectiveness in improving student achievement (Strong, 2011).

The Mathematica Policy Associates studied the effectiveness of T.F.A. teachers who had been teaching for more than two years in comparison to the teaching effectiveness of traditional certified, alternatively certified and uncertified teachers; these teachers would serve as the control group in the study ( Strong, 2011). The group of T.F.A. teachers within the study had a stronger academic background and had little teacher preparation within their undergraduate studies than the control group of teachers (Strong, 2011). The Mathematica study showed that T.F.A. teachers had stronger student achievement data in mathematics than the control group but there was no difference in student achievement in reading between the T.F.A. teachers and the control group of teachers (Strong, 2011).

Another study of the effectiveness of T.F.A. teachers was conducted by the Hoover Institute of Stanford University in Houston, Texas, but the findings were criticized by other researchers (Strong, 2011). Linda Darling-Hammond contested the study because the study used student achievement data comparing T.F.A. teachers to uncertified teachers, some with no bachelor's degrees, and found that T.F.A. teachers were more effective based on strong student achievement data (Strong, 2011). The study was deemed flawed because T.F.A. teachers are known for having a strong academic background with Ivy League undergraduate degrees and would presumably out-perform non-degreed teachers (Strong, 2011). Additionally, the raw data from the study was not released to other researchers to verify and substantiate the study's findings (Strong, 2011). Further studies that did compare T.F.A. teachers to traditional teachers did find student achievement data was higher for students with traditionally certified teachers (Strong, 2011). Not all alternative certified teacher programs are able to recruit Ivy League students who have a rigorous academic background or strong expertise in content areas that they will be teaching (Strong, 2011). The majority of alternative certification programs within the United States are less selective in the type of individual that is admitted into their programs (Strong, 2011).

Research studies have shown that beginning teachers often feel under-prepared for the classroom and the pedagogy that is guiding their teaching may not be fully developed to be an effective teacher (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008; Loughran, 2010; Marzano, 2007).

Loughran (2010) stated that several studies have found that novice teachers tend to demonstrate the following:

1. novices tend to view experiences and events as separate and isolated whereas experts search for patterns and relationships
2. novices' approaches to planning are not as organized and focused as those of experts, who carefully plan to meet their goals, and
3. novices tend to be captured by the immediacy of the situation whereas experts are not only aware of their thoughts and actions (in action), but also the impact of these on their practice (p. 37).

In a highly effective classroom, the teaching and learning environment is student-driven and the teacher serves as a facilitator of student-learning experiences (Loughran, 2010). In a student-driven learning environment the following characteristics are exhibited: intellectually stimulating activities, scaffolding of instruction to support student-learning, real-life application to learning, sensitivity to different learning-styles and learning going beyond the content area being taught (Loughran, 2010). An effective teacher is guided by a pedagogy that takes into consideration the classroom environment, students' learning styles as well as background, and the purpose of the lesson being taught (Loughran, 2010). All of these determine the most effective instructional strategies to achieve the goals of the lesson (Loughran, 2010).

Developing pedagogical expertise in a novice teacher needs to be viewed as an active learning process where the various acts of teaching include but are not limited to: classroom organization, lesson planning, implementation of lesson, classroom management, and assessment for learning (Loughran, 2010). These acts should be deeply reflected by the teacher in order to continually improve on the craft of teaching (Loughran, 2010). Research has indicated that alternatively certified teachers are known

to have experience in other careers and/or expertise in the content area they teach (Grimmett, 2012). However, they possibly lack expertise in pedagogy, so their ability to effectively teach a content area in which they have expertise in may be limited (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). Since an alternatively certified teacher may not have been exposed to theories related to teaching and learning, child development and classroom management practices may be weak (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). A school principal needs to have a full understanding of the teaching and learning weaknesses of his/her alternatively certified teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). To provide instructional support to the alternatively certified teachers, it may be necessary for school principals to provide them with exposure to different educational theories related to teaching and learning in which they may lack knowledge (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008).

Effective teachers have both the knowledge and understanding of the content that and the ability to choose the most effective instructional strategies to implement in order to have a high probability of success in student learning outcomes; this is what lends to teaching being both an art and science (Marzano, 2007). As teachers develop their own pedagogy, they must use educational research to expand their knowledge base of effective teaching strategies about learning and classroom management. Selection of the best strategies will ensure student learning is based on their students' needs and the classroom environment in which they teach (Marzano, 2007). Robert Marzano (2007) defines effective pedagogy as having three definitive parts: 1) implementation of effective instructional strategies, 2) implementation of effective classroom management strategies, and 3) utilization of effective classroom curriculum design strategies. Effective teachers have the critical ability to discern which instructional and classroom

management strategies to use based on critical reflection on the objectives of the lesson as well as the intended learning outcomes for the students (Grimmett, 2012).

The single most important factor that influences student achievement is for students to be taught by an effective teacher (Marzano, 2007). One of the most influential studies on the impact of effective teachers on student learning was conducted by Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges in 2004 because it utilized random assignment of students to classes and controlled for the following variables: socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, class size and presence of a teaching aide (Marzano, 2007). The study took place in Tennessee and involved a total of 42 school districts with 79 participating elementary schools (Marzano, 2007).

The study's findings highlighted the dramatic difference in student achievement gains for students taught by an ineffective teacher versus a highly effective teacher. Students taught by an ineffective teacher were outperformed by students who had an effective teacher by "14 percentile points in reading and 18 percentile points in mathematics" (Marzano, 2007). The students who were taught by a highly effective teacher outperformed a student group taught by an average teacher by "13 percentile points in reading and 18 percentile points in mathematics" (Marzano, 2007). A premise established within the study is that effective teachers significantly impact student achievement and that ineffective teachers can hinder student achievement as well (Marzano, 2007).

## **Adult Learning Theories for Professional Development**

Understanding how adults learn best based on theory and best practices provides a strong framework for school district and campus leaders to design effective professional development to improve teaching and learning.

Malcolm Knowles (2011) provides six assumptions of adult learners that facilitators of adult learning should address in order to provide effective professional development:

1. Adults need to know how new learning can help improve their work performance.
2. Adults have the learners' self-concept and this drives their desire to direct their own learning for their personal benefit.
3. Adults have rich life experiences that often define who they are as individuals and should be drawn upon as a learning resource.
4. Adults have a readiness to learn new concepts and skills that are currently aligned to their current work tasks or the next stage in their career.
5. Adults have an orientation to learning when the learning is presented in problem-centered format and can have immediate application to their work or life activities.
6. Adults are motivated more by internal factors such as: self-fulfillment, job satisfaction, and quality of life than they are by external factors such as: seeking promotions and making more money (pp. 63-67)

Principals need to be aware that teachers will actively engage in learning if they view the goals and objectives as relevant (North Carolina Regional Educational

Laboratory, n.d.). According to the North Carolina Regional Educational Laboratory (n.d.), adult learners need learning to be applicable to their current work or life activities. If a teacher does not see the relevance in a professional development training they will not actively engaged in the professional development nor will any of what is being taught be translated into their instructional practice. Professional development environments need to make adult learners feel safe and non-judgmental if principals want to create an environment where teachers take risks and can learn from their failures (North Carolina Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d.). (North Carolina Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d.). Follow-up activities by principals are necessary for teachers to ensure new learning is being applied appropriately and effectively (North Carolina Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d.).

Adults seek out learning in order to be successful in life-changing events; the more these events occur, the more driven adults are to seek out learning opportunities (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). When beginning teachers enter the profession they are the most open to new learning in order to increase their odds of success in the classroom. New knowledge helps adults cope successfully with life-changing events helping them grow either professionally or personally (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Internal motivators of self-preservation and maintaining self-esteem are likely to drive adults to seek out new learning (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Beginning teachers are more likely to seek out specific professional development to assist with weaknesses in their instruction or classroom management in order to improve (Zemke & Zeke, 1984).

Integration of new information with previously acquired information is important to adult learners in order for the new learning to be maintained and used (Zemke &



Zemke, 1984). Information that causes cognitive dissonance takes longer for an adult learner to understand and therefore use in professional or personal circumstances. Adults take failure in new learning personally and are less likely to take risks, therefore, the professional development environment should be non-threatening (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). This understanding should impact the planning and delivery of the instruction if the strategy or topic being presented requires teachers to adopt a new way of thinking and doing that might be dramatically different from their current instructional practices.(Zemke & Zemke, 1984).

When principals plan professional development, the learning activities should take into consideration different viewpoints from “people in different life stages and with different value sets”(Zemke & Zemke, 1984, p.2). It is important to connect a concept to different values and perspectives so all teachers with varying levels of experience can see the value in the learning (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). To address the critical need for self-direction in adult learning, it is important to incorporate technology, access to experts, short seminars, and short lectures to allow for more control of the pace and nature of the content (Zemke & Zemke, 1984) .

As principals plan professional development for their teaching staff they must take into consideration proven principles of adult learning to ensure the professional development goes beyond the initial training. The environment for adult learning must be both physically and mentally comfortable (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Principals should avoid long lectures and long periods of sitting and aim to create a low-risk environment so adults feel comfortable participating (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Principals need to clarify what the learning will be and will not be before the professional development

begins (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Utilize the adult experience in the room as potential anchors for others given the experience is connected to the concept or skill being presented (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). When giving teachers with experience a chance to share their own knowledge about a particular instructional or classroom management strategy, principals then serve as instructors and facilitators and not just administrators. As a facilitator, effective development is further heightened by providing opportunities for participants to share and answer open-ended questions (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). In addition, principals should balance the introduction of new concepts with time for collaboration and input from other teachers in order to assess and monitor their own learning against that of fellow colleagues (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Principals need to build in time for application of new learning and provide for follow-up for new learning to ensure adults are using the learning after the professional development as concluded (Zemke & Zemke, 1984).

One method that school district and campus leaders can use to lower teacher attrition rates is to improve upon how they facilitate administrative support to teachers. Ingersoll's studies have shown that anywhere between 40 to 50 percent of teachers will leave the classroom within the first five years in the profession (Riggs, 2013). Annually close to 15% leave their campus for employment elsewhere and 40% of undergraduates majoring in education never became teachers (Riggs, 2013). One study suggested there was a myriad of reasons which influence teachers to quit the profession ranging from personal reasons to financial reasons, career opportunities, lack of administrative support and low campus morale (Riggs, 2013). One reported category for leaving the profession was labeled as personal reasons: poor work-life balance, lack of respect, stress and

exhaustion (Riggs, 2013). Other recurring indicators came from low-performing schools, where teachers reported a low campus morale coupled with a feeling like teaching was a losing battle because student academic performance remained constantly low despite their efforts, both led to teacher attrition from the profession. Another common reason for teachers leaving the profession is the low pay as it does not allow for financial security (Riggs, 2013). One study's findings on why teachers stay in the profession were related to administrative actions that create high campus morale in the following ways: administrative support in discipline and instruction issues, structures in place for teacher collaboration about instruction and active solicitation of teachers' input on school operations (Riggs, 2013).

The damage of high teacher turnover can be seen in both financial terms and in low-performing schools where student learning outcomes suffer from the lack of effective and experienced teachers employed in those schools (Carroll & Fulton, K., 2004). The "average cost to recruit, hire, prepare and lose a teacher is \$50,000 dollars" (Carroll & Fulton, 2004,p.17). In 2000, the number of teachers leaving their current campus or leaving the profession was approximately 500,000 (Carroll & Fulton, 2004). The top reasons for teachers leaving their current campus were: lack of professional support, poor school leadership, low pay and personal reasons (Carroll & Fulton, 2004). The full economic cost for high teacher turnover include the following: loss of tuition and tax revenue, increased costs for advertising, recruiting, interviewing and training replacement teachers, and lost investment due to provided professional development to improve instructional knowledge and skills (Carroll & Fulton, 2004). The human cost of high teacher turnover is likely lie with the seasoned teachers who may experience

burnout because of additional assigned duties and responsibilities. there is a lack of community within the school and the school itself lacks a strong connection to the larger community it resides in, and students experience lack of school climate stability because of consistent teacher turnover (Carroll & Fulton, 2004).

As baby boomers age out of the teaching workforce, a new generation of teachers and leaders are moving into education., Generation Y ( Gen Y) is beginning to impact public schools. Teachers born between 1977 and 1995 are referred to as the Gen Y public school teachers (Coggshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, Drill, American Institutes for, & American Federation of, 2011). This segment of the teaching population was involved in research study by American Federation of Teachers and American Institutes for Research that examined the workplace needs of this generation of teachers (Coggshall et al., 2011).

The study revealed approximately half of Gen Y teachers intend to remain in the teaching profession for their entire work career, so it is important that school administrators understand how to meet their workplace needs in order to retain long-term, effective Gen Y teachers (Coggshall et al., 2011). The study identified five key actions that a school can implement to help transform schools into high-performing workplaces and assist in retaining young talent: timely feedback on their instructional performance, provide time and space for peer learning opportunities to share instructional practice, create a reward system for high performance, and implement a fair and rigorous evaluation system (Coggshall et al., 2011).

Gen Y teachers are known to have the following attributes: realistic, hold moral values, are committed to causes, and are achievement-focused (Behrstock, Clifford, & National Comprehensive Center for Teacher, Q., 2009). These workers also tend to be

well-educated and attribute their professional success to the academic opportunities afforded to them (Behrstock et al., 2009). As professionals, Gen Y workers are “creative, innovative, and self-confident”, and in order to further this creativity, they desire to utilize technology in the workplace and voice displeasure when technology resources are unavailable (Behrstock et al., 2009). Gen Y workers thrive on collaboration and are focused on making positive change that can have a large impact on society (Behrstock et al., 2009). Professionals considered Gen Y believe in diversity and value inclusivity in the workplace (Behrstock et al., 2009). Due to the above attributes Generation Y workers are especially suited to be the teachers of public school students who need to be learning academics at high-levels through cutting-edge technology in addition to the collaboration and communication skills needed to work alongside different cultures for success in the global marketplace (Behrstock et al., 2009).

A cause for concern for school leaders is the high rate of annual teacher attrition with close to 160,000 teachers leaving the profession and another 230,000 changing schools due to unsatisfactory work conditions (Behrstock et al., 2009). Aside from the financial strain of attrition, there is also the emotional costs which can cause low campus morale and impacted student learning due to instability associated with the fluctuation of teaching staff (Behrstock et al., 2009).

Behrstock and Clifford (2009) provide ten specific strategies that school leaders can implement to improve retention rates of Generation Y teachers:

1. Involve them in developing a vision and setting goals.
2. Empower them to assume leadership responsibilities from Day 1.
3. Celebrate their generational differences and unique contributions.

4. Realize that their career ambitions and loyalties differ from those of previous generations.
5. Provide professional development opportunities that involve collaboration and technology.
6. Offer in-depth feedback to and praise where appropriate.
7. Set aside time for regular collaboration among all teachers and among Gen Y teachers specifically.
8. Use technology to help them use data to improve instruction.
9. Ensure that adequate facilities for the latest information technology are available.
10. Provide honest, open and personalized guidance and mentoring to help advance their instructional practice. (p.10).

In order to continue to improve teaching and learning, it is critical that teachers are provided professional development that is appropriate and effective by implementing best practices for adult learning (Beavers, 2009). Professionals leading professional development should serve as “facilitators” of learning rather than directing the instruction for learning to adults (Beavers, 2009). When creating professional development opportunities it is important to remember that teachers by nature are problem solvers and want to question and challenge themselves and their colleagues in order to learn new practices to improve teaching and learning in their classroom (Beavers, 2009). It is important during professional development for teachers to have time and space made available for teachers to collaborate and share best practices in relation to problems with classroom instruction and management. By doing so, a professional community of

teachers can be built through active collaboration which can be accessed once the professional development activity is completed (Beavers, 2009).

Providing time for self-directed learning is critical in allowing teachers control over their own learning based on their individual needs, wants and desires in terms of professional growth (Beavers, 2009). In order to make the most of self-directed learning, facilitators of adult learning should create opportunities for teachers to critically self-examine their instructional practice for both strengths and weaknesses. Teachers can then create a learning path to grow professionally based on the self-analysis (Beavers, 2009).

For school districts to have successful professional development that translates into improved teaching and learning in the classroom, the following principles should be implemented: professional development should be designed with input from teachers, keep professional development activities relevant so the learning can be immediately applied, allow time for collaboration, professional development activities should address different adult learning styles, and create an environment for professional development activities where all teachers are valued and accepted (Beavers, 2009). In order to provide effective professional development for all teachers, it is important for professional development designers to recognize the different developmental stages of teachers based on their career experiences. Betty Steffy's model acknowledges that growth happens throughout a teacher's career and the professional development should align to teacher's current developmental stage in order for growth to be optimal (Kornelis, n.d.). Pat Kornelis adapts Steffy's model of career stages to explain what type of professional development is appropriate for each career stage.

The first stage is the anticipatory stage and it is comprised of both pre-service teachers and teachers in their first two year of service (Kornelis, n.d.). During the anticipatory stage teachers are eager to apply their learning from their teacher preparation program, but can also grow frustrated with the amount non-instructional tasks they are required to complete (Kornelis, n.d.). Supervisors of new teachers need to provide both instructional and classroom management support to new teachers by placing them with an experience mentor who can guide and support them throughout the first two years (Kornelis, n.d.). Additionally, supervisors should provide timely and constructive feedback to help with the new teacher's morale by identifying what they are doing well while also providing resources to help improve their practice (Kornelis, n.d.).

The next stage in Korneli's model of career stages is the master/expert stage in which a teacher enters after several years of teaching and demonstrates expertise through student achievement data and classroom observations (Kornelis, n.d.). A master/expert teacher has the following characteristics: confidence in teaching ability, is a leader amongst his/her peers, positive relationships with students, colleagues and administrators, and may also have earned national certification (Kornelis, n.d.). A supervisor of a master/expert teacher should provide support and affirmation of the teacher's expertise (Kornelis, n.d.). A supervisor should offer them roles and opportunities to grow professionally in the organization (Kornelis, n.d.). A supervisor may recommend professional development opportunities to further enhance instructional practice or ask them to lead a professional development for their peers (Kornelis, n.d.). A master/expert teacher should be given opportunities of leadership within the school and serve as a mentor to novice teachers (Kornelis, n.d.).



Alternatively certified teachers are not only learning about the art and science of teaching as they are teaching, but also held accountable for students' learning (Grimmett, 2012). Alternatively certified teachers are receiving their required field experiences as teachers of record without the direct supervision of a mentor or lead teacher. It is critical that school principals provide instructional leadership to teachers going through alternative certification programs to increase the odds of these teachers being effective and produce positive student learning outcomes (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). In order for principals to provide effective instructional leadership to these novice teachers, it is important for principals to understand how adults learn and how that learning can be applied into the classroom setting (Beavers, 2009; Knowles, 2011).

Teachers going through alternative certification should view the classroom as a place where students are taught but also as the environment in which they will learn about effective practices of teaching and learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). School principals have to create structures and instructional leadership practices that support alternatively certified teachers to learn from their teaching and to grow as professionals (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). The importance of having a successful first-year cannot be understated because it will serve as the foundation for the type of teacher one becomes and whether or not an individual will decide to remain in education (Feiman-Nemser, 2012)

### **Job-Embedded Professional Development**

A transition away from traditional professional development that is typically done off-site and away from campus is job-embedded professional development (Croft et al., 2010). Job-embedded professional development is teacher learning that is directly related

to teachers' current instructional practice and is meant to provide immediate growth to any identified deficiencies in instructional planning and delivery in order to improve student learning outcomes (Croft et al., 2010). Job-embedded professional development is classroom or campus-based and is included within the teacher's workday (Croft et al., 2010). Teachers and administrators collaborate and assess current weaknesses within the cycle of the written, taught and tested curriculum through an inquiry-based approach (Croft et al., 2010). Innovative professional development activities are then created to be implemented during the school-day to address the weaknesses through any of the following methods: action research, case discussions, coaching, critical friends groups, data teams/assessment development, and examining student work/tuning protocols (Croft et al., 2010).

One form of job-embedded professional development is action research where a teacher determines an area of concern he/she may have with instruction such as: checks for understanding (Croft et al., 2010). Then the teacher will research best practices based on literature and collect data from his/her classroom before and after implementing new instructional strategies to determine if student learning outcomes improved (Croft et al., 2010). Case discussions allow for groups of teachers to discuss a case study of an instructional problem with a realistic scenario with critical analysis to determine a solution to the instructional problem (Croft et al., 2010). Teachers are honest with their analysis because the case study does not directly involve the teachers and therefore mitigates any risk for participation (Croft et al., 2010).

Another form of job-embedded professional development is instructional coaching and can take many forms (Croft et al., 2010). All forms of instructional

coaching involve frequent observations and targeted feedback by an instructional coach or school administrator on instructional strategies that can improve the learning environment and student learning outcomes (Croft et al., 2010). Instructional coaches have expertise in a specific content area and with effective instructional practices within the content area (Croft et al., 2010). Critical Friends Group involves frequent meetings of teachers for the purpose of using protocols to analyze and examine student work, lesson plans or assessments (Croft et al., 2010). Teachers may also ask for guidance from their peers on an instructional strategy with which they are struggling during this specialized meeting time. During Critical Friends Group, teachers use different types of protocols such as Student Work Protocol or the Tuning Protocol to guide the work of teachers and allow for constructive questions to be asked and feedback be given in an environment that is safe, trusting and collaborative for all teachers (Croft et al., 2010).

School principals can ensure effective and successful job-embedded professional development by encouraging all staff members to engage in learning opportunities to improve teaching and learning on the campus (Croft et al., 2010). School principals can create a school atmosphere and culture where continued professional learning is the norm and not the exception for all teachers (Croft et al., 2010). School principals can identify and ask teachers to lead campus professional development training based on the teacher's expertise in content or instructional strategies in order to assist beginning teachers (Croft et al., 2010).

### **Instructional Leadership Development in Texas**

All principals serve as appraisers for their school staff members and must complete the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) course in order to

be certified as a state of Texas appraiser for public school teachers. Beginning June 1, 2002, school administrators were also required to participate in an Instructional Leadership Development (I.L.D.) course prior to taking the PDAS class.

The I.L.D. course's primary function is to:

- Understand the relationship between a vision of quality learning for every student and the requirements of Texas law for planning curriculum, appraisal, staff development, and accountability;
- Create, model, and encourage a school culture that is learner centered and based on high expectations, collaboration, continuous improvement, and ethics and integrity; and
- Establish processes in daily school routines that systematically support ongoing improvement in quality learning for every student (Education Service Center, Region 2, 2013, p. 1).

The I.L.D. framework is a systematic approach meant to create active environments in which continual learning for both teachers and students is expected and facilitated by school leaders in order to improve student learning outcomes. The I.L.D. framework is based on the premise that school leaders should be: learner-centered, hold high expectations, seek continuous improvement through collaborative actions with school stakeholders (Texas Education Agency, 2009). School principals need to have a strong understanding of curriculum, instruction and assessment to effectively supervise teachers and provide appropriate professional development to improve student learning (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Professional development needs to prepare teachers to connect their curriculum to real-world experiences and careers (Texas Education Agency,

2009). School principals need to communicate with the business and higher education community to establish partnerships that will provide teachers with a powerful toolbox that will deepen their instruction and will prepare students to be college and career-ready (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Inherent within the I.L.D. framework is the idea that teaching is a skill which can be improved through instructional leadership practices that focus on “assisting, supporting, and collaborating with teachers to enhance their repertoire of skills to improve student performance” (Texas Education Agency, 2009, p. 4) .

The I.L.D. framework is based on developmental supervision of teachers throughout their career. Developmental supervision requires school principals to make informed decisions based on data, to provide quality feedback, and to provide sustained support to teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Through this process, teachers will grow instructionally as a result of the increased support from school principals, and simultaneously decrease the amount of pressure teachers often feel in improving student performance (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Providing teachers with the appropriate type of professional development creates a tangible instructional support practice that indicates the school principal has engaged in both ongoing classroom observations with verbal feedback shared with the teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2009).

Under the I.L.D. framework, professional development is aimed at developing teachers in order to meet the schools’ identified needs and goals. According to the TEA (2009), effective professional development is learner-centered and self-directed. Professional development traditionally has been described as being: fragmented, teacher-centered, done in isolation by outside trainers, and focus based on district needs (Texas

Education Agency, 2009). Moving forward the TEA (2009) believes that effective professional development should be: aligned with the school's needs and goals, provided by school leaders, student-centered and focused on how to improve individual school's student learning outcomes (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Professional development no longer needs to be a one-size fits all delivery model. Professional development can be implemented effectively through: individual/self-directed programs, mentoring/coaching activities, group planning, action research and professional learning communities (Texas Education Agency, 2009). By offering a wide-variety of professional development models, schools can target different teacher professional needs to ensure that schools are continuously improving ( Texas Education Agency, 200).

In order to have continuous improvement in teaching and learning the school, as an organizational structure, must also seek out continuous improvement (Texas Education Agency, 2009). The manner in which the school is managed can set the overall tone as to whether continuous improvement is important to the overall success of the school (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Organizational management is defined as a “systematic structure for using educational resources such as people, budgets, time and facilities to support teaching and learning through a continuous improvement processes” (Texas Education Agency, 2009, p. 95). The organizational management of a school can have a positive or negative impact on school culture (Texas Education Agency, 2009).

The foundation of the I.L.D. course can be found in the correlates of effective schools that were researched by Lawrence W. Lezotte and were quickly adopted by educational leaders across the United States, including Texas. The seven correlates of effective schools are: 1) safe and orderly environment, 2) climate of high expectations for

success, 3) instructional leadership, 4) clear and focused mission, 5) opportunity to learn and student time on task, 6) frequent monitoring of student progress, and 7) home school relations (Lezotte, 1991).

Over time Lezotte believed the seven correlates of effective schools have evolved and adapted to meet the complex instructional and social needs of schools. An effective school should demonstrate a safe and orderly environment to create a conducive environment for learning and is also a place where students and teachers exhibit behaviors of team work and collaboration (Lezotte, 1991). Lezotte (1991) also stated that effective schools consistently produce a climate for high expectations of success for all. By creating equitable learning opportunities for students, over time, teachers would begin to differentiate instruction to ensure that all students achieve mastery of the lesson being taught. Lezotte (1991) understood that inherently teachers do not typically come prepared to know how to create differentiated instructional opportunities.

Lezotte (1991) stressed that as school structures evolved it was important the principal create collaborative professional structures that would allow teachers to share instructional strategies with each other. School-wide collaborative structures created by the principal along with time set aside by the principal supports the notion that the school is willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure that students and teachers meet the high expectations for success by providing the instructional support to make it happen (Lezotte, 1991). Effective schools mandate that learning is occurring for all students and not just the students that learn at a faster rate than their peers (Lezotte, 1991).

In effective schools, instructional leadership is spear-headed by the school principal and is supported by teachers ensuring the fruition of the school's vision and

mission of effective instructional delivery, which will invariably produce positive student learning outcome (Lezotte, 1991). Teachers feel empowered to serve as instructional leaders in a learner-centered environment where learning is central and mandatory for both teachers and students (Lezotte, 1991). Teachers are able to receive constructive feedback from their principal on their instructional practices to further improve, and the principal is able to seamlessly move from being a coach, cheerleader or a partner to a teacher depending on the context of their interaction (Lezotte, 1991).

In an effective school all stakeholders hold a clear understanding of the mission and their actions are focused on ensuring the mission is achieved (Lezotte, 1991). At the heart of any effective school's mission is that all students are learning at high levels, yet the challenge has always been on how to move students who are historically low-performing to learn at higher levels (Lezotte, 1991). Lezotte's (1991) research shows teachers in effective schools learn to scaffold instruction to ensure that low-performing students master basic skills and that effective teachers gradually phase in higher-level learning so that students can be brought up to grade level successfully. School principals can support teachers by providing training on backward planning, which focuses on beginning lesson planning with the learning outcome first and then determining what learning activities will achieve that outcome (Lezotte, 1991).

Effective schools are also characterized by teachers that engage in bell to bell instruction with a focus on essential skills in structured and well-planned learning activities (Lezotte, 1991). Lezotte (1991) stressed that as states make content standards more complex and abundant, it was important that teachers began to hone in on what standards are fundamental and necessary for students' ultimate success. In effective



schools, teachers are frequently monitoring students' learning and progress using formative assessments that have become easier to do as technology has evolved (Lezotte, 1991). Teachers are able to administer formative assessments via technology and gain instant information on how students' are progressing and can then adjust their instruction based on that data (Lezotte, 1991). Effective teachers monitor student learning through non-traditional assessments such as student portfolios and student performance assessments; these practices allow for higher-level learning activities to be used as a formal assessment (Lezotte, 1991).

The final correlate of an effective school is the strong partnership between school and home that is based on transparent and frequent communication primarily initiated from the school (Lezotte, 1991). It is imperative for school principals to encourage teachers to develop varied methods of communication between the school and home in order to ensure that parents understand the mission and vision of the school as well as ways they can support both teachers and their children in reaching the instructional goals the school has set each year (Lezotte, 1991). Effective schools create trust with parents through consistent two-way communication to increase parental involvement in schools (Lezotte, 1991).

### **School Principal as Instructional Leader in Hard-to-Staff Schools**

A report by researchers from the University of Minnesota and University of Toronto provided research findings on the importance of leadership and its impact on schools where the learning needs are most varied and diverse (Leithwood et al., 2004). Their research indicated that successful school principals have implemented the following actions to be effective: 1) provided a clear vision, mission and goals with a

concise pathway to achieve goals, 2) used data to track progress and performance, and 3) developed human capital that provided support and resources to campus personnel to increase student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). Effective school organizations created conditions that support the work of teachers and do not inhibit teaching and learning (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Principals have the ability to change the working conditions on their campus to ensure it is an environment conducive to learning for both teachers and students (Wallace Foundation, 2013). A case study done by SERV (2006) which focused on staffing efforts in hard-to-staff schools in North Carolina found that changing work conditions can reduce teacher turnover and addressing the factors that cause a school to be hard-to-staff can also reduce teacher turnover. The research study demonstrated it was important for school principals to provide timely professional development that will assist in all staff members to work effectively in schools that have diverse student needs that often make the work environment challenging due to academic and behavioral concerns (SERV, 2006).

An area of weakness in American public education are the learning and behavioral challenges that are present in hard-to-staff schools (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Hard-to-staff schools are often staffed with teachers unprepared and lack their school principal's support to successfully meet these challenges (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). The lack of support not given to teachers has led to 30% of teachers leaving the profession within five years (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). For every teacher that leaves, the cost of replacement can lie anywhere between \$8,000 to \$48,000; frequent turnover in hard-to-staff schools has both financial and educational

costs that perpetuate the ongoing issue of staff retention ( Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Darling-Hammond & Berry (2006) recommended the creation of a national teacher support program that prioritizes hard-to-staff schools and includes qualified mentors with relevant educational field experience for novice teachers. A problem uncovered in the research is school districts with high levels of teacher attrition do not have experienced teachers to serve as mentors for beginning teachers, particularly, alternatively certified teachers, who require more direct guidance and support when working in hard-to-staff schools (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006).

### **Instructional Leadership Support for Alternatively Certified Teachers**

Principals need to provide intensive and specific instructional leadership support to alternatively certified teachers through their first years in classrooms to ensure student academic success and to retain these teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008).

Alternatively certified teachers are going to have a wide array of pre-service training experiences, and once they arrive on a campus, it becomes the principal's responsibility to take ownership of the instructional support these teachers will need to be successful ( Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). The school principal cannot achieve this task alone; therefore, it is important that there are other people, structures and processes that can assist in the professional growth of an alternatively certified teacher ( Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Spillane 2006).

Dufour & Marzano (2011) describes how district-level and school-level administrators develop and set school priorities and the support structures that will help all teachers become expert teachers. A five-part framework developed by Dufour & Marzano (2011) presents the development of teaching expertise over time. The framework

includes the following conditions: 1) a clearly defined knowledge-base for teaching, 2) opportunities for teachers to practice instructional strategies and receive feedback, 3) opportunities for teachers to peer observe and discuss expertise, 4) criteria for effective teaching is established and individual professional development plans are aligned to the established criteria, and 5) school leaders recognize teachers' progression as the teachers move toward expertise (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). Student achievement will improve if teachers receive constructive feedback from school leaders and have opportunities to collaborate through a collegial environment in which the aim is to develop expertise to ensure all students learn (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

Pollock & Ford (2009) provided both instructional leadership practices and strategies based on research recommendations that have yielded improvement in student achievement. The instructional leadership practices focused on providing classroom observation feedback to teachers on critical classroom decisions that promoted meaningful learning experiences (Pollock & Ford, 2009). Pollock & Ford provided school leaders guidance on delivering quality feedback for teachers on every stage of lesson planning to ensure that all students learn at high levels (2009). This process helped administrators coach teachers in aligning grading practices with their lesson plan to improve learning outcomes for students ( Pollock & Ford, 2009).

Timely and quality feedback is a critical process that school principals need to continually engage in to provide the framework for a constructive dialogue with teachers to improve a practitioner's craft (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009). Instructional rounds is an innovative process of providing instructional feedback to teachers based on the model of medical rounds (City et al., 2009). This professional learning experience

allowed school leaders and practitioners to develop a shared understanding of what high-quality instruction looks like in the classroom (City et al., 2009).

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are critical structures on any school campus that build a learner-centered environment for school principals, teachers and students (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). In a demanding school environment, it takes a collaborative team effort with shared leadership to meet the challenges facing schools today (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). Through a study of district leadership, principal leadership, and team leadership, Dufour & Marzano (2011) provided insight on how teachers can effectively lead their students. Dufour & Marzano (2011) research has established that by implementing a PLC, a district and a school can create a collaborative and trusting culture while building the collective capacity of faculty and staff. A PLC has the ability to create teams of educators for the purpose of working with curriculum and instruction to create lessons targeted at ensuring that all students will learn (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). Research has shown that a PLC is continually looking at ways to assist teachers and leaders respond to students in different ways when students are not learning (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This chapter outlined the procedures used in the qualitative study to explore instructional leadership support strategies used by school principals that will support the professional growth and retention rates of beginning teachers with zero to three years of experience, particularly alternatively certified beginning teachers. The qualitative study revealed what and how campus principals provided instructional support for beginning teachers. The qualitative study also examined the perspectives of beginning teachers on the influence of the instructional leadership of their principals on their professional growth and their decisions to remain on their current campus.

This qualitative study used online surveys and guided interviews with predetermined topics to gather data. The three campus principals individually answered eleven open-ended questions via telephone or through written response. Principals were given the option of responding by telephone or written response based on what was convenient to their schedules. Telephone interviews were scripted by the researcher. Two principals opted to do the interview by telephone. One principal submitted answers in writing to the eleven open-ended questions via email to the researcher. The three principals and thirteen campus administrators from the participating campuses completed an online survey related to the instructional leadership strategies that are used for all beginning teachers, with zero to three years of experience, employed at their respective campuses. The online survey addressed traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers as a whole and separately. Nineteen teachers in their first three years of service

were surveyed regarding their perspectives on the school leadership team's instructional leadership strategies impact on their professional growth and how it influenced their decision to remain on their current campus. The data collected from all data sources was examined for common findings.

An open-ended interview approach was used by the researcher in which the wording and order of the questions was determined prior to the individual interviews. During the individual interviews, principals were asked the same open-ended questions in the same sequenced order. The individual interviews of the three principals allowed them to individually reflect on whether their instructional leadership towards beginning teachers is differentiated based on the teacher's certification route and if the instructional leadership support provided has an impact on the retention rate of their alternatively certified teachers. Utilizing the open-ended interview that contained identical questions allowed principals to provide insight to the researcher on effective instructional leadership strategies in supporting beginning teachers who are alternatively certified based on their individual professional experiences (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Each principal had the opportunity to provide specific examples on their perceived successes and failures in providing instructional support to beginning teachers who were alternatively certified. Principals were able to explain if the instructional support provided had any impact on the retention rate of beginning teachers from their perspectives. An open-ended interview with pre-determined questions assists in reducing the possibility of having the data skewed based on researcher's bias( Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

The open-ended interviews allowed each principal to share their own perspectives on instructional leadership towards beginning teachers and if the approach is differentiated based on whether a teacher is alternatively certified or traditionally certified. Principals was able to provide information based on their professional experiences regarding the impact their instructional leadership has had on retaining alternatively certified teachers on their campus. The analysis of the open-ended interviews and online surveys allowed the researcher to identify trends and patterns collectively found in the principals' instructional leadership practices in supporting beginning teachers who are traditionally and alternatively certified teachers on each of the campuses. The results of the school principals' on-line surveys and beginning teacher on-line surveys provided additional data for analysis. This data allowed the researcher to identify common instructional support strategies used for all beginning teachers and specifically alternatively certified teachers to support their professional growth and influence their decisions to remain on campus.

### **Research Questions**

1. What instructional and classroom management strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team provide all beginning teachers during their first three years of service?
2. What additional instructional leadership strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team implement to further support beginning alternatively certified teachers in support of their professional development?



3. What are the campus principals' and school leadership teams' perceptions of the influence of their instructional leadership support on the professional growth and retention rates of alternatively certified classroom teachers?
4. How do beginning teachers, who are traditionally certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team for their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?
5. How do beginning teachers, who are alternatively certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team on their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?

## **Setting**

### **District Setting**

The district, campuses and principals were chosen for the qualitative study as a convenience sample based on location and access to the investigator. The campuses were selected due to easy access to the campus principals and school leadership team due to prior professional relationships established between the campus principals and the investigator. Each campus was also selected based on having student demographics that are associated with a hard-to-staff campus and their academic achievement record. For the purpose of this study, three campus principals volunteered to be interviewed and their identities will be documented with predetermined codes to maintain confidentiality of the results, e.g. P1, P2, and P3. The principals in the qualitative study are all middle school

principals whose schools are located in the same urban school district with in southeast Texas. The school district is a large school district located in the Gulf Coast region of Texas in a major metropolitan area. The student demographics of the school district were: 60% Hispanic, 25% African American, eight percent Caucasian, three percent Asian, and four percent other races. (Texas Education Agency, 2013). Within the student population, 80% qualified as Economically Disadvantaged, 30% qualified as Limited English Proficient, 60% meet the criteria for being At-Risk of not graduating high school, and 90% of all students qualified for Title 1 services (Texas Education Agency, 2013a). The school district employs approximately 11,500 teachers and 600 school administrators, with an average experience of 12 years, to meet the educational needs of the diverse student population (Texas Education Agency, 2013a). The district experienced a 18% turnover rate of teachers during the 2012-2013 school-year (Texas Education Agency, 2013a) . During the 2012-2013 school-year 10% of teachers had zero teaching experience and 23% teachers had 1 to 5 years of experience (Texas Education Agency, 2013a).

The last year the school district received a state rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was during the 2010-2011 school-year and it earned a rating of Academically Acceptable as documented on the Academic Excellence Indicator System. During the 2011-2012 school- year TEA did not provide a rating for the district due to new state-wide standardized assessments that were introduced during that year. The district was still required to meet Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) based on state assessments in reading and math. During 2012-2013 only 40% of school's met AYP and 60% of school did not meet AYP (Texas Education Agency, 2013a). In 2012-2013 the

school district earned an accountability rating of Met Standard under the state of Texas's new school performance rating system(Texas Education Agency, 2013a).

### **School 1 Setting**

This school described below is known as S-1 in the qualitative study. It is located in the southern portion of the school district. Approximately 450 students are enrolled in the school (Texas Education Agency, 2013b). The student demographics of the school were: 20% Hispanic, 75% African American, and ten percent other races (Texas Education Agency, 2013b). Within the student population, 90 % qualified as Economically Disadvantaged, 10 % qualified as Limited English Proficient, 50% met the criteria for being At-Risk of not graduating high school (Texas Education Agency, 2013b). The school employs less than 40 teachers and four school administrators, with an average experience of six years to meet the educational needs of the diverse student population (Texas Education Agency, 2013b). During the 2012-2013 school-year 12 teachers had zero teaching experience and 7 teachers had one to five years of experience (Texas Education Agency, 2013b).

The last year the school received a state rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was during the 2010-2011 school-year and it earned a rating of Academically Unacceptable as documented on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (Texas Education Agency, 2011a). During the 2011-2012 TEA did not provide a rating for the district due to new state-wide standardized assessments that were introduced during that year. The district was still required to meet Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) based on state assessments in reading and math. During 2011-2012 and 2012-13 the school did not meet AYP(Texas Education Agency, 2011a, 2013b). In 2012-2013 the school earned an

accountability rating of Improvement Required under the state of Texas's new school performance rating system (Texas Education Agency, 2013b).

### **School 2 Setting**

The school described below is known as S-2 in the qualitative study. It is located in the southeastern portion of the school district. Total student enrollment of the school is approximately 1,500 students (Texas Education Agency, 2013c). The student demographics of the school were: 70% Hispanic and 30% African American, (Texas Education Agency, 2013b) . Within the student population, qualified 95% as Economically Disadvantaged, 20% qualified as Limited English Proficient, 40% met the criteria for being At-Risk of not graduating high school (Texas Education Agency, 2013c). The school employs approximately 85 teachers and eight school administrators, with an average experience of twelve years (Texas Education Agency, 2013c). During the 2012-2013 school-year 13 teachers had zero teaching experience and 17 teachers had one to five years of experience (Texas Education Agency, 2013c).

The last year the school received a state rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was during the 2010-2011 school-year and it earned a rating of Academically Acceptable as documented on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (Texas Education Agency, 2011b). During the 2011-2012 TEA did not provide a rating for the district due to new state-wide standardized assessments that were introduced during those years. The district was still required to meet Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) based on state assessments in reading and math. During 2011-2012 and 2012-13 the school did met AYP (Texas Education Agency, 2011b, 2013c). In 2012-2013 the school earned an

accountability rating of Met Standard under the state of Texas's new school performance rating system (Texas Education Agency, 2013c).

### **School 3 Setting**

The school described below is known as S-3 in this qualitative study. It is located in the eastern portion the school district. Total student enrollment is approximately 1,000 students (Texas Education Agency, 2013d). The student demographics of the school were: 88% Hispanic, 10% African American and two percent other races. (Texas Education Agency, 2013d). Within the student population, 95% qualified as Economically Disadvantaged, 30% qualified as Limited English Proficient, 50% met the criteria for being At-Risk of not graduating high school (Texas Education Agency, 2013d)., The school employs approximately 55 teachers and four school administrators, with an average experience of eleven years to meet the educational needs of the diverse student population (Texas Education Agency, 2013d). During the 2012-2013 school-year nine teachers had zero teaching experience and 10 teachers had one to five years of experience (Texas Education Agency, 2013d).

The last year the school received a state rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was during the 2010-2011 school-year and it earned a rating of Recognized as documented on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (Texas Education Agency, 2011c). During the 2011-2012 TEA did not provide a rating for the district due to new state-wide standardized assessments that were introduced during that year. The district was still required to meet Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) based on state assessments in reading and math. During 2011-2012 and 2012-13 the school did not meet AYP (Texas Education Agency, 2011c, 2013d). In 2012-2013 the school earned an accountability

rating of Improvement Required under the state of Texas's new school performance rating system (Texas Education Agency, 2013d).

### **Participants**

All the three school principals who have volunteered to participate in the online survey and interviews had between two to three years' experience as a school principals and have been at their current assignment over two school years. One of the principals led the campus to meet AYP after two consecutive school years of not meeting the standard. Two of the campuses in the qualitative study had not meet AYP for two consecutive school years as documented in the Accountability Rating Report released by TEA in August 2013. Additional participants in this study included: any assistant principal, dean of instruction or associate principal at each participating campus. Sixteen campus administrators participated in the qualitative study.

### **Subjects' Demographics**

#### ***School principals, assistant principals and deans of instruction***

Sixteen campus administrators from all three campus were involved in the qualitative study responded to the online survey. Three were principals, one was an associate principal, two were a dean of instruction and ten were assistant principals. Participants self-reported the following: at which campus they were employed. A total of 16 respondents participated in the survey during the last two weeks of school in May and June: four school administrators from S1, eight school administrators from S2 and four school administrators from S3.

***Beginning teachers: alternatively certified and traditionally certified.***

Beginning teachers at all three participating campuses were emailed an invitation in late May to participate in an online survey to gather their perspectives on the instructional support given to them by school administrators throughout the school year. The survey would also collect their opinions about the possible impact the instructional support made on them throughout the school year in terms of professional growth and their decision to remain at the campus or resign at the end of the school year. Twenty-five beginning teachers were emailed the link to the online survey and only 19 of those completed the survey. The 19 beginning teachers who responded to the online survey were employed at the following campuses: one was employed at S1, 15 were employed at S2 and 3 were employed at S3. Four of the 19 beginning teachers earned their initial certification through a traditional university-based teaching certification program and 15 of the 19 beginning teachers earned their initial teaching certification through an alternative certification program.

**Procedures**

The University of Houston, Committee of the Protection of Human Services, will grant approval of this study (See Appendix A). To remove all identifiers that might indicate individual schools or districts, the interviewed principals' schools, districts, and names were replaced by predetermined codes to maintain an anonymous procedure for reviewing the data. Three campus principals and their leadership volunteered to participate in this research study. Beginning teachers at each campus were identified based on having three or less years of teaching service. Campus principals, assistant principals, deans of instruction and beginning teachers were sent an on-line survey

through survey monkey in May of 2014 during the last two weeks of school and the respondents remained anonymous. Each principal signed “Consent to Participate in Research” form before the interviews are conducted (See Appendix B).

## **Interviews**

The principals received the form “ University of Houston Consent to Participate in Research” that will fully explained the purpose of the study, procedures confidentiality, risk and discomforts, benefits, alternatives, publication statement, and the agreement for the use of audio tapes. This form also includes the “Subject Rights” and all the principals initialed each page and sign the consent form before the interviews were conducted. The principals received the 11 predetermined questions a week before the interview to help them be prepared to respond with accurate reflections. Two principals’ responses were scripted by the investigator because these two principals answered questions over the telephone. One principal responded in writing to the questions via email to the researcher. All of the principals received a copy of their interview transcripts and were given an opportunity to make revisions. There were no drawbacks to the this procedure and it allowed each principal flexibility in responding to the interview based on their work schedule.

Each campus principal participated in one semi-structured interview. The single interview took place over the phone or principals submitted a written response to the questions, which ever was convenient to their schedule. The investigator asked six initial questions to gain an understanding of each principals’ professional background as it may inform how they support beginning teachers on their campus. The interview consisted of six questions relating to the principal’s professional experience:



1. How many years did you teach?
2. How many years have you been a principal?
3. How did you earn your initial teaching certification?
4. Describe your journey from classroom teacher to school leader.
5. How long have you been a campus principal?
6. How many years have you lead at your current school?

Each principal was asked five open-ended questions related to their instructional support of beginning teachers.

1. How do you support all of your beginning teachers during their first two-years of service?
2. How do you differentiate the instructional support given to traditionally certified teachers than you do for alternatively certified teachers?
3. What common obstacles do you find that beginning teachers face on your campus?
4. In your experience, does the type of teaching certification route a teacher takes to become a teacher impact classroom preparedness and the instructional support given by you?
5. How has providing targeted instructional support to beginning teachers helped improve your retention of beginning teachers, both traditional and alternatively certified teachers.

### **Survey**

The survey was distributed through Survey Monkey, an online survey website, to the principals, assistant principals and deans of instruction who currently work on the

campuses involved in the qualitative study. The survey reflected the instructional leadership strategies used to support all first-year teachers on campuses and any separate instructional leadership strategies provided to beginning teachers who are alternatively certified. To determine the demographics of the surveyed school administrators, the respondents disclosed their position on campus, and the number of years they have served in that role on campus. Then each school administrator answered a series of questions about the of instructional support provided to all beginning teachers and any separate instructional leadership strategies provided to beginning teachers who are alternatively certified. Teachers in their first three years of service received a teacher survey on instructional leadership support of school principals to determine how school principals influence their professional growth and influence their decision to remain each year at the campus. Copy of the survey will be found in Appendix D and Appendix E.

### **Instruments**

The instruments used in this research study are the interview questions for the three principals created by the researcher to complement the participatory survey, which was distributed online through Survey Monkey.com. Due to the small number of participants, 16 school administrators and 19 beginning teachers, the survey was not piloted. The interview questions include six questions about the principal's educational history and experience along with five questions relating to instructional leadership support to all beginning teachers and to beginning teachers who alternatively certified. The survey was completed online at the Survey Monkey website. The researcher created a question bank based on the research findings from Dangel & Guyton (2005) in their collection of research articles on alternative teachers found in the book, Research on

Alternative and Non-Traditional Education . A copy of all the instruments can be found in Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E.

### **Analyses**

Data recorded from the interviews and online surveys were analyzed in three stages. In order to analyze the data from the interviews, all interview data was reviewed and organized by each principals' statements related to each question using text analysis through a word repetition technique(Ryan, 2003). The investigator identified specific terms related to instructional support that were common among all of the principals and they were categorized into findings that represented the same network of ideas related to instructional support of beginning teachers, particular alternatively certified teachers (Ryan, 2003). During the second phase, important words and phrases were organized as possible key features of instructional leadership practices of supporting beginning teachers who are traditionally and alternatively certified(Ryan, 2003). The results were translated into specific findings about instructional leadership practices in supporting beginning teachers who are traditionally certified and beginning teachers who are alternatively certified at the schools involved in the qualitative study(Ryan, 2003).

Finally, survey results were analyzed for patterns and trends through text analysis from both open-ended and closed-ended questions to determine how school administrators and beginning teachers perceive the instructional leadership support in impacting the professional growth and retention of beginning teachers who are traditionally and alternatively certified(Ryan, 2003). Patterns and trends were identified by common verbs and actions used in both sets of surveys completed by school administrators and beginning teachers(Ryan, 2003). Findings were established when

three or more participants identified specific instructional leadership support strategies were used on their campus to support professional growth of beginning teachers on their campus.

### **Limitations**

A limitation to the this study is the small size of this study which included: three middle school campuses, sixteen school administrators and nineteen beginning teachers who participated in both the interviews and survey. The small sample used in this study does not reflect a wide-range of educational settings or reflect the complexity of all urban middle school. A second limitation is the time frame in which the both surveys and principal interviews took place; they occurred at the end-of-school year, which may have had an influence on the total number of participants that completed the survey and the perceptions reflected within the survey. A third limitation is the investigator had established professional relationships with each campus principal prior to this research study and had knowledge of the instructional leadership strategies being used at each campus. This qualitative study should not be used as a generalization of the best practices for all principals wanting to utilize instructional support strategies to improve retention rates of beginning teachers who are alternatively certified or traditionally certified.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

This qualitative study explored the perspectives of principals and beginning teachers, in their first three years of service, of how instructional leadership strategies can impact beginning teachers' professional growth and their retention on their current campus. In order to answer the following questions, responses from the principals' interviews, the principals' surveys, the campus leadership teams' and the beginning teachers' surveys were analyzed through text analysis:

1. What instructional and classroom management strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team provide all beginning teachers during their first three years of service?
2. What additional instructional leadership strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team implement to further support beginning alternatively certified teachers in support of their professional development?
3. What are the campus principals' and school leadership teams' perceptions of the influence of their instructional leadership support on the professional growth and retention rates of alternatively certified classroom teachers?
4. How do beginning teachers, who are traditionally certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team for their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?
5. How do beginning teachers, who are alternatively certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school

leadership team on their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?

Three middle school principals were asked eleven questions related to how each of them provided instructional leadership to beginning teachers in effort to promote professional growth and retain these teachers each year. An online survey was completed by campus principals, assistant principals, deans of instruction and beginning teachers at each campus to provide varying perspectives on whether the instructional leadership provided by campus principals did in influence professional growth of beginning teachers and influence their decision to remain on the campus.

## **Interviews**

### **Interview Procedures**

The three subjects were identified based on their school's demographics and school's academic record. Three subjects were interviewed via the telephone or via email and responses were transcribed. One principal preferred to respond to the questions in writing and sent her responses to the researcher through email. Two principals participated by telephone and the investigator scripted their responses during the phone interview. All of the principals were asked the same questions. The interview consisted of six questions relating to the principal's professional experience:

1. How many years did you teach?
2. How many years have you been a principal?
3. How did you earn your initial teaching certification?
4. Describe your journey from classroom teacher to school leader.

5. How long have you been a campus principal?
6. How many years have you lead at your current school?

Questions one, two, four and five were created to ascertain each principal's professional experience as an educator to gain a better understanding of their experience from classroom teacher to principal. The principals' professional background influences how they will engage in the instructional support of their teachers. Question three was designed to determine the teaching certification path each principal undertook as a beginning teacher to determine if they were traditionally or alternatively certified. The principals' experiences as a beginning teacher could influence how they support beginning teachers on their campus. Question six was important to establish the length of time they have lead their current campus as principal.

Each principal was asked five open ended questions related to their instructional support of beginning teachers.

1. How do you support all of your beginning teachers during their first three-years of service?
2. How do you differentiate the instructional support given to traditionally certified teachers than you do for alternatively certified teachers?
3. What common obstacles do you find that beginning teachers face on your campus?
4. In your experience, does it make a difference the route of certification a person takes to become a teacher in terms of classroom preparedness?

5. How has providing targeted instructional support to beginning teachers helped improve your retention of beginning teachers, both traditional and alternatively certified teachers?

Question one was designed to determine the level of instructional support beginning teachers receive regardless of their certification route. Question two was designed to unearth whether campus principals provide differentiated instructional support to enhance the professional growth of beginning teachers who are alternatively certified. Questions three and four were designed to allow principals to explain their observations of the common obstacles beginning teachers face on their campus and if the certification route a teacher takes makes a difference in their classroom preparedness and it how translates to the level of instructional support given to assist in professional growth of beginning teachers. The fifth question was designed to give principals the opportunity to explain from their perspectives if they instructional support they have given to all beginning teachers has helped improve their overall retention rates of both traditional and alternatively certified teachers.

The principals' responses to the questions were scribed and commonalities and themes were compiled from their responses. Findings were determined after important words and phrases were identified as common instructional leadership practices utilized by all three principals in supporting both traditionally and alternatively certified beginning teachers' professional growth. Findings were also organized around common concerns principals expressed around their perspectives on how their instructional leadership support to all beginning teachers impacts beginning teachers deciding whether to remain at their individual campuses.



## **Interview Results**

Three campus principals participated in the interviews about principals' perspectives towards instructional leadership strategies used to support professional growth of beginning teachers and their retention as a whole. These principals were also asked whether instructional support is differentiated in any manner for alternatively certified teachers in order to grow them professionally and influence their decision to remain on the campus.

The first principal (P1) was an urban middle school principal during the 2013-2014 school year and the campus had approximately 400 students enrolled. This principal had ten years total experience as a public school educator: three years as a classroom teacher, three years as an assistant principal, one year as a Dean of Instruction and three years as a campus principal with all experiences occurring at the same school. The second principal (P2) was an urban middle school principal during the 2013-2014 school year and the campus had approximately 1,500 students enrolled. This principal had a total of 18 years as a public school educator: ten years as a classroom teacher, three years as an assistant principal, three years as a Dean of Instruction, and two years as a campus principal. The third principal (P3) was an urban middle school principal during the 2013-2014 school year and the campus had approximately 1,000 students enrolled. This principal has a total of 14 years as a public school educator: two years as classroom teacher, three years as a special education supervisor, five years as a special education district coordinator, an assistant principal for two years and campus principal for two years. Each principal had earned their initial teaching certification through an alternative certification program. Interview Results

**Finding one: relationships.**

The first question posed to the principals was, “How do you support all of your beginning teachers during their first three years of service?” All three principals emphasized the need for building relationships and rapport immediately with their beginning teachers in order to build trust as an instructional coach. Each principal stated that they choose to appraise all beginning teachers on their campus but the relationships and rapport begin before the formal evaluation even begins. Each principal begins to build relationships and rapport with the beginning teachers prior to school starting and making an effort to connect with each beginning teacher through regular conversations and direct instructional coaching prior to being formally observed. The quotes below are direct quotes taken from principals’ structured interview to support the finding of relationships and rapport.

- “ I provide one-on-one instructional coaching to each beginning teacher throughout the year.”
- “ As the principal, I directly appraise and support all beginning teachers on my campus.”
- “ I meet with all beginning teachers weekly in order to get to know them and provide instructional coaching”.
- “ I make all teachers feel very special and nurture them, this allows me to provide constructive feedback about all aspects of teaching because I have established trust with them”.

- “ It is critical that I establish relationship and rapport with beginning teachers at the beginning of the year so they will come to me for support and assistance when they need it”.

Each principal referenced in their structured interview that the following methods were used to establish rapport and relationships early in the school-year by: assessing all beginning teachers, providing direct instructional coaching, establishing trust early with beginning teachers through weekly meetings with beginning teachers.

**Finding two: differentiated instructional support.**

The second question posed to the principals was, “How do you differentiate the instructional support given to traditionally certified teachers than the instructional support that you give to alternatively certified teachers?” After analyzing their responses, two out of three principals were adamant that the instructional support for alternatively certified teachers needed to be at a high level because of the instructional and classroom management deficits they have observed in alternatively certified teachers. The quotes below are direct quotes taken from principals’ structured interview to support the finding of differentiated instructional support.

- “ I provide personalized support to alternatively certified beginning teachers such as scripted lessons, increased training opportunities with curriculum and more observations for feedback and coaching.”
- “ Yes, there is a separate instructional support system implemented by administrators for teachers who are certified through a university program versus teachers who are certified through an alternative certification program because they have different backgrounds and experience with content, pedagogy and life

experiences that will impact how they will operate in the classroom. Instructional support for alternatively certified teachers includes special trainings on: lesson planning, instructional delivery, and classroom management”.

- “The instructional support is based on what they are coming in with and their demonstrated weaknesses that are observed by administrators. I also take into consideration what beginnings teachers tell me are their weaknesses when implementing instructional support”.

One principal believed that all beginning teachers, regardless of their certification route, needed intensive instructional and classroom management support because all her beginning teachers lacked classroom preparedness in her opinion. The quote below is taken directly from the principal’s structured interview.

- “Differentiated instructional support is based on teachers needs not certification route because the vast majority of beginning teachers are not equipped to effectively teach students in an urban middle school. For example, a university teacher preparation program nor an alternatively certification program will not teach a 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading teacher how to teach a 6<sup>th</sup> grader to read for the first time through learning the alphabet and phonetics. However, both programs will prepare a 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading teacher instructional strategies on reading comprehension, which is not the most pressing need of my 6<sup>th</sup> graders, who do not know how to read!”

### **Finding three: job-embedded professional development.**

Each principal expressed the need for job-embedded professional development at the campuses in order to provide just-in-time professional development to accelerate the

professional growth of their beginning teachers in order to meet the varied needs of their students. The principals were then asked to respond to the following two questions:

“What common obstacles do you find that beginning teachers face on your campus?” and “In your experience, does it make a difference the route of certification a person takes to become a teacher in terms of classroom preparedness?” Their responses below from their structured interviews provided the framework for this finding:

- “ Beginning teachers lack content knowledge, lack classroom management strategies, no ability to unpack standards, and even after lesson planning being able to effectively deliver instruction. Beginning teachers need instructional support in this area that is modeled and received during the school day. ”
- “ In order to address the instructional and classroom management deficiencies that most beginning teachers present, it is necessary to provide embedded professional development within the school day to help an ineffective teacher become effective.”
- “ Job-embedded professional development can take the form of instructional coaches, professional learning communities, book studies and peer to peer observations”.

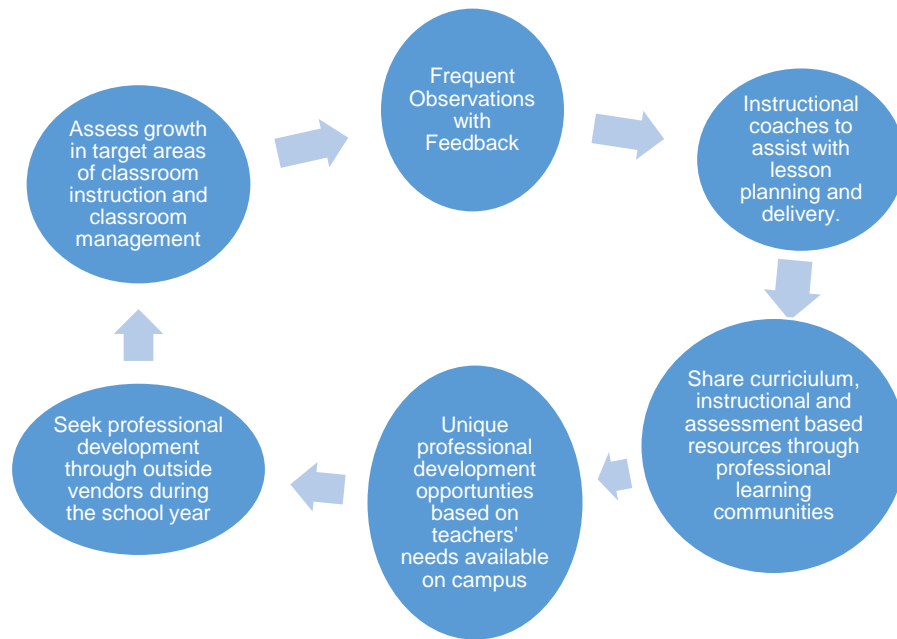


Figure 1. Job-embedded Professional Development

*Note:* The above figure was created based on the responses from principals structured interview on how they incorporate job-embedded professional development.

A sub-finding emerged regarding alternative certification programs being deemed as inadequate in preparing beginning teachers to fully ready to take on a classroom as teacher of record. All three principals stated there was a need for additional instructional and intensive instructional support for alternatively certified beginning teachers because they often lacked classroom preparedness to meet the needs of students at their campuses.

- “An ACP teacher has no experience with adolescent learning theory and how to differentiate instruction bases on students’ strengths and weaknesses.”
- “Alternative certification programs does not help teachers unpack standards, understand the purpose and strategies behind differentiated instruction.”

- “The number one common obstacle beginning teachers face, particularly ACP teachers, is building relationships with students, they do not know how to create relationships with children without losing control of the classroom”.
- “ACP teachers often have no student teaching experience and they do not know how to interact with students in the role of teacher. They are not confident because they have no frame of reference to draw from on how to build relationships with students and manage classrooms effectively.”
- “ACP programs today are poorly run and do not adequately prepare beginning teachers. ACP beginning teachers are not prepared to teach because they lack support and training from the ACP program who are supposed to prepare them to be a teacher of record.”
- “The ACP programs have changed over the last decade and they are about profit not about preparing teachers for the classroom.

**Finding four: retention struggles.**

All three principals stated grave concerns regarding the ability to retain beginning teachers due to the student demographics they serve on their campus when responding to the following question, “How has providing targeted instructional support to beginning teachers helped improve your retention of beginning teachers?” Each campus has a student majority identified as at-risk for not graduating from high school along with high rates of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches, which is an indicator that many of the students are economically disadvantaged. Many of their students are receiving special education services and/or English as a Second Language services, making it necessary for teachers to differentiate their instruction to meet the varied needs of

students. Principals reported that many of their teachers report to them a feeling of being overwhelmed because of their campuses' challenging student demographics. The quotes below are direct quotes taken from the principals' structured interviews which provided the framework for the theme of retention struggles.

- “It has been powerful for the majority of beginning teachers to receive targeted informal instructional support from the principal and assistant principals to improve classroom instruction through: frequent observations and feedback, providing unique professional development based on the teachers' needs and sharing of instructional materials and resources. Overtime beginning teachers can be mentored to become effective in the classroom, but they will eventually begin to look for schools with less challenging student demographics. When these teachers leave our campus the cycle begins again in recruiting, hiring and training new teachers to become effective teachers.”
- “ However, if a teacher is placed on a PPA ( Prescriptive Plan of Assistance) or a formal growth plan this will kill any chance of growing the teacher and retaining the teacher. From my perspective, in this district PPA's are seen as a death sentence that a teacher cannot recover from and it harms the relationship between the administrator and the teacher. It should only be used as a last resort”.
- “ I just completed a teacher retention survey, teachers were very satisfied with the instructional support given. However, they become more likely to be recruited by other campuses because they have developed into highly effective teachers in a tough urban middle school. Due to the campus characteristics of being low SES, majority African-American, with high mobility and the majority of students



performing two or more grade levels below, getting teachers to remain at the campus beyond three years is difficult.”

- “It requires a lot of mental and physical energy to remain at this campus”.
- “Retention of beginning teachers continues to be an area of need we will continue to work on at this campus”.

The common reasons given to principals by beginning teachers why they are resigning or leaving the current campus were the following: recruited by other campuses, student demographics were too difficult to teach, placed on a formal growth plan and stress.

### **School Administrators’ Online Survey**

#### ***School principals, assistant principals and deans of instruction***

Sixteen campus administrators from all three campus involved in the qualitative study responded to the online survey. Three were principals, one was an associate principal, two were a dean of instruction and ten were assistant principals. Participants self-reported the following: at which campus they were employed. A total of 16 respondents participated in the survey: four school administrators from S1, eight school administrators from S2 and four school administrators from S3.

### **School Administrators Online Survey Results.**

The 16 respondents disclosed the following information: how they earned their initial teaching certification, how many years they taught, how many years they had been a school administrator and how long they had been at their current campus. Within the 16 respondents, nine out of 16 school administrators earned their initial teaching certification through a school district-based alternative teacher certification program, six out of 16 school administrators earned their initial teaching certification through a

traditional university-based teacher certification program, three out of sixteen school administrators earned their initial teaching certification through a non-affiliated alternative certification program and six percent earned through initial teaching certification through Region IV alternative certification program. It is important to note the professional background and how each administrator earned their initial teaching certification because it can influence how they provide instructional support to beginning teachers on their campus.

The number of years that each respondent taught varied with seven out of sixteen school administrators having taught for between five and nine years, five out of sixteen school administrators taught between ten to fourteen years, three out of sixteen school administrators taught for fifteen years or more and only six percent had taught between one and four years. The numbers of years each respondent had been a school administrators had a wide variance with eight out of sixteen respondents having been an a school administrator for three to five years, four out of sixteen school administrators had been a school administrator for one to two years, three out of sixteen school administrators had been a school administrator six to nine years and ten years. The level of teaching experience for each school administrator is important to note because it can provide insight on how long they have been working with curriculum, instruction and assessment (Breidenstein et al., 2012; Richard Dufour & Marzano, 2011). This provides the foundation for school administrators working as instructional leaders of a school and supporting teachers (Breidenstein et al., 2012; Richard Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

The respondents were asked in the online survey to disclose how many years they had been employed at their current campus. Nine out of sixteen respondents had been on

their campus between two and four years, four respondents had been on their campus for five years or more, two respondents had been on their campus for one year and one respondent had been at their campus for less than a year. The length of time a campus administrator had been working at a campus is important because it provides insight in how long instructional leadership strategies have been used on each campus and if there is stability in within the leadership team.

Each respondent was asked approximately how many beginning teachers does the school hire each year. Eleven respondents reported they hire between four and seven beginning teachers each year. Three respondents reported they hire between one and three beginning teacher each year. Two respondents reported they hire between eight and eleven beginning teachers each year. This questions provides insight in the turnover rate of teachers on their campus and how many beginning teachers are hired each year. Beginning teachers are classified as teachers with zero to three years of experience.

The online survey posed an open-ended question that asked: how many of your current beginning teachers received their initial teacher certification through an alternative certification program? The school administrators from S1 reported all current beginning teachers received their initial teacher certification through an alternatively certification program. There was a wide-variance reported from S2 on the number of current beginning teachers who are alternatively certified: one school administrator did not know, one school administrator reported three beginning teachers were alternatively certified, one school administrator reported half of all beginning teachers were alternatively certified and one school administrator reported six beginning teachers were alternatively certified. Two school administrators from S2 reported two beginning

teachers were alternatively certified and another two school administrators reported four beginning teachers were alternatively certified. The school administrators from S3 reported a range of responses to how many of their current beginning teachers are alternatively certified: two school administrators were unsure, one school administrator report two to three beginning teachers are alternatively certified and one school administrator reported all current beginning teachers are alternatively certified.

When the respondents were asked if they preferred to hire a traditionally certified teacher to an alternatively certified teacher? Nine respondents reported no they did not prefer to hire a traditionally certified over alternatively certified teacher versus the seven respondents who reported they did prefer to hire a traditionally certified teacher.

Within the seven respondents who reported they did prefer to hire a traditionally certified teacher over an alternatively certified teacher were given a follow-up question providing four different possible reasons for the school administrators to choose from as to why they prefer to hire traditionally certified teachers over alternatively certified teachers. Four respondents stated they favored hiring beginning teacher who were traditionally certified because they had prior student teaching experience. Three respondents believed that beginning teachers who were traditionally certified were better prepared in classroom management and classroom instruction. Four respondents equally felt a beginning teacher who was traditionally certified had basic knowledge of learning theories and stronger academic foundation to work with children.

The respondents were asked the following question in the online survey: in your experience, how confident are you in the classroom readiness of a beginning teacher who is alternatively certified. Eleven respondents were somewhat confident and three

respondents were fairly confident in the classroom readiness of beginning teachers who are alternatively certified. Only two of the respondents were not confident at all in the classroom readiness of beginning teachers who are alternatively certified.

The respondents were asked in the online survey which areas of teaching that alternatively certified teachers tend to be deficient in based on their experience. Fifteen respondents reported classroom management was the most deficient area and a close second was classroom instruction reported by fourteen respondents. Seven respondents reported lesson planning as a third area of deficiency, which was followed by one respondent who stated parent communication being a fourth area deficiency.

The respondents were asked if they provided additional instructional support to beginning teachers who are alternatively certified: eleven respondents reported yes additional support was given and five respondents reported no additional support was given. The eleven respondents who reported they did give additional instructional support to alternative certified teachers were asked to identify four different ways additional instructional support was given beginning teachers who were alternatively certified. Frequent observations with direct feedback were reported by ten of the eleven of the respondents. Frequent instructional coaching on classroom management and classroom instruction was reported by nine of the eleven respondents. Additional professional development opportunities specifically designed for alternatively certified teachers were reported by seven of the eleven respondents and six of the eleven respondents reported using intensive mentoring by experienced teachers.

The respondents were asked whether there was an explicit expectation at their school for mentor teachers to provide additional instructional and classroom management

support to beginning teachers who were alternatively certified. Nine out of sixteen respondents stated yes mentor teachers should be providing additional instructional and classroom management support to beginning teachers who are alternatively certified. Seven out of the sixteen respondents reported there was no expectation for mentor teachers to provide additional support to beginning teachers who are alternatively certified.

The respondents were asked in the online survey two separate questions about types of professional development support given to all teachers. The first question asked if there were functioning professional learning communities that support teacher collaboration. Fifteen out of the sixteen respondents reported there was a functioning professional learning community on their campus and only one respondent reported no functioning professional learning communities existed at their campus.

The second question on the online survey pertaining to how professional growth was supported on each campus asked in what ways is teacher professional development supported on the campus. All sixteen respondents reported the use of individual professional development plans based on individual professional goals. Thirteen respondents reported professional development opportunities based on school-wide goals. Twelve respondents reported implementing district-mandated professional development plans. Eleven respondents reported having school-based structures that provide for time and space for teacher collaboration.

Each respondent was asked in the online survey approximately how many beginning teachers who were traditionally certified resign at the end of the school year. Five respondents reported zero beginning teachers who were traditionally certified

resigned at the end of the school year. Ten respondents reported approximately one to two beginning teachers who were traditionally certified resign at the end of the school year. Only one respondent reported between three to four beginning teachers who were traditional certified resigned at the end of the school year.

The online survey also asked respondents to report the number of beginning teachers who were alternatively certified that resign at the end of the school year. Seven respondents reported approximately one to two alternatively certified teachers resign at the end of the school year. Five respondents reported approximately three to four beginning teachers who are alternatively certified resin at the end of the school year. One respondent reported approximately five or more beginning teachers who are alternatively certified resign at the end of the school year. Three respondents reported that zero beginning teachers who are alternatively certified resigned at the end of the school year.

The respondents were asked in the online survey what reasons do beginning teachers who are alternatively certified provide for resigning from the campus. Twelve respondents reported beginning teachers stated they were pursuing a career outside of education, six respondents stated resignation was due to lack of discipline support, six respondents stated they were pursuing a position at another campus and two respondents stated it was due to lack of instructional support.

### **Teachers' Online Survey**

#### ***Beginning teachers: alternatively certified and traditionally certified.***

Beginning teachers with zero to three years of experience at all three participating campuses were emailed an invitation to participate in an online survey to gather their perspectives on the instructional support given to them by school administrators

throughout the school year. The survey collected their perspectives about the possible impact the instructional support made on them throughout the school year in terms of professional growth and their decision to remain at the campus or resign at the end of the school year.

In the online survey, all beginning teachers with zero to three years of experience employed at the participating campuses were asked to record the number of years of prior teaching experience. Three of the nineteen beginning teachers reported having zero years of experience. Eight of the nineteen beginning teachers reported having one year of teaching experience. Six of the nineteen beginning teachers had two years of teaching experience and two of the nineteen beginning teachers reported having three years of teaching experience.

The beginning teachers were asked in the online survey the number of years at their current campus. Eight beginning teachers reported having been employed at their current campus between two to four years. Six beginning teachers reported being employed at their current campus for one year. Five beginning teachers reported being employed at their current campus for less than a year. This information was important to gain insight how long each teacher had been employed at their current campus.

### **Teachers' Online Survey Results**

The beginning teachers were asked to report through the online survey how they earned their initial teaching certification. Six teachers reported earning their initial teaching certificate through Region IV alternative certification program and another six teachers reported earning their initial teaching certification through a non-affiliated alternative certification program. Three teachers reported earning their initial teaching



certification through a school district-based alternative teacher certification program. Four teachers reported earning their initial teaching certification through a traditional university –based teacher certification program.

All beginning teachers were asked to identify the instructional and classroom management areas they struggled with implementing as a new teacher. Eleven out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported in the online survey they struggled with classroom management and classroom instruction. Ten out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported in the online survey to have struggled with lesson planning. Three out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported in the survey to have struggled with parent communication. Traditionally certified beginning teachers reported: four out of four teachers reported in the online survey to have struggled with classroom management and two out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported in the online survey to have struggled with classroom instruction. One out of four traditionally certified beginning teacher reported in the online survey to have struggled with lesson planning and two traditionally certified teachers reported in the online survey to have struggled with parent communication.

Beginning teachers were asked to identify in the online survey how their professional development was supported on their campus. Three out of four beginning teachers who were traditionally certified reported in the online survey their professional development was supported through professional development focused on school-wide goals. Three out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported their professional development was supported through district-wide mandated professional development. Two out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported their

professional development was supported through individual professional development aligned to individual goals. One out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported professional development was supported through school-based structures that provide time and space for teacher collaboration.

Thirteen out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported their professional development was supported through district-mandated professional development. Twelve out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported their professional development was supported through professional development opportunities based on school-wide goals. Eight out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported their professional development was supported through individual professional development based on individual professional goals. Five out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported the presence of school-based structures that provide time and space for teacher collaboration.

Beginning teachers were asked on the online survey if their campus had functioning professional learning communities that support teacher collaboration. Three out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported yes they had functioning professional learning communities and one out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported they did not have functioning professional learning communities. Twelve out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers stated their campus had functioning professional learning communities. Three out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers stated in the e online survey their campus did not have a functioning professionally learning community.

All beginning teachers were asked to evaluate their confidence in classroom readiness during their first two years of teaching in the e online survey . Two out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported through the online survey being fairly confident in their classroom readiness and two out of four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported being somewhat confident through the online survey in their classroom readiness. One out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers stated they were not confident in their classroom readiness. Eleven out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers were somewhat confident in their classroom readiness. Three out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers were fairly confident in their classroom readiness.

Beginning teachers who were alternatively certified were asked in the online survey if they received additional instructional support from school leadership or mentor teachers in comparison to beginning teachers who were traditionally certified. Nine out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported yes they did receive additional instructional support, four out of fifteen alternatively certified beginning reported they did not receive additional support and two out of the fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers were unsure if they receive additional support.

### **Teacher's Open Ended Survey Responses**

Beginning teachers were asked the following open-ended question in the online survey: What instructional leadership behaviors has your principal or school leadership team members performed been important to your professional growth as a teacher? Their responses were grouped in the following findings: feedback and developed relationships.

### **Finding one: feedback.**

Ten out of the 19 beginning teachers reported timely and constructive feedback helped them grow professionally throughout the school year. Only one of out the ten was a traditionally certified teacher. The feedback they received helped the teachers identify weak areas in their instruction and/or classroom management while receiving strategies or resources on how to improve those areas. The quotes below are taken directly from teachers' open responses in the online survey to form the theme of feedback.

- “ Specific feedback on how to improve my instruction. Trainings at my school with my peers that address areas of instruction I need to improve in”.
- “Provided feedback, resources and training to improve my instruction.”
- “Frequent feedback and training/resources to grow professionally.”
- “Providing immediate feedback on observation. Providing training and resources to help with lesson planning and classroom delivery.”

### **Finding two : developed relationships.**

Beginning teachers in this qualitative study reported the importance of school leadership developing strong relationships with them that aided in school administrators providing instructional support to help them grow professionally. Six of the fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers mentioned the importance of developing relationships with their campus principals. It was important for beginning teachers to receive individually attention and time from the school principal as the navigated their first years of teaching. The quotes below were taken directly from the teachers' open responses from the online survey to form the theme of developed relationships.

- “Developed a relationship with me from the beginning and providing useful resources and training.”
- “Developing a relationship and rapport as a mentor to develop me as a teacher”.
- “Developed a relationship with me from the beginning with weekly check-ins”.

**Finding three: provided instructional resources.**

Beginning teachers in this qualitative study reported the need for continual training and resources in order to become a more effective teacher. Ten of the 19 teachers reported the need for training and resources to be given to them that were aligned with the areas of weakness in their classroom. All ten of the teachers were alternatively certified beginning teachers. The quotes below were taken directly from the teachers’ open responses from the online survey to form the theme of provided instructional resources .

- “I receive a lot of support in getting instructional materials.”
- “Providing training and resources to help with lesson planning and classroom delivery.”
- “Providing training at school to address the areas I was weak in”.
- “Providing feedback, providing training and providing resources.”

All beginning teachers were asked the following question in the survey: “If you have decided to resign from your current school, what reason(s) did you provide for your resignation?”. Five of the 19 beginning teachers were not resigning and stated this in

response to the survey question, all of which were alternatively certified beginning teachers. One hundred percent of the traditionally certified beginning teachers were resigning at the end of the year and cited lack of discipline support as the main. Twenty five percent of the traditionally certified beginning teachers were resigning due to being recruited to another campus, lack of instructional support and pursuing a career outside of education. For alternatively certified beginning teachers sixty-six percent had decided to resign at the end of the year. Sixty-six percent of alternatively certified beginning teachers reported they were resigning due to seeking employment at another campus, thirty-three percent reported they were resigning due to lack of discipline support and due to a lack of instructional support. Thirty- three percent of alternatively certified beginning teachers reported seeking a career outside of education.

### **Instructional Leadership's Influence on Retention**

All beginning teachers were asked the following question in the online survey: "What actions or behaviors do your principal and/or assistant principals consistently perform that influences your decision to remain at the campus each year"? Responses were grouped into the following findings: developing relationships and feedback.

Finding one: developing relationships.

Beginning teachers in this qualitative study reported how impactful it was on their decision to remain at the campus based on the efforts of the campus principal and school administrators to develop relationships with them from the beginning. Beginning teachers reported the relationships formed with the school leadership team fostered a deep connection between themselves, the school and the students. One out of four of the

traditionally certified beginning teachers stated the importance of the principal developing a relationship from the beginning through weekly check-ins. Seven out of the fifteen teachers reported the importance of building relationships with campus principals as an influencer in deciding to remain on campus. The quotes below were taken directly from teachers' open responses to support the finding of developing relationships.

- “Develops relationships with me and my peers as professionals”.
- “Build relationships with me to make me feel connected to the school and students.”
- “Build relationships from the beginning”.
- “Develops a relationship with me from the beginning with weekly check-ins”.
- “Developing a relationship with me as an instructional mentor. Checking in with me weekly to see how I am doing my first year of teaching.”

### **Finding two: feedback.**

Beginning teachers in this qualitative study reported how influential receiving consistent constructive feedback in their decision-making to remain at their campus for another school year. Beginning teachers in this qualitative study reported how receiving timely constructive feedback helped them develop a relationship with school administrators but also grow professionally. Two out of the four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported receiving frequent feedback as one of the actions their principal had done that could influence their decision to remain at the campus. Eleven out of the fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported in the open response section of the online survey the importance of timely feedback in growing professionally and remaining at the campus. The consistent feedback made them feel the school

leadership was invested in their success as a teacher. The quotes below were taken directly from teachers' open responses to support the theme of feedback.

- “Provides clear feedback and ways to improve.”
- “ Provide clear feedback and guidance for expectations”.
- “Provide feedback that is then followed by training and resources”.
- “Provides support through resources and feedback to improve classroom instruction”.
- “Provide training at school to address areas that I am weak in”.
- “Immediate feedback from observations. Follow-up with materials and resources to improve instruction”.
- “Written feedback within 48 hours of walk-throughs or observations. Provides support through resources and feedback to improve classroom instruction”.

The last question on the online survey for beginning teachers was the following:

“What instructional leadership actions or behaviors do your principal and/or assistant principals perform that can influence your decision to leave a campus”? Teachers' responses from the online survey were grouped into the following themes: lack of discipline support and lack of instructional support which can contribute to a poor campus climate.

#### **Finding four: lack of discipline support.**

Beginning teachers reported that the main reason they would decide to resign from the campus would be based on lack of discipline support by school administrators. If beginning teachers did not feel supported in how their discipline referrals were handled or if they did not feel safe on campus then the teachers were more than likely to pursue a



resignation. All four traditionally certified beginning teachers reported lack of discipline support as a primary reason to resign. Seven of the fifteen alternatively certified beginning teachers reported lack of support of discipline from school administration would be a reason to resign at the end of the year. The following quotes were taken from the open-ended portion of the online survey and help support this finding.

- “No help with discipline”.
- “Lack of support with discipline”.
- “Lack of support in discipline referral. Poor campus climate”.
- “ Some reasons that would influence me to leave are their inability to follow through with what they say. Discipline is not consistent, and students are allowed to haggle with detention days to fit them.”
- “ Not backing us up in behavior situations, having unrealistic expectations.”
- “Not addressing student behavior.”

**Finding five: lack of instructional support.**

Several of the beginning teachers in this qualitative study did not feel supported instructionally by the campus principal and school administrators and believed this hindered them in doing their job effectively. Three out of the four traditionally certified beginning teachers felt a lack of instructional support from campus principals. This was not a reason stated by alternatively certified beginning teachers as a reason to resign. The lack of instructional support in their perspectives would play a significant role in their

decision to resign from the campus. The quotes below are taken directly from the open-ended response of the online survey to support this finding.

- “Uncomfortable work environment, lack of support in discipline and lack of resources and support.”
- “ There’s little support for my department and there are a lack of resources for my basic needs a teacher. This is, in turn, make my job tougher in ways that it shouldn’t be”.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, reviews the intent of the qualitative study, discussion of the results, implications for school leaders, and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions**

#### **Introduction**

The most valuable assets within a school are its teachers because they have the most direct impact on the quality of teaching and student learning that is occurring daily. It is critical for the school principals along with their assistant principals, associate principals and deans of instruction to foster and support the professional growth of its teachers throughout their career. It is even more important for school principals to foster and play a significant role in the professional growth of their beginning teachers in order to continually improve teaching and learning on their campus (Breidenstein et al., 2012; Dufour & Marzano, 2011). By serving an active role in the professional growth of their beginning teachers school principals can also increase their chances of retaining their beginning teachers through building rapport and relationships with beginning teachers and providing timely and constructive feedback to them (Breidenstein et al., 2012; City et al., 2009). This chapter will provide an overview of the qualitative study and a discussion of the data in conjunction with the current academic literature, implications for school leadership, and implications for further study.

#### **Overview of the Qualitative Study**

This qualitative study explored the perspectives of principals and beginning teachers on the instructional leadership strategies that are used by school principals to support the professional learning of beginning teachers who are traditional certified and alternatively certified during their first three years of service. The qualitative study revealed how campus principals and campus administrators provided instructional

support to all beginning teachers and if additional support was given to alternatively certified teachers to grow them professionally. The qualitative study also examined the perspectives of beginning teachers, both traditionally and alternatively certified, on the influence of the instructional leadership on their professional growth and how influences them to remain on their current campus each year. The responses from the principals' open-ended interviews and online surveys responses from beginning teachers and school administrators were analyzed for patterns and trends. The data was then categorized into findings for each group of respondents. The five research questions explored in this qualitative study were:

1. What instructional and classroom management strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team provide all beginning teachers during their first three years of service?
2. What additional instructional leadership strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team implement to further support beginning alternatively certified teachers in support of their professional development?
3. What are the campus principals' and school leadership teams' perceptions of the influence of their instructional leadership support on the professional growth and retention rates of alternatively certified classroom teachers?
4. How do beginning teachers, who are traditionally certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team for their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?

5. How do beginning teachers, who are alternatively certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team on their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?

## **Discussion of Results**

*What instructional and classroom management strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team provide all beginning teachers during their first three years of service?*

It was evident by responses from the open-ended interviews with principals and the responses from school administrators and beginning teachers from the online surveys that each campus has implemented several different instructional leadership strategies to facilitate the professional growth of all its beginning teachers. Each principal discussed in their interviews the importance of building rapport and relationships from the moment the new teacher was hired and throughout the school year. This finding of the qualitative study supported a critical component of transformational leadership, in that if principals want to transform their campuses into environments conducive to learning at high levels for students and teachers, it is necessary to engage in transformational leadership behaviors which requires principals to establish positive and individualized relationships with their teaching staff (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Building relationships and rapport were equally important to both beginning teachers and administrators as trust was being established. The relationships and growing trust enabled each principal and school administrator to dispense timely, constructive

feedback, which often was well-received by beginning teachers. Each principal stated they were the direct appraiser for each beginning teacher and regularly provided instructional coaching, trainings and resources based on frequent data from classroom observations. Professionally relationships between beginning teachers and school principals were created through instructional coaching and regular feedback from observations in which school principals began early in the school-year. Several teachers perceived the instructional coaching, professional development trainings and resources as correlated to their instructional deficiencies and thought they would help them grow as teachers. Each principal took on characteristics of a transformational leader by working with employees individually to align their individual goals and objectives with the organization's goals and objectives (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The school principals in this qualitative study performed another key behavior of transformational leadership by aligning teachers' goals with the organization's goals the end goal being as the individual employee's capacity grows then the organization as a whole benefits (Bass & Riggio, 2006). All beginning teachers at each surveyed campus were involved in the following professional development activities to varying degrees: district-mandated professional development plans, professional development opportunities based on school-wide goals, individual professional development focused on individual professional goals and school-based structures that allow for teacher collaboration. Each principal and their school administrative team had qualities of being a transformational leader in the manner in which they provided support through mentoring and coaching to their teachers, which can lead to teachers having higher performance levels because of the individualized attention given (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Current school reform literature and the results from this qualitative study both show the critical need for schools to be led by transformational leaders.

*What additional instructional leadership strategies do campus principals and the school leadership team implement to further support beginning teachers who are alternatively certified in support of their professional development?*

Two principals discussed in their interview their awareness of the instructional and classroom management needs of any beginning teacher who was alternatively certified and how their instructional leadership support strategies were purposely more intensive than what may have been given to beginning teachers who were traditionally certified. All principals reported in both the open-ended interview and online surveys that they provided the following types of ongoing intensive professional development for beginning teachers who were alternative certified: frequent observations with direct feedback, frequent instructional coaching on classroom instruction and classroom management, professional development opportunities developed specifically for alternatively certified teachers and intensive mentoring by experienced teachers. The principals were operating as capacity builders for alternatively certified beginning teachers by using shared leadership strategies, exposing them to experienced teachers as mentors, frequent instructional coaching sessions and relevant professional development opportunities unique to their needs. The school principals in this qualitative study utilized research-based instructional leadership practices that have proven to be effective by Dufour & Marzano (2011) in building capacity of teachers through both job-embedded professional development and traditional professional development to strengthen classroom instruction of their beginning teachers.

One principal believed that due to the student demographics of the campus and the high numbers of at-risk students, who on average were performing several grade levels below their peers within the school district, any beginning teacher, regardless of certification route would not be prepared to be effective on her campus. This principal felt it was necessary to provide extensive professional development support to all beginning teachers in order to accelerate their professional growth and ensure their teaching effectiveness on her campus.

*What is the principals' and the school leadership teams' perception of the impact of their instructional leadership support on the professional growth and retention rates of alternatively certified classroom teachers?*

All principals in both of their open-ended interviews believed the instructional support they gave to alternatively certified beginning teachers made a significant difference in the professional growth of their teachers and overtime, improved teaching and learning at their campus. The downside of being effective at facilitating the professional growth of their teachers from the principals' perspective is often other schools would then start recruiting those same teachers three to four years later. Two of the principals spoke of the frustration this caused them because their retention rates constantly stayed high because their beginning teachers would come to be known as highly-effective in a school known to be difficult to work in due to student characteristics, and would be recruited away by higher-performing schools with fewer at-risk students. This phenomenon is known as the "revolving door" by Ingersoll (2003) in which high numbers of teachers leave urban campuses due to poor working conditions and difficult student demographics. Eleven beginning teachers' responses in their online



survey spoke of the stress of the campus climate and not feeling supported in terms of student discipline which influenced their decision to resign.

*How do beginning teachers, who are traditionally certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team for their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?*

Only 19 teachers responded to the online survey out of 25 teachers who were invited to participate. Out of the 19 teachers only four were certified through a traditional university program. Out of the four teachers who did respond, three were employed at S2 and one was employed at S3. Two out of three of the teachers at S2 responded the instructional leadership strategy, from their perspective, that had the most impact on their professional growth was frequent feedback about teaching performance and professional development directly tied to their areas of weakness, which was reported in their open-ended response to the online survey. One out of three teachers from S2 responded the most impactful instructional leadership strategy school administrators performed to influence her professional growth was assisting her with problematic students, which was reported in the teacher's open-ended response to the online survey. The one respondent employed at S3 stated she did not feel the principal or other school administrators provided much support to her in terms of professional growth.

School principals and other school administrators have the power to influence a teacher's decision to remain at campus at the end of the year based on their daily actions and behaviors. When the four traditionally certified beginning teachers were asked the following question: what actions or behaviors do your principal and/or assistant principals consistently perform that influences your decision to remain at the campus

each year, their responses had consistent similarities. Their responses as a whole carried the theme of the importance of relationships and rapport as factors that can influence them to stay but lack of support with discipline as a factor that will influence them to resign.

*How do beginning teachers, who are alternatively certified, perceive the instructional leadership support they receive from their principals and school leadership team on their professional growth influencing their decision to remain at the campus?*

Beginning teachers who have sought certification through the alternative certification route tend to be weaker in terms of classroom readiness due to an abbreviated preparation program, which may not fully prepare them to be an effective classroom teacher (Loughran, 2010). Fifteen beginning teachers who were alternatively certified participated in the survey, of the 15 teachers, 12 teachers were employed at S2, two were employed at S3 and one was employed at S. Both S1 and S2 had a significantly lower participation rate than S2. The most commonly talked about factor that influences an alternatively certified beginning teacher to stay at their campus is receiving timely feedback from school administrators. Seven out of the 15 alternatively certified beginning teachers stressed the importance of timely feedback supported by appropriate professional development and resources positively influenced their decision to stay at a campus, which was reported in their open-ended response in the online survey. The frequent feedback combined with frequent professional development and instructional resources assisted in teachers growing professionally and served as a positive influence in their decision to remain at their respective campuses.

The second major influence on alternative certified beginning teachers who decide to remain at their campus each year is the relationships and rapport they develop with campus principals and school administrators. Five out of the 15 alternative beginning teachers included the importance of developing relationships and rapport with school principals and school administrators, which was reported in their open-ended responses in the online survey. The relationships and rapport assist in building trust between teachers and school administrators. This allows school administrators to provide consistent feedback to teachers, which can then be well- received by the teachers. Teachers can then use the feedback to identify trainings and resources to grow professionally to become a better teacher. These teachers felt the effort and time school administrators invested in them made them feel connected to the success of the school. Most teachers reported in the online survey via the open responses they felt that the school principal and school administrators cared for their individual success.

The main factor for an alternatively certified beginning teacher who decides to resign at the end of the school year is lack of support in discipline. Lack of support with discipline was reported overwhelmingly by seven of the 15 teachers in their open-ended online survey responses. This finding support research studies in which lack of support with discipline can be a critical factor in influencing a teacher to resign at the end of the year (Carroll & Fulton, 2004; Riggs, 2013).

For both traditionally and alternatively certified beginning teachers that participated in the qualitative study building rapport and relationships with school administrators was a critical first stage in their professional growth. Those relationships provided the platform for school administrators and experienced teachers to work with all

beginning teachers to grow them professionally throughout the year. Both schools principals and beginning teachers reported in this qualitative study instructional coaching and frequent feedback helped cultivate the professional relationship which created a level of support for many of the beginning teachers that positively influenced them to remain on the campus.

### **Implications for School Leadership**

School principals need to have the knowledge and skills to manage the school budget, human resources and the technology needs of its campus on daily basis to ensure students' needs are being met. Principals have the ability to create a learning environment that is based on high expectations along with a commitment to improving teaching and learning by providing support and resources to beginning teachers which will allow students and adults to achieve the unimaginable (Wallace Foundation, 2007). A transformational leader creates a dynamic vision for teaching and learning where each child can and will learn (Public Agenda, 2007). In order for school principals to be effective transformational leaders they must view each beginning teacher as an individual with unique needs, strengths and weaknesses (Bass & Riggio, 2006). School principals must give individualized consideration to each beginning teacher which can be done through direct instructional coaching and feedback which can be used to build professional relationships with beginning teachers.

School principals must make a concerted effort to build professional relationships with their teachers in order to improve teaching and learning on their campus (Breidenstein et al., 2012). In order to overcome any challenges a school may encounter because of its students' demographics or because of the area of town where a school is

located having strong relationships between teachers and school principals can create a positive campus climate (Leithwood et al., 2004). This can be translated into a positive and productive learning environment for students. School principals can utilize adult learning principals in order to grow teachers professionally. Teachers need to feel connected to a larger purpose and if a school principal can create a teaching environment where teachers feel responsible for the successes or failures of the school, they will likely invest in their own professional growth to ensure students are successful (Knowles, 2011; North Carolina Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d.).

School principals need to invest and implement on a regular basis job-embedded professional development to assist in improving teaching and learning on their campuses. Job-embedded professional for practicing teachers should be similar to the learning experiences of student teachers in that effective professional development allows for continual professional growth that can be applied immediately in classroom instruction (Croft et al., 2010). Professional development should allow practicing teachers to audit their instructional needs and seek professional development that provide professional growth in those areas through new learning experiences, application of new learning and reflection on the impact of the new learning on student learning (Wepner, 2006). Job-embedded professional development is critically important for alternative certified teachers because their mastery of pedagogy and classroom management strategies may be very weak depending on the quality of preparation provided by their alternative teacher preparation program (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). School principals cannot wait until the summer or the beginning of school to provide professional intervention to teachers. Intervention for improving classroom instructional strategies or behavioral management

strategies needs to occur as soon as the school principal becomes aware of it to prevent a negative impact on student learning.

School principals and school administrators regularly provide feedback to teachers through yearly evaluations. However, the feedback in which teachers are impacted by the most is the timely and constructive feedback accompanied by both resources and training to help grow areas of weaknesses (Pollock & Ford, 2009). Timely and constructive feedback by principals often does not occur because it takes time and effort to craft authentic constructive feedback in a timely manner (Pollock & Ford, 2009). The benefits of helping a teacher grow professionally far outweigh any inconvenience it may cause school principals to implement giving teachers timely and specific constructive feedback (Pollock & Ford, 2009). This qualitative study found that regular feedback not only could create professional relationships between teachers and principals but also could be used to target areas of instructional weaknesses by pairing it with targeted professional development.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The findings of this qualitative study have provided several areas of future research. All three of the participating schools in the qualitative study reported extensive instructional leadership support strategies along with differentiated professional development activities but all three schools still had concerns with retention of beginning teachers despite their leadership efforts. Future research could examine if there is a long-term impact on teacher retention rate in schools that are considered hard-to-staff were school principals have implemented differentiated professional development activities for more than five years. Sustained differentiated professional development over a five-year

period could result in higher retention rates and high teacher morale if teachers feel their professional learning is based on their individual needs and their personal success as teachers.

A second area of future research should focus on how to improve campus climate and teacher moral at hard-to-staff campuses. Two out of the three principals explicitly discussed their own leadership actions for developing relationships and rapport with beginning teachers and especially with alternatively certified teachers, but despite those efforts beginning teachers would ultimate leave their campus. Future research could focus on additional leadership strategies principals can implement to overcome the challenges in a hard-to-staff campus in order to lower teacher turnover rates and continue to improve teaching and learning on their campus.

A third area of future research is to examine principals' perspectives on the classroom readiness of all beginning teachers, with regards to teacher preparation programs, in urban schools with high numbers of students' with learning and behavioral challenges. This type of research could examine specific teacher preparation programs and how their programs prepare their teachers in training to work with urban students with learning and behavioral challenges. Such research may reveal areas of strengths of teaching preparation programs that can be replicated in other teacher preparation programs; while exposing ineffective teacher preparation programs which may need an entire program overhaul in order to provide effective training and preparation to future teachers.

A fourth area of research would be for this qualitative study to be replicated on a larger scale either district-wide or by having similarly situated districts participate in the

study. It could also generate data on the different types of instructional leadership strategies that may be used on high-achieving and low-achieving campuses across a school district. This would allow researchers to determine if feedback and building relationships is as an important instructional leadership strategy to all principals and beginning teachers in the process of growing beginning teachers professionally and reducing the turn-over rate of beginning teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The rate of new teachers earning their initial teaching certification through alternative certification routes in Texas has been fifty percent or higher since 2005 (Grimmett, 2012). Alternatively certified beginning teachers tend to have experienced an abbreviated and condensed certification program which may not fully prepare them to be an effective classroom teacher (Baines et al., 2001). In 2008, the State of Texas conducted an audit of all alternative certification programs operating in Texas, and a major conclusion cited by the state auditor was that improvements in oversight process of all alternative certification programs was needed to ensure that teaching candidates were meeting all requirements in order to receive teaching certificates (Keel, 2008). Based on the audit, it is clear that there are many loopholes that alternative certification programs can employ to present themselves as an efficient and credible teacher education program, and with limited oversight by the state, it calls into question the level of quality of teachers these programs may be producing. Research studies has shown alternatively certified beginning teachers tend to be hired in low-performing and hard-to-staff schools in which these teachers are overwhelmingly not prepared to deliver effective classroom instruction or classroom management( Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Darling-



Hammond et al., 2005; Wayman et al., 2003). If alternatively certified beginning teachers do not receive instructional leadership from school administrators immediately, then they will likely not grow professionally and will leave the profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). This only leads to the cycle beginning again of school principals hiring new round of alternatively certified beginning teachers to fill unfilled vacancies (Ingersoll, 2003)

In this qualitative study, all three campuses had student demographics characteristic of hard-to-staff schools including: significant numbers of alternatively certified beginning teachers, high numbers of at-risk students, and the majority of students were minority students with low academic performance and were of low-socio-economic status. Each campus took a differentiated instructional leadership approach in providing support and structures to grow all faculty members. Two out of three principals provided intensive support to all beginning teachers who were alternatively certified; while one principal adamantly felt all beginning teachers, regardless of certification route, need intensive instructional support. From both the principals' and teachers' perspective the two most critical actions which had the most influence on helping a teacher grow professionally and remain at their campus another year, was receiving feedback which was used as a tool to build relationships and rapport with beginning teachers. Receiving authentic and timely feedback helped both alternative and traditionally certified beginning teachers pinpoint areas of weakness and seek out trainings or resources to strengthen those areas of weaknesses.

Building relationships and rapport was important for all three principals in the qualitative study to undertake immediately once beginning teachers were hired. Relationships and rapport were developed in a variety of ways at each campus, which

helped in most cases build trust and respect between beginning teachers and school administrators. The beginning teachers felt school principals cared about their success in the classroom and appreciated school principals for taking time to develop a professional relationship with them. The relationships developed served as a vehicle in which timely and constructive feedback could be given to the beginning teachers by the school principals and also allowed beginning teachers to feel comfortable going to school principals for assistance when they needed it. The qualitative study's findings is supported by research that has demonstrated strong professional relationships allow for constructive dialogue to occur in which timely and meaningful feedback can create powerful learning experiences for both students and teachers (City et al., 2009) . Positive relationships and constructive dialogue between beginning teachers and principals can help with campus climate and morale influencing many teachers to remain at the campus for another year (Leithwood et al., 2004).

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## **Appendix A**

### **Approval to Conduct Qualitative Study from the University of Houston**

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## DIVISION OF RESEARCH

April 29, 2014

Terra Smith  
c/o Dr. Michael Emerson  
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Terra Smith,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "A Case Study: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support the Professional Development of Alternatively Certified Teachers" on March 7, 2014, according to federal regulations and institutional policies and procedures.

At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately fulfill the requested contingencies, and your project is now **APPROVED**.

- **Approval Date: April 29, 2014**
- **Expiration Date: April 28, 2015**

As required by federal regulations governing research in human subjects, research procedures (including recruitment, informed consent, intervention, data collection or data analysis) may not be conducted after the expiration date.

To ensure that no lapse in approval or ongoing research occurs, please ensure that your protocol is resubmitted in RAMP for renewal by the **deadline for the March 2015 CPHS meeting**. Deadlines for submission are located on the CPHS website.

During the course of the research, the following must also be submitted to the CPHS:

- Any proposed changes to the approved protocol, prior to initiation; AND
- Any unanticipated events (including adverse events, injuries, or outcomes) involving possible risk to subjects or others, within 10 working days.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Daniel O'Connor, Chair  
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document, if one is approved for use. All research data, including signed consent documents, must be retained according to the University of Houston Data Retention Policy ([found on the CPHS website](#)) as well as requirements of the FDA and external sponsor(s), if applicable. Faculty sponsors are responsible for retaining data for student projects on the UH campus for the required period of record retention.

Protocol Number: 14290-01

Full Review:   X  

Expedited Review:

## **Appendix B**

### **University of Houston: Consent to Participate in Research**

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON**  
**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**PROJECT TITLE:** A Qualitative Study: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support the Professional Development of Alternatively Certified Teachers.

You are being invited to take part in a research project conducted by Terra Smith, a doctoral student in the Executive Ed.D. in Professional Leadership Program at the University of Houston. This qualitative study is part of a dissertation to fulfill requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Professional Leadership. This project is under the supervision of Dr. Wayne Emerson and Dr. Agnus McNeil.

**NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

Taking part in the research project is voluntary and you may refuse to take part or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any research-related questions that make you uncomfortable.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore instructional strategies that will support alternatively certified teachers. Since alternatively certified teachers may have limited teacher preparation before becoming a teacher of record, the responsibility of teacher preparation shifts from the pre-service program to the school principal. In this qualitative study, administrators from urban, middle school campuses will participate in one-on-one interviews and online surveys to gather insight on the instructional leadership strategies that are used to support the professional development of beginning teachers who are



alternatively certified to improve teaching and learning on middle school campuses. The study will be broken down into three phases.

Data recorded from the interviews and online surveys will be analyzed in three stages. In order to analyze the data from the interviews, all interview data will be reviewed and organized by each principals' statements related to each question using text analysis through a word repetition technique (Ryan, 2003). The investigator will identify specific terms related to instructional support that are common among all of the principals and they will be categorized into findings that represent the same network of ideas related to instructional support of beginning teachers, particular alternatively certified teachers (Ryan, 2003). During the second phase, important words and phrases will be organized as possible key features of instructional leadership practices of supporting beginning teachers who are traditionally and alternatively certified (Ryan, 2003). The results will be translated into specific findings about instructional leadership practices in supporting beginning teachers who are traditionally certified and beginning teachers who are alternatively certified at the schools involved in the qualitative study (Ryan, 2003).

Finally, survey results will be analyzed for patterns and trends through text analysis from both open-ended and closed-ended questions to determine how school administrators and beginning teachers perceive the instructional leadership support in impacting the professional growth and retention of beginning teachers who are traditionally and alternatively certified (Ryan, 2003). Patterns and trends will be identified by common verbs and actions used in both sets of surveys completed by school administrators and beginning teachers (Ryan, 2003). Findings will be established when three or more participants identify specific instructional leadership support strategies

were used on their campus to support professional growth of beginning teachers on their campus.

### **PROCEDURES**

A total of 41 subjects at 3 locations will be invited to take part in this project.

You will be one of approximately 13 subjects invited to take part at this location.

The three campus principals will participate in structured interviews with predetermined questions.

**Interviews:** The principals will receive the five predetermined questions the day before the interview to help them be prepared to respond with accurate reflections. All three principals' responses will be recorded and transcribed. Principals will have the option to respond in writing to the questions. All of the principals will receive a copy of their interview transcripts and will be given an opportunity to make revisions.

Each campus principal will take part in one semi-structured interview. The single interview will take place either at the principals' campuses or by telephone, at a day and time that is convenient to their schedule. The interview will consist of six questions relating to the principal's professional experience:

1. How many years were you a classroom teacher?
2. How many years have you been a principal?
3. How did you earn your initial teaching certification?
4. Describe your journey from classroom teacher to school leader.
5. How long have you been a campus principal?

6. How many years have you lead at your current school?

Each principal will be asked five open-ended questions related to their instructional support of beginning teachers:

1. How do you support all of your beginning teachers during their first three-years of service?
2. How do you differentiate the instructional support given to traditionally certified teachers than you do for alternatively certified teachers?
3. What common obstacles do you find that beginning teachers face on your campus?
4. In your experience, does it make a difference the route of certification a person takes to become a teacher in terms of classroom preparedness?
5. How has providing targeted instructional support to beginning teachers helped improve your retention of beginning teachers?

The survey will be distributed to three campuses' school leadership team members.

**Survey:** The survey will be distributed through Survey Monkey, an online survey website, to the principals, assistant principals and deans of instruction who currently work on the campuses involved in the qualitative study. An additional survey will be distributed to beginning teachers in their first three years of service. The survey will reflect the instructional leadership strategies used to support all beginning teachers in their first three years of service on campuses and any separate instructional leadership strategies provided to beginning teachers who are alternatively certified. To determine the demographics of the surveyed school administrators and beginning teachers, the respondents will disclose their position on campus, and the number of years they have

served in that role on campus. Then each school administrator will answer a series of questions about the of instructional support provided to all beginning teachers and any separate instructional leadership strategies provided to beginning teachers who are alternatively certified.

**Time:** The amount of time for the structured interview will be approximately 45 minutes. The amount of time for the online survey will be approximately 20 minutes. The interviews and surveys will take place during a window beginning in May 2014 to conclude in June 2014. The data from the interviews and survey results will be coded and analyzed between June 2014 and August 2014. Final summary of the results will be available by September 2014.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number by the principal investigator. This code number will appear on all written materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from all research materials and will be available only to the principal investigator. Confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits.

### **RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

All data from the structured interviews and surveys will remain confidential. All data from the structured interviews will not include individual identifiers or names, assuring confidentiality.

### **BENEFITS**

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand instructional strategies to support teachers who are alternatively certified.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

### **PUBLICATION STATEMENT**

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however, no individual subject will be identified.

### **AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES**

If you consent to take part in this study, please indicate whether you agree to be audio/video taped during the study by checking the appropriate box below. If you agree, please also indicate whether the audio/video tapes can be used for publication/presentations.

- ☐ I agree to be audio/video taped during the interview.
  - ☐ I agree that the audio/ video tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.
  - ☐ I do not agree that the audio/ video tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio/video taped during the interview.

### **SUBJECT RIGHTS**

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me, as have any potential benefits.
4. I understand the protections in place to safeguard any personally identifiable information related to my participation.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Terra Smith at 832-428-5359. I may also contact Dr. Wayne Emerson, faculty sponsor, at 713-743-7597.
6. Any questions regarding my rights as a research subject may be addressed to the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713-743-9204). All research projects that are carried out by Investigators at the University of Houston are governed by requirements of the University and the federal government.

### **SIGNATURES**

*I have read this form to the subject and/or the subject has read this form. An explanation of the research was provided and questions from the subject were solicited and answered to the subject's satisfaction. In my judgment, the subject has demonstrated comprehension of the information.*

Principal Investigator (print name and title): Terra Smith, Doctoral Student

Signature of Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this study, and have been provided with a copy of this form for my records and in case I have questions as the research progresses.*

Study Subject (print name) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Study Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I consent to allow Terra Smith to use my following data sets:

**(Initial all that apply)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Structured Interview Responses**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support Beginning Teachers Survey**

## **Appendix C**

### **Instructional Leadership Principal Semi-structured Interview**



### Semi - Structured-Interview Questions

The interview consisted of six questions relating to the principal's professional experience:

1. How many years did you teach?
2. How many years have you been a principal?
3. How did you earn your initial teaching certification?
4. Describe your journey from classroom teacher to school leader.
5. How long have you been a campus principal?
6. How many years have you lead at your current school?

Each principal was asked five open ended questions related to their instructional support of beginning teachers.

7. How do you support all of your beginning teachers during their first three-years of service?
8. How do you differentiate the instructional support given to traditionally certified teachers than you do for alternatively certified teachers?
9. What common obstacles do you find that beginning teachers face on your campus?
10. In your experience, does it make a difference the route of certification a person takes to become a teacher in terms of classroom preparedness?
11. How has providing targeted instructional support to beginning teachers helped improve your retention of beginning teachers, both traditional and alternatively certified teachers?

## **Appendix D**

### **Instructional Leadership Principal Survey**

**School Leadership Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support****Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support the Professional Development...**

Consent of Participant to Participate in Research Study.

**\*1. The purpose of this case study is to explore instructional strategies that will support alternatively certified teachers. Since alternatively certified teachers may have limited teacher preparation before becoming a teacher of record, the responsibility of teacher preparation shifts from the pre-service program to the school principal. In this case study, administrators from urban, middle school campuses will participate in one-on-one interviews and online surveys to gather insight on the instructional leadership strategies that are used to support the professional development of beginning teachers who are alternatively certified to improve teaching and learning on middle school campuses. Beginning teachers in their first two years of service will be surveyed on the instructional leadership strategies that are implemented by their school principals to support their professional growth. This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713) 743-9204 .**

**If you are receiving this survey, it is because you have been identified as a school administrator on one of the participating campus. To confirm your consent in participating in this study, check yes below. If you do not want to participate in this study, check no below. All responses will be submitted anonymously and there will be no direct link to your identity.**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**School Leadership Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support****\*2. At which campus are you employed?**

- ☐ S 1
- ☐ S 2
- ☐ S 3

**\*3. What is your gender?**

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

**\*4. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)**

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian / Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic American
- ☐ White / Caucasian
- ☐ Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

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**\*5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ Doctorate Degree

Other (please specify)

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**\*6. How many years did you teach?**

- ☐ 1 to 4 years
- ☐ 5 to 9 years
- ☐ 10 to 14 years
- ☐ 15 years or more

**School Leadership Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support****\*7. How many years have you been a school administrator?**

- ☐ 1 to 2 years
- ☐ 3 to 5 years
- ☐ 6 to 9 years
- ☐ 10 years or more

Other (please specify)

**\*8. How many years have you been at your current campus?**

- ☐ less than a year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 to 4 years
- ☐ 5 years or more

**\*9. What is your current position title on campus?**

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Dean of Instruction
- ☐ Assistant Principal

Other (please specify)

**\*10. How did you earn your initial teaching certification?**

- ☐ Traditional university-based teacher certification program
- ☐ School district-based alternative teacher certification program
- ☐ Region IV alternative teacher certification program
- ☐ Alternative teacher certification program not affiliated with a school district or a state service center

Other (please specify)

### School Leadership Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support

**\*11. Approximately how many beginning teachers do you hire each year?**

- ☐ 1 to 3
- ☐ 4 to 7
- ☐ 8 to 11
- ☐ 12 to 15

Other (please specify)

**\*12. How many of your current beginning teachers received their initial teacher certification through an alternative certification program?**

**\*13. Do you provide more instructional support to beginning teachers that received their initial certification through an alternative certification program than beginning teachers that were certified through a traditional university program?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**\*14. If you answered yes to question # 11, answer the following question. In what ways do you provide additional instructional support to beginning teachers that are alternatively certified? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Frequent observations with direct feedback
- ☐ Frequent instructional coaching on classroom instruction and classroom management
- ☐ Professional development opportunities developed specifically for alternatively certified teachers
- ☐ Intensive mentoring by experienced teachers

Other (please specify)

### School Leadership Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support

**\*15. How is the instructional support given to all beginning teachers monitored by the school administration?**

- ☐ Not monitored
- ☐ Electronically monitored
- ☐ Monitored through frequent check-ins with mentor teachers
- ☐ Combination of B and C

Other (please specify)

**\*16. Which of the following area(s) do you perceive beginning teachers who are alternatively certified tend to be deficient? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Classroom management
- ☐ Classroom instruction
- ☐ Lesson planning
- ☐ Parent communication

**\*17. How often are beginning teachers who are alternatively certified placed on a formal growth plan?**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Frequently

**\*18. On your campus are there functioning professional learning communities that support teacher collaboration?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**\*19. In what ways is teacher professional development supported on your campus?**

- ☐ District-mandated professional development plans
- ☐ Professional development opportunities focused on school-wide goals
- ☐ Individual professional development focused on individual professional goals
- ☐ School-based structures that provide for time and space for teacher collaboration

**School Leadership Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support**

**\*20. Each year how many of your beginning teachers who are traditionally certified to teach resign at the end of the school-year?**

- ☐ 0  
☐ 1-2  
☐ 3-4  
☐ 5 or more

**\*21. Each year, how many of your beginning teachers who are alternatively certified to teach resign at the end of the school-year?**

- ☐ 0  
☐ 1-2  
☐ 3-4  
☐ 5 or more

**\*22. In your experience, how confident are you in the classroom readiness of a beginning teacher who is alternatively certified?**

- ☐ Not confident  
☐ Somewhat confident  
☐ Fairly confident  
☐ Very confident

**\*23. Are teachers who are assigned to mentor beginning teachers who are alternatively certified expected to provide additional instructional and classroom management support than would be given to teachers who are traditionally certified to teach?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**\*24. Do you prefer to hire a traditionally certified teacher to an alternatively certified teacher?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No



**School Leadership Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support**

**\*25. If you answered yes to question # 22, answer the following question. Why would you prefer to hire a traditionally certified teacher over an alternatively certified teacher?**

- ☐ Better prepared in classroom instruction/classroom management
- ☐ Have a background in child/adolescent learning theories
- ☐ Have student teaching experience and/or classroom teaching experience
- ☐ Have a stronger academic foundation in working with children or adolescents

**\*26. Based on your experience, are teachers who are alternatively certified often able to connect classroom instruction to real-world situations?**

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

**\*27. When beginning teachers who are alternatively certified resign, what reason do they provide?**

- ☐ Lack of instructional support
- ☐ Lack of discipline support
- ☐ Pursuing a career outside of education
- ☐ Seeking employment at another campus or school district

Other (please specify)

## **Appendix E**

### **Instructional Leadership Teacher Survey**

## Teacher Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support Beginning Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support the Professional Development...

Participant Consent to Participate in the Research Study.

**\*1. The purpose of this case study is to explore instructional strategies that will support alternatively certified teachers. Since alternatively certified teachers may have limited teacher preparation before becoming a teacher of record, the responsibility of teacher preparation shifts from the pre-service program to the school principal. In this case study, administrators from urban, middle school campuses will participate in one-on-one interviews and online surveys to gather insight on the instructional leadership strategies that are used to support the professional development of beginning teachers who are alternatively certified to improve teaching and learning on middle school campuses. Beginning teachers in their first two years of service will be surveyed on the instructional leadership strategies that are implemented by their school principals to support their professional growth. This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713) 743-9204 .**

**If you are receiving this survey, it is because you have been identified as a beginning teacher on one of the participating campus. To confirm your consent in participating in this study, check yes below. If you do not want to participate in this study, check no below. All responses will be submitted anonymously and there will be no direct link to your identity.**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**Teacher Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support Beginning****\*2. At which campus are you employed?**

- ☐ S 1
- ☐ S 2
- ☐ S 3

**\*3. What is your gender?**

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

**\*4. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)**

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian / Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic American
- ☐ White / Caucasian
- ☐ Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

**\*5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- ☐ Bachelors Degree
- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ Doctorate Degree

Other (please specify)

**Teacher Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support Beginning****\*6. How many years have you been teaching?**

- ☐ 0 years  
☐ 1 year  
☐ 2 years  
☐ 3 years  
☐ 4 or more years

Other (please specify)

**\*7. How many years have you been at your current campus?**

- ☐ less than a year  
☐ 1 year  
☐ 2 to 4 years  
☐ 5 years or more

**\*8. What grade and subject area do you teach?**


**\*9. How did you earn your initial teaching certification?**

- ☐ Traditional university-based teacher certification program  
☐ School district-based alternative teacher certification program  
☐ Region IV alternative teacher certification program  
☐ Alternative teacher certification program not affiliated with a school district or a state service center

Other (please specify)

**\*10. How is the instructional support given to teachers monitored by the school administration?**

- ☐ Not monitored  
☐ Electronically monitored  
☐ Monitored through frequent check-ins with mentor teachers  
☐ Combination of B and C

Other (please specify)

**Teacher Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support Beginning**

**\*11. Which of the following area(s) did you as a beginning teacher struggle with implementing? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Classroom management
- ☐ Classroom instruction
- ☐ Lesson planning
- ☐ Parent communication

**\*12. On your campus are there functioning professional learning communities that support teacher collaboration?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**\*13. In what ways is teacher professional development supported on your campus?**

- ☐ District-mandated professional development plans
- ☐ Professional development opportunities focused on school-wide goals
- ☐ Individual professional development focused on individual professional goals
- ☐ School-based structures that provide for time and space for teacher collaboration

**\*14. How confident were you of your classroom readiness during your first two years of teaching?**

- ☐ Not confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Fairly confident
- ☐ Very confident

**\*15. If your initial teacher certification was received through an alternative certification program, did you receive additional instructional and classroom management from school leadership or mentor teachers than your peers, who were traditionally certified through a university-based program?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

### Teacher Survey: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Support Beginning

**\*16. Based on your experience, are teachers who are alternatively certified often able to connect classroom instruction to real-world situations?**

- ☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Strongly Disagree

**\*17. If you have decided to resign from your current school, what reason(s) did you provide for your resignation? Check all that apply.**

- ☐ Lack of instructional support  
☐ Lack of discipline support  
☐ Pursuing a career outside of education  
☐ Seeking employment at another campus or school district

Other (please specify)

**\*18. What instructional leadership behaviors has your principal or school leadership team members have performed as been important to your professional growth as a teacher?**

**\*19. What actions or behaviors does your principal and/or assistant principals consistently perform that influences your decision to remain at the campus each year?**

**\*20. What instructional leadership actions or behaviors does your principal and/or assistant principals perform that can influence your decision to leave a campus?**