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# Administrators' Perceptions of Mindfulness Practices in Southeastern, Racially and Ethnically Diverse Urban Elementary Schools

Sakima Romero-Chandler  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Sakima Romero-Chandler

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Walden University  
2022

Abstract

Administrators' Perceptions of Mindfulness Practices in Southeastern, Racially and

Ethnically Diverse Urban Elementary Schools

by

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MA, Howard University, 2013

MA, Queens College, 1999

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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May 2022

## Abstract

Mindfulness practices are increasingly used in schools; however, there is a gap in practice when it comes to their use. The problem investigated through this basic qualitative study was the implementation of school mindfulness practice (SMP) of elementary school administrators in a large, urban area in the southeast United States. The purpose of this project study was to understand urban elementary school administrators' perceptions of the implementation of SMP in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban elementary schools. The conceptual framework was the instructional leadership model of Murphey, Hallinger, Weil, and Mittman that emphasizes the importance of understanding administrative functions, school activities, and organizational processes. The research questions explored how school administrators perceive the implementation of SMPs and what administrators perceive were challenges or supports as they led the implementation of SMPs. The participants were six school administrators from four elementary schools who were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and were analyzed using coding and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that school administrators used SMPs for positive outcomes in academics and behavior as well as to manage the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings may help administrators to better understand their role in the successful planning and implementation of SMPs to address student behavior problems. The project deliverable is a 3-day professional development training for school administrators to learn strategies to use SMPs. The SMP strategies may help school administrators to achieve higher student academic outcomes, leading to positive social change.

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## Dedication

Thank God, thank my family, thank Dr. Mary Hallums, Dr. Richard Penny, and Dr. Nancy Williams. My Legacies are my reason for pushing through when there was no more wind at my back. Angelica, Kamani, Gabriella, Karson-Nina. My sister Arayna, who I knew from her first day of life would be watching my every move so always lead by word and deed. Ms. Katrina Conway and Mrs. Thelma Marshall who never allowed me to forfeit the gift God placed in me. Mr. Theophilus J. Marshall who played the melodious notes our family used to strive. Romero family, I pray I have made you proud. Rev. Dr. Joseph Chandler Jr., my beacon and guidepost always a step ahead of my journey helped me see the possibilities of not just one but two terminal degrees. Dr. Tricia B. Bent-Goodley my lifetime friend, sister, and mentor thank you for absolutely everything. Thank you to my Sorors, there is none other like our sisterhood, love, and dedication.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

The problem investigated in this basic qualitative project study was the implementation of school mindfulness practices (SMPs) among elementary school administrators in a large, urban area in the southeast United States. The goal of utilizing SMPs is to address student behavioral problems within the school environment because multiple factors, including academics, social and emotional balance, and overall success, are affected by student behavior (Muratori et al., 2016). SMPs have many possible outcomes (Kabat-Zinn, 2005; Viglas & Perlman, 2018). Black and Fernando (2016) stated that mindfulness helps urban schools by providing alternatives to anger escalation, addressing student behavioral concerns, and increasing academic performance. Behavior problems by students have been known to disrupt academic activities resulting in student suspensions and loss of instructional time (Kiema, 2015).

The study sites were racially and ethnically diverse urban schools affected by poverty and with high numbers of student behavioral problems in the district. According to the district report card, school administrators were provided with the opportunity to select from a multitude of schoolwide programs to address student behavioral problems and benefit students academically, behaviorally, and socially. The district report card also showed that many school administrators supported SMPs in schools; however, a gap in practice existed regarding the perceptions and implementation of SMPs in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban elementary schools. Specifically, there was not one specific program approved for use in every school located at the study site.

In some of the urban schools in the district, elementary students engaged in violent behaviors resulting in suspensions. According to a district administrator, teachers lost instructional time by not addressing behavioral issues with SMPs. Although some predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban, elementary schools at the study site implemented SMPs, a school administrator meeting briefing report indicated that the gap in practice was that elementary school administrators were inconsistent in implementing SMPs. This differential use of SMPs in the schools created a gap in practice whereby SMPs were used in some schools fully or partially and not used consistently in other schools. The school administrator meeting briefing report also showed that SMPs including meditation were encouraged but not required to be practiced in local elementary schools as part of the school curriculum. The district superintendent explained that a gap in practice existed among implementing schools due to the lack of structured guidance. Some school administrators were not implementing a specific SMP program, and those school administrators who were implementing the program were using various levels of the SMP implementation throughout the school.

According to a school administrator, some of the study site schools were affected by poverty, and school administrators in this local area struggled to enforce effective behavior modification programs. Students receiving free or reduced lunch indicate that they live below the poverty line (Owens, 2020; United States Department of Education, 2019). Many students who attended schools at the study site district also lived in communities where the neighborhoods were often violent places. Conflict resolution is not often present in the way people in the neighborhoods resolve problems, and police are

regularly called to resolve conflicts or conduct arrests (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014/2019). According to Lambert et al. (2016), community conflict affects classroom instruction. Instructional time is sacred for most school administrators to increase academic success and reduce disruptive behaviors; therefore, increasing time on task for students should be augmented (Anderson et al., 2016). School principals set the goals for behavior models and SMPs within the school district, and these have the potential for positive student outcomes with formal implementation (see Meyers et al., 2019).

### **Rationale**

I conducted this study to better understand how administrators perceived and responded to SMPs and their implementation in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban elementary schools and to identify the challenges and opportunities within this model. SMPs address student behavioral problems in schools and, consequently, some problems within the school's community (Black & Fernando, 2016). To implement the model effectively, the principal and other identified administrative personnel would need to approve and commit to SMP use within the school (Black & Fernando, 2016). According to Tarrasch (2018), mindfulness and meditation practices assist teachers in teaching the curriculum more effectively to students. Teachers trained in mindfulness and who participate in the programs have more academic and social, and behavioral success with students (Caballero et al., 2019).

This project study was needed to discover how school administrators perceived SMPs and the challenges, benefits, and supports required to implement these practices successfully. Two research questions guided the investigation. I conducted interviews

with six administrators assigned to the predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban, elementary schools that use SMPs. School administrators are carrying out the implementation of SMP in different ways: full implementation, partial implementation, or no implementation. Therefore, this project study's findings may help administrators increase their understanding and gain insight into the SMP implementation process. As the project deliverable, I developed a 3-day professional development program that may help school executive administrators to assist principals in implementing the SMP program.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used in this study:

*Meditation*: Quietly watching one's breath and making mental connections to the rise and fall of breath (Leoni, 2016).

*Mindfulness*: Focusing one's attention in the moment and calmly acknowledging feelings and thoughts (Simpson, 2017).

*Self-regulation*: One's own ability to act on their behalf consciously or unconsciously to modify behavior internally, without the need for external forces (Nigg, 2017).

*Social-emotional learning*: A process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, CASEL, 2015).

*SMPs*: The system students throughout the school engage in mindfulness practices (Kraemer-Holland, 2021).

### **Significance of the Study**

Successful SMP implementation may support students to stay in school (Nigg, 2017). School administrators should encourage social-emotional learning, reduce behavior problems and suspensions, and increase academic learning (Caballero et al., 2019; Long et al., 2018). Mindfulness practice is a lifelong skill that may assist students throughout all areas of their lives and may benefit society in general indefinitely by increasing students' capacity for calm and reducing violence (Caballero et al., 2019; Long et al., 2018). Reduced violence in society would increase school safety (Morris, 2016). According to Marchbanks et al. (2017), by introducing effective SMPs, school administrators are extending the opportunity for self-regulation beyond the school's proximity and affording the possibility of changing the prescribed course of life for racially and ethnically diverse, urban, low socio-economic students and empowering them (Caballero et al., 2019).

This study was unique because most studies on SMPs did not focus on the school administrators and their perceptions and implementation of SMPs; therefore, obtaining viewpoints directly from school administrators on this topic could be helpful for further practice. The study findings may help administrators successfully implement SMPs in other predominantly urban, elementary school settings. The results could also help administrators reduce student behavioral problems and suspensions. Moreover, the findings may benefit school administrators beyond this southeastern region to learn from



other colleagues about SMPs and engage with SMPs as part of their school's standard curriculum. Finally, the findings may help administrators better understand their role in successfully implementing SMPs to address student behavior problems.

The project deliverable is a 3-day professional development training for school administrators to learn SMP strategies. The SMP strategies may help school administrators achieve higher student academic outcomes and fewer behavioral issues, leading to positive social change.

### **Research Questions**

The problem investigated in this study was that elementary school administrators in a large, racially and ethnically diverse, urban area in the southeast United States were inconsistently implementing SMPs. I aimed to understand administrators' perceptions of SMPs and how they responded to the implementation of SMPs in their urban elementary schools. The research questions that guided this project study were:

RQ1: How do school administrators perceive the implementation of SMPs?

RQ2: What do administrators at the school level perceive are challenges or supports as they lead the implementation of SMPs?

### **Review of the Literature**

A strategy is used to complete a systematic literature review (Snyder, 2019). I identified local, regional, and school information using the following online databases: ERIC, Education Source, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, NCES Publications, National Academic Press, UNESCO Documents Database, and SAGE Journal educational websites. Local, regional school information was obtained using the

following key search terms and phrases: *mindfulness, meditation, principal, administrative support, school leadership teams, the principal support of teachers, poverty, urban, racially and ethnically diverse students, low-socioeconomic status, social-emotional learning, principal role, school administrators, effective school leadership, and school violence.*

In the United States, the accepted form of administrative leadership in schools was centered around corrective action at the hands of a principal, headmaster, or school administrator (Hughes et al., 2019). Changing this narrative and way of educational management has taken a slow, but sure course as scholars have searched for academic, social, and behavior modification programs that bring reform to students and are incorporated into the organization plans of the principal. The implementation of schoolwide management systems still falls squarely in the hands of the principal, who is also the instructional, social, and academic leader of the school (Slater et al., 2018). Often, this same individual may not have all the current information on leadership or pedagogical trends for positive behavior interventions and social-emotional learning such as SMPs.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework was the instructional leadership model that describes three main areas of instructional leadership: (a) administrative functions engaged by principals, such as developing and promoting school expectations; (b) types of collegiate activities performed by principals, such as managing teachers and curriculum; and (c) processes of the school organization by creating school policies (Murphey et al., 1983).

The level or type of principal activity can be a direct or indirect interaction consisting of behaviors, practices, and policies, and the activities and behaviors outlined comprise instructional leadership functions (Murphy et al., 1983).

The school serves as the organization, and the principal is the leader in charge of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership, therefore, includes roles inclusive of the entire school, such as setting a vision and mission; managing the instructional program; and focusing on the social, educational atmosphere (Murphy et al., 1983). There are 11 principles responsibilities outlined in the model: framing school goals, communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, developing and enforcing academic standards, and providing incentives for learning. (Murphy et al., 1983, p. 139)

In this study, I used this conceptual framework to view the administrators' perceptions of the implementation of SMPs in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban, elementary schools, including the (a) functions engaged by principals regarding SMPs, such as making SMPs part of the schoolwide program and developing schoolwide expectations; (b) types of activities performed by school administrators regarding SMPs, including teacher and curriculum assessments to determine if SMPs are included; and (c) school administrator processes for the school's organization regarding SMPs in the school building and policies, including physical spaces and schoolwide policies for quiet reflection. This framework was also used to create the study's interview questions.

## **Review of the Broader Problem**

The goal of the literature review was to locate resources related to SMPs in three phases: (a) the general practice, in other words, the big picture of SMPs, including aspects of mindfulness, meditation, social and emotional learning, and self-regulation; (b) implementation of SMPs, how these practices can be implemented every day in schools, and how this process may modify the principal and administrative team's administrative functions; and (c) identification aspects of social change associated with SMPs on the school, the community, and society. During the search of the online databases, I further narrowed the search to identify peer-reviewed articles, including qualitative and quantitative studies published within the last 5 to 7 years. Once peer-reviewed articles were identified, each was assessed for its quality of rigor and relevance to the study topic. Additionally, relevant information was extracted and synthesized into meaningful categories for utilization in the literature review.

### **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a capacity to stay present with one's experiences with an accepting attitude engaging openness and curiosity (Simpson, 2017). There are no tools needed to practice mindfulness because it works from within the body, focusing on the individual's attention and breath (Eisenbeck et al., 2018). Lindsay and Creswell (2017) described mindfulness as a means for individuals to find inner peace and use the skill as a life-benefiting practice. The calm found in mindfulness practices helps quiet the mind and gather the attention and focus of the individual (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). During mindfulness practice, the focus is on the breath and not allowing the mind to wander because the goal

is to stay in the current space, removing concerns about the past or worries for the future (Zenner et al., 2014). Erwin (2016) further indicated that when discussing mindful meditation, children benefit behaviorally, academically, and socially from early practice in SMPs. I gathered this information from an extensive systematic literature review of previous studies on mindfulness practices in early education as positioned within the larger social context.

According to a review of SMPs, mindfulness can be practiced by focusing one's attention for a sustained time, thus producing effective management of depression and anxiety as well as increased resiliency and academic performance (Simpson, 2017). Additionally, Leoni (2016) asserted that mindful meditation includes quietly watching one's breath and making mental connections to the rise and fall of the chest. The outcomes of mindful meditation can be significant because there is a notable reduction in adverse behaviors among students who meditate regularly (Benn & Renders, 2016).

### **Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation through mindfulness contributes to conscious and unconscious processes that control a person's reactions to emotions and external behaviors (Nigg, 2017). Hirshberg et al. (2020) contended that the overall calming benefits of SMPs for an educator trained in mindfulness practice are evident to researchers and may even exceed those apparent in the students. A randomized control study that had children in a classroom group assigned to a mindfulness cohort showed that the establishment of mindfulness, meditation, and self-regulation resulted in increased self-regulation and prosocial behavior as well as less hyperactivity (Viglas & Perlman, 2018).

Education is also a profession with multiple stressors, and mindfulness practices assist teachers in maintaining calm and focus throughout the school day. Much of what educators do is for the students, yet this practice may have the ability to serve several functions for both educators and students (Tarrasch, 2018). Administrators are being trained to use self-regulation practices in schools; however, there is still a great deal to be determined about how to address and assess the practices in the classroom setting and the outcome of later-life success (McCoy, 2019). Moreover, administrators can be trained in mindfulness and meditation practices as part of their training coursework in college and subsequently use their fieldwork or internship as a means of honing the practice for use throughout their educational career (Barreto, 2015). In this way, the administrator becomes a change agent for increased self-regulation of students at any school or program.

### **Mindfulness in Early Childhood Settings**

As with most aspects of education reform, perhaps the most reasonable place to institute change is in the preschool setting. For instance, the National Institute for Early Education Research reported that nearly 1.5 million 4-year-olds in the United States were enrolled in public prekindergarten or special education programs in elementary school settings in 2017–2018 (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2019). Erwin (2016) emphasized the advantages of beginning children in the practice of mindfulness while they are still young and able to make a pattern of positive behaviors. According to (Razza et al., 2020) SMP was shown to have an overall positive benefit for students in an early childhood setting; this would mean instituting the practice with students as young as 3 years old in the

schools. Prekindergarten for 3-year-old students is the earliest stage when children in low-income areas are enrolled in public schools. Zelazo et al. (2018) conducted a study utilizing a pretest, posttest, and a follow-up randomized-control trial to assess an SMP program on stress reduction on 218 prekindergarten students attending schools serving low-income families in two U.S. cities and determined that poverty-related stress interferes with the development of essential skills for academic achievement.

### **Evidence of Opportunities to Use Mindfulness in School Settings**

Erwin et al. (2017) provided examples of practicing mindfulness in early childhood settings. These examples could be paramount to the genesis of programs where there currently are no SMPs, but there is an opportunity for SMPs since there is not yet a confirmed, established mandated curriculum for prekindergarten in the schools. Moreover, Kuyken et al. (2013) conducted a nonrandomized, controlled feasibility study to assess the acceptability of the Mindfulness in Schools Programme amongst a sample of 522 secondary students. The results of the study revealed Mindfulness in Schools Programme was effective in significantly reducing symptoms of depression and stress amongst students, thus improving their overall well-being. Zenner et al. (2014) performed a mindfulness-based school intervention review and meta-analysis and determined that mindfulness can serve as the foundation for education since students learn to focus and self-regulate and develop increased problem-solving skills flows in tandem with obtaining knowledge. Zenner et al. determined that most skills necessary for a successful school career will be constructed through SMPs.

Some essential skills students acquire with SMP are focus and concentration (Kenwright et al., 2021). Additionally, skills that help adjust emotions, like anger and frustration, can be developed (Schonert et al., 2015). Mindfulness practice enhances education in attentional and emotional self-regulation as well as empathy, compassion, ethical sensitivity, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Zenner et al., 2014). Furthermore, overall stress reduction was uncovered because of SMPs in a systematic review and thematic synthesis of qualitative studies (Sapthiang et al., 2019). School-based mindfulness techniques that can lower school students' stress levels will have applications in various contexts, including but not limited to academic educational progress (Sapthiang et al., 2019).

### **Implementation of SMPs in Schools**

Understandably, administrators may ask how to implement SMPs in a classroom as part of the school's curriculum during the school day. According to Harpin et al. (2016), elementary-aged students can engage in mindfulness daily in a homeroom class before starting the academic day. In this case, the students would use the practice much like the traditional warm-up time that has been incorporated into school curriculums for many years. Moreover, Emerson et al. (2019) emphasized that mindfulness can be employed with all students regardless of the school's curriculum. There is no limit to which schools may employ the techniques irrespective of the school's geographic or social location. Additionally, Lemberger-Truelove et al. (2018) highlighted many positive effects of SMPs for schools, teachers, and all involved in social interactions that can promote self-regulation in all children.



The question remains how to proceed with the practice in classrooms as part of the curriculum. Many new emerging SMP curriculums, which now flood the marketplace for school executives, superintendents, principals, and teachers of individual classes, seek to answer this question; One example is Mindkinder, which was found to assist with school behavior and adaptation and create relationships (Moreno-Gomez et al., 2020). Relax, another curriculum was found to decrease symptoms of depression and increase tolerance to external stressors (Volanen et al., 2016). Maynard et al. (2017) reviewed 61 mindfulness-based intervention studies to improve primary and secondary school students' cognition, academic achievement, behavior, and socioemotional functioning. Of the 61 studies, 35 were synthesized and found to have had an overall improvement among students, leaving district superintendents and school leaders with a remarkable array of options for a formalized SMP curriculum.

### **Strategies of Mindfulness in the Classroom**

The practice of mindfulness can be achieved using multiple strategies in a classroom environment. For example, Routhier-Martin et al. (2017) provided an overview of how students used various methods of mindfulness, such as journaling, sketching, or other solitary activities that students do individually at a desk or anywhere the teacher decides within the classroom for a specific amount of time. Many elementary school classrooms already have a time for free writing within the curriculum that the principal monitors during the literacy block or attached to other specific academic measures observed by administrators. This method provides an opportunity to use the time for a slightly modified activity focusing on mindfulness (Moon, 2017).

Additionally, Hartel et al. (2017) discussed the adaptability of using mindfulness and meditation in the classroom before any academic work is engaged at the beginning of the session. Mindfulness, often called meditation, can be done with a few minutes of monitored breathing to transition from one activity to the next or begin the school day. Students felt this time was necessary for a productive class and further mentioned that they felt like the teachers cared about them because they instituted this practice (Hartel et al., 2017).

Moreover, Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) outlined in-school mindfulness and social-emotional learning programs designed for elementary students that reduce stress and produce positive school outcomes with academic benefits. The use of these programs resulted in students showing an increase in emotional control and self-regulation. With the social, emotional, physical, and academic benefits of SMPs and the relatively small periods of time and space implementation of the program encompasses, it appears to play a positive role in social change when implemented effectively.

### **Principal's Role in SMP**

Principals are the main drivers of change in schools regarding the contribution of their perspectives while adding processes to the teachers, instructional teams, and students (Dhuey & Smith, 2018). In the instructional leadership model, Murphy et al. (1983) outlined one of the roles of the principal as an administrator to manage a curriculum that is student focused while continually increasing the capacity of all staff in the school community. The principal has the responsibility of selecting or approving professional development and engaging all faculty in the safe implementation of state or

district mandates (Soini et al., 2016). The entire school is affected by the principal's decisions and vision or goals as the school leader who determines the trajectory of the school each academic year (Murphy et al., 1983). All students and staff take notice and respond accordingly when principals either believe in a project and support and prioritize it or reject a project and do not show the team that their attention is placed toward engaging the school in a program (Hutton, 2017).

Principals can support SMP implementation by embedding as little as ten minutes into the daily schoolwide agenda. This would include all students and staff being required to comply with the requests for participation and provide a measure of evidence (Keller et al., 2017). As leadership staff in the school, principals should provide a social-emotional leadership framework for school counselors who can utilize social-emotional leadership dispositions; as well as demonstrate a commitment to social-emotional learning, such as SMP, to affect change in others, including educators and students in the school (Bowers et al., 2018).

Characteristics such as self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationship skills have been considered imperative in preparing school leaders to facilitate systemic change in schools (Patti et al., 2015; Zelvys et al., 2019). Understanding the significance of developing the social-emotional competency skills of school administrators, Mahfouz (2018) sought to examine the effectiveness of Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE), a professional mindfulness-based program on the leadership and well-being of school administrators. Following in-depth interviews with 13 school administrators, the study's

results determined that the implementation of CARE led to significant improvements in leadership skills, such as self-reflection, self-awareness, self-care, and the ability to recognize emotional reactions. Moreover, Wells and Klocko (2018) investigated principal workplace well-being by focusing specifically on the components of stress and resiliency. Based upon their findings, Wells and Klocko advocated for implementing mindfulness principal's training, whereby school leaders had the opportunity to learn self-care practices, set boundaries, and acquire communication skills to assist in working with conflict.

### **School Counselor and Staff Roles in SMP**

School counselors may be able to advocate for using mindfulness as a social-emotional learning strategy to reduce behavior problems in schools instead of issuing measured discipline referrals leading to student suspensions. When students exemplify high levels of stress, it can impede academic success, relationships with peers, healthy decision making, family relationships, self-efficacy, and resiliency (Lindsey et al., 2018). Acknowledging that SMP may help students learn and employ stress reduction strategies, school counselors and staff can assist students in self-awareness and control in managing stress. School counselors play an integral role in fostering holistic student development (American School Counselor Association, 2014); therefore, mindfulness is valuable within students' academic and emotional domains. Because of their skillset, school counselors are rightfully suited to spearhead the integration of mindfulness into schools. For instance, Cleveland (2016) asserted that school counselors are well-equipped to guide mindfulness programs within school programs for K-12 students through various

methods, such as meditation, yoga, breathing, concentration exercises, and sensory-awareness techniques.

School counselors must employ collaborative efforts when utilizing mindfulness within school settings. The collaboration between school counselors and school administrators is significant as it provides an opportunity to meticulously evaluate and assess data for a mindfulness program that best fits the school's needs and, most importantly, the students (Jennings et al., 2019). Additionally, school counselors and teachers must collaborate to design effective mindfulness practices strategically and subsequently model and implement such practices into daily class activities (Jennings et al., 2019). This collaboration can enhance the school environment by increasing student engagement and resiliency. Moreover, Maratos et al. (2019) conducted a feasibility study to assess the effectiveness of a compassionate mind training program among 78 teachers, support workers, and counseling staff. (Maratos et al. 2019) demonstrated that much of the team benefited from compassionate mind training, as indicated by significant increases in self-compassion and significant decreases in self-criticism.

### **Social Change**

Societal and social transformations are possible when low-income students are taught positive mindfulness techniques. Waters et al. (2015) presented a systematic, evidence-based review of the effect of meditation interventions in schools to decide if this is a good tool for transforming student behavior and the outcomes of behavioral problems. Black and Fernando (2016) addressed the social pitfalls of urban low-income areas and the need for self-regulation activities provided through mindfulness training.

Students who have the skills of pausing to deflect impulsivity may ward off behavior problems that lead to disproportionately high suspensions. The U.S. Department of Education estimated that about 6% of the K-12 students were suspended at least once during a school year; in some urban regions, the number is 3 or 4 times higher (Shi & Zhu, 2022).

Suspensions are one of the leading causes of the school-to-prison pipeline (Morris, 2016). Wisner (2016) provided multiple examples of mindfulness in an alternative school where all the students present were there due to a background of having difficulties in a traditional school setting; students in the study benefitted from mindful meditations throughout the school day and in areas of their community and home life. Moreover, Lambert et al. (2016) reported that students in high crime areas struggle more academically due to outside influences, which carry over into the school setting, thus increasing the need for interventions. Many programs associated with mindfulness and meditation are prepared for students who are not racially and ethnically diverse and not in predominately urban areas with high crime; thus, cultural considerations must be made when implementing a SMP program in schools with diverse cultures (Hazlett-Stevens, 2020). According to Martinez and Zhao (2018), students who used SMP were less likely to be referred for discipline problems. The emotional self-regulation, delayed outbursts, or well-handled negative emotions of students are aligned with school and community violence reduction (Heshmati & Ahmadkhanloo, 2017).

## **Implications**

The deliverable of this project study was a 3-day PD training to be used throughout the professional educational community, informing; school districts, school building level administrators, and independent schools on the implementation of SMP. This project deliverable was based on the emergent themes based on the data collection and analysis. The 3-day PD is training that outlines three key areas of SMP for administrators to understand and subsequently replicate and integrate into the schools for effective implementation. The PD training is tailored to school administrators responsible for the school's organization and development processes regarding SMP in school buildings and executive educational policies. The 3-day PD is a training that includes: (a) defining and explaining the general practice, in other words, the big picture of mindfulness, meditation, social and emotional learning, and self-regulation; (b) implementation in schools, how can these practices be integrated every day in the schools, and how this process modifies the principal's administrative functions; and (c) bringing the outside in, or taking the inside out, what are the aspects of social change associated with SMP on the school, the community, and society. The attendees will be school administrators preparing to engage in meditation and mindfulness practices as part of the training. Additionally, the attendees will be instructed on the same techniques teachers receive as part of their in-service to be prepared to lead SMP.

## **Summary**

Elementary school administrators in a large urban area in the southeast United States were inconsistent in implementing SMP. School administrators were provided with

an option to use SMP; however, little was known about their perceptions or implementation practices into the schoolwide curriculum. This study, which was conducted using a basic qualitative methodology, was to understand administrators' perceptions and responses to SMP implementation in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse urban elementary schools. The project deliverable may help executive administrators to assist principals in implementing the program and tracking data on SMP. The 3-day PD can assist other school administrators interested in learning about SMP from the perspective of their colleagues.

As noted in the literature review, the integration of SMP has multi-faceted benefits and challenges. Benefits include increased self-regulation, better emotional control, improved academic performance, and the long-term asset of calm and stress reduction. The challenges include finding the time in the school day to incorporate SMP and training staff to engage the practice with students. Instructional leadership includes roles inclusive of the entire school, such as setting vision and mission, managing the instructional program, and focusing on the social, educational atmosphere (Murphy et al., 1983). Utilizing SMP focuses on the curriculum of mindfulness and meditation and the implementation in schools, including the roles of all school leaders.

In Section 2, I will discuss the research design of this study and explain the qualitative tradition, processes, analytic method, and findings. I will also detail the participant recruitment and data collection. Finally, the selection criteria for the participants and the methods of establishing the research relationship with the participants will be presented.



## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

The problem investigated through this project study was that school administrators in a southeastern public school district were inconsistent in implementing SMPs. With this basic qualitative study, I aimed to understand school administrators' perceptions about the implementation of SMPs in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban, elementary schools. The research questions were:

RQ1: How do school administrators perceive the implementation of SMPs?

RQ2: What do administrators at the school level perceive are challenges or supports as they lead the implementation of SMPs?

### **Qualitative Research Design, Methodology, and Approach**

I employed a basic qualitative research design in this project study. Qualitative studies are used to understand better a topic area for which there is little established scholarship (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The qualitative methodology can be used to discover and understand a phenomenon and understand the process or the views of the people involved in the phenomenon (Bradshaw et al., 2017). A basic qualitative research design was the most appropriate approach to employ in this study because there had been limited research conducted on school administrators' perceptions and responses to SMP use. Various qualitative investigations have been conducted to highlight the perceptions of students and school staff regarding the implementation and effectiveness of SMP in schools (Crawford et al., 2020; Hudson et al., 2020; Norton & Griffith, 2020; Reindl et al., 2020; Wilde et al., 2019). However, there remains a lack of research explicitly

focused on the in-depth insights of school administrators concerning this topic.

Therefore, I used a basic qualitative research design, specifically individual interviews, to understand administrators' responses and perspectives regarding SMP implementation in predominantly urban elementary schools.

The primary data collection method used for this basic qualitative study was interviews (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because this study aimed to understand the perspectives and process implementation of the administrators involved in the phenomenon of SMP, I selected and individually interviewed six school administrators from four schools within a school district in the southeastern United States. The participants represented schools where SMPs were integrated into the school plan. Once school administrators responded to the online research flyer and provided their consent to take part in the study, I formally requested to interview them using Zoom. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The interview data were analyzed using inductive and deductive coding and the thematic process to identify, organize, describe, and report common patterns or themes (see Saldana, 2016). I systematically upheld the confidentiality of all information collected.

### **Justification**

I selected a basic qualitative research design to explore the participants' individual perspectives to discover what meaning they derive from the experiences as well as what may emerge as a result (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Individual interviews were conducted to collect and understand administrators' responses and perceptions about SMP implementation in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban,

elementary schools and how SMPs may be implemented in the principal's administrative practices. A basic qualitative research design was appropriate for this study because it offers the ability to collect the in-depth perspectives and viewpoints of the research participants (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Participants**

The individuals invited to participate in this study consisted of six school administrators from four urban elementary schools within the southeastern United States school region where SMPs were integrated as part of the school plan. I used purposeful sampling to select the participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is a sampling technique where the participants are chosen based on their experiences with the phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, purposeful sampling is used to select the participants to ensure that they have experience with a phenomenon being researched (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Boddy (2016), qualitative researchers need a sample size between six and 12. Although data saturation is unnecessary for a basic qualitative study, qualitative researchers reach data saturation when they determine that there is no new information or data generated through additional data collection (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative researchers often use smaller sample sizes than quantitative researchers because the depth of data generated from each participant is more expansive and exhaustive (Boddy, 2016).

### **Criteria for Selecting Participants**

I obtained approval to conduct this project study from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Walden University IRB approval number for this

study is 12-16-21-0507978. After receiving IRB approval to conduct the research, I posted the recruitment flyer on online social media sources such as LinkedIn. I also used the Walden University participant pool of subjects and other social media to acquire additional participants. The participants met the requirements of being a school administrator in a school that was (a) urban, (b) predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, and (c) used SMP. I sent an email including the project flyer and consent form to participants. The flyer was created because school administrators were busy and having a flyer served as a visual reminder for them to respond to my request to participate in the study. The selection criteria included school administrators, assistant principals, deans of students, and other designed school administrative personnel responsible for implementing the SMP program in an urban, Southeastern, predominantly racially and ethnically diverse school.

### **Establishment of Researcher-Participant Relationship**

I obtained the Walden University IRB approval to conduct this study. The potential risks and benefits of participating in the research study were provided to the participants. The following criteria established by *The Belmont Report* were fully adhered to in the implementation of the study: (a) autonomy, (b) beneficence, (c) nonmalevolence, and (d) justice (see Anabo et al., 2019). It is essential to ensure that human research participants are protected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I had knowledge of the systems impacting the participants, participants' experiences, and appropriate ways to interact with the research participants throughout the study process (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). Once IRB approval was granted, I started the participant recruitment process while

protecting the human research participants by following the rules and ethical standards outlined by the IRB.

### **Protection of Participants' Rights**

All participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the research study during recruitment and before and during data collection. I explained to the participants that they had the right to withdraw their consent to participate at any time without consequences and assured them that their responses would be destroyed within 5 years of completion of the study (see Thorpe, 2014). To build rapport with the participants, I introduced the nature of the study via the Walden University Informed Consent Form. The purpose of the research study, sample interview questions, time commitment, anticipated procedures, risks and benefits of participating in the research study, compensation for participating in the research study, voluntary nature of the research study, and my university contact information were stated on the forms. This was done to fully introduce the study to participants so they could make an informed decision whether to participate (see Saldana, 2016).

Before the beginning of data collection and after addressing and answering all participants' questions, comments, and concerns, I electronically provided a copy of the informed consent form to each participant. The participants were asked to electronically sign the consent form, agreeing to participate in the study and acknowledging their rights during the collection period (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). After receiving the signed informed consent forms back from the participants, I began the data collection process of interviewing the participants using an interview protocol I created. My doctoral study

committee reviewed the interview protocol before it was used to interview the participants.

After collecting and analyzing all interview data, I stored the data in a locked office. I have access to this office, and it is locked with a key. Physical data are stored in a locked filing cabinet, and all electronic data are encrypted and stored on a password-protected computer located within the office. Per Walden University IRB guidelines, I will store and maintain all data for 5 years before destroying it by either deleting the electronic files from the laptop or shredding the physical documents. Participants were assigned numbers or aliases to protect their anonymity.

### **Data Collection**

Qualitative interviews allow a researcher to view specific, nonobservable information and points of view (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I created the interview protocol for this project study and used it during the semistructured interviews to answer the research questions. The interviews were conducted over the Zoom videoconferencing platform. Zoom has built-in recording features to record interviews, so I used the audio record feature was used to record each interviewee's responses to the interview questions. Finally, I took meticulous notes during each of the semistructured interviews.

In response to the disruptions and challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been several advances made in providing innovative opportunities to conduct qualitative research via videoconferencing platforms (see Archibald et al., 2019). Online platforms such as Zoom have been regarded by researchers as an economical and convenient alternative to in-person interviews, especially within the era

of social distancing (see Gray et al., 2020; Lobe et al., 2020). The interviews for this study lasted between 25 and 60 minutes. I used interview questions that I developed based on the literature review, information found in the instructional leadership model (see Murphy et al., 1983), and knowledge of SMP implementation within the southeastern region of the United States (see Appendix B).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I had no professional relationship with the participants. Additionally, I had not worked at any schools under study where SMPs were implemented. Moreover, I had not worked with or supervised any participants and had no researcher biases. I had previously worked in the region where the administrators were from; however, I did not interview former colleagues. As a novice qualitative researcher, I was mindful of how researcher biases may detract from interactions with participants and interpretation of data (see Creswell, 2018). Researcher biases negatively influence the reliability of data (Creswell, 2018). As an interviewer, I maintained neutrality and nonjudgmental behavior to not affect the participants' responses during the interviews (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

To recruit the participants, I used social media and the Walden Participant Pool. The flyer was sent electronically to those individuals who showed an interest in participating in the study by responding to the email request. I also sent the consent form via email to describe the research study, including the purpose statement. I requested the voluntary consent to participate in the study for those participants who continued to show interest and met the selection criteria. Finally, for those individuals who decided to

participate in the interviews, I scheduled the interviews and provided them with a password-protected Zoom link.

### **Data Analysis**

I used coding and thematic review to analyze the data (see Creswell, 2018). After each interview, I transcribed the interview data and entered it into NVivo, a software program used to manage and organize the data. Once all the data were entered into NVivo, I used inductive and deductive data analysis approaches to analyze it. Inductive refers to an analysis coming from the data, and deductive refers to analysis from other sources that may be theory or from prior research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicated that the inductive process supports the researcher in establishing a set of themes by working back and forth between the themes and the data. Deductive analysis is used to determine if any important data have been omitted or if there was a need to add additional information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data from the interviews were organized into smaller units of information to build codes, categories, and themes. I used the following steps, developed by Braun and Clark (2006) and Clarke and Braun (2013) to analyze the data:

1. Become familiar with the data: I reviewed the audiotapes and transcribed the interview data to familiarize myself with the participants' responses. Then, I took notes during the interviews and read those notes multiple times afterward. This process was repeated multiple times until there was a thorough comprehension of the data.



2. Generate initial codes: I used iterative coding to develop codes to complete this step. Specifically, I used the Perspectives Held by Subjects Codes to code the interview data. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described the Perspectives Held by Subjects Codes as a family of coding types that emerge when the subjects use particular phrases associated with the shared environment. This process was used to develop a codebook to identify and solidify codes. I also had some predetermined codes based on the research questions, as demonstrated in the hybrid coding model (see Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I analyzed each participant's responses and made notes about repeated words and phrases, patterns and overlaps in context, and any outliers. This method was used to record my general thoughts about the interview data.
3. Search for themes: This step was completed by diagramming to make connections within codes and establishing themes developed based on axial coding. Using the interview transcripts, I investigated the axial codes to discover patterns among the codes. These patterns emerged into themes that were evolving or temporary and were organized to form broader themes connecting to the research questions and conceptual framework. These connections linked the codes to themes and theory as the framework to thematically analyze the data (see Ravitch & Carl, 2020).
4. Review themes: This step was crucial to capture the correct themes. No additional themes emerged that did not appear to fit anywhere, but if they had, those themes would still have been noted.

5. Define themes: At this stage, I identified the themes. In this study, I provided a clear explanation of each theme and how they were connected. The interview transcripts were reviewed multiple times. Member checking ensured the accuracy of the identified themes and the meaning ascribed to them by the participants (Candela, 2019). During this part of the process, I ensured that the perceptions shared were consistent with the interviewees' interpretations of their implementation of SMPs.
6. Write-up: I prepared a written report of the interview transcripts at the final stage and provided an in-depth, concise report based on the data analysis. In addition to member checking to triangulate the data, I asked a Walden faculty member to act as an external auditor to examine the interview transcripts to ensure a reduced degree of researcher bias and make sure the themes were appropriate and logical (see Fusch et al., 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). An external auditor is a person outside of the project who thoroughly reviews the project for validity, researcher bias, appropriateness, and logic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **Evidence of Quality**

I followed procedures to address the accuracy of the interview data. During the interviews with the participants, I used the interview protocol, which I created based on the literature review and the conceptual framework. Moreover, I used the interview protocol as a guide to ask the participants the same questions. Furthermore, I developed the open-ended interview questions. Additionally, I used member checking to validate the

interview transcripts, minimize researcher biases, and ensure the credibility of the findings of this project study (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, member checking was used to ensure credibility of this research study. After I used member checking, I found that the interview transcripts were a reflection of the responses provided by the participants. I did not include in the findings the names of the participants; instead, I used identifiers, such as P1 to refer to the first school administrator who participated in the interviews. I followed the ethical procedures and ensured the anonymity of the participants. I will keep the interview transcripts in a secure place for 5 years. Regarding transferability, I included in the presentation of the themes experts from the interviews. Concerning dependability, I kept a journal documenting possible researcher biases.

### **Discrepant Cases**

I found no discrepant cases. If discrepant cases were found by analyzing the interview transcripts, I would have included all discrepant cases in the findings. Discrepant cases are identified as data that may not align with the trend of most of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All data collected are important to the validity and reliability of the overall study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations**

The first assumption was the participants gave honest responses during the semistructured interviews. The second assumption was school administrators implemented SMP. The third assumption was the data collection methodology which was basic qualitative research design.

The first limitation was the sample size. I was aiming for a larger sample; however, six school administrators decided to participate in this project study. The second limitation was that teachers who implemented SMP activities were not invited to participate in this project study. The third limitation was that students who worked on SMP activities were not interviewed.

For the purpose of this project study, the study site was in the southeast United States. Therefore, the scope of this project study was one area. This project study was limited to the geographic boundaries within one geographic area. The findings may not be generalized or transferred to other similar public school districts located in the southeast United States.

### **Data Analysis Results**

The research problem investigated was that school administrators in a southeastern public school district were inconsistent in implementing SMP. This basic qualitative research project study aimed to understand school administrators' perceptions about the implementation of SMP in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse urban elementary schools. Interviews were conducted via Zoom. After each interview was completed, I transcribed the interview data. I entered the data into NVivo, a computer program, to manage and organize the data for the coding and thematic review (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). After all the data were entered into NVivo, I reviewed and analyzed the data. I then used an iterative process of coding to develop codes. Ten codes emerged: strengths, challenges, mindfulness and meditation practice, racially and ethnically diverse, COVID-19, academic, mental health, administrative functions, professional

development, and perceptions (Table 1). I reexamined each interview transcript line-by-line using axial coding from these initial codes. I found category codes based on the frequency of the appearance of the codes and the context and content in which they appeared. The category codes arose from the connections between the initial open codes and their relationships to the phrases repeated (see Table 1). I then created a codebook based on the phrases associated closely with the codes. I identified the themes. I explained each theme and how the themes were connected to the research questions (see Table 1).

**Table 1***Codes and Categories Codes*

| Codes                                   | Categories Codes   |
|---|--|
| Strengths                               | Relationship/connection, sense of staff community, and creativity in finding resources                                 |
| Challenges                              | Sense of urgency, lack of resources, and the pandemic  |
| Mindfulness and meditations in practice | Trauma, association with religion, yoga, deep breathing, and calming   |
| Racially and ethnically diverse         | Reading materials, stereotypes about SMP, and not using mindfulness practices  |
| Pandemic                                | Used mindfulness   |
| Academics                               | Mindfulness helps students focus   |
| Mental health                           | Cultural competence, mindfulness was needed more for urban, low-income students, and mindfulness was helpful when used |
| Administrative function                 | Education and training, parent/community education, alternatives/choices time  |
| PD                                      | Lacking PD, PD was too costly, and self-selected PD  |
| Perceptions                             | Fad, language, and perceptions of staff  |

I found three category codes regarding the strengths code: relationship/connection, sense of staff community, and creativity in finding resources. Despite all the challenges, school administrators found SMP valuable. Moreover, school administrators found positive outcomes in academics and student behavior and believed in the long-term benefits of SMP (Table 1). Furthermore, I found three category codes concerning the challenges code: a sense of urgency, lack of resources, and the pandemic. School administrators reported challenges involved: engaging staff to create buy-in and convincing teachers who were more set in their ways regarding instruction and behavior (Table 1). Furthermore, I found five categories of mindfulness and meditation in the practice code: trauma, association with religion, yoga, deep breathing, and calming (Table 1).

Concerning the racially and ethnically diverse code, I found three category codes: Reading materials, stereotypes about SMP, and not using mindfulness practices (Table 1). Specifically, reading materials such as books were not culturally competent for racially and ethnically diverse children. African American staff and students had defined stereotypes about SMP. Parents and staff did not think racially and ethnically diverse students used mindfulness practices (Table 1). Additionally, I found one category code concerning the pandemic code: used mindfulness (Table 1). Mindfulness became more well-known during the pandemic. Additionally, mindfulness was necessarily used during the pandemic.

I found one category code regarding the academics code: mindfulness helps students focus (Table 1). I found three category codes concerning the mental health code:

cultural competence, mindfulness was needed more for urban low-income students, and mindfulness was helpful when used (Table 1). Mental health was needed to support students and staff at the schools under study. Moreover, I found three category codes regarding the administrative function code: education and training, parent/community education, and alternatives/choices time (Table 1). Administrative functions regarding SMP included developing schoolwide expectations; however, the activities performed by school administrators were not aligned with school district mandates. Also, I found three category codes regarding the PD code: lacking PD, PD was too costly, and self-selected PD (Table 1). Prior PD was inconsistent for all participants. Ongoing PD is necessary for the full implementation of SMP. Regarding the perceptions code, I found three category codes: fad, language, and staff perceptions (Table 1).

The data analysis revealed five themes regarding school administrators' perceptions of SMP (Table 2). The first theme was that school administrators integrated SMP into the school curriculum. The second theme was that SMP was used to improve students' behaviors and academic achievement. The third theme was ongoing PD was suggested for the implementation of SMP. The fourth theme was that school administrators experienced challenges to implement SMP. The fifth theme was that SMP activities were useful during the pandemic.



**Table 2***Emergent Themes*

| RQ1: How do school administrators perceive the implementation of school mindfulness practices?   |  |
|--|--|
| Theme  | Theme Description  |
| 1  | Integrated SMP into the school curriculum                            |
| 2  | SMP was used to improve students' behaviors and academic achievement |
| 3  | PD was suggested for the implementation of SMP                       |
| RQ2: What do administrators at the school level perceive are challenges or supports as they lead the implementation of school mindfulness practices? |  |
| 4  | Challenges to implement SMP  |
| 5  | SMP activities were useful during the pandemic                       |

**RQ1. How do school administrators perceive the implementation of school mindfulness practices?**

***Theme 1: Integrated SMP into the School Curriculum***

This theme was that school administrators incorporated SMP into the school curriculum. According to P1, SMP's function mindfulness was added to the daily routines to improve student behavior. School administrators implement meditation, such as 30 seconds to 3 minutes of meditation daily, said P1. SMP functions help promote mindfulness within the classrooms by assisting students to be aware of their surroundings. The example P1 provided was SMP was implemented to help students be mindful of their time. Another example P1 used was SMP helped students to be aware of how others feel. P1 emphasized that SMP can help students focus on one task at a time. According to P1, meditations, taking mindful breaks, taking time to reflect, and reflective

writing are components of mindfulness. As a school administrator, P1 incorporated mindfulness at the school as part of the daily school routine to help students focus on academic achievement. Moreover, P1 reported, "students were more interested in what they were learning at school." Furthermore, P1 implemented SMP at school and found that when students and teachers had mindfulness moments early on in the day, such as during the first teaching period or homeroom class, students had more social, emotional, and peer interactions. Also, P1 mentioned that SMP helped "the student population is mindful for students to focus on what they are doing in the classroom." SMP was implemented at the school to improve student behavior because by promoting mindfulness within the classrooms, students became more aware of their surroundings. For example, SMP helped students know their time and how others feel. Because of the implementation of SMP, students focused on one task at a time by using meditations to reflect on their writing and time usage. In conclusion, SMP was used by P1 at the school to increase academic achievement because students had more social, emotional, and peer interactions during SMP. P1 recommended that SMP be incorporated into the school curriculum.

P2 provided a plethora of examples concerning SMP. As a school administrator, P2 was aware of the functions of SMP and used SMP to help students focus on the curriculum. For example, P2 implemented SMP to meet students' individual needs by helping them improve their behaviors in the classroom. The example P2 shared was that students struggled with behavioral issues in school. Another example P2 gave was that SMP helped students be mindful of space and their peers when they were indoors.

Another example P2 used was through SMP; students were helped to "get into the classroom routines." P2 emphasized that teachers were encouraged to also implement SMP by using meditation during every lesson to "have a brief moment to themselves to help students stay focused on the curriculum." The last example P2 used was "a calming center in the classroom for students to read books about feelings and emotions." P2 incorporated SMP into the school curriculum to help students focus on the curriculum, meet their individual needs, and improve their behaviors in the classroom. Also, P2 incorporated SMP by "encouraging teachers to meditate during every lesson to help students stay focused on the curriculum."

Similar to the responses provided by P1 and P2, P3 said that during classroom observations, student behavioral issues were noticed. P3 implemented SMP to help students improve their behaviors in the classrooms and help teachers use meditation to meet students' individual needs. For example, P3 encouraged teachers to "do meditation and breathing exercises with students in the classrooms." P3 implemented SMP at school because of behavioral issues in the classrooms. According to P3, teachers used SMP to improve student behaviors by implementing SMP daily to "help students understand the importance of good behavior in the classroom." P3 emphasized that teachers helped with SMP implementation because they "were telling students why it was important to focus on the curriculum and good behavior." P3 explained to the teachers SMP was implemented for the benefit of the students by teaching students how to behave in the classroom better. As an experienced school administrator, P3 helped teachers understand the functions of SMP. Thus, P3 implemented SMP at the school to help students improve

their behaviors in the classrooms and help teachers use meditation to meet the needs of students by assisting students to focus on the curriculum and appropriate behavior. In conclusion, P3 incorporated SMP into the school curriculum to help students focus on the curriculum and improve their behaviors by assisting teachers in understanding and using the functions of SMP.

Like P1, P2, and P3, P4 incorporated SMP into the school curriculum to help students focus on the curriculum and improve their behaviors. P1 stated, "once we started to incorporate mindfulness into our daily routine, students were more focused." Like P3, P4 encouraged teachers to "do breathing exercises with students in the classrooms." P4 said journaling could help students improve their behaviors in the classroom. According to P4, "as far as mindfulness, it has not been used consistently" because teachers "need to believe that meditating helps students improve their behaviors in the classroom." P4 is aware of the functions of SMP and finds this program "promising because if you use a mindfulness program in your school, there may be an association because SMP and students are focusing on the curriculum."

The responses provided by P5 are in line with the answers given by P1, P2, P3, and P4. P5 incorporated SMP into the school curriculum because its goal was to help students focus on the curriculum and improve their behaviors in the classroom. P5 encouraged teachers and students to use journaling as a type of mindfulness for both teachers and students to use in school. P6 stated that the teachers in the school encourage students to "calm down, you know, journal if you have to be by yourself." P5 emphasized that SMP is useful when the school administrator focuses on the curriculum and helps

students improve academic achievement and reduce student behaviors. According to P5, "students are encouraged to use some type of relaxation activity in the classroom to help them focus on the curriculum." Specifically, P5 said SMP was useful at the school because this program helped "students who were not academically successful to focus on the curriculum and have better classroom behavior."

An example of SMP provided by P5 was "the whole class was working on a mindfulness activity to calm their mind, to be able to focus on the curriculum, and to behave." P5 noticed that teachers "implement SMP in the classroom to focus on the curriculum by understanding the importance of using mindfulness as a part of a curriculum to make sure that they can get their students to focus on the lessons." P6 incorporated SMP into the school curriculum to help students focus on the curriculum and improve their behaviors in the classroom. SMP's functions, such as mindfulness practices, were used in the school, according to P6. Up to 30 minutes were allocated every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for students to use mindfulness practices in the classrooms. P6 mentioned that students used activities to focus on the curriculum.

The six participants, who were school administrators, incorporated SMP into the school curriculum. All participants used mindfulness for students to focus on the curriculum and improve student behavior. P1 used SMP to increase academic achievement. P2 used SMP to help students focus on the curriculum and improve their behaviors. P3 also implemented SMP for students to focus on the curriculum and improve their behaviors by assisting teachers in understanding and using SMP functions. P4 encouraged teachers to use SMP functions for students to improve their behaviors in

the classroom by focusing on the curriculum. P5 found SMP helpful to help students who were not academically successful in focusing on the curriculum and having better classroom behavior. P6 incorporated SMP's functions, such as mindfulness practices for students in the classrooms.

***Theme 2: SMP Was Used to Improve Students' Behaviors and Academic Achievement***

SMP was used to improve students' behavior and academic achievement.

According to P1, mindful activities such as reflective writing were embedded into the curriculum. The goal of having mindful activities was to help students improve their behaviors at school. P1 emphasized SMP was used to improve students' behavior at school. According to P1, "students suffering from anxiety were calmer after the mindful activities were implemented." The explanation P1 provided was that "mindful activities helped students increase social interaction in the classrooms because students became more aware of themselves during the anxiety periods." An example provided by P1 was "students who used mindful activities became more comfortable in the classrooms because they better focused on the lessons." After mindful activities were integrated into the curriculum, students improved their behaviors at school. P1 mentioned that because mindful activities were used in the classrooms, "students focused more on the lessons and performed better academically because they were encouraged to talk calmly through their challenges."

According to P2, before SMP implementation, "the majority of the students were reactive." P2 stated, "teaching students mindfulness practices of coping and working through a challenge helped them with their social, emotional health, and academic."

Thus, mindful activities embedded into the curriculum helped students improve their behaviors at the school because they were better focused on the lessons and achieved more academically. P2 reported SMP was used to improve students' behavior and academic achievement. According to P2, breathing techniques, a function of SMP, were embedded into the curriculum to help students improve their behavior and academic achievement at the schools. Moreover, P2 mentioned that teachers were encouraged to use SMP for social-emotional learning in the classrooms. Furthermore, P2 stated, "because SMP was used, students' behavior and academic achievement improved at the school." Teachers helped students with "self-awareness in the classrooms for students to better focus on themselves and their achievement." Specifically, teachers were encouraged to use mindfulness practices in their lessons. As an example, "teachers showed students how to focus on learning and allowed students to work on mindfulness activities." In conclusion, SMP was used to improve students' behavior and academic achievement by using breathing techniques embedded in the social-emotional learning curriculum.

P3 provided similar responses to P1 and P2 that SMP was used to improve students' behavior and academic achievement at the school. P3 mentioned SMP was used "during school hours and summer programs by teachers who were encouraged to implement social-emotional learning practices in their lessons." Teachers at the school where P3 is the school administrator used SMP's functions. For example, one of the functions of SMP used in the classrooms was "opening circles where students can gather together with peers to feel comfortable during a lesson." According to P3, using SMP

activities during the lessons, "students got to know each other." Teachers interacted with students during the SMP activities. Another example P3 mentioned was "at the end of the school day, teachers and students used closing circles in the classrooms to briefly reflect on the teaching day." P3 said SMP activities were used, and as a result, students' behavioral issues in the classroom were also reduced, and teachers reported higher student achievement.

P4 reported that the teachers used SMP in all classrooms to help students improve their behavior and academic achievement. Mindfulness was used at the school where P4 was the school administrator. According to P4, SMP was beneficial at the school because "students were given opportunities to focus more on the curriculum." P4 encouraged teachers to allow students "to take time to reflect on their behaviors and focus on the lessons." According to P4, "teachers noticed a lot of gains with their students. For example, students were doing better academically and behaved more in the classroom." Moreover, P4 said SMP resulted in "decreased student disciplinary issues." Specifically, P4 mentioned as an example, "students concentrated more on their school activities and behaved better in the classroom." P4 concluded, "mindfulness was implemented in the school, and SMP was an excellent program to help students not only to improve learning but also to behave better." Thus, SMP was used to help students improve their behavior and academic achievement.

Similar to the responses provided by P1, P2, P3, and P4, the school administrator P5 stated SMP was very helpful because students improved their behaviors and academic achievement. P5 mentioned that SMP was necessary to implement in the school to



support students because they now say “I know I can meditate, I can breathe, I can I can count” instead of engaging in inappropriate behaviors. Also, P5 said teachers were able to help students "have the calmness and relaxation in the classroom." Moreover, P4 encouraged teachers to allow students to reflect on their behaviors. According to P5, students were doing better academically because SMP was implemented in the classroom.

The answers P6 provided during the interview were in line with the comments P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 made about SMP having been used to improve students' behavior and academic achievement. P6 supported teachers in using SMP in the classrooms. Also, P6 asked teachers to share mindfulness activities for the benefit of the students. Like P5, P6 said SMP was implemented in the school to reduce students' behavioral issues. P6 stated “an alternative to discipline, mindfulness for me from the administrative perspective looks like the school taking more time.” Although the practice of SMP took more planning, school administrators interviewed felt the rewards of fewer behavioral problems were worth the extra time in the school day.

The participants used SMP to improve students' behavior and academic achievement at the schools. P1 said reflective writing was embedded into the curriculum, and as a result, students improved their behaviors at school. P2 mentioned that breathing techniques were embedded into the social-emotional learning curriculum. P3 said the use of opening circles where students gathered together with peers to feel comfortable during a lesson. P4 reported that mindfulness was used at the school for students to focus more on the curriculum. P5 supported teachers to help students with calmness and relaxation in

the classroom. P6 supported teachers to share mindfulness activities with other teachers for the benefit of the students. Thus, SMP was implemented in the schools under study to improve students' behavior and academic achievement.

### ***Theme 3: PD Was Suggested for the Implementation of SMP***

All participants suggested that PD was necessary for the implementation of SMP. P1 emphasized the importance of ongoing PD on the functions of SMP. According to P1, school administrators need to master the specific functions of SMP because they are instructional leaders who apply their leadership to support teachers and students. P1 learned about mindfulness during SMP PD sessions and brought SMP resources to the school to share with teachers. P1 suggested, “mindfulness coaches should come to provide professional development for staff, it would be very helpful.” P2 emphasized the importance of learning about mindfulness and applying knowledge to support both teachers and students in the school. During the PD P1 attended, they learned about mindfulness from the SMP coaches who presented the PD sessions. As a result, P1 recommended ongoing PD on the full implementation of SMP for school administrators and school support staff to learn the functions of SMP to support both teachers and students. During the interview, P1 suggested that school administrators purchase and use resources on SMP functions. Moreover, P1 said school leaders need to learn about the strengths of SMP for teachers to help students improve not only learning but also their behaviors in the classroom. P1 said school administrators need PD on how to implement SMP functions in the schools to support teachers to implement SMP in the school. “Begin with the action of mindfulness to be engaged with what that practice is,” P1

suggested ongoing PD on SMP to learn the functions of SMP and the strategies to use to better support teachers and students in the school with mindfulness activities.

Additionally, P2 recommended ongoing PD on SMP. According to P2, PD presenters on SMP provided resources containing strategies to implement SMP in the school. Also, P2 said that when school administrators implement SMP, they need to know the strategies to use to support teachers teaching SMP functions. Specifically, P2 emphasized that school administrators need PD on SMP to understand what activities affect students' behavior and academic achievement. P2 stated, "administrators remove their administrative hat and remind them that they too are people." Moreover, P2 mentioned that school administrators benefit from PD on SMP by learning how to use SMP functions in the school.

P3 recommended ongoing PD on SMP like his colleagues P1 and P2 did. According to P3, PD on how to use the functions of SMP is needed because the mindfulness curriculum may help students focus on their learning and improve their behaviors. Moreover, P3 suggested SMP partners visit the school to offer PD on SMP to help teachers onsite implement mindfulness using the "teach the teacher model so that the teachers can implement SMP once they've taught them." According to P3, "ongoing PD on SMP should be district-wide to help all school administrators successfully implement SMP functions." Furthermore, P3 communicated with teachers regarding which functions of SMP practices they need help with and decided to request from senior district administrators ongoing PD on SMP. Because P3 implemented SMP and student behavioral issues were reduced, P3 strongly suggested PD on SMP for all school

administrators at the schools under study. According to P3, for teachers to implement SMP, school administrators need to know more about the best practices of SMP to support the teachers better to use SMP in the classrooms.

Additionally, P3 said, "I want everyone in the school to be trained on SMP. For instance, SMP consultants should visit the school district to teach teachers hands-on activities on SMP." Furthermore, P3 explained that students benefitted from SMP activities in the classrooms because teachers helped these students focus on the curriculum. Also, P3 mentioned that the peer-to-peer mindfulness program might help school administrators in the form of PD on SMP. P3 stated, "I think continuous PD on SMP for educators is beneficial to administrators, teachers, and students. For example, the mindfulness coach could visit all schools to train teachers on SMP."

Additionally, P3 said PD on SMP should be offered at the district level to help administrators and teachers by providing "SMP resources and examples." At the school where P3 is the school administrator, teachers have academic mentors called coaches, helping teachers with improving teaching practices. An SMP consultant could be a coach to teachers to train them with hands-on SMP examples to use in the classroom. P3 reported that teachers need "support with mindfulness because SMP is a school initiative."

P4 strongly suggested ongoing PD for the full implementation of SMP in the school. As a school administrator, P4 said they provide support to teachers based on what they know about SMP; however, P4 said, "I am not an expert. I need PD on SMP to learn more about it." Moreover, P4 emphasized the need for PD on SMP on how to "actually

implement mindfulness" by knowing "the benefits of mindfulness and following step-by-step the SMP guide on implementing mindfulness in the classrooms." Furthermore, P4 mentioned, "school administrators need to know how mindfulness benefits the students."

P5 is in a school where students have behavioral issues. Although P4 knows little about the functions of SMP, they have received feedback from other school administrators that SMP helps students behave better at school. As a result, P5 reported ongoing PD is needed to know how to implement it in the school entirely. Moreover, P5 was aware of some of the functions of SMP, such as "students journaling their feelings." Additionally, P5 said SMP is suitable for teachers and school staff to be able to teach students about mindfulness. According to P5, "teachers need to participate in SMP training to take away from the presentation what they need to teach about mindfulness to students." Additionally, P5 mentioned, "PD must be offered at the beginning of the year for teachers to learn about mindfulness activities to help students focus on the lessons in the classroom." Moreover, P5 emphasized school administrators need to know the dynamics of their school and support teachers, staff, and students by creating a teaching and learning environment where mindfulness is used in school activities for students to "learn how to relax, calm down, focus on the lesson, and better behave."

According to P6, "PD on SMP will benefit teachers because they implement SMP activities in the classrooms. Teachers engage students in SMP activities to remain focused on the lessons." Moreover, PD on SMP activities for school administrators and teachers early in the academic year will benefit students more. P6 said, "We start the school year in August, and teachers have about 2 weeks before school to attend PD on

SMP." Furthermore, P6 suggested that PD on SMP contain specific mindfulness activities to help students better behave in the classroom because "student behavioral issues are a problem at this school."

In conclusion, all participants suggested ongoing PD to implement SMP activities in the schools fully. Moreover, the participants said school administrators need to know the functions of SMP to support teachers and students. Additionally, the participants suggested that SMP resources be provided to schools containing strategies to implement SMP activities. Finally, the participants reported that PD on SMP for school administrators is needed because these administrators need to know more about the practices of SMP to support the teachers better to use SMP activities in the classrooms.

**RQ2: What do administrators at the school level perceive are challenges or supports as they lead the implementation of school mindfulness practices?**

***Theme 4: Challenges to Implement SMP***

The participants reported challenges with the implementation of SMP activities in the schools. P1 stated, "buy-in is the main challenge to convince teachers that SMP can help students focus on the curriculum and improve their behaviors." Additionally, P1 said SMP activities should be designed to engage students and teachers to "understand the importance and benefits of SMP." Finally, P1 mentioned that for school administrators to implement SMP, stakeholders such as teachers and students need to "believe in mindfulness because it is a new concept and teachers are skeptical."

According to P2, school administrators are challenged with implementing SMP in schools because "mindfulness is a new concept for teachers and students because they do

not know how it works." P2 mentioned that teachers did not have mindfulness activities to help diverse students. Like P1, P2 said they were challenged convincing teachers to "understand the impact SMP has on diverse students' behaviors." An example provided by P2 was, "the student population was African American and the SMP activities were about animals with the main characters being White students. If SMP activities do not reflect students' home life, then it is difficult to implement SMP."

A challenge mentioned by P3 was "the language used in the SMP activities that read like a script." P3 said, "Teachers were challenged to read off a script to students who may not understand the concept until the teacher explains to students the meaning of the script they read." Thus, P3 concluded that SMSP activities should be inclusive of diverse students. P3 also said, "teachers need to buy in to use SMP activities successfully." According to P3, teachers who understood SMP activities implemented them in the classroom. Those teachers who did not understand SMP activities struggled to implement them in the school. P3 was challenged by those teachers who did not think SMP was worth the time because they had not bought into SMP.

P4 mentioned that teachers saw SMP activities as something extra added to their teaching time. Moreover, P4 said those teachers needed support to integrate SMP into the classroom curriculum. Teachers at this school were skeptical about the use of mindfulness in the classroom. As a result, P4 requested SMP coaches to visit the school to provide teachers with hands-on SMP activities to understand its benefits.

The challenge P5 reported was teachers' willingness to implement SMP. According to P5, teachers needed hands-on practice to understand the benefits of SMP.

Therefore, P5 involved the teachers in practicing SMP activities at the school. P5 was challenged by teachers who were not fully implementing SMP in the classrooms.

According to P5, additional time was spent one-on-one with those teachers who were not implementing SMP activities, and teachers need to buy-in to use SMP activities. P6 said the challenge in implementing SMP in the school was "teachers' buy-in." Teachers reported to P6 that they had to spend additional time in the classroom to work on the SMP activities with students. P6 identified two challenges with implementing SMP, "time and buy-in from teachers."

In conclusion, all of the participants reported challenges with implementing SMP activities. P1, P3, P5, and P6 said teachers' buy-in was the main challenge. P2 said mindfulness was a new concept for teachers, and mindfulness activities did not include diverse students. P3 said SMP activities read like a script, and teachers who did not understand SMP activities struggled to implement them in the classroom. P4 mentioned that teachers were skeptical about the use of mindfulness, and time to implement SMP activities. P4 and P5 said teachers needed hands-on SMP activities to understand its benefits. P6 spent additional time with teachers who were not implementing SMP activities. I created (Table 3) shown below to display the various challenges participants experienced with the implementation of SMP activities.

**Table 3**

*Challenges With the Implementation of SMP Activities*

| Participant | Buy-In | New<br>Concept | Script | Skeptical | Hands-On<br>Activities | Time To<br>Implement |
|-------------|--------|----------------|--------|-----------|------------------------|----------------------|
|-------------|--------|----------------|--------|-----------|------------------------|----------------------|



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|    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | X | X |   | X |   |   |
| P2 |   | X |   |   |   |   |
| P3 | X |   | X |   |   |   |
| P4 |   |   |   | X | X |   |
| P5 | X |   |   |   | X | X |
| P6 | X |   |   |   |   | X |

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***Theme 5: SMP Activities Were Useful During the Pandemic***

All participants reported that the SMP activities were useful during the pandemic in virtual and face-to-face classes. P1 was grateful that teachers used SMP activities when students attended virtual classes during the pandemic. Specifically, P1 said, "The pandemic sparked the need for more mindfulness practice." Because of the pandemic, school administrators offered hybrid classes to students. P1 mentioned that teachers taught in both modalities using the hybrid model, such as the virtual and in-person models. Teachers reported to P1 that SMP activities were used during the pandemic and focused on mindfulness. Moreover, teachers also said to P1, SMP activities were done easier in the virtual learning environment because the teachers used specific scenarios to help students cope with the lessons and the pandemic. According to P1, teachers emphasized how students implemented mindfulness to participate in the classes at home and not in the classroom. P1 concluded that SMP activities are appropriate for virtual and face-to-face lessons.

P2 reflected on how the school district administrators at the study site mandated that teachers integrate SMP activities in the virtual learning environment, which was

created using the Zoom online platform for teachers to teach lessons to students.

According to P2, "teachers understood the importance of mindfulness in virtual learning." Therefore, during the pandemic, when students stayed home and teachers taught lessons via Zoom, students struggled with the new form of being conducted online. Moreover, P2 observed the online classes and noticed youth were struggling with the new "way of life by being at home and attending a lesson, and still having to do homework and participate in discussions with the teacher and peers." Furthermore, teachers used mindfulness activities with students during the virtual classes to support students to focus on the lesson and their wellbeing.

P3 provided similar responses to P1 and P2. SMP activities were used during the pandemic in virtual and face-to-face classes by the teachers in the school where P3 is the school administrator. P2 stated "movement breaks, breathing exercises we really tried to kick it up they were virtual." According to P3, SMP activities helped the students focus on the virtual lessons by practicing mindfulness. P3 mentioned that parents of students also reported that SMP activities on mindfulness helped their children cope with the pandemic and the virtual lessons. P4 agreed with P1, P2, and P3 that the SMP activities were useful during the pandemic. According to P4, SMP activities on mindfulness were very popular during the pandemic because "both teachers and students at the schools under study tried to cope with the pandemic." P3 said that many teachers reported they were exhausted because teaching virtual classrooms required more time for preparation. Parents of students also reported to P3 that they had been exhausted trying to learn the features of Zoom to help their children prepare for the classes. As a result, parents and

students experienced "mental health challenges." Because the teachers implemented mindfulness activities during the pandemic, students were more focusing on the lessons because students were able to calm down to learn from the teachers in the virtual environment. According to P4, "students used mindfulness to help them calm down. Also, students learned how to be calmer and study more independently."

During the pandemic, P5 supported teachers to teach virtual classes using Zoom. P5 encouraged teachers to implement SMP activities to "calm students down to focus on the lesson." According to P5, "because of the pandemic, SMP mindfulness was implemented for the well-being of students, teachers, and staff." P5 emphasized to teachers and staff to "care for and nurture the students mentally" by helping students "calm down" when they felt nervous in the virtual teaching environment. According to P5, teachers, staff, students, and parents were impacted by the pandemic, and mindfulness activities proved to be very helpful to cope with school closures and the delivery of lessons virtually. Moreover, after schools reopened, teachers used mindfulness activities in the classroom to support students in the face-to-face classrooms where they experienced restrictions such as wearing a mask and keeping social distance. Furthermore, mindfulness activities helped students focus on the lessons because they were overwhelmed with pandemic-related restrictions at the school. P5 mentioned that "students were saying to the teachers they cannot mentally make it through the day because they thought they would get COVID-19 in the classroom."

According to P5, commonly phrased included "I'm going to get sick, I'm going to make someone else sick, and I am stressed out." An example P5 used was teachers were

encouraging students to "do physical exercises in the classroom to calm down or use journaling activities to focus on what they like doing or see the school counselor." P6 revealed the same responses as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 that teachers and students used the SMP activities on mindfulness during the pandemic. According to P6, "SMP activities proved even more imperative and more important during the pandemic because such activities helped students focus on the lessons by practicing calmness." P6 implied that the mindfulness activities helped students cope with the pandemic.

In conclusion, the six participants said that the SMP activities were useful during the pandemic. Moreover, the participants said teachers used SMP activities during the virtual and face-to-face lessons and supported students to focus on mindfulness for students to cope with the lessons and the pandemic. Furthermore, students struggled with the virtual classes and worked on mindfulness activities to focus on the lessons and their well-being. Finally, mindfulness activities helped teachers, parents, and students cope with school closures and the delivery of lessons virtually.

### **Summary**

I used a basic qualitative research design to explore the participants' individual perspectives to discover what meaning they derive from, as well as what may emerge as a result. I conducted individual interviews to understand administrators' responses and perceptions about SMP implementation in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse urban elementary schools and how SMP may be implemented in the principal's administrative practices. The participants were school administrators from urban elementary schools who were selected using purposeful sampling. The Zoom video

conferencing online platform was used to interview the participants. I analyzed the interview transcripts using coding and thematic analysis.

Five themes emerged. The first theme was that school administrators integrated SMP into the school curriculum. The second theme was that SMP was used to improve students' behaviors and academic achievement. The third theme was ongoing PD was suggested for the implementation of SMP. The fourth theme was that school administrators experienced challenges to implement SMP. The fifth theme was that SMP activities were useful during the pandemic. I present the project in the next section, which is Section 3.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

The project is a 3-day PD training for school administrators on implementing SMPs within their schools. I based the PD session topics on the perspectives expressed by participants during the interviews. The PD sessions focus on the components of SMP implementation and establishing sustained practices systematically.

### **Components of the PD Project**

The objective of the 3-day PD training for school administrators is to provide practical strategies in SMPs, support school administrators, and prepare them to implement in their individual schools. The sessions consist of SMP training for school leaders and the actions incorporated with being an instructional leader based on Murphey et al.'s (1983) instructional leadership model and the use of the SMP as a framework to structure sessions with students and staff. The PD consists of the following components:

1. Collaborative hands-on SMP activities and leader reflection.
2. Lessons focused on SMPs.
3. Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants.
4. Development of customizable plans that integrate the SMP curriculum.
5. Establishment of a collaborative regional cohort focused on SMP and SEL.

### **Goals of the PD Project**

The goal of this 3-day PD project is to improve the knowledge, practice, and implementation of SMPs by using quality resources and developing school administrators. The training will help school administrators and leadership teams become

effective SMP practitioners. Based on the information collected from the interviews, I created the PD to focus on how to create a curriculum to implement informed SMPs.

### **Rationale**

Through one-on-one interviews with the participants, I identified that PD was needed to educate administrators on the implementation of SMPs. Based on the interviews, the administrators implementing SMPs were not provided with sufficient PD on SMPs that helped them to implement the processes in real, school-based scenarios. As I analyzed the interview transcripts, the data showed the need for PD that was consistent, thorough, and hands-on. I created the PD to be open to all and support the opportunity for ongoing teaching and learning accessible to instructors.

The PD project enabled me to address the data collected from school administrators during the interviews. I selected a PD to engage school administrators in on-site professional enrichment that could be conducted as part of a larger training over time or as a onetime, standalone training. The PD addresses the individual and collective requisites of each participant in developing their administrative preparedness to effectively implement SMPs, including school administrator-focused SMP training, understanding the wide range of SMP practices and their implementation, and curricular references and support for integration with national standards. The PD program assists with the concept of SMP implementation with purposeful and intentional training that is adjustable based on the specific audience.

PD benefits participants by creating a productive school environment (Hyer & Gardner, 2017). In the PD project, school administrators will analyze their thinking by

using physical mindfulness practices, journaling, reflective thinking, and collaborative exercises. This training also introduces participant-focused mindfulness as a tool to establish connections among the participants. By completing the exercises themselves, school administrators become focused on engaging in the practice and preparing to develop effective SMPs as instructional leaders leading the implementation in their schools.

Research is enlightening, and during my investigation, I discovered that little PD of school administrative leaders existed. In addition, it became evident that research examining SMP as a curriculum has increased; however, there still remains a gap in free, accessible, overall trainings for school administrators related to SMPs and a need for effective leadership practices related to SMP implementation.

### **Review of the Literature**

The goal of the second literature review was to find and review resources related to SMP as it relates to the project. I organized the literature review into three subsections: (a) an overview of PD for school administrators, (b) PD on SMPs, implementation of SMPs, how these practices can be implemented every day in schools, and how this new learning may modify the principal and administrative team's administrative functions; and (c) PD on SMPs and social emotional learning.

First, I obtained local, regional school information through the use of the following key search terms and phrases: *mindfulness, meditation, principal, administrative support, school leadership teams, principal support of teachers, urban, racially and ethnically diverse students, social-emotional learning, principal role, school*



*administrators*, and *effective school leadership*. These keyword search terms and phrases were searched in the following online databases: ERIC, Education Source, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, NCES Publications, National Academic Press, UNESCO Documents Database, and SAGE Journal educational websites.

During the search of the online databases, I further narrowed the search to identify peer-reviewed, scholarly work, including qualitative and quantitative studies published within the last 5 to 7 years. Once these studies were identified, each was assessed for their quality, rigor, and relevance to the study topic. I extracted and synthesized relevant information into meaningful categories for utilization in the literature review. I determined that saturation was reached when the same studies continued to be identified in the search. This concluded the systematic literature review process.

### **An Overview of PD for School Administrators**

I focused the literature search on PD for school administrators and school staff. The literature reviewed on PD included the following topics: mindfulness, principal, administrative support, school leadership teams, principal support of teachers, and social-emotional learning.

I selected peer-reviewed literature on PD for school administrators that was published within the last 5 years, with an exception to the 5-year rule for seminal studies that continue to impact the field of SMPs. According to Hallinger (2018), there is no one-size-fits-all method of school administrator PD or preparation, each set of leadership practices must be tailored to the adaptability of each school and context. PD is tailored towards specialized training, standardized education, professional education, or learning

assisting school administrators, teachers, and staff with increased knowledge, proficiency, and effectiveness (Crowley, 2017). Much like the conversation on the abundance of literature found on teacher preservice training, preservice preparation provided by many university-based principal preparation programs varies widely in the types and levels of programs offered and their effective PD for school administrators (Grissom et al., 2019).

There has been notable progress in principal training and ongoing preparation (Ebell et al., 2017). During the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, the need has increased for school administrators to engage in various types of culture building PD with colleagues (Toth, 2020). Gümüş and Bellibaş (2020) indicated that the relationship between PD and school principals' leadership practices includes the mediating role of self-efficacy. School administrators engaged in PD can enhance their capacity to overcome school problems and improve student learning by increasing their capacity to handle leadership practices. School administrators need adaptability as to when, where, and how they engage in OD for it to be the most effective for them (Norberg, 2019).

The freedom of choice for school administrators to select their most appropriate style of PD is an opportunity for true collective collegial learning. According to Vennebo and Aas (2020), this type of collective learning among school administrators is also known as group coaching in PD and provides opportunities for school administrators to learn from each other as they meet to work through aspects of school leadership (Brandmo et al., 2021). The world of educator training and PD has migrated from a prescribed menu to a more buffet style, choose what you need to thrive model (Cliffe et

al., 2018). The trend appears to allow school administrators to enter at their specific point of need and obtain training to then move on to effective school leadership. There are many PD models available in education for school administrators to follow, yet the role of a school administrator extends into other areas where a migration of skills exists. Rooney et al. (2019) discussed a developmental model for educating wise leaders including how mindfulness and wisdom creation practices can be embedded into a leadership model to make the leader more effective in multiple areas.

### **PD on SMPs**

Mindfulness practices also help school administrators and school staff encounter the challenges of effective school leadership and pedagogical details by reducing emotional stress via breathing exercises, mindful listening, or making time to reflect and process and be still while approaching a difficult task. Correia (2021) said that accessing some of the programs that have been created more recently in the educational arena could potentially benefit principals, teachers, and students. These training programs can improve their resilience and help them more effectively manage the constant stressors and demands associated with school culture, especially for principals facing burnout (Wells & Klocko, 2018).

SMP PD increase staff's personal and professional resilience through enhanced self-awareness while also supporting their well-being and developing mindful relationships among colleagues. Birchinnall et al. (2019) found that mindfulness training had potential personal and professional benefits for preservice teachers, including fewer lost instructional days and a reduced amount of stress. In the interviews in the current

study, several participants stated they were interested in their teachers obtaining PD for these reasons. Proponents of PD, especially for novice teachers, have suggested that integration of SMP PD could even be included in educator training courses (Zimmerman, 2018). Since mindfulness practices and SEL are not yet required for teaching certification, the next best route to provide teachers training may be to deliver PD via an on-site training.

In terms of personal outcomes for teachers, the positive benefits of mindfulness training have included reduced, self-reported symptoms of psychological stress and improved well-being in a recent review of 19 studies that evaluated mindfulness programs for educators (Lomas et al., 2017). Lomas et al. (2017) detected encouraging outcomes across most measures, including psychological distress, burnout, and well-being. In light of the school administrator participants' perceptions of their staff's emotional condition during the past 2 years of the pandemic expressed in the current study, these studies provide some hope for school staff moving forward.

In another review, Jennings (2017) found a wide variety of mindfulness training programs, including CARE for teachers, which exhibits a track record of positive effects across measures of emotion regulation, stress, burnout, and mindfulness and stress management and relaxation techniques in education (Benn et al., 2012), demonstrating improvements in stress and well-being as well as the acceptability and feasibility of use with school staff and parents. This is important because participants in the current study noted that parents also need to understand the elements of SMPs and such a PD could provide the necessary provisions for including families.

**PD on SMPs and SEL**

Peer-reviewed literature supports the relationship between SMP implementation and SEL. Most school administrators are familiar with SEL as a trend in education that is gaining national and local district level support, especially where mindfulness practice PD can be found. In a nationally representative survey of 884 K–12 principals, 98% of participants noted that SEL is transferable and advantageous to students, yet principals outlined gaps in professional preparation equipping them to implement SEL with fidelity (DePaoli et al., 2017). Social-emotional learning is defined as

The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (CASEL, 2015, p. 1).

Mindfulness practices are supported by the CASEL, and school administrators recognize the CASEL website as a means to develop plans to include social emotional competence into their curriculum. The website also provides support for SEL competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

**SMP PD Effects on Staff and Workplace**

Participants in the current study discussed that the implementation of SMPs had a calming effect on students and the overall school environment. PD and practice will assist in the positive aspects of mindfulness-based practices on staff as they relate to each other (Vonderlin et al., 2020). Vonderlin et al. (2020) determined through a meta-analysis of

randomized controlled trials on mindfulness-based programs in the workplace that they are advantageous to the staff since workplace environments are stressful and demanding. It is worth noting that in another meta-analysis, Jayawardene et al. (2017) systematically synthesized the results of randomized controlled studies conducted in various workplace settings and found that online trainings on and participation in mindfulness practice to be equally effective in stress reduction; minimizing mental distress; and improving overall well-being, job satisfaction, and compassion. Overall, regardless of the method of training or PD selected for the mindfulness training, the outcomes of stress reduction and workplace satisfaction were consistent (Eby et al., 2019). Mahfouz and Gordon (2021) discussed the need for school administrators to focus on SEL not only for the students but increasingly for the staff through PD. Throughout the interviews, school administrators in the current study reported recognizing that all staff needs the PD to increase SMP implementation and lessen the stress broadly in the schools.

### **Project Description**

PD is open to all educational personnel in administrative positions who are currently implementing SMP or are preparing to implement SMP in the coming school year. The presenters will be SMP instructional specialists, school administrators, school counselors, and, school district administrators who have demonstrated knowledge and expertise in SMP practice and implementation and SMP curriculum developers. By the end of the training school, administrators will have a greater understanding of administrative functions, school activities, and organizational processes necessary for

implementing or preparing to implement SMP in their school as well as the techniques to implement mindfulness.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

I plan to use formative assessment to measure new and ongoing learning measures for workshops and to evaluate PD. There are multiple ways to engage in formative assessment such as questioning and reflection (Milawati, 2017). The evaluation tool for this PD section of the project study utilizes a formative assessment, which is known to school administrators and staff based on the wide adoption of formative assessments in all aspects of education. Formative assessments can be completed easily and quickly provides responses that help the evaluator to adapt in real time to improve the training.

I will formatively assess participants after each session as well as at the end of each day. The formative assessments will include completing a simple three-question survey at the end of each day, completing a brief verbal check-in after each session with a new trainer or for a new section they attend, and encouraging participants to complete mindful reflections. In addition to the formal formative assessments, I will retain the chat questions if virtual or parking lot questions in person for further examination and ensure participants have email addresses for trainers and presenters to follow up as the need arises. The administration of these formative assessments will allow me to learn in real-time if participants are gaining new knowledge or if it is necessary to adjust any format of the 3-day PD that will meet their needs in a different way than I had originally prescribed.

School administrators are accustomed in most districts to providing an exit ticket, as a fun way to assess student learning. I will replicate this model for the school administrators. They will either complete a mindfulness task or create a prompt to be used by another participant in an exercise the following day. These formative assessments let me know if PD is addressing the learning session outcomes as designed.

### **Summative Evaluation**

A summative evaluation via a survey will be completed by all participants at the close of the PD. Summative evaluations are utilized to assess and determine if the learning and goals were met (Agboola & Hiatt, 2017). Because SMP is still a relatively new process for school administrators there remains an ongoing need to evaluate PD that inform and improve practice, and to serve as a guide to consider reform. (Merchie et. al., 2018) noted that evaluating PD provided an advanced understanding of how the sessions affected practice, and served as a guide to consider modification moving forward. The results of these summative evaluations will inform future SMP PD trainings and the use of presenters or trainers.

### **Evaluation Goals**

The overall goal of this 3-day PD project is to improve the knowledge, practice, and implementation of SMP by using quality resources and increasing the skills of developing school administrators. The goals in cooperation with the formative and summative evaluations align with the goals of the workshop. The evaluation data will be a guidepost measuring what the participants learned about SMP. Information collected



will assist the presenters daily in developing PD for adaptations based on the data collected from the evaluations.

### **Project Implications**

Previous studies on SMP have focused on teachers' implementation of SMP this research project study, which was conducted using a basic qualitative methodology was to understand administrators' perceptions and responses to the implementation of SMP in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse urban elementary schools. The outcomes may help district or executive administrators to assist principals in implementing the program and tracking data on SMP, and it will also assist other school administrators in learning about SMP in the voice of their colleagues. The primary implication of this study is to create PD training to be used throughout schools in and beyond this southeastern region and build administrators' capacity for the use of effective SMP in schools with an urban predominantly racially and ethnically diverse student population.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

The project is a 3-day PD training for school administrators focused on implementing SMP within their schools. The PD session topics are based on the findings from the participant interviews.

#### **Project Strengths**

One strength of this project is the sessions focus on the components of SMP implementation and establishing sustained practices systematically that school administrators can employ in multiple areas of the school curriculum and operations. As I analyzed the participant interview transcripts, the data showed the need for PD that was consistent, thorough, and hands on. The PD project supports the opportunity for school administrators' ongoing teaching and learning.

Another strength of the project is the ability to provide free PD to all school administrators who participate in SMPs or wish to integrate SMPs into their schools and need PD to gain a greater understanding of administrative functions, school activities, and organizational processes necessary for implementing or preparing to implement SMPs in their school. Many participants noted the SMPs they currently use are either self-taught or cost too much of the school's PD budget to obtain the necessary training for full implementation.

#### **Project Limitations**

I relied on existing literature on SMP to build the project, and it became evident to me that a limitation was the lack of available train-the-trainer models available for school

leaders to become mindfulness practitioners or otherwise certified to teach SMPs to others. Unfortunately, this project also does not answer that need for a certification or a credentialed train-the-trainer model. Another limitation is that the development and implementation of the project will take time away from other items school administrators may deem more important than SMPs. This PD is scheduled to take place over 3 days. School administrators who feel they are more focused on becoming educational leaders may not value this much time spent on learning about SMPs. When schools are back in session, I would need to find an onsite location for the implementation of a 3-day PD that requires enough physical space for school administrators to engage in SMPs actively and map out physical spaces mirroring their school buildings where SMPs can be implemented.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Among my recommendations for alternate approaches is the creation of a curriculum specifically focused on SMPs that would be distributed for free throughout the schools. Included in this curriculum would be a toolkit for principals, including diagrams for school design with a focus on mindfulness matters, school building design, classroom setup, teacher evaluation forms, a full Professional Learning Communities toolbox with conversation starters, and other supports. Another alternative approach could be the creation of a community-based, before and afterschool program staffed by school personnel and local mindfulness professionals. In this way, the school and community could be connected in the holistic practices. School staff and community members could work together on a mindfulness matters curriculum.

### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

While on this academic pursuit to uncover administrators' perspectives on SMPs in predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban schools in the southeastern United States, I discovered there are a multitude of ways to embrace alternative practices to support the most racially diverse and historically marginalized communities. I fully embraced a career change and now work in the field of domestic violence awareness and homicide prevention and ministry. I have co-authored publications on community engagement and Black women, domestic violence, trauma, and mental health (Bent-Goodley et al. 2021). Although this journey did not take me to my expected end as a school district administrator, the rewards of learning to research relevant topics that embrace societal change for the greater good have been life-giving. As a result of this study, school administrators may feel more empowered to set the goals for behavior models and SMPs within their schools and have the potential to improve student outcomes with formal implementation. Meyers et al. (2019) indicated that the school leaders are the ones to set the tone for the school, and as a result of the study, more school administrators will have the information necessary to provide alternative ways to address the social and emotional learning component of the school.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

Mindfulness practices are a lifelong skill that may assist school administrators, students, and their communities throughout all areas of their lives and may increase their capacity for calm and academic success, better mental health, and reduced violence. Reduced violence in society would increase school safety and reduce the number of

students being pushed out of school settings and into juvenile justice settings (Morris, 2016). Based on the findings of this study, I see early SMP creating benefits for society in general.

According to Marchbanks et al. (2017), by introducing effective SMPs, the school is extending the opportunity for student self-regulation beyond the school's proximity and affording the possibility of changing the prescribed course of life for urban, racially and ethnically diverse, low socio-economic students, thereby empowering them. This study was unique because most studies on SMPs have not focused on the school administrators and their perceptions and implementation of SMPs. The field of education will benefit from this study because school administrators beyond this southeastern region can use the findings to learn from other colleagues about SMPs in their own words and possibly implement SMPs as part of their school's standard curriculum.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The findings of this study indicated that school administrators are not currently provided with the supports needed to execute SMPs with full fidelity in part because there is no specific mandate or curriculum provided at the district level. Additionally, there are not currently enough approved PD options available that are free and easily available to all staff preparing to implement or currently implementing SMPs. Some participants noted that a certification may also be useful in a train-the-trainer model.

### **Applications**

An application of the findings of this study is the importance to provide PD to all school administrators who participate in SMPs or wish to integrate SMPs into their

schools and need PD to gain a greater understanding of administrative functions, school activities, and organizational processes necessary for implementing or preparing to implement SMPs in their school. Positive social change can be achieved by providing free PD aligned to the school's or school district's curriculum map and the school administrators' functional school plan ensuring that school administrators may integrate the necessary SMP functions into the principals' functions based on Murphey et al.'s (1983) instructional leadership model.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Future research may include the perspectives of parents on children's home-to-school relationships as a result of engaging in mindfulness practices, particularly as it relates to mental health, mindfulness practices, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Another consideration for future study is high school administrators' perspectives on SMPs. Some participants noted a need for SMP to be integrated all the way through high school with emphasis on SMPs encouraging increased attendance, academic performance, and self-control as well as mental health benefits. Further research, including studies to explore how different SMPs may produce various outcomes based on the design, training, implementation, and evaluation, is certainly needed.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results of this study on administrators' perceptions of SMPs in southeastern, predominantly racially and ethnically diverse, urban, elementary schools show that school administrators have an interest in using SMPs; however, they require more support with implementation, determination of which SMP is best suited for their

population, and training and education for those that will utilize the approach in the school. There is promise and potential to this emerging practice, but more information is needed as to best practices and how to fully integrate SMPs into administrative practices. Based on the findings of this study, I created a project to provide PD to all school administrators who participate in SMPs or wish to integrate SMPs into their schools and need PD to gain a greater understanding of administrative functions, school activities, and organizational processes necessary for implementing or preparing to implement SMPs in their school. The results of this research provide the opportunity for further research and applications of SMPs.

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## Appendix A: The Project

**Doctoral Study Project Study  
Professional Development****Administrators' Perceptions of School Mindfulness  
Practices in Southeastern Predominantly Minority  
Urban Elementary Schools**

Date: February 8, 2022

Time:

Members:

Chair- Dr. Mary Hallums

Committee Member- Dr. Richard Penny

Student- Sakima Romero-Chandler

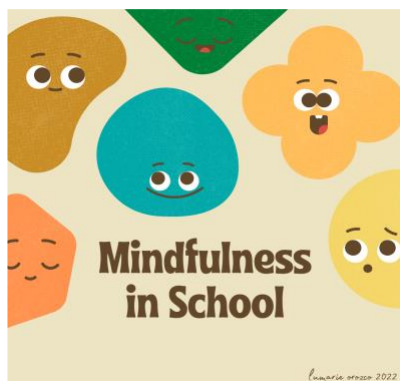
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## Welcome Goals and Overview

- The purpose of this professional development is to provide support and the opportunity for ongoing teaching and learning of school administrators in the field of School Mindfulness Practices (SMP).
- By the end of the training school administrators will have a greater understanding of administrative functions, school activities, and organizational processes necessary for implementing or preparing to implement SMP in their school as well as the techniques to implement mindfulness.

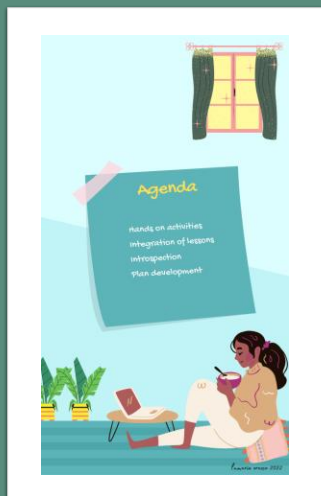
## Overview



This professional development is open to all educational personal in administrative positions who are currently implementing SMP or are preparing to implement SMP in a coming school year.

The presenters are SMP instructional specialists, school administrators, school counselors, and school district administrators who have demonstrated knowledge and expertise in SMP practice and implementation and are SMP curriculum developers.

## Professional Development Agenda Overview



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- **Day 1**
  - Collaborative hands on SMP activities, leader reflection
  - Lessons focused on SMP demonstrated by presenter panel with participant volunteers
  - Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants.
- **Day 2**
  - Lessons focused on SMP presented by volunteers reviewed by group
  - Development of customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum
  - Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants.
- **Day 3**
  - Development of customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum.
  - Establishment of a collaborative regional cohort focused on SMP and SEL
  - Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants.

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## Background



- The professional development sessions will focus on the components of SMP implementation and establishing sustained practices systematically that school administrators can employ in multiple areas of the school curriculum and school operations.
- As you noticed when you registered this training was free. Many participants of a recent survey noted the SMP they currently used is either self-taught or costs too much of the school's professional development budget to obtain the necessary training for full implementation.

<https://www.teachhub.com/professional-development/2019/11/15-professional-development-skills-for-modern-teachers/>

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## Professional Development Hourly Agenda



- **Day 1 Presenters: Dr. Applebaum and Mr. Lotus**
- **9 am-10:00 am**- Icebreaker
- **10:00 am-10:30 am** - am Group formation by School Leadership Team
- **10:30am- 11:30 am**- YouTube Video- and reflection activity
- **11:30-12:00 pm** -Presenter lead collaborative hands on SMP activities
- **12:00-12:15**- Check for understanding
- **12:15-1:00 pm**- Lunch
- **1:00- 2:30**- Presenter lead lessons focused on the practice of SMP
- **2:20-2:45**- Create a prompt to be used by another participant in an exercise the following day
- **2:45-3:00**- Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants

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## Professional Development Hourly Agenda

- **Day 2 Presenters: Dr. Applebaum and Mr. Lotus**

- **9 am-10:00 am**- Icebreaker yoga movement and mindfulness practice
- **10:00 am-10:30 am** - Lessons focused on SMP presented to School Leadership Teams
- **10:30am- 11:30 am**-Development of customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum
- **11:30-12:00 pm** -Presenter lead collaborative hands on SMP activities
- **12:00-12:15**- Check for understanding
- **12:15-1:00 pm**- Lunch
- **1:00- 2:30**- Independent group lessons focused on the practice of SMP
- **2:20-2:45**- Create a customizable plan for SMP
- **2:45-3:00**- Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants

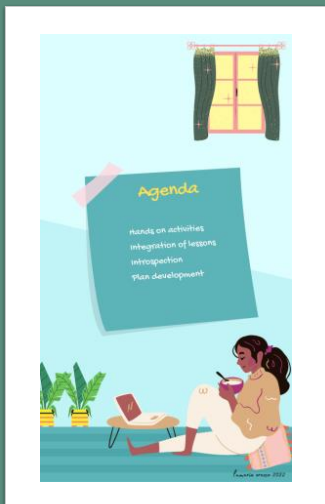


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## Professional Development Agenda Overview



8

- **Day 3 Presenters: Dr. Applebaum and Mr. Lotus**

- **9 am-10:00 am-** Icebreaker yoga movement and mindfulness practice
- **10:00 am-10:30** – structured lessons focused on SMP presented to School Leadership Teams
- **10:30am- 12:00 am-**Development of customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum
- **12:00-12:15-** Check for understanding
- **12:15-1:00 pm-** Lunch
- **1:00- 2:00-** Peer Review of SMP curriculums in groups
- **2:00-2:30-** Establishment of a collaborative regional cohort focused on SMP and SEL
- **2:30-2:45-** Create a customizable plan for SMP
- **2:45-3:00-** Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants **Exit Ticket- Survey**

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## Key Terms

- **Mindfulness** is defined by focusing one's attention in the moment and calming, acknowledging feelings and thoughts (Simpson, 2017).
- **Meditation** is defined as quietly watching one's breath and making mental connections to the rise and fall of breath (Leoni, 2016).
- **Social-Emotional Learning** is defined as a process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2015b)



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## Key Terms

- *Self-regulation* is defined as one's own ability to act on their behalf consciously or unconsciously to modify behavior internally, without the need for external forces (Nigg, 2017).
- *School mindfulness practices* is defined by the system of engaging in mindfulness practices engaged by students throughout the school (Kraemer-Holland, 2021).



## Morning



- Presenters: Dr. Applebaum and Mr. Lotus
- Icebreaker
- Group formation by School Leadership Team
- YouTube Video- and reflection activity (share your thought on integrating one aspect of the SMP presented in the video)  
[https://youtu.be/SQ2eSn4F\\_d8](https://youtu.be/SQ2eSn4F_d8)
- Presenter lead collaborative hands on SMP activities
- Check for understanding
- Lunch

## Afternoon

- Presenter lead lessons focused on the practice of SMP
  1. Mindful Meditation
  2. Breathing in the clouds
  3. Journaling
- Create a prompt to be used by another participant in an exercise the following day
- Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants



## Morning

DAY 2

- Lessons focused on SMP presented by Dr. Applebaum and Mr. Lotus and volunteers reviewed by group
- Development of customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum
- Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants.
- <https://youtu.be/2r6TWTqr8FM>

## Afternoon

- Independent review and practice of 1 of the mindfulness techniques learned yesterday.
- Lessons focused on SMP presented by volunteers reviewed by group
- Development of customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum
- Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants.  
[https://youtu.be/6s1\\_m28B7ek](https://youtu.be/6s1_m28B7ek)



DAY 2

## Morning

- **Presenters: Dr. Applebaum and Mr. Lotus**
- Development of customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum based on the instructional leadership model of Murphy et al. (1983).
- The framework outlined three main areas for instructional leadership: (a) administrative functions engaged by principals, such as developing and promoting school expectations, (b) types of collegiate activities performed by principals, such as managing teachers and curriculum, and (c) processes of the school organization by creating school policies.



DAY 3

## Morning

- **Things to consider while building your plan**
- The Overall Practice of Mindfulness
- Mindfulness and Self-Regulation
- Opportunities to Use Mindfulness in School Settings
- Strategies of Mindfulness in the Classroom
- Principal and Staff Roles in SMP
- SMP beyond the walls of the school



DAY 3

## Afternoon



DAY 3

- Peer Review of SMP curriculums in groups
- Establishment of a collaborative regional cohort focused on SMP and SEL
- Introspection check to identify the learning and progress of participants.
- **Exit Ticket- Survey**



## Resources



- *The Lemonade Hurricane: A Story of Mindfulness and Meditation* by Licia Morelli
- *Wild Mindfulness* By *Laura Larson*
- *Just Ask!* By *Sonia Sotomayor*
- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* By *Britney Winn Lee*
- *I Like Myself!* By *Karen Beaumont*
- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- *What Does it Mean to Be Present?* By *Rana DiOrio*
- *Ruby Finds a Worry* By *Tom Percival*
- *Yoga4Classrooms Activity Card Deck* by Lisa Flynn
- *The Name Jar* By *Yangsook Choi*
- *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It* by JoAnn Deak

## SMS Programs and Resources

- **Mindful Classrooms** at [mindfulclassrooms.com](http://mindfulclassrooms.com).
- **Sesame Street Common and Colbie Caillat Deep Breathing with Elmo**  
[https://youtu.be/\\_mZbzDOPyIA](https://youtu.be/_mZbzDOPyIA)
- [www.cosmickids.com/tag/zen-den](http://www.cosmickids.com/tag/zen-den) - Cosmic Kids Zen Den, mindfulness and meditation videos for kids
- [www.gonoodle.com](http://www.gonoodle.com) – movement and mindfulness for kids. Playlist can be found on YouTube

## SMP Programs and Resources

- [https://www.educatingmindfully.org/equity?utm\\_campaign=781265cb-139a-482b-a9f8-29cae7f8e036&utm\\_source=so&utm\\_medium=mail](https://www.educatingmindfully.org/equity?utm_campaign=781265cb-139a-482b-a9f8-29cae7f8e036&utm_source=so&utm_medium=mail)
- Peace of Mind resources <https://teachpeaceofmind.org/shop/>.
- Mindfulness in schools project (UK) <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/>
- Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students [crtandthebrain.com](http://crtandthebrain.com)

## Summary

- This training has assisted you to; engage in collaborative hands on SMP activities, spend time in leader reflection, Create lessons focused on SMP, Complete introspection checks to identify the learning and progress of participants, developed customizable plans that integrate SMP curriculum and established a collaborative regional cohort focused on SMP and SEL. Please continue to practice school mindfulness and make the world a more peaceful place.

## Closing



I have retained your questions from the parking lot any that have not been answered will be given to and Dr. Applebaum or Mr. Lotus and they will respond within 2 days.

Feel free to email our team at  
SchoolMindfulnessMatters@  
NoMail.com

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## Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Administrators

Title of Study: Administrators' Perceptions of School Mindfulness Practices  
Southeastern Predominantly Racially and Ethnically Diverse Schools.

Date: TBD

Location: Zoom

Time of Interview:

Interviewer: Sakima Romero-Chandler

Interviewee: TBD

### **Greeting:**

“Good day, my name is Sakima Romero-Chandler. I have been an educator and school administrator for almost 20 years. I am grateful that you will participate in this study today. I know that some things have changed, and we are now meeting to hold our interview via Zoom instead of in person, but please know that I value your time and expertise. I have received your *Informed Consent* form, and I would like to ensure that I do indeed have your consent to proceed with this interview at this time. As stated in the form you may withdraw consent at any time during the process and I will, immediately destroy all of your information and properly discard it. I will take every possible step to maintain confidentiality, and your name, the school's name, and all personal information will remain private. Do you have any questions for me about the study, including the process, or any of the information provided on the *Informed Consent* form? Before we begin.”

### **Checklist:**

- \_\_\_\_ Signed *Informed Consent* form. (be prepared to re-send or review)
- \_\_\_\_ Obtain a secondary verbal consent before pressing the record (if no additional consent provided or if it is inaudible, ask again. If the respondent does

not want to be recorded, stop the process, thank participant, and follow procedures to destroy participant information.)

**Interview Notes for the Researcher:**

- Be kind and conversational, but allow the participants to respond.
- Do not provide any information about other participants or their responses.
- Ask open-ended and clarifying questions when necessary.
- Remind the participants that they may cease participation in this study at any time.

**Background/Purpose:**

“This interview is designed to help me gain a better understanding of your administrative perceptions of school mindfulness practices. Please feel comfortable sharing your thoughts, providing as many details as possible. This interview will be recorded so I don’t miss anything you share, and I will be taking notes by hand. Although I am writing and talking to you, I am engaged in this conversation and I am paying attention and appreciate both your time and expertise. I have prepared questions for this interview, however, I might also ask for more information regarding something you have shared; please note this will just help me further clarify your perspective and does not mean you have been unclear. Do you have any questions before we proceed? Do you wish to proceed? Do I have your permission to proceed with this interview and recording?

**Questions:**

1. Tell me about mindfulness practices at your school
2. How do you as a school administrator, perceive school mindfulness practices?

3. How do you as a school administrator, perceive the implementation of school mindfulness practices?
4. At your school, are school mindfulness practices included in the curriculum, if so, did you choose it, or was it pre-selected?
5. Were you provided staff development for school mindfulness practices?
6. If you were given the opportunity to have unlimited access to support for school mindfulness practices, what types of support would you choose?
7. What do you as an administrator at the school level perceive are challenges as you lead the implementation of school mindfulness practices?
8. What do you as an administrator at the school level perceive are supports as you lead the implementation of school mindfulness practices?
9. Have mindfulness practices changes as a result of the school's response to the pandemic, if so how?
10. Is the physical school building prepared for school mindfulness practices in terms of space to practice?
11. As the leader of the school, have you noticed a correlation between the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional factors affecting students engaged in school mindfulness practices?
12. If you designed a professional development for new principals prior to them beginning school mindfulness practices in their schools, what would you include?

**Closing:**

“Thank you for your time and insight today. I appreciate your participation and sharing your perspectives on school mindfulness practices. Your responses will be kept confidential, and you may still withdraw participation at any time. I will follow up with you soon to review my notes and transcription for accuracy. Do I have your permission to contact you for this purpose? Thank you again for your time, and have a wonderful day!”