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Teachers' Perceptions of Their Input into Important Campus Decision Making

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions of Their Input into Important Campus Decision Making

By

Amy J. Boughton

M.Ed., Texas Woman's University, 2006

BS, Texas Woman's University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2023

Abstract

The Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) results from 2018 to 2021 indicated that school leadership has improved in one North Texas district. The problem investigated in this study was that despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" was consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and was the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and to gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. The conceptual framework for this research was the leadership for learning (LfL) theory. The research questions investigated were as follows: (1) What are teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions? (2) What are teachers' recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions? The study employed a basic qualitative methodology using semi structured open-ended interview questions that were transcribed and coded. Ten teacher participants were interviewed from secondary schools within the sample district. The study affirmed that although opportunities for input look differently on every campus, teachers revealed that a variety of input options should be made available on every campus. Teachers recommended that principals consider sustaining building leadership teams with rotating membership, adding additional campus decision-making committees, sending frequent surveys or polls, creating staff pulse checks, sending inquiry emails, and conducting one on one informal input opportunities.

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Dedication

I would like to first and foremost thank God, who has enabled this amazing journey and provided me the strength to persevere through it. I also want to thank my parents, Tom and Cindy Boughton, who, from the first day, told me I could accomplish anything that I set my mind to do as long as I set goals and sustained a strong work ethic. Throughout my life, my parents fostered decision-making confidence and an undeniable fortitude inside of me that rendered this journey a reality. I also want to thank my spouse, JP Cron, whom I love beyond words. Without the unrelenting commitment we share, the daily symbiotic encouragement, and the unequivocal love we ascertain for one another, I would not have been able to realize this personal success.

Next, I would like to thank my parents-in-law: Dr. William Cron, Dr. Deborah Cron, Dr. Mary Jo Hatch, and Dr. Philip Murvis. All of whom are acclaimed educators in their respective fields, dedicated to the art and skill of influencing and leading others. Additionally, all have shared in lengthy conversations and debates about public education leadership and encouraged me to stay the course on this journey.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The district has annually surveyed teachers regarding their perceptions of their ability to educate all students, the school climate, and the quality of school leadership, utilizing the Q12 Employee Engagement Gallup Poll from 2012 to 2016. In 2016, a district committee voted to adopt a new employee survey called the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS). Using the PTS, the most recent survey results indicated that school leadership is generally good, with 68% of teachers in the district rating school leadership favorably (Panorama, 2021). Despite these favorable overall results, one dimension of school leadership, teacher input into important school decisions, has lagged behind the other dimensions of the school leadership section. Teachers' favorability rating on this dimension was 52% in the most recent leadership survey (Panorama, 2021). The problem to be investigated in this study is that despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" is consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and is the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions.

It is widely recognized that school leadership is crucial for student success and school performance (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). For many principals, it's an aspiration to grant teachers an important role in decision-making and leadership within schools (Ingersoll & Collins, 2017). In recent years, efforts to increase teacher roles in schools have been discussed under the banner of "teacher leadership" and "teacher-powered"

schools (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Given the focus on instructional and teacher leadership, there has been extensive empirical research. There are limits, however, to this research. In particular, the key elements of teacher leadership vary considerably across school districts (Ingersoll et al., 2018). As a result, there has yet to be a consensus on the programs and actions a district should take to encourage teacher leadership and teacher input opportunities. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district.

Rationale

During the 2011-12 school year, the district underwent a transformative process to determine the aspirations for educating our students and growing teachers and administrators for the 21st century (Lake Independent School District, 2021). In the first phase, the district held six summits in September 2011 to begin the conversation with the community about this undertaking (Lake Independent School District, 2021). All stakeholders were involved in focus groups and answered online surveys to gather the information and input necessary to carry the district into the second phase, including what these opportunities would be like for the district. In the third phase, the Strategic Design Team developed the district's new core beliefs, vision, mission, and goals from the summits, focus groups, and surveys (Lake Independent School District, 2021). Additionally, the school board and superintendent voted to conduct a teacher analysis to gain further insight into the district's climate and level of teacher engagement.

In 2012, the district decided to conduct the Q12 Employee Engagement Gallup Poll for several reasons. First, the district wanted to gain greater insight into the organizational climate following the state's $5.4 billion in educational budget cuts (Lake Independent School District, 2012). Second, the district wanted to implement a recommendation from the Texas Teaching Commission (2012) to administer a teacher workplace survey as part of several new teacher retention strategies. Finally, the district also obtained results from several secondary campus surveys that indicated a need for teacher engagement and a distinct need to transform the climate (Lake Independent School District, 2012). The results obtained from the Q12 Employee Engagement Gallup poll in the school years 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-15 revealed that teacher engagement in the questions concerning recognition, teacher input, and opportunities for teacher leadership possessed the lowest mean values for the district (Lake Independent School District, 2015).

The Q12 Employee Engagement Gallup-Poll (2015) results were problematic because the district had allocated significant time and resources to educating principals on the importance of campus climate, specifically concerning teacher recognition, the need for teacher input, and the opportunities for teacher leadership. The consistency in the district's Q12 Employee Engagement Gallup-Poll (2015) results revealed a significant need to further investigate the district's secondary campuses' indicators of depleted teacher engagement levels in these areas. After utilizing the Q12 Employee Engagement Gallup Poll (2015) to measure teacher engagement on each campus and yield marginal improvements, the district assembled another focus group to review other options for

employee surveys (Lake Independent School District, 2015). As a result of the focus group, the district changed its annual teacher survey provider to Panorama Education in 2016.

Nevertheless, teacher ratings regarding their input into important decisions were disappointing and did not exhibit the positive trend the district hoped to obtain. In the most recent survey conducted in the district by Panorama Education, for instance, only 52% of teachers responded favorably to the school leadership question, "When the school makes important decisions, how much input do teachers have?" (Panorama Education, 2021). This question had the lowest favorable rating among the nine leadership questions in the survey. Even though the most recent survey results were slightly better than those of the previous two years, teachers expressed 48% favorable ratings in 2018, 46% in 2019, 48% in 2020, and 52% in 2021, deeming they do not influence important decisions on their campus.

The district recognized a significant opportunity for innovation and campus engagement by offering opportunities for teachers to be involved in campus-wide decision-making and encouraging teachers to take advantage of those opportunities. One of the four cornerstone goals listed by the district in its district improvement plan (Plan4LLearning.com, 2019) emphasizes real innovation. Performance goal 3 for meeting this cornerstone goal is to build on talents and strengths within the district. One strategy for achieving this performance goal is to engage teachers in opportunities to get involved in campus decision-making. Options to have input in significant campus opportunities include the following:

- Campus leadership teams

- Restorative practices leaders

- Teacher leader cohorts

- Curriculum writing

- Department chairs/leads

- Team leaders/Grade-level leaders

- Teacher mentors

- New hire teacher mentors

- Professional learning facilitators and presenters

Despite these opportunities for greater involvement, the district's stakeholders rated the performance rating on this strategy as "some progress." As a result, this strategy was included in the district improvement plan for the next year (Plan4LLearning.com, 2019).

Given the critical role of teacher involvement in campus decision-making and the continued lower favorability ratings regarding teacher input, the purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions, as well as gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. The study focuses on identifying why teachers believe they have little input and provided them with the opportunity to explain their ratings on the campuses' PTS, along with exploring their recommendations to increase input opportunities. These recommendations may provide additional insight into teacher perceptions about campus decision-making overall, how the principal may increase input opportunities, and fruitful direction for future efforts in teacher leadership.

Definitions

Panorama Teacher Survey: Teachers' perceptions of their involvement into important campus decisions are the numeric representations as reported by the Panorama Teacher Survey- School Leadership subset. The survey reports the results for the question: "When the school makes important decisions, how much input do teachers have?" (Panorama, 2021).

Teacher Input: By definition, teacher input is the process school leaders use to involve teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions (ThoughtCo, 2018).

Teacher Leadership: The process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement. Such leadership work involves three intentional development foci: individual development, collaboration or team development, and organizational development (Sinha & Hanuscin, 2017).

Leadership for learning (LfL) theory: The process in which the entire school community actively participates in the improvement of learning (Daniels et al., 2019). LfL as conceptualized by Daniels et al. (2019) integrates features of instructional leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, and situational leadership.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant to the district because it was aligned with the district improvement plan, and specifically focusing on one of the four cornerstone goals

identified by the district in 2020-21. Performance goal three was designed to utilize and build on the talents and strengths within the district. One strategy for achieving this performance goal was to engage teachers in opportunities to get involved in campus decision-making. In a broader sense, the study is significant to education concerning how principals can increase teacher input opportunities on their campuses. The study's outcomes may provide district administration with valuable information about teacher perceptions and priorities. The study may lead to improvements in the principal preparation program, the newly implemented principal mentorship program, and strategies principals may implement to increase teacher input opportunities on their campuses. This study could be significant in assisting the district with developing its principal leadership program by providing a greater understanding of teacher perceptions as they relate to the results of its annual PTS.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. The two research questions are based on the conceptual framework of leading for learning (LfL) theory. RQ1 focused on the teachers' perceptions concerning their inclusion or exclusion on important campus decisions. RQ2 focused on teacher perceptions of recommendations for the future.

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions?

RQ2: What are teachers' recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions?

Review of the Literature

This section traces the leadership for learning (LfL) theory as the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study. In addition, this section will explore the role of the school principal in general, teacher leadership, and the importance of facilitating teacher input into the process of campus performance improvement. The online portion of the literature review was conducted using the Walden University Library, ERIC Database, EBSCOHost database, and ProQuest Dissertations. Additionally, several of the resources were found by using Google Scholar Search Engines. The key terms used for these searches were *leadership for learning (LfL) theory, school principal, teacher leadership,* and *teacher input.*

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides an orientation to the study, establishes how the study aligns, and how the study design and methodology meet rigorous research standards (Burkholder et al., 2016). Research in the field of educational leadership has mainly been investigated based on previous leadership theories: instructional (Camargo, 2021; Hill, 2021; Blue, 2020; Odusoga, 2020; Boyce & Bowers, 2018; Aas & Brandmo, 2016), transformational (Camargo, 2021; Hill, 2021; O'Donnell, 2021; Unrau, 2021), distributed (Hill, 2021; Stuart, 2021; Thompson, 2020), and situational (Allen, 2021; Ritchey, 2021; Ferlita, 2020). Although, recently "leadership for learning" (LfL) emerged in school leadership research as a means to incorporate all stakeholders in the school

improvement process (Daniels et al., 2019). Leadership for learning integrates different aspects of previous theories mentioned and arose as a reaction to the perceived limitations of instructional leadership (Bush, 2013). More recently, the concept of instructional leadership has been expanded to the theory of leadership for learning to include human resource capital management and further adult development and professional development components, as well as student and teacher assessment and feedback (Boyce & Bowers, 2018). Initially, LfL gained interest in North America, but in the past 15 years, it has become a global phenomenon receiving substantial attention from leading scholars (Daniels et al., 2019; Aas & Brandmo, 2016; Marsh, 2015; Hallinger & Huber, 2012).

LfL is often understood as the process in which the whole school community actively participates in the improvement of learning (Daniels et al., 2019). The theory is centered around improving the learning community within a school by engaging all stakeholders. Unlike models focusing on specific leadership styles, the framework emphasizes the relationship between school leadership, collaborative leadership practices/participation, context, and learning at various organizational levels (Pietsch et al., 2019). Within the LfL theory, a leader must first stay focused on learning, teaching, curricula, and instruction and, second, make all the other dimensions of schooling (e.g., administration, organization, finance) work, aiming to improve student learning (Daniels et al., 2019). Researchers further capture LfL under eight main domains: 1) focus on learning, 2) monitoring teaching and learning, 3) building nested learning communities, 4) acquiring and allocating resources, 5) maintaining a safe and effective learning

environment, 6) mentoring and induction, 7) stakeholder engagement, and 8) a shared

discipline climate (OECD, 2019; Halverson & Kelley, 2017).

As previously stated, LfL takes on dimensions of the key elements in four other

leadership theories: instructional, transformational, distributed, and situational. The first

element of LfL is that it is team-oriented and collaborative and refers to a campus-wide

leadership approach by formal and informal leadership roles. Shared leadership

(sometimes interchangeably called distributed, horizontal, or plural leadership) can be

understood as a collectivist process in which multiple people assume leadership roles,

both formally and informally (Carvalho et al., 2020). The leadership responsibilities are

divided up between individuals according to their distinctive talents and capacities. When

specific responsibilities are divided between individuals, shared or distributed leadership

contributes to LfL.

The second element is that LfL is designed to create learning at all organizational

levels: student learning, teacher learning, organizational learning, and administrative

learning. When a principal focuses on instructional leadership, they employ practices

including setting clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating

resources, and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth

(Blue, 2020). The intense focus on learning supports many of the aspects of instructional

leadership. The third element involves capacity building through collective efficacy. With

transformational leadership, the leader supports his followers by involving them in the

decision-making process and stimulating their efforts to be as creative and innovative as

possible to identify solutions (Scheiltz, 2019). The collective efficacy within

transformational leadership focuses on inspirational motivation from the people working together to evoke an environment of distinct optimism (O'Donnell, 2021).

Lastly, LfL is results oriented. Being results-orientated relates to several different aspects of situational leadership. According to Barmeyer and Franklin (2016), situational leadership development of followers is the level where the follower has mastered the skills required for the assigned task. Therefore, the data trends can be easily analyzed based on the completion of assigned tasks.

I used LfL as the conceptual framework to understand how principals can improve their learning community by engaging all stakeholders, particularly teachers' viewpoints. Unlike other leadership theories, which focus on specific characteristics or styles, LfL emphasizes the relationship between school leadership, collaborative leadership practices/participation, context, and learning at various organizational levels. LfL is a leadership model that promotes teachers as predominant stakeholders within an organization, paying specific attention to teacher leadership opportunities and teacher input into important campus decision-making.

Teacher Input

Teacher input is an essential part of organizational culture, attrition on campus, and overall job satisfaction. The principal plays a central role in what teachers have input on and how that input is collected. The Learning Policy Institute (2017) found that inclusive decision-making and when principals listen to teachers' ideas and engage those ideas in change is one of the leading elements of teacher attrition. Teachers want principals that value their expertise and experience (Jacobson, 2018). Most of the time,

teachers do not want to be polled whenever the bus schedule changes; however, teachers want input on curriculum, course assignments, their evaluation process, and other critical campus decisions that affect their classroom, department, or the campus culture as a whole. Principals need to be open to what the teachers can share and create a safe space for honest, respectful conversations where both sides can voice concerns and share their opinions (Will, 2019).

A recent Gallup Panel survey of nearly 500 teachers who teach kindergarten through high school at public, parochial, private, and other schools across the United States was conducted March 5-12, 2018. In the survey, K-12 teachers stated that they believe their input needs to carry more weight when important decisions are being made at the school level. In the survey, 31% of teachers believe their input is considered a "great deal" or "a lot" in these situations, much lower than the percentages saying the same about input from other stakeholders, including administration, school board, and state and federal governments (Hodges, 2018). Classroom teachers' belief that their voices are not heard in decision-making processes is not new (Hodges, 2018). A 2012 Gallup survey of employees from 12 different occupational categories found that K-12 teachers were the least likely of all groups to agree with the statement, "At work, my opinions seem to count."

In addition to asking teachers how much input they currently have in decision-making at their school, the Gallup survey (2018) asked how much input they should have. The results show that teachers believe they need a stronger voice in the decisions being made on their campuses. Nearly all teachers, 93%, believe they should have considerable

input (Hodges, 2018). Teachers are nine percentage points more likely to say they should have considerable input than to say the same about the next highest group, school administration, at 84% (Hodges, 2018). Teachers' employee engagement is linear to the overall employee engagement in the United States, but there are clear opportunities for improving teacher engagement with input options alone. K-12 teachers lag behind other professionals in their belief that their opinions count at work, undermining their broader engagement as public school employees (Hodges, 2018). Thus, providing teachers with more significant opportunities to express their input could address their feelings of not being heard and boost overall engagement within the profession.

In 2017, three organizations, Corwin, a publisher of professional development materials; Learning Forward, a professional-learning membership organization; and the National Education Association, surveyed more than 6,300 teachers across the United States. Teachers surveyed indicated that they think professional learning is prioritized on their campuses, but they said they are rarely involved in the decision-making process (Learning Forward, 2017). While teachers largely agree that school leaders think professional learning is important, just over half of teachers surveyed said they have "some say" in their professional learning decisions, and nearly 20% said they have no input at all (Will, 2019). Teachers surveyed went on to say that principals and other district leaders make professional learning decisions. The lack of teacher input creates a discrepancy between the professional learning teachers want and need and what they get. Professional learning is just one example and one area where teachers surveyed have indicated that the decisions being made lack their input.

Teachers are not asking to be polled or to have input every time the bus schedule changes, or the cafeteria serves a different lunch menu. Rather, teachers want to be a part of schools where they trust their school leaders, and collaboration is a priority. Surveys have shown that school climate is a leading factor in whether teachers remain at their schools (Jacobson, 2017). If decisions need to be made on a campus that involves the work of teachers and directly affect them, then teachers want principals to value their expertise and experience. The RAND Corp survey (2021) found that 96% of principals think that teachers are involved in making important decisions about their schools, but that is far more than the 58% of teachers who feel the same way. The bottom line is that educational policy decisions regarding curriculum standards, state-mandated testing, professional learning, program funding, school safety, and daily operations are often highly debated in school districts nationwide. Teachers feel that the governing bodies, especially state and federal entities, need more say-so in important decisions. Teachers believe they should have much more input in decision-making at the "boots on the ground" level.

The School Principal and Teacher Leadership

The role of the school principal has changed over time. In the mid-nineteenth century, principals emerged as leaders in U.S. schools (Grissom et al., 2017). The principal position was created when students were separated by age and divided by grade level into separate classrooms under a single teacher (Grissom et al., 2017). The principal's role has evolved as research on leadership models also expands. Initially, principals were expected to uphold district mandates, manage personnel and budget, and

handle operational issues (Barakat et al., 2019). As operational managers, principals became responsible for developing sound fiscal practices, maintaining the facility and grounds, creating an efficient master schedule, hiring quality personnel, building positive community relations, coordinating effective instructional programs, and evolving school policies to meet the needs of students and their overarching communities.

During the 1960s and 1970s, principal responsibilities grew to include the management of federally funded programs, most of which concentrated on minority student populations. While principals might be involved in some curriculum and instructional supervision, into the 1980s, their primary role was overall school operational, physical facilities, and fiscal management (Fullan, 2018; Glatthorn et al., 2016). The Commission for Excellence in Education released a report titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Commission for Excellence in Education, 1983). The report indicated that the United States educational system failed to meet our national need for a competitive workforce. Additionally, the report concluded that the quality of teaching could have been compared better with that in other nations. These conclusions gave rise to the accountability movement, which among other initiatives, led to a change in the principal role from strictly operations manager to providing instructional leadership.

The paradigm shift to instructional leadership requires school principals to manage operations effectively while fostering instructional excellence and developing various stakeholders as collaborative partners in the learning process (Cheng et al., 2016). School principals today face the extraordinary challenge of integrating instructional,

community, and visionary leadership (Ross et al., 2016). The fact that principals are now

held accountable for the learning of their pupils, the multiple tasks they need to fulfill,

and the increasing pressure imply that leadership today is seen as a collective activity

(Daniels et al., 2019). The collective action of current educational leaders involves all

stakeholders; more specifically, teachers play a vital role in the instructional leadership,

culture, and vision on campus. With LfL, the school principal implements teacher voice

as part of the decision-making process and offers multiple means for teachers to be

involved in important decisions on campus.

    Many principals are well on their way to empowering teachers and making them

part of the important conversations on their campus. As part of LfL, principals need to

think about teacher leadership in a collective leadership way, where principals and

teacher leaders work together to collectively build a community of learners that benefits

all (Lia, 2019). Teachers who are given leadership opportunities and are involved in the

decision-making process are likelier to stay at their schools. So, the principal needs to

identify critical initiatives or problems that the campus needs worked on and identify

teacher leaders and committees to start working on these elements of the campus. When a

principal blesses the idea or work and makes it known that this person(s) is officially

taking this role, and that it is not fleeting, this impacts how the rest of the teachers

respond. The principal must make it known that the district supports teacher leadership.

    As teachers and principals navigate these relatively new waters of teacher

leadership and teacher input into important campus decisions, it is essential to look at the

perceptions of teachers and principals. Data from the RAND Corporation's web-based

American Educator Panel (AEP) surveys (2021) provide greater insight into teacher and

principal perceptions of teacher and principal perceptions of teacher influence in school

decision-making. A significant gap exists between teacher and principal perceptions of

teacher influence (Johnston et al., 2021). For example, 96% of school leaders and only

58% of teachers perceive that they are involved in making important decisions on their

campus (AEP, 2021). Additionally, 98% of school leaders agree or strongly agree with

the statement that teachers have a lot of informal opportunities to influence what happens

at their school, which a much higher rate than 62% of the teachers surveyed (Johnston et

al., 2021). Lastly, 31% of teachers report not being comfortable voicing concerns in their

schools (AEP, 2021). Teachers must be able to voice their concerns, share ideas, and

provide input for a principal to build teacher voice, confidence, and leadership on

campus. When a principal has buy-in and leadership from their teaching staff, they

manifest a campus culture that evokes authentic change.

It is incredibly important for school leaders to forge authentic relationships with

their teaching staff. Not only does authentic and intentional relationship building enhance

the school climate, but it also ignites motivation to perform their best. Andrews and

Conway (2018) described the leadership-focused relationship between principals and

teachers as parallel leadership. Andrews and Conway (2018) stated that this type of

collaborative leadership is characterized by mutualism, shared trust and respect between

formal leaders and teacher leaders, a shared purpose, and substantive amounts of freedom

for individual expression and action. Collaborative leaders are in a constant state of

learning, sharing ideas and perspectives with and from colleagues (Carswell, 2021).

Leaders who value the ideas, input, and opinions of others engage colleagues in collaboration and demonstrate shared leadership. However, they also foster effective leadership practices and mentorship for aspiring future leaders. Leadership capacity is cultivated through modeling, mentorship, best practices, and experiences. Therefore, principals must find ways to continually manifest their teachers' and teacher leaders' growth, opportunity, and input.

Principals with staff advisory committees or building leadership teams may have to frequently rotate participants or ask teachers who do not speak up during meetings to share their input (Jacobson, 2018). The RAND researchers also encourage school leaders to examine teacher leadership opportunities critically; they believe they provide for their teachers and establish systems and structures that foster regular dialogue about important school decisions. RAND (2021) suggests that principals' positive perceptions might be based on what they are hearing from a small subset of faculty members, such as teacher leaders; however teachers might feel stifled and frustrated by a perceived lack of leadership opportunities. Principals must use multiple methods to ensure they hear from a broader cross-section of teachers (Jacobson, 2018).

Professional development for leaders is key, as teachers report leadership as "the strongest predictor of teacher retention (García Torres, 2018). Principals may need their forms of professional development to become more collaborative and confident in nurturing teacher leadership (Andrews & Conway, 2018; Smylie & Eckert, 2018). Further research describes teachers valuing leadership over salary in determining whether to stay or leave a district (Learning Policy Institute, 2017, p. 1). The Garcia study (2018)

has shown that leadership skills, particularly relational skills, are related to teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention. Two relational, leader-facilitated behaviors, as noted by teachers to increase job satisfaction and reduce retention, are described by teachers as participation in decision-making and autonomy (García & Weiss, 2019). Moreover, according to the Learning Policy Institute (2017), "these principals generally describe their leadership responsibilities as facilitators, collaborators, team leaders, or leaders of leaders," adding, "these principals often employ leadership teams, interview teams, or site-based management teams to make school-based decisions" to foster collaboration and create a broader sense of ownership.

Traditionally, the role of the school principal may be described as one focused on bureaucratic and management responsibilities such as responsibility for the school economy, facilities, schedules, and personnel (Hallinger et al. 2018). During the last few decades, the responsibility of school principals in many countries has been extended to all aspects of school management and operations. Regardless, one specific area that principals need to focus on is teacher leadership, which involves the establishment of social linkages within a community and the building of collegiality so that teachers may share instructional practices (Pan & Chen, 2020). The recognition that teachers may also assume roles of instructional leadership has resulted in a call for models of shared educational leadership between principals and teachers.

Implications

The findings of this study will help school principals understand teachers' perceptions of what decisions they believe have been included and excluded, as well as

their recommendations on how to incorporate teachers into important campus decisions. The findings can help define the professional development needs of school principals on including teachers in important campus decisions. The findings may also help school principals and district administrators understand teachers' perceptions regarding their input into important campus decisions and recommendations for future input gathering. The possible implications for positive social change include reducing the gap between teacher and principal perceptions regarding teacher input, strategies for school principals to gain input, and further teacher leadership opportunities within the district.

Summary

The problem investigated in this study is that despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" is consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and is the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions. The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. These recommendations may provide additional insight into teacher perceptions about campus decision-making overall, how the principal may increase input opportunities, and fruitful direction for future efforts in teacher leadership.

The project study uses a basic qualitative research design. Leadership for learning (Lfl) is the conceptual framework used to understand how principals can improve their learning community by engaging all stakeholders. Unlike other leadership theories that

focus on specific characteristics or styles, LfL emphasizes the relationship between school leadership, collaborative leadership practices/participation, context, and learning at various organizational levels. LfL is a leadership model that promotes teachers as predominant stakeholders within an organization, paying specific attention to teacher leadership opportunities and teacher input into important campus decision-making. The participants in the study are all levels of teachers who serve in the role of department chair on their campus. I will collect data via interviews and analyze the data for emergent themes. The findings will be used to drive a 2-day professional development for school principals. The content of the 2-day professional development will include:

- An examination of LfL leadership strategies.

- An analysis of their Panorama Teacher Survey results.

- Review strategies for obtaining teacher input and providing teacher leadership opportunities.

The literature review reveals a gap between what school leaders and teachers perceive regarding input into important campus decisions. Regardless of the disparity in perceptions, this gap between teachers and principals signals a critical disconnect that school leaders need to examine. School leaders must critically examine the leadership opportunities they believe they provide for their teachers and establish systems and structures that foster regular dialogue about important school decisions (Johnston et al., 2021).

Section 2 includes a description of the methodology used for this project study, including data collection and analysis. Section 3 includes a description of the project for

this study, including data findings. Section 4 includes reflections on the project study and

the strengths and weaknesses of the project as it addresses the problem and implications

for future research opportunities.

Section 2: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. The problem investigated in this study is that despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" is consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and is the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions. The two research questions were based on the conceptual framework of leading for learning (LfL) theory. RQ1 focused on the teachers' perceptions concerning their inclusion or exclusion on important campus decisions. RQ2 focused on teacher perceptions of recommendations for the future.

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions?

RQ2: What are teachers' recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions?

Research Design and Approach

Description and Justification

I used a basic qualitative research design for this project study. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. The two research questions that guided the

research study were based on the conceptual framework LfL theory. RQ1 focused on the teachers' perceptions concerning their inclusion or exclusion on important campus decisions. RQ2 focused on teacher perceptions of recommendations for the future.

Basic Qualitative Research Design

A basic qualitative research design was appropriate for this project study. Choosing a basic qualitative study over a quantitative study was more advantageous to gathering and reporting findings as it allowed for multiple perspectives to be stated and applied toward the analysis and inclusivity of teachers involved in important campus decision-making. Researchers using basic qualitative research are interested in the interpretation of experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015), the meaning applied to the experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and how the participant reflects on those experiences (Percy et al., 2015). Additionally, qualitative research focuses on understanding the perceptions of the people being studied (Yin, 2018). Furthermore, quantitative studies provide a numerical and statistical approach, whereas qualitative studies allow for a broader method of information collection.

Justification for Research Design

The more that research questions depend on the perceptions of others, the more relevant a basic qualitative research design is. By using a basic qualitative research design, researchers can investigate a contemporary phenomenon in a real-world context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Studying teachers' perceptions about their role in important campus decisions and identifying why teachers believe they have little input into important campus decisions requires data about their experiences. Thus, a basic

qualitative research design was appropriate to understand the secondary teachers' thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. I gained an in-depth understanding of the study phenomenon by posing explanatory why, how, and what questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The problem investigated in this study was that despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" was consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and was the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions. A qualitative study suited the current study because it allowed me to explore language and social behaviors, and to describe and analyze social norms among a sample population (Johnson & Christensen, 2017, pg. 36). The methodology also allowed exploratory open-ended interview questions (Plano et al., 2015, pg. 288). Participants were able to relay their experiences in their natural language and communication style instead of responding to or rating their answers in predetermined questions often found in quantitative studies.

I did not use grounded theory design in this research study because a theory about teachers' perceptions was not being created. Ethnography and phenomenology are other research designs that were considered but not used. A phenomenological design was not suitable for this study because it is used to examine a phenomenon over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2017). An ethnographic research design was not selected because the focus was not on an entire cultural group (Creswell, 2017). The participants' stories in the research study would not be interrupted (Creswell, 2017).

Throughout the research project, I developed an understanding of the personal perceptions of each participant on their perceived input into campus decision-making. Research questions requiring layered narratives with complex explanatory information to inform quantitative data are best suited to qualitative frameworks (Cooley, 2013). Various characteristics of qualitative research were appropriate for this study, including utilizing multiple data sources, focusing on participants' meanings, and gathering a holistic account of a problem area (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research includes three kinds of data: interviews, observations, and documents (Patton, 2015).

Participants

Population and Sampling

The research study occurred in a North Texas school district comprised of 69 schools over 127 miles and 13 municipalities (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018). The district's 69 campuses include 41 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, five 9th/10th-grade schools, five high schools, and three alternative education programs. The district serves approximately 49,000 pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade students for the 2022-23 school year, and it employs about 3,600 teachers. The average salary for teachers in the district is $60,850.00. The years of experience breakdown is 27.2% are within 1-5 years' experience and 72.8% have 6 or more years' experience. The average years of teaching experience is 12.4 and the average years of teacher experience with the district is 8.7. LISD has a teacher turnover rate of 12.9%. The average number of students per teacher is 17.1.

The project study used purposeful sampling to select information-rich participants (Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling is appropriate because participants were intentionally selected to participate in this project study. Thus, of the 3,600 teachers, 276 serve as core content area department chairs on their campus, and the goal was to identify a minimum of 10 participants who met the additional selection criteria.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the main criterion for selecting participants is considering those who may inform the study's research questions. Therefore, the participants for this project study were selected based on the following teacher criteria:

1. Occupy a full-time teaching position at one of the district's campuses;

2. Taught at the present school for a minimum of two years; and

3. Serve as a department chair in a content area.

These criteria were designed to ensure a sufficient depth of teaching and campus experience to inform participants' discussion of the focal basic qualitative study. The scope of campuses was considered appropriate for comparability of experiences across participants to facilitate identifying a standard set of themes not influenced by the level of education. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that the rights and welfare of human research subjects are protected in research studies. Before I conducted this research study, I asked permission from the school district's senior administrator and Walden University's IRB to interview participants. Upon IRB approval, I generated a list of potential study participants who met the research criteria. First, I constructed a

research study participant email that was approved by the IRB and sent to the district's

senior administrator over research. Next, the district's senior administrator contacted the

department chairs on both elementary and secondary campuses. Through the email sent

to all the potential participants, I shared the purpose and significance of the research

study and the methodology for data collection.

Justification of Participants

The target population for this study was teachers who served as department chairs

on either their elementary or secondary campus in a large suburban North Texas school

district. Every core content area has a department chair on each of the 69 campuses in the

district. The four core content areas include English, Math, Science, Social Studies,

Languages Other Than English, and Career and Technology. Therefore, there are 276

core content department chairs in the district. Purposeful sampling was used because I

wanted to select individuals who currently taught on the campus, had taught for a

minimum of two years, and served as department chair (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

This project study aimed to recruit a minimum of 10 teachers to participate in the study

who met the criteria. I invited all participants who met the selection criteria. I collected

qualitative data through interviews conducted. Thus, the study used a minimum sample of

10 teachers to collect enough qualitative data to reach saturation. Purposeful sampling

was used to select teachers to participate in the research study. Purposeful sampling

allowed for specific settings, persons, or activities to be selected to provide data pertinent

to one's questions or goals that may not be obtained from other sources. According to

Creswell (2017), there are no set guidelines regarding the number of participants to be

sampled. The sample size for a qualitative study varies from study to study (Creswell, 2017).

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that the rights and welfare of human research subjects are protected in research studies. Before I conducted this study, I asked permission from the school district's senior administrator over research and Walden University's IRB to interview the project study's participants. Upon IRB approval, I generated a list of potential study participants who met the research criteria. First, I constructed a research study participant email approved by the IRB and sent it to the district's senior administrator over research. Next, the district's senior administrator contacted the department chairs on both elementary and secondary campuses. Through the email sent to all the potential participants, I shared the purpose and significance of the research study and the methodology for data collection.

I sent a confirmation reply when a participant expressed interest in participating in the study. Final participants were chosen from those who signed the letter of informed consent. Immediately following the signed letter of informed consent, I sent an individual email to each willing study participant. The email included options for interview times and dates and the parameters for interviewing on WebEx.

Establishing a Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

Researcher-participant relationships often develop during the data collection process. As the researcher asks the participant questions, a rapport builds. Building rapport involves reporting participants' responses in a way that does not distort intended

meanings (Stewart et al., 2017). Researchers need to secure agreement from the participants to participate in the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). After the teachers agreed to participate in the study, I built trust with the participants to establish a collaborative and professional relationship. I fully discussed the procedures for participants and reassured them once again of their anonymity.

Creditability, dependability, and confirmability are components of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Gaining the participant's trust is essential in finding answers to the research questions. Trustworthiness definition is the main qualitative content exploration phase from the beginning of the study until the reporting of the results (McGrath et al., 2019). The interviews are for collecting data and allowing the researcher to explore the participants' experiences (McGrath et al., 2019). According to McGrath et al. (2019), building rapport with the participants is necessary as it helps them to feel comfortable before and during interviews. The researcher can build trust with the participants by making them comfortable answering the interview questions and possibly being open to adding in-depth details in their responses. The participants must know that the information they share is valuable to the research study. By addressing the components of trustworthiness, I gave the reader a clear picture of the study.

I ensured that the study participants felt comfortable during their interviews and encouraged them to ask questions. I ensured they felt comfortable sharing their perceptions about their inclusion or exclusion regarding important campus decisions. I also reassured the participants that the school's and principal's names would not be

included in the findings. Lastly, I explained my role as a novice researcher, and that

listening was the primary instrument for gathering data during each interview.

Measures for Protecting Study Participants

The credibility of a project study is contingent on protecting the participants'

anonymity. To ensure credibility with the participants, I represented their responses

accurately. I also used member checking to lessen my personal bias as a novice

researcher. The participants reviewed their responses for accuracy after the interviews

were transcribed. I did not include the names of the participants in the interview

transcripts. Additionally, I did not include the following:

- The name of the school.

- The name of the principal.

- The name of the participants in the findings.

Rather than use identifying names, I used a specific code to refer to a particular

participant. For example, I used the letter "T" to refer to a teacher, followed by a number

to indicate the participant who responded to the interview questions. T1 will refer to the

first teacher that I interviewed.

I did not share the interview transcripts with the school district administrator over

research. I kept all transcribed information on my personal computer in a password-

protected file. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the project

study at any time, and participation was voluntary. All interview data were used for the

project study and adhered to strict confidentiality. All files containing the interview

transcripts were encrypted. The data will be stored for five years, per the protocol of Walden University. After five years, I will destroy all the interview data I collected.

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Data Collection

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Justification for Data Collection Methods

A basic qualitative research design was used to examine teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and to gather their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. The problem investigated in this study was that despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" was consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and was the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions. I did not administer surveys to collect quantitative data because I was not studying the relationship among variables. I conducted interviews on WebEx with the participants to collect qualitative data.

As a researcher, I must have skills that enable them to engage with people in the data collection process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Furthermore, I utilized a reflexive process of data collection by asking questions that will directly impact their research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Another important role of the researcher is maintaining fidelity while exploring and understanding people and the community they collaborate with during the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Qualitative Data Collection Process

For this project study, interviews were the primary means of data collection. The interviews were conducted using an interview protocol (Appendix). The interview protocol was used to inform the participants of the initial questions asked during the interviews. The interview questions aimed to investigate why despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" was consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and was the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions. I developed the interview protocol (Appendix), which contained nine open-ended interview questions. The interview questions did not include personal information.

Due to current COVID-19 district guidelines, I used WebEx to conduct the interviews. The interviews occurred on a day and time agreed upon by each participant. I informed the participants that their names were kept confidential to protect their anonymity and prompt open, meaningful, and authentic responses. I also notified all participants that they could withdraw from the interview at any time without repercussion. The participants also had the opportunity to ask questions during the interview. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes. During the interview, I audio-recorded and documented the interview with permission from each participant.

Systems for Keeping Track of Data

After each interview, I transcribed the interview using NVivo software. The transcripts did not include the name of the participants. I used the letter "T" followed by a

number to refer to each participant. T1 refers to the first teacher interviewed. The interviews were treated confidentially. The project study focused on protecting the privacy and confidentiality of each participant and their corresponding personal and interview data. The interviews were stored on my laptop, and a copy was stored on a removable jump drive. A password secures the laptop and the jump drive. The jump drive will be stored in a lockable file cabinet.

Sufficiency of Data Collection

I interviewed teachers on WebEx to collect qualitative data. The interviews were the instrument used to in the data collection process. The interviews consisted of nine open-ended questions (see Appendix). The problem investigated in this study was despite favorable overall results on the Panorama Teacher Survey (PTS) in the local school district, the school leadership dimension of "teacher input into important campus decisions" was consistently ranked by teachers as needing improvement and was the lowest ranking amongst the other school leadership dimensions. The study aimed to understand the perceptions of a select set of individuals so that interview questions may feel personal to the participants. Interview questions pertained to an individual's perception of their involvement in campus decision-making. The questions focused on the participants' professional experience. However, the answers revealed personal information or sensitive thoughts about their involvement, opportunities for input, and recommendations for future information seeking from campus administrators.

Data Analysis

WebEx participant interviews were used to collect the data, and it was transcribed into text files for data analysis using NVivo software. The interviews were replayed as an audio file and compared against the text transcription to ensure correctness before analysis. Following the transcription process, participants were provided a copy of the transcription as part of the member-checking process to ensure the study's validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Participants were provided a copy of their interview transcription via email. Member checking allowed each participant to approve and clarify any of their responses. The interview transcripts were organized and summarized using the NVivo software program. The transcribed interviews were exported to Microsoft Excel and coded to categorize the transcripts. Similar words categorized the interview transcripts.

The codes were grouped to generate themes. During the coding procedure, I searched thoroughly in the interview transcripts to identify words or phrases that represented common themes reoccurring in the participants' responses. I used axial coding to identify subcategories that emerged from similar responses. The subcategories were constructed according to a constant comparative model. I continually analyzed the participant's information to bring the data to the point of saturation. I aggregated the responses using axial coding. I also examined the participants' responses in concurrence with the literature review and conceptual framework to identify words and phrases from the interviews.

I transcribed the interviews, organized the interview transcripts, identified common words and phrases, and highlighted the commonalities in each response to each interview question using the interview protocol (see Appendix). I used a yellow color to highlight the main keywords. All keywords highlighted in yellow were copied into a spreadsheet to group the information. I reviewed the content of the spreadsheet to find the common themes.

Evidence of Quality of Data

Following the basic qualitative study design, I used the member-checking method as a verification process again after completing the data analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Member-checking helped me validate that data interpretations and conclusions match the meaning participants attributed to their answers, referred to as emic validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Member-checking was a way to validate the interview transcripts. For research results to be as valid as possible, participants confirmed or corrected the researcher's general interpretations of their answers to ensure no misinterpretations occurred during data analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). By conducting member-checking, I ensured that personal biases were not reflected in the interview transcripts and that the transcripts reflected the accurate perception of the participants. Therefore, interviews were transcribed verbatim, and member-checking was conducted.

Data Analysis Results

The nine semi-structured interview questions used for data collection were appropriate for this research study. The semi-structured interviews allowed participants

the freedom to expand on the questions while also allowing the researcher to expand upon the participants' responses. Semi-structured interviews created a more open and relaxed environment, exemplified by several participants telling stories and clarifying their responses. Ten interviews were conducted via WebEx and ranged in length from approximately 12 minutes to 45 minutes. All 10 participants could respond to all nine questions, with only minimal delays due to processing the questions. Other than that, the interviews were completed without disruptions. All interviews were recorded, transcribed using NVivo software, and member-checked by all the study's participants for accuracy.

Once the interviews were member-checked by each participant, the interviews were coded for themes. This process took a great deal of time due to the extensive information gathered during the participants' interviews. The coding process for qualitative research is logical and intuitive as the researcher utilizes inductive and deductive reasoning through three coding phases. Manually reading the content line by line is an essential part of the coding process and was done throughout the coding process for this study.

The first phase of coding, or open coding, was used to go line-by-line through each interview to code the data, develop descriptive themes, and assign category titles. This open coding phase included selecting specific words and phrases from the content. The second phase, or axial coding, was used to explore patterns and emerging themes. During this phase, some of the information was merged, clustered, retitled, and specific elimination occurred. The third phase is where the deepest level of analysis occurs. The third phase is defined as selective coding. During this phase, new themes were created as

the content was compared, and additional merging, retitling, and elimination occurred. The coding for this research study used a mix of all three phases. Initial coding results were wide-ranging and included codes such as campus committee involvement, surveys, polls, group meetings, building relationships, authentic feedback, follow-through, greater transparency, and inclusionary opportunities.

Role of the Researcher

I have served in public education for 26 years. I taught at the high school level as a certified social studies and special education teacher for nine years. I also served as a high school assistant principal for nine years, and for the past eight years, I have been a secondary head principal. My teaching background resembles teacher participants in the study and could be interpreted as biased. Therefore, the participants and I share a common language, an understanding of the teacher occupation, and familiarity with the input and involvement process. I did not have a supervisory role over any of the participants in this project study.

I worked hard to establish a good rapport with the teachers who participated in this study due to my capacity to share a common background with the participants. Linguistic relativity is the idea that people see and understand the world through the lens of their local language, and their thoughts are bound by their language (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). A common background between the researcher and participants will facilitate a natural interview with the potential to generate in-depth insights for analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). However, I ensured that the recruitment process met all expected ethical standards put forth by the Walden IRB and the district's senior

administrator over research. Participants were well-versed in the subject of the project study. I am the only person who has access to the interviews saved and secured electronically. I was the only person who collected and coded the data from the participants. I will delete all electronic transcripts after five years of completion of the project study.

Discussion of Results

The study presented two research questions. The two research questions were based on the conceptual framework of LfL theory. Research question one focused on the teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions. Research question two focused on teachers' recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions. Therefore, the discussion of results is provided by the research questions, themes for teachers' perceptions concerning their inclusion in important campus decisions, and teachers' perceptions of recommendations for the future. The themes generated from research question one was department chair or team leadership, campus committee involvement, and surveys or polls. The themes generated from research question two were building relationships, inclusionary input opportunities, transparency, and authentic feedback. The summary of findings provides an overview of the results and a link to recommendations. It is also important to note that all participants are department chairs on their campus and serve in a leadership role over other teachers in their respective departments.

RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions?

Department Chair or Team Leadership

Nine out of 10 teachers reported they had input into campus decisions as their content team's department chair or leader.

> I'm a department chair. And so that gives me more insight than your average teacher. My principal is very good at bringing in the department chairs and asking us what we're thinking about doing whatever it is and here's why we want or need to do it. When he rolls out the information, he will ask us, "what do you all think about this?" and sometimes there have been times where we were all like, no, no, people are going to hate that. He's very good at taking the input from all of the department chairs. And it doesn't mean he always sticks with what the department chairs say, but he is very good at telling us why or why not a decision was made (Teacher 5).

The department chair's role is to provide professional leadership to the staff in their department, work collaboratively with other department chairs, and advise the principal on all matters connected with the department's operations. The department chair is also responsible for planning, coordinating, and supervising the activities within the assigned department, as they carry out directives from the principal.

> I feel like my role as department chair, I would say, I may have a closer relationship with the administrative team than others. I feel comfortable saying to my principal, I'm just warning you, some people are not really thrilled about this

idea and my department was chatting. What do you think about this? So, I see my

role as sort of an emissary between administration and the teachers. Sometimes it

is the other way around where I'm taking some complaints from my department

and saying, hey, let's think about what these complaints actually are and what do

you think people would prefer (Teacher 8).

Seven out of the nine teachers stated that their principal perceived the role of department

chair as a leadership position on campus, and five out of the nine teachers said that their

principal proactively sought out their input on issues regarding the campus.

"Once the top leadership meeting is done, then I feel like they push out

information to the department heads and department heads then communicate

with the teachers in their departments. I guess, in a pyramid format from top

down," stated Teacher 3.

Only one teacher reported that their principal did not value the role of the department

chair, and they were not involved in any campus decision-making.

Campus Committee Involvement

Seven out of 10 teachers reported that they had input into campus decisions if they served

on a campus decision-making committee. The following was shared by Teacher 7:

Teacher committees are essential. I think every campus can benefit from having

more teacher-based committees. And structure the committees with clear, outlined

expectations of what the committee is there to do- and have a strong vision. None

of us like to do work on work that doesn't make sense. So, the principal needs to

give the committee the information and data it needs to produce quality products

or solutions that add real value to the campus.

Examples of campus decision-making committees stated by the participants included:

Building Leadership Team (BLT), Campus Leadership Team (CLT), Campus

Improvement Committee (CIC), or the Campus Site Team (CST). The principal

designates the name of the committee. By direction from the Texas Education Agency, a

campus-level committee must be established on each campus to assist the principal. The

committee must meet to implement planning processes and site-based decision-making

per local School Board policy and must be chaired by the principal. The team is designed

to serve exclusively in an advisory role and approve items like staff development,

professional learning, and other campus specific matters.

> "I definitely think that any campus that doesn't have a campus leadership team
>
> should create one and make sure to include representatives from every
>
> department." explained Teacher 10.

The role of this campus committee is to assist the building principal in formulating

performance objectives for the campus and advising in other areas of planning,

budgeting, curriculum, staffing, staff development, and school organization. The campus-

level committee must approve the portions of the campus improvement plan addressing

campus needs through a campus needs assessment. The primary purpose of site-based

decision-making through one of these committees is to improve student achievement and

performance. As noted by Teacher 6,

We have our interdisciplinary meetings once a month. So rather than meetings

just by department or leadership position, our campus divides us all up based on

our conference period. We are then presented with a set of questions to sit and

discuss and then the leader of the team takes notes and reports the input of the

interdisciplinary meeting back to the principal.

Multiple participants noted that they wanted to learn how individuals were selected to

serve on these committees, and two of the participants stated the need for greater

transparency in the selection process. One participant cited favoritism and no term limits

on members of the leadership committee. Teacher 10 stated that,

"if you were not on the campus leadership team, you as a teacher didn't have a

big role in making big decisions unless you were really passionate about it and

wanted to meet one on one with the principal."

Surveys or Polls

Four out of 10 teachers reported that they had input into campus decisions if they

filled out the campus surveys or polls put forth by the administration. All 10 research

participants noted that their principal used Google Forms as an ongoing way to survey the

staff. Teacher 4 shared the following.

I like a monthly survey. I just feel like the timing of the survey is very important.

I think you get different information if you send it out too quick, but I like the 4 or

5 question surveys once a month. It doesn't have to be long and I suggest adding a

comment box. It helps our principal see how things are going.

Eight out of 10 participants stated that their principal attached a Google Form survey to an explanatory email to staff, and two said their principal used a QR code distributed to staff. Interestingly, four out of 10 participants discussed security and privacy issues when their principals used electronic means to survey or poll the campus. Teacher 1 shared the following.

> I would tell you; a lot of people don't trust the whole Google survey thing. Teachers worry about their names getting out there and all that. I think I honestly would say type up your concerns on a sheet of paper or any ideas you have and drop it in the box where there's no cameras. I hate to say that, but they there's a lot of voices that want to be heard anonymously. People don't want to voice what they're feeling on a survey. But I just think that we need to go old school on that and do like paper, you know, print it out and put it in the box in the teacher's lounge where there's no cameras.

All four discussed the reluctance of teachers to fill out online surveys and the need for more anonymity. The four teachers stated that they felt like doing online surveys provided the administration with the necessary documentation for a "we got you" kind of situation instead of for authentic feedback. Also, they shared the opinion that if the principal wanted their feedback, they would ask for it in an in-person setting.

RQ2- What are teachers' recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions?

Building Relationships

Seven out of 10 teachers stated that they preferred an individualized approach to input. They felt like they would be more inclined to share their ideas, suggestions, and possible criticisms if they had a good relationship with the principal. Teacher 8 noted the following thoughts.

> I think before there's a formal process there needs to be relationships. And if you have that communication with the teachers, and the administrative team has an open-door communication line. Teachers feel appreciated and respected, loved, and cared for. That is when, I think they are more open to giving authentic input.

Principals can build strong relationships with their staff by being respectful, supportive, and trusting teachers as professionals. As explained by Teacher 7

> It's trusting us with information and giving us the information that makes us feel like not only do you value me and you hear me, but when I can't have my way about something that I at least understand what happened or why it doesn't make sense at this time or whatever.

Teachers discussed the need for principals to get to know their teachers individually. Teacher 1 noted

> I will say that, you know, the last five years or so, it's just gotten where we have so many new teachers and so many others retired that I'm not as close to admin as I was at one point. I wish that on a big high school campus like ours, that we could do more things to get to know each other a little bit better. I think that

would be the first steppingstone of all of things because we really don't know

each other like we used to. The relationships aren't there.

They encouraged principals to discover their teachers' likes and dislikes, hobbies, family,

etc. All 10 teachers in the research study discussed the need for appreciation, empathy,

equity, and transparency, to feel connected to their principal and the campus.

Inclusionary Input Opportunities

Six out of 10 teachers noted the need for inclusionary input opportunities. In an

inclusive school, there is a culture and practice of valuing every student and staff

member. A shared mission, vision, and beliefs apply to everyone within the organization.

Therefore, when principals demonstrate inclusive leadership, they foster this culture of

equity and inclusion. The principal builds a structure of collective responsibility for all

students where educators respond to the unique needs of each student. The staff sets high

expectations while providing appropriate support and resources for all learners.

Additionally, the principal establishes committees of diverse staff members with diverse

perspectives to make collective decisions and propose ideas and solutions for the campus.

To be more inclusive with teacher input, I think you have multiple groups. Like,

okay, if you want the leadership group, fine. I get that. But then have the building

leadership team because they can be two different groups. And two, you know,

have different people on those committees (Teacher 2).

All of the teachers discussed the need for principals to have more than one driving

committee and allow for shared decision-making. Having multiple committees alleviates

the ideas of favoritism and the same people making all the decisions. Teacher 6 noted the following.

> I would recommend interdisciplinary teams. I think it's fantastic for a school to get people together from all departments and who represent all student populations to discuss innovative ideas and get different viewpoints and perspectives. Principals should for sure structure input gathering like that.

Transparency

Five out of 10 teachers stated that principals needed to be more transparent to enhance future opportunities for teachers to have input. Transparency is being open, vulnerable, and allowing others information about what is happening. Teachers know that specific information calls for confidentiality, like student privacy, medical information, and security situations, but with other details, a staff who is kept in the loop and understands the whole picture is more likely to put their trust in their principal. When discussing input, teachers mentioned when they vote on something or submit their input on a Google Form, they never see the results. For example, Teacher 3 added the following.

> Yeah, the lack of transparency is very true and all of the cards seem to be played very close to the vest. And there's not really, I don't know if it's genuine, but the information is not being relayed. It's not being conveyed to teachers. And we don't really know the reason behind it or why we're just doing the task that is asked of us.

When a principal does not show the results, it gives the appearance of no follow-through or a lack of transparency surrounding the results or reasons why a decision was made. Teacher 4 added

> I don't believe that there was much guidance on any decisions. There wasn't any kind of transparency. I would have no idea. So, for me I would say that there was no transparency, you know what, I read every email and I followed through and so I know that there wasn't transparency. Specific decisions just were not communicated.

Additionally, all five teachers suggested that a lack of transparency and follow-through leads to trust issues, and four of the teachers said that it created problems with buy-in amongst staff. Teacher 10 noted the following.

> Trusting that the input is considered and may be utilized. Like if you're going to ask me for my input, don't just do it to be polite about it. Use it or if you don't let me know why you chose something else. Just trusting that if you believe that your workers are who you've hired them to be and what you need from them, you're getting from them, and then actually using their input and not just, you know, doing it because someone in central office asked you to.

Authentic Feedback

Four out of 10 teachers recommended that principals focus on giving their teachers authentic feedback. Teachers suggested that principals can offer teachers feedback through various formats, including written comments, recorded notes, informal observations, group discussions, or individual conversations.

I think you're not going to get genuine input if you're just doing a survey like the

Gallup Q-12 Survey, the Panorama Teacher Survey, or the teacher pulse checks. I

think you need to schedule time to have a face-to-face conversation where you

actually talk to somebody for 10-15 minutes uninterrupted (Teacher 9).

Regardless of the format, teachers stated that "how" principals communicate feedback

matters to them.

Try to remember what it's like to be in the classroom. Don't lose sight of that.

Look at the people that are doing things consistently. Reward those of us that are

doing our job and only occasionally have a slip up. Don't email all of us to stop

doing something when it is only a select few. That's bad for morale. Please email

that person that is doing it. So, reward the good teachers by, if nothing else, not

having to read all of that. Remember what it's like to be in the classroom and

don't do the group blanket punishment email. Because some of us are really doing

a good job. And you know, sometimes silence is golden, even if you don't have

time to praise us, you know, at least don't make us read that (Teacher 5).

Teachers said that feedback should be meaningful, helpful, and non-threatening. Teachers

want authentic feedback promptly with the ability to process it and put it into practice.

Often the only feedback a teacher receives is at the end of the year in a formal written

document without the ability to collaborate, discuss, or reflect on what the principal has

assessed. Additionally, teachers recommended that principals show appreciation and

recognition for their successes; nothing is too big or small. They desire advice through

ideas and strategies that convey support rather than mandates. Lastly, teachers stated that

they want to know that their principals and colleagues believe in them, understand their strong commitment, and have confidence in their success.

Summary of Findings

The discussion of results provided meaningful insight into teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and their recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions. The Appendix shows the nine semi-structured questions used to guide the participants' interviews. The summary of findings provides an overall compendium of what the interviews uncovered through the study. The summary of findings included items that were both identified in the themes and not identified in the themes. Tables 1 listed below shows the research questions and themes in a simple, easy-to-read format.

Table 1

Teachers' Perceptions Input Themes

Research Question	Theme
RQ#1- Qualitative: What are teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions?	Department Chair or Team Leadership Campus Committee Involvement Surveys or Polls
RQ#2- Qualitative- What are teachers' recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions?	Building relationships Inclusionary Input Opportunities Transparency/Follow Through Authentic Feedback

Several interesting findings were derived from the interviews when research question one, "What are teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions?" was asked. Of the 10 teachers interviewed, nine reported

they had input into campus decisions as their content team's department chair or team lead. Seven out of the nine teachers stated that their principal perceived the role of department chair as a leadership position on campus, and five out of the nine teachers said that their principal proactively sought out their input on issues regarding the campus. Only one teacher reported that their principal did not value the role of the department chair, and they were not involved in any campus decision-making. It was refreshing to hear that most campus principals are utilizing their department chairs in leadership positions and allowing them to be part of the decision-making process. This result was unexpected due to the ongoing low survey results regarding teacher input in the district. According to Bayler et al., (2017), empowering teachers allows them to discover what they are capable of and expand their professional development. When a principal involves teachers in campus decision-making, it empowers the teachers. They further discuss how empowerment involves providing teachers with the opportunities to help with decisions, including school goals and policies (Bayler et al., 2017). The researchers attest this involvement in decision-making made teachers feel content and empowered (Bayler et al., 2017). All 10 teachers stated that they felt appreciated and valued by their principal when they were involved in campus decisions.

Another finding from the study was the importance of teachers serving on campus committees. Seven out of 10 teachers reported that they had input into campus decisions because they served on a campus decision-making committee. The role of a campus decision-making committee is to assist the building principal in formulating performance objectives for the campus and advising in other areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum,

staffing, staff development, and school organization. Teachers in the research study understood that every campus has to have a building or campus leadership team. It is a requirement by the Texas Education Agency. Still, all 10 teachers stated that opportunities to serve on a committee should be broader than this one committee or specific people. All 10 teachers wanted to see more committee opportunities on their campuses to get more significant input from many staff members. Multiple study participants noted that they wanted to learn how individuals were selected to serve on these committees, and two of the participants stated the need for greater transparency in the selection process. The principal must be transparent about the selection process for the campus decision-making committee or any additional committees on the campus. One participant cited favoritism and no term limits on members of the specific leadership committee on their campus.

Another finding from the study was the discussion surrounding the means of getting input from teachers. Four out of 10 teachers reported that they had input into campus decisions when they filled out the campus surveys or polls sent by the administration. All 10 research participants noted that their principal used Google Forms as an ongoing way to survey the staff. On a sizeable academic staff, sending an electronic survey is sometimes the most efficient and effective way to get input. However, four research participants discussed security and privacy issues associated with electronic surveys or polls. They went on to discuss the reluctance of many teachers to fill out online surveys and the need for greater anonymity. Significant reluctance to fill out an online survey was an unexpected finding. It appeared to the teachers as a way to

document input provided by the teacher instead of a means of seeking authentic input. Also, they shared the opinion that if the principal wanted their feedback, they would ask for it in an in-person setting.

Additionally, several fascinating findings were derived from the interviews when research question two, "What are teachers' recommendations for enhancing opportunities for teachers to provide input and be included in important campus decisions?" was asked. Seven out of 10 teachers stated that they preferred an individualized approach to input. Teachers felt they would be more inclined to share their ideas, suggestions, and criticisms if they had a good relationship with the principal. All 10 teachers in the research study discussed the need for appreciation, empathy, equity, and transparency, to feel connected to their principal and the campus. Essentially stating that connectivity yields a desire to contribute input.

Next, teachers discussed the need for inclusionary input opportunities. Six out of 10 teachers noted inclusionary input opportunities as a significant recommendation for principals looking to address teacher input on their campus. All of the teachers discussed the need for principals to have more than one decision-making or steering committee that allowed for more significant collective decision-making across the campus. Having multiple committees alleviates the notions of favoritism and the same people making all the decisions. By utilizing various committees on campus, a principal is working on the critical elements of developing teacher leadership, generating more avenues for input, and creating a culture where the teacher's voice is honored and respected.

Additionally, the study participants recognized the need for principals to be transparent and provide authentic feedback. Five out of 10 teachers stated principals needed to be more transparent about teacher input. Transparency is being open and vulnerable and allowing others to have information about what has happened, what is happening, or what might happen. When the teachers discussed input, they mentioned that they never see the results when they vote on something or submit their input on a Google Form. When a principal does not show the results, it gives the appearance of no follow-through or a lack of transparency surrounding the results or reasons why a decision was made. Additionally, all five teachers suggested that a lack of transparency and follow-through leads to trust issues, and four of the teachers said that it created problems with buy-in amongst the entire staff.

Authentic feedback by the principal was the last recommendation by study participants. Regarding authentic feedback, four out of 10 teachers recommended that principals focus on giving their teachers genuine feedback.

I would like to know the pulse of the campus. I would like the administration to know the pulse of the program that I am over and know that numbers are only getting higher and that is important data for our campus. I would love for that to be included and part of the conversations. I would like to be in the loop and be shared with. Maybe they just need to look outside of the chosen group and have a specific teacher input group. That way they can get a different perspective. So, let's open it up, and have more accessibility with input, actually work on getting really good feedback from all groups (Teacher 3).

Teachers suggested that principals offer feedback through various formats, including written comments, recorded notes, informal observations, group discussions, or individual conversations. Teachers stated that "how" principals communicated their feedback mattered to them. Teachers mentioned that the only feedback they generally receive is at the end of the year in a formal written document without the ability to collaborate, discuss, or reflect on what the principal has assessed. Lastly, teachers stated that they want to know that their principals and colleagues believe in them, understand their strong commitment, and have confidence in their success.

Several themes related to the study could be discerned in the literature review. For example, in the literature review, the school principal's role in providing teacher input opportunities, teacher leadership on committees, and the importance of facilitating teacher input into the process of campus performance improvement were examined. The summary of findings aligned with the information contained in the literature review. Teacher input is an essential part of organizational culture, teacher retention, and overall job satisfaction. The principal plays a central role in what teachers have input on and how that input is collected. Teachers want principals that value their expertise and experience (Jacobson, 2018). Principals need to be open to what the teachers can share and create a safe space for honest, respectful conversations where both sides can voice concerns and share their opinions (Will, 2019). Teachers believe they need a stronger voice in the decisions being made on their campuses. Principals need to provide teachers with more significant opportunities to express their input which could address their feelings of not being heard and boost engagement on their respective campuses. The summary of

findings and the literature review highlighted the aspects of teacher input as they aligned

with the leadership for learning (LfL) theory.

The summary of findings affirmed that the selection of the leadership for learning

(LFL) theory as the conceptual framework of this study was correct. LfL is often

understood as the process in which the whole school community actively participates in

the improvement of learning (Daniels et al., 2019). The theory is centered around

improving the learning community within a school by engaging all of its stakeholders.

LfL was used as the conceptual framework to understand how principals can improve

their learning community by engaging all stakeholders, particularly teachers' viewpoints.

Unlike other leadership theories, which focus on specific characteristics or styles, LfL

emphasizes the relationship between school leadership, collaborative leadership

practices/participation, context, and learning at various organizational levels. LfL is a

leadership model that promotes teachers as predominant stakeholders within an

organization, paying specific attention to teacher leadership opportunities and teacher

input into important campus decision-making.

Recommendations

The review of literature and the interviews conducted for the research study

provided a wealth of information which helped shape the proposed project. There is a

significant need for principals to obtain teacher input when making important campus

decisions. Although opportunities for input look differently on every campus, teachers

revealed that a variety of input options should be made available on every campus.

Teachers suggested that principals consider sustaining building leadership teams with

rotating membership, adding additional campus decision-making committees, sending frequent surveys or polls, creating staff pulse checks, sending inquiry emails, and conducting one on one informal input opportunities.

All participants for this study acknowledged that their principal utilized one or more of the input opportunities stated above. However, they all had recommendations for principals for enhancing future opportunities to teacher input. The first recommendation was for principals to start all of their input efforts by building relationships with their teachers. Teachers stated that they would be more willing to share their thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and criticisms if they had a good relationship with their principal. Teachers adamantly conveyed that they have no desire to give input if they don't have a personal connection or investment with the principal.

Another recommendation was for the principal to provide multiple inclusionary input opportunities for teachers. Participants revealed the necessity for principals to have multiple committees and utilize various means for gathering teacher input into campus decisions. With a multitude of input options, the climate on the campus becomes more inclusive, equitable, and the notion of favoritism decreases.

An additional recommendation was for principals to be transparent. Participants recommended that principals disclose their processes for committee selection, and for all results of surveys to be presented back to the faculty for review. Teachers felt like principals in many cases did not reveal the "how" or the "why" behind their decision-making leading to feelings of mistrust and angst by the staff.

Lastly, participants discussed the need for principals to provide authentic feedback. Teachers desire feedback. Teachers want to know how they are doing and they want to hear directly from their principal. Teachers get feedback from their students every day, but in most cases only receive feedback from their principal once per year in an evaluative setting. Teachers recommend that principals implement a variety of informal feedback options or have those one-on-one informal feedback conversations as they walk the building. Several of the recommendations are somewhat tied together or come back to the notion of transparency by the principal.

The recommendations were very useful in creating a project which consisted of a two-day professional learning opportunity for principals. The professional learning opportunity for principals connected the research study with the recommendations from the participants.

Section 3: The Project

A basic qualitative study was completed to explore teachers' perceptions about their role in providing input into important campus decisions and gathering their recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities in the local school district. The hope was that the study would help identify why teachers believe they have little input. It would also allow teachers to explain their ratings on the campuses' previous surveys and explore their recommendations to increase input opportunities.

The recommendations provided additional insight into teacher perceptions about campus decision-making overall, how the principal may improve input opportunities, and fruitful direction for future efforts in teacher leadership by campus principals. From this study and the findings that were revealed, it was determined that principals need to obtain teacher input when making important decisions about the campus. Principals should not be making all the decisions in isolation from the teachers doing the frontline work.

Although opportunities for input look different on every campus, teachers revealed that various input options should be available on every campus. Teachers suggested that principals consider building leadership teams with rotating membership, adding additional campus decision-making committees, sending frequent surveys or polls, creating staff pulse checks, sending inquiry emails, and conducting one-on-one informal input opportunities. However, the study participants revealed four compelling and unforeseen recommendations. Teachers felt that a principal must have several fundamental trust factors in place before a principal can deploy any of the tangible input suggestions mentioned above. The most prevailing of these recommendations was the

need for principals to start all their input efforts by building relationships. Teachers stated that they would be more willing to share their thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and criticisms if they had a good relationship with their principal. Teachers disclosed that they have no desire to give input if they don't have that personal connection or investment with their principal. Participants also revealed the necessity for principals to have multiple committees centered on equity, inclusion, and distributed leadership opportunities. An additional recommendation was for principals to be transparent. Participants recommended that principals disclose the processes for committee selection, as well as for all results of surveys to be presented back to the faculty for review. Lastly, participants discussed the need for principals to provide authentic feedback and follow through. Several recommendations are somewhat tied together or come back to the notion of transparency, rather than the anticipated tangible examples.

The recommendations were not revolutionary in ideology, but they were compelling when considering how to build the foundation for consistent and effective teacher input. All 10 participants identified that the biggest key to input is their relationship with the principal and how it directly impacts their desired input level. The participants' recommendations led to the decision to create a two-day professional development for principals that focused on a multi-step look at teacher input on their campuses. The professional development opportunity allowed principals to look at their Panorama Teacher Survey results, analyze their current teacher input efforts, review the recommendations provided in the study, and develop an action plan for future input teacher input efforts.

Rationale

As described in the introduction of this project, there needs to be a conscious effort put forth by principals to include teachers' input on important campus decisions. In addition to the effort necessary to gather teacher input by principals, principals must make solid connections and build trust with their teachers. Furthermore, in the results of the qualitative interviews, all teachers recommended the need for a personal relationship with their principal. Teachers also described the need for multiple communication channels with their principal.

In an article written by Plotinsky (2022) on the three ways administrators can include teachers in decision-making, it was stated that increased opportunities for functional communication leverage teacher expertise by opening stronger interpersonal connections and that frequently, the power of informal conversation is underrated. The Voices from the Classroom (2023) survey revealed that teachers are the single most important in-school factor in determining the overall success of a school; yet, their diverse voices are consistently left out of the conversation and decision-making. Most principals know that they cannot and should not make important campus decisions in isolation, yet many teachers feel left out of decision-making; thus, the project offers a window of opportunity for principals to dive into this disconnection.

Including teachers in important campus decisions is not just beneficial but essential. Principals need to integrate teacher voice into the decision-making process and realize that their responsibilities should not be isolated from the collective expertise and insights of the teachers on the front lines of education at their schools. Teachers possess

invaluable firsthand knowledge of students and their colleagues' daily challenges, needs, and aspirations. Their insights are grounded in the classroom experience and can provide critical perspectives on curriculum development, teaching strategies, and student support systems. By involving teachers in decision-making processes, principals tap into a wealth of expertise that can lead to more informed, practical, and effective decisions that ultimately benefit the entire school community. This collaboration with teachers helps foster a sense of ownership and commitment among teachers. When educators have a say in important decisions, they are more likely to feel invested in the outcomes and take ownership of the implemented changes. The collaboration between a principal and their teachers, in turn, can boost morale, motivation, and a sense of teamwork among the faculty, creating a more positive and cohesive school environment.

Lastly, involving teachers in decision-making promotes transparency and trust within the campus and school community. When teachers are part of the decision-making process, it can clarify administrative choices, dispel rumors, and reduce skepticism. This transparency fosters a sense of trust between the principal and their teachers, ultimately leading to better communication and stronger working relationships. Principals should include teachers in important campus decisions because it capitalizes on their expertise, fosters ownership and commitment, and promotes transparency and trust. Thus, the focus of this project was to create a two-day professional development that addressed teacher involvement in campus decision-making and how a principal can utilize their data, coupled with the suggestions provided by study participants to get teachers involved in the decisions on their campus.

Review of Literature

A literature review was conducted in conjunction with the study's findings to

provide a basis for the project. Areas derived from the study and further detailed in the

literature review include the importance of the teacher and principal relationship, input

committees based on inclusivity, transparency, and authentic feedback provided by

principals. The literature provided in this section was done by searching the Walden

University library and Google Scholar platforms. Searched terms on these platforms

included *the principal and teacher relationship, committee-based decision-making at*

schools, principal transparency, and *the importance of authentic teacher feedback by*

school principals.

The Principal and Teacher Relationship

Forging relationships with the teachers on campus is one of the most vital roles of

a principal. However, according to the article, *Appropriate Ways for Principals to Build*

Relationships with Teachers, teachers often perceive their principal's top priorities as

setting educational goals for the school or establishing policies and procedures, while

relationships appear to be secondary. This is easy to believe, given the amount of

pressure and the insurmountable number of tasks that principals are responsible for. With

so many expectations and responsibilities, the time spent building and working on

relationships is often compromised. Nonetheless, principals must set aside specific time

in their day to tend to the relationships in their building. The advantages of building

strong relationships are very clear. Teachers who feel that their voices are heard and that

they're supported in their attempts to take risks tend to be innovative leaders in the classroom, produce better results, and feel connected on their campuses (*Principal: Listening To, Caring for Staff's Needs Key to Success*, n.d.).

As principals evaluate their relationships with their teachers, they need to consider the efforts and gestures they make toward them every day. For example, principals should determine what their specific recognition efforts look like, their visibility around the school and in classrooms, their display of care toward teachers, their leadership style, and what accommodations they make for teachers who are struggling with issues outside the confinements of their classroom. As stated in the article, *How One Principal Builds Strong Relationships*, A good principal always remembers what it's like to be in the classroom, and a principal's number one goal should be to get to know their teachers and build trust as their leader. As Lowry (2021) indicated, after completing a qualitative study on principal leadership styles and teacher collective efficacy, teachers want to perform well for the principal and the organization due to the leadership attributes of the principal. The way the principal motivates, encourages, and supports all teachers leaves teachers with higher job satisfaction and commitment. All teacher participants shared the same beliefs and effort regarding student achievement and organizational success, thus creating a collective efficacy, which is fostered by the principal's leadership characteristics and ability to generate relationships (Lowry, 2021). Strong relationships between principals and teachers must include expressing care, challenging growth, providing support, sharing power, and expanding possibilities (Trust & MDRC, n.d.).

Another area for building the principal-teacher relationship identified through this study and reinforced in the literature review was teachers' desire for interpersonal growth, continuous improvement, and leadership opportunities. As a whole, teachers want to grow and feel a sense of autonomy on their campuses. Teachers are leaders inside of their classrooms, so it is natural for many to want to be identified by the principal as potential leader in other areas, too. Therefore, the principal needs to promote teacher leadership and a variety of opportunities to learn and grow. Wang and Ho (2020) examined the role of the principal as an essential factor in teacher leadership, and principals should encourage teacher leaders to lead the change process and empower them to participate in school-wide decision-making. Similarly, Chukowry (2018) described that "the success of teacher leaders depends largely on the principal's philosophy of power-sharing in the setting where they work." Principals can go a long way in building trust by allowing teachers to lead and truly own the issues that matter to them.

Inclusionary Input Opportunities

Teacher input looks different on every campus. As principals consider various teacher input opportunities, campus committees are one avenue many principals utilize. Study participants revealed that principals need multiple committees centered on equity, inclusion, and distributed leadership opportunities. Instead, many teachers feel like they are only invited to provide input when it comes to surface-level issues. Also, teachers often think that the decision has already been made or that their input has no actual impact on the outcome, and ultimately, their attempt at providing input could have been a

better use of their time (Gonzalez, 2021). For example, 93% of teachers believe they should have considerable input on campus decisions, including 52% that believe they should have "a great deal" of input into important decisions; nevertheless, only 7% of teachers say they have "a great deal" of input in school decisions (Hodges, 2022, p. 1). Therefore, a gap exists between the input teachers want to give and what input teachers actually get to have. A very intentional effort needs to be made by principals to make gains on teacher input.

Inevitably, with every school year comes a great deal of change. Principals must analyze what changes will occur that they must get teacher buy-in for. For example, principals are often tasked with getting teachers on board with new innovations, revised district protocols, curriculum adaptations, classroom environment expectations, and professional development, to name a few. Getting teachers to comply with changes is an inadequate response. For the transition to newness to occur with fidelity, teachers must be bought in and invested. After identifying opportunities for improvement, including teachers in decision-making is a definitive way to increase buy-in (Ayres, 2023, p.4). Choice does not have to be widespread, but an effort to provide teachers with understanding and a measure of influence into the decision can empower them. The idea of choice, teacher voice, and buy-in can be established throughout the campus with equitable committees and inclusive input opportunities.

A recommendation by study participants was for principals to provide multiple inclusionary input opportunities for teachers. Participants revealed the necessity for principals to have multiple committees and utilize various means for gathering teacher

input into campus decisions. With a multitude of options, the climate on the campus becomes more inclusive, equitable, and the notion of favoritism decreases. According to Woods-Murphy (2016), teacher leader participants emphasized the importance of working in school cultures that support their efforts. In addition, many teacher leader participants were able to improve school cultures and serve on productive campus committees through personal and collaborative efforts. Diversified campus committees can challenge the status quo and disrupt the established models to improve the educational experience for all.

Ultimately, it is incumbent on every school leader to accurately assess the need for change by identifying the deficiencies in what currently exists and include teachers in this process (Ayers, 2023, p. 5). Simpson (2021) conducted a study where teachers lead by getting involved in school-level decision making, improvement planning, action research, and leading new initiatives. Research revealed that when the necessary antecedents and enablers are in place, teacher leadership on campus committees can grow and lead to positive outcomes for students, teachers, and the greater school community.

Transparency

The project literature review recognized the need for principals to be transparent. To most of us, being transparent means, you're not hiding anything and you let others look through a window into your world, throwing the blinds wide open (Leedy, 2018, p. 2). Teachers tend to feel like principals do not reveal the "how" or the "why" behind their decision-making, leading to mistrust and angst by the staff. Effective communication is essential for the success of any organization and the evolution of the organization's

communication must be ongoing. In a school, teachers and principals need to be able to communicate openly and transparently to ensure comprehensive building-wide success. Teachers need to know that their principal supports them and is willing to listen to their concerns. By communicating transparently, both groups can better understand each other's perspectives and build stronger relationships (SAS, n.d).

The most important thing a principal can do is tell the teachers what change is needed and why that change is needed. When the "why" isn't shared, that failure can cause more trouble than any other communication oversight (Leedy, 2018, p. 4). Principals must take teachers behind the scenes and let them see all the planning, strategies, decisions, and solutions that must be considered. There is always a reason or purpose behind important decisions on a campus. If a principal invites teachers in and shares valuable background information, it removes doubt and builds trust. Transparency in leadership means keeping your employees in the loop, sharing the good and the bad, and welcoming honest feedback from your team members (Perucci, 2020).

Many teachers believe that transparency generates trust, and trust is linked to presuming positive intent when it comes to their principal. Erugun (2020) conducted a study where the implementation of transparency increased, noting that employees saw their supervisors more kindly; therefore, school administrators should demonstrate greater transparency. Through this trust, a greater degree of productivity can be achieved, teachers emphasize why principals act the way they do instead of making snap judgments, and the school's structures are seen as fair by those who function with them (Edwards, 2022). To ensure transparency in all aspects of the school, principals must

create equitable committees, structures, policies, and procedures that specifically deal with transparency and how transparency will be facilitated. Structured transparency creates accountability for those leading the campus and the necessity to pass on information to all stakeholders.

Authentic Feedback

Study participants discussed the need for principals to provide authentic feedback. Providing feedback to teachers is integral to creating a positive school culture and establishing school-wide expectations. Genuine feedback by the principal nurtures connectivity, reflection, and a desire for continuous improvement. Supporting teachers with timely and consistent feedback perpetuates self-reflection and collegiality as the school moves toward attaining specific goals. The principal must also establish predictable, ongoing systems for gathering, evaluating, and responding to feedback throughout the year to weave a culture of ongoing feedback (*A Strong Feedback Culture Starts with Us*, 2023).

When principals provide feedback to teachers, it must be meaningful. One way that principals can construct meaningful feedback is to identify specific strengths and areas of needed improvement. Feedback must also be consistent. Principals and assistant principals should be clear about the expectations and school-wide priorities from the beginning (Chiaro, 2019). For example, one principal uses a four-step process to provide feedback to teachers. The four-step process includes: 1. Framing the expectations, 2. Modeling, 3. Debriefing in the moment, and 4. Observing the teacher implementing. This four-step process narrows the focus to the highest-leverage practices (Chiaro, 2019).

Principals must be ready to give and receive feedback in a symbiotic and honest relationship with their teachers.

In the Vandermolen and Meyer-Looze (2021) case study, principals were evaluated to see if providing more feedback impacted teacher performance. The study uncovered that the principals' comments were too baseline and only descriptive about what the principal observed in the classroom. Therefore, it reveals the importance of authentic feedback beyond observed student behaviors. The goal of feedback is to give specific observation-based information for the interpersonal growth and development of the teacher. Feedback can include school culture, campus committees, mentor opportunities, classroom management, instructional methodology, and a host of other categories. Although there is a need for formal evaluations, when it comes to feedback, there are numerous benefits to informal feedback. In the Grissom et al., (2021) case study about feedback, the study revealed another challenge for effective feedback is the principal's hesitancy to have challenging conversations about weaknesses, leading them to over-focus on the positive aspects of what they have observed. For many principals, the skills required for meaningful teacher feedback conversations must be developed and ascertained over time. However, they are essential for the teacher's growth, professional development, and overall buy-in on the campus. The buy-in from quality feedback manifests the desire for teachers to provide input.

The literature review has provided abundant information on teachers' recommendations for enhancing teacher input opportunities. The literature review was conducted in conjunction with the study's findings to provide a basis for the project.

Areas derived from the research and further detailed in the literature review included the importance of the teacher and principal relationship, input committees based on inclusivity and transparency, and the importance of authentic feedback provided by principals. The participants' recommendations led to the creation of a two-day professional development for principals that focused on a multi-step look at teacher input on their campuses. The professional development opportunity allowed principals to look at their Panorama Teacher Survey results; staff pulse check data, analyze their current teacher input efforts, review the recommendations provided in the study, and develop an action plan for future input strategies. Therefore, a professional development for principals focused solely on teacher input was chosen for the project.

Project Description

The project was derived from the results of this research study and the literature review. The project was a two-day professional development for principals regarding teacher input efforts on their campuses. The professional development opportunity allowed principals to look at their Panorama Teacher Survey results, staff pulse-check data, analyze their current teacher input efforts, review the recommendations provided in the study, and develop an action plan for future teacher input efforts.

Teachers were asked how input was gathered on their campuses during this study. Teachers discussed the need for principals to consider sustaining input gathering with the building leadership teams on their campus and ensuring rotating membership. Teachers suggested that principals add additional campus decision-making committees to increase diverse perceptions and teacher involvement. Additionally, teachers conveyed the need

for principals to continue to send frequent surveys or polls and inquiry emails to solicit efficient and timely input from the entire staff. Lastly, teachers highly endorsed the idea of principals conducting one-on-one informal input opportunities. Teachers stated the need for principals to walk around the building, ask questions, and consider those information input opportunities.

In the summary of findings, participants expressed several recommendations needed before a principal deploys the strategies. Areas derived from the study include the importance of the principal-teacher relationship, input committees based on inclusivity, transparency, and authentic feedback provided by principals. Thus, the project came together as a means for these areas to be addressed to increase teacher input into important campus decisions. The professional development allowed principals to come together to analyze their campus input data, evaluate teachers' perspectives on their input, understand the teachers' recommendations, develop an action plan for future teacher input opportunities, and spend time in collaboration with their colleagues on the topic.

The criteria for the professional development were derived from the teachers' perceptions of input themes and the teachers' perceptions of recommendations themes, aligning with the literature review and analyzing current input data and efforts with desired future outcomes. As each theme was previously identified, it became a focal point for professional development. The professional development's primary objective was to guide principals to analyze their input data and efforts and evaluate recommendations to consider new strategies with desired outcomes. The conclusion of the professional

development was engaging, relevant, and collaborative and helped set the foundation for future training for principals on teacher input on their campuses.

Resources

The most important resource needed was a convenient meeting time with all the principals. Time is a crucial resource when scheduling professional development with principals. Principals interested in attending professional development needed to be able to commit to this timeframe for uninterrupted collaboration and focus. The professional development was in-person, so the presenter only required a computer connection to a projection screen to display a PowerPoint Presentation. The participants were placed in small groups ranging from 3-4 participants. At each table's center, the participants found markers, a large post-it pad, and sticky notes. The professional development was held in the district's professional learning center so all participants could access the internet for video streaming and collaboration efforts.

Roles and Responsibilities

The project required roles for two primary groupings: the presenter and the principals. The presenter was responsible for ensuring that each principal had their campus teacher input from the Panorama Teacher Survey and the Staff Pulse Check data and that the findings from the study were represented and understood. All principals needed to know that participants in the study were department chairs from one of the sixty-nine campuses in the district and that the presenter only collected, analyzed, and summarized the research study's data presented in the meeting. The presenter did not review any data associated with a specific principal or campus. The presenter also

ensured that all aspects of the professional development were thoroughly explained and understood by the principals involved. These aspects included roles, time, commitment, and expectations.

Potential Barriers

The timing of the professional development is the primary barrier. Since the school year started the second week of August, the project presentation and implementation were planned for two staff work days in the Fall Semester. While the professional development was scheduled for two days, the principals had to commit to both days fully. The only other potential barrier is time; the presenter ensured that time was specifically set aside for the professional development to be adequately implemented for those two days.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The project was presented to the Superintendent and Executive Director of Professional Learning during the 1st nine-week grading period. The presentation was precluded by a summary of the findings from the research study that led to the project proposal and included the potential benefits of implementing the project. Upon receiving approval for the project, the goal was to begin implementation immediately. Implementation of the project consisted of an initial overview WebEx led by the presenter with all principals. During this meeting, an introductory study recap and an explanation of how the professional development evolved were introduced. The commitment and expectations were covered. After the meeting, a summary was provided

to all principals interested in moving forward with the professional development opportunity.

Project Evaluation Plan

The professional development project was evaluated by both formative and summative feedback. At several designated segments of the professional learning, the presenter conducted a formative check-in with the participating principals. After the professional development, the presenter deployed a summative evaluation with all the principals. Further details of the evaluation are provided in the following paragraphs.

Formative check-ins are an essential aspect of any professional development. Formative check-ins ensured that the presenter proceeded slowly and that participants in the training fully comprehended the intended lesson. Throughout the professional development, principals were in small groups. These small groups were used to discuss key concepts presented. For example, principals had small group discussion time when principals were presented with teachers' perceptions of input on their campuses. Then, each small group shared their answers to spark discussion amongst the whole group. After this example, not only was a formative check-in conducted, but innovative ideas about current input practices were formulated. There was a formative check-in at each related professional development step.

A summative evaluation was deployed after the professional development. The summative assessment was used for both overall understanding, reflection, and feedback on the importance of the professional development provided. There was a one-page summative evaluation provided (Appendix A). The summative evaluation consisted of

five questions created by the presenter to show proficiency upon professional development completion and reflection regarding the training. The reflection provided the necessary information for the presenter to enhance the experience for principals in the future.

Project Implications

The most significant implication was the principals completing the professional development. The professional development took two days and a lot of time off their campuses. This experience increased principals' understanding and capacity when considering campus decision-making and teacher input. The professional development was engaging and provided numerous opportunities for principals to collaborate and discuss current and future teacher input trends on their campus. The principal collaboration and authentic discussions were vital for sustaining future interest in this professional learning. Teacher input will continue to evolve as new technologies are presented, committees change, and the campus needs for each principal progress. How teacher input is collected, and the recommendations that teachers have for getting more significant input into campus decision-making will always be something that principals need to work on. This is not a professional development that is a one-time event or a one-stop shop. Thus, the implication of involving teachers in important campus decisions is an enduring aspect of a principal's job.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

Determining the strengths and limitations of the project was more challenging than initially thought for several reasons. When evaluating the strengths, it's evident and easy to figure out what the project's strengths are. Still, through another person's lens, it may be ambivalent. When it comes to the study's limitations, I attempted to eliminate them; however, some limitations could rise to the surface, so they were also addressed.

The project's strengths are that it brought principals together in collaboration for an extended time and revealed both internal and external perceptions. The professional development allowed a greater understanding of teachers' perceptions into important campus decisions. Principals left the project knowing that teacher input will continue to evolve as new technologies are presented, committees change, and the campus needs progress. However, how teacher input is collected, and the recommendations teachers have for getting more significant input into campus decision-making will always be something that principals need to look at and work on.

Getting principals off campus for an extended amount of time is often challenging. This professional development provided two days of uninterrupted time for principals to collaborate and discuss teacher input on their campuses. Time has been a repeated concern with the need for teacher input into important campus decisions and principals' perceptions regarding the subject. This professional development helped ease the time constraints and allowed principals to learn and partner with their colleagues on the topic.

Time was the first strength recognized, but teachers' perceptions were the second strength. As indicated in the project study, teachers' perceptions were extremely influential in determining this professional development. Therefore, the opportunities for department chairs to speak openly about their perceptions of teacher input into important campus decisions and their recommendations were essential. This professional development also gave principals a chance to hear from department chairs, who, at times, are the voice of so many of the teachers on their campuses. As part of the principals' professional development, they could also openly discuss the perceptions and recommendations from department chairs around the district. This was another strength of the project because principals understood that their relationship with teachers on the campus is the foundation for whether they will receive open and honest input, as most teachers in the study preferred one-on-one conversations versus the standard surveys or polls.

The goal of the project was to give principals a set time frame to come together to analyze their campus input data, evaluate teachers' perspectives on their input, understand the teachers' recommendations, develop an action plan for future teacher input opportunities, and spend time in collaboration with their colleagues on the topic. The last and greatest strength of this professional development is how it could positively impact principals' favorable results regarding teacher input. If principals spend time working on teacher input based on the recommendations from the study, their teachers' perceptions of input into important decisions on their campuses will improve. Thus, the

most significant strength is a better understanding of how to include teachers into important campus decisions.

Concerning project limitations, the one that was a must to consider was time. Although time was a strength for the project, it could also be considered a limitation. Getting multiple principals together for two days is difficult enough, but time could have become an issue due to the depth and complexity of several of the discussions. The presenter had to be very conscious of staying on the specified agenda and the timeframe for each part of the agenda. Often, principals wanted to spend more time on specific pieces of their campus data, teachers' recommendations, and why they felt they had difficulty implementing greater teacher input measures on their campuses. I had to keep the professional development on track, adhere to the intended agenda, and constructively manage time.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Professional development has been a long-time staple in public schools to provide learning opportunities for educators; therefore, this professional development approach for principals is consistent with having a greater chance of impact. However, there was an alternative approach that may also have produced positive results in addressing teacher input into important campus decisions. That alternative approach could have implemented the project into the principals' required summer learning conference.

The alternative approach of utilizing the summer learning conference is also a common option for education; however, the main factor considered was time. Considering all of the learning that the district wants to address in the five days of the

summer conference, it didn't seem like the most conducive option. The summer learning

conference for principals addresses new legislative initiatives, campus operations, legal

issues, special education, 504, teacher evaluations, campus improvement plans, and other

imperative professional learning sessions. Spending two full days on teacher input seems

time-prohibiting. Perhaps this approach could be realized as an option for the principals'

summer learning in the future, or at least a portion of the learning.

Scholarships, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

When educators said that obtaining a doctorate was going to be an extensive

interpersonal journey, that was an understatement. For me, this process began over a

decade ago with countless setbacks, doubts, and rewrites. The journey has come with

many frustrations, worries, and uncertainties. It makes you question your capabilities and

capacities as a student down to your core. Regardless, the part of me that stayed

consistent was my persistence and the support of my committee along the way. The

reading and research I have done, I have not only used for myself, but I have also brought

it to my school for ongoing learning and leadership practices. Deciding on whether to do

a quantitative or qualitative study took the most time, in addition to the review of

literature. However, I now understand how it all comes together and how the pieces

eventually fit into place. An extensive and current literature review is fundamental to

supporting a quality research study. Additionally, the literature review has made me a

more effective principal. I consistently reference information from my research in my

current work on campus.

The most important aspect of the journey is understanding time management, persistence, and the concept of "eating an elephant" one bite at a time. Doctorate degrees are work, and it has been the most challenging thing I have ever done. I have tremendous adoration and respect for all the folks before me, as well as those who come after me, who have obtained a doctoral degree while working full-time in public education.

When I started my research, I had yet to learn that it would result in the professional development opportunity for principals that it ended up becoming; however, as the themes from my interviews evolved during data analysis, the project began to take shape. I could see that the teachers' perceptions of their input into important campus decisions carried more weight than what principals gave it credit for.

Principals come into the profession knowing that teachers need to have input, but the extent to which a teacher feels comfortable expressing their input and the means they feel most comfortable expressing that input must be evaluated and considered on each campus. For the most part, teachers and principals want similar things for their campuses, but other factors like relationships and opportunities are at the heart of the matter. The most critical factors for principals were trust and transparency, but other factors, such as inclusive committee opportunities and authentic feedback, were highly recommended. The consistent theme that all teachers shared was that everything involving input was routed in the foundation of the teacher-principal relationship. The relationship must be there.

The professional development project was created based on the participants' responses in the study. The transition from the research study to the project was seamless,

as the teachers' perceptions regarding input and their recommendations guided the format. The information given during the qualitative interviews was relevant and provided a clear pathway to creating the professional development for principals. Furthermore, having authentic teachers' voices driving the recommendations for principals provided immense insight for the project. Thus, the focus of this project was to create a two-day professional development that addressed teacher involvement in campus decision-making and how a principal can utilize their specific campus data, coupled with the suggestions provided by study participants to get teachers involved in the decisions on their campus.

Completing this project study provided me with an immeasurable professional learning and personal growth journey. I now know what it takes to truly research a topic, live it, breathe it, and then turn around and provide a meaningful professional development for my colleagues. Before this study, I needed to realize the depth and complexity it takes to be called a research practitioner and determine if other research was valid or credible. Completing this study has taken me to a higher academic growth level and made me a more effective learner and leader.

Reflections on the Importance of the Work

Implementing teacher input into important campus decisions is essential for principals. The principal's role in providing teacher input opportunities, teacher leadership on committees, and the importance of facilitating teacher input into the process of campus performance improvement are all significant aspects of the principal's role. Principals need their teachers, and they need them involved. Teacher input is

essential to organizational culture, teacher retention, and overall job satisfaction. The principal plays a central role in what teachers have input on and how that input is collected. Teachers believe they need a stronger voice in the decisions being made on their campuses. Principals need to provide teachers with more significant opportunities to express their input.

Lastly, involving teachers in decision-making promotes transparency and trust within the campus and school community. When teachers are part of the decision-making process, it can clarify administrative choices, dispel rumors, and reduce skepticism. This transparency fosters a sense of trust between the principal and their teachers, ultimately leading to better communication and stronger working relationships. Principals should include teachers in important campus decisions because it capitalizes on their expertise, fosters ownership and commitment, and promotes transparency and trust. Thus, the implication of involving teachers in important campus decisions is an enduring aspect of a principal's job. Therefore, the importance of the work done for this doctoral study is a guide for principals on how to integrate teachers into important campus decisions.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This professional development project has the potential to impact principals for future years and all educational levels positively. This professional development was geared toward principals at elementary and secondary levels, but all the professional development attendees were secondary principals. The professional development could be easily adapted for elementary school principals and specialty schools such as high

school career centers, alternative education disciplinary schools, and credit recovery campuses. Additionally, teacher input on any campus is vital to the campus culture.

Another area for future research consideration is understanding that organizational culture, teacher retention, and overall teacher job satisfaction are constantly evolving, so although the teacher input professional development is applicable today, it should be reviewed every couple of years for relevancy and innovations. New innovations and technologies will also drive change in how principals build their leadership teams, add additional campus decision-making committees, send frequent surveys or polls, create staff pulse checks, send inquiry emails, and conduct one-on-one informal input opportunities.

The final area for future consideration is the application of this professional development. This research and how principals include teachers in important campus decisions is vital to a successful organization. This professional development must be presented from a point of enthusiasm and authenticity. All principals involved in participating in the professional development must desire to look at their campus data and look sincerely at making positive changes when it comes to teacher input. Completing the professional development should reflect a more profound understanding regarding principals' relationship building, inclusionary input opportunities, transparency, and authentic feedback regarding teacher input on their campus.

Conclusion

Finding methods to include teachers in important campus decisions is critical to the success of any school. Teachers should feel that their opinions, ideas, and critiques

are welcomed, valued, and appreciated. When I think about my 10 years in the classroom, I remember when my input mattered to the principal, so much so that I pursued a career in campus administration. I admired the principals I had who informally asked for my opinions, put me on campus committees, pushed me to pursue leadership on their campus, and saw potential in me. As I moved up in campus administration, I watched how my predecessors fostered the growth and potential in others, and it has become a lifelong passion of mine. Now, I have the outstanding opportunity to do these things for my teachers and staff, and I will continue to pursue ways to ensure that teachers' voices are heard, understood, and treasured. This doctoral study was about urging principals and educational leaders to do the same. Listen to those on the front lines, implement the feedback you get from them, and ensure you consistently work on the relationship to foster trust and transparency. The decisions made on campus should be thoughtful and collaborative.

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Appendix: Qualitative Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to identify why teachers believe they have little input by providing them with the opportunity to explain their ratings on the campuses' PTS and exploring their recommendations to increase input opportunities.

RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions on input into important campus decisions?

RQ2. What recommendations do teachers have on how their input may be included into important campus decisions?

<u>Interview Questions</u>:

1) What are your years of experience? What is your level of instruction (ES, MS, HS)? Do you have experience at different campuses, subject(s) or grade levels taught? Do you have experience teaching in other school districts?

2) What is the process your school's leaders follow when important decisions need to be made for the campus?

3) What role do teachers play in the decision-making process at your school? What role do you play?

4) How is teacher input gathered and included in your school's decision-making process?

5) Are there instances when teachers' input is not sought or not included in important decisions?

   a. If no, why do you think teachers' input is always included?

   b. If yes, what types of important decisions would not include teachers' input? Why do you think teachers' input is not included in these decisions?

6) How could your school's leaders be more inclusive of teacher input when making important decisions?

7) What recommendations do you have for school leaders as to optimizing teacher input into important decisions? What would the ideal process look like?

8) If you could make the one, most important recommendation to school leaders at your school and other schools to improve the role teachers play in providing input

into important decisions, what would that be? Why do you see this as the most important?

9) How can school leadership best support your role as an important source of input into school decisions?