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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated K-8 teachers beliefs about their principals' behaviors and attitudes that encouraged them to remain in teaching. Teachers completed interviews that focused on principal behaviors, levels of support received, relationships between level of support and decision to stay in teaching, job satisfaction, job stress, and school commitment. From these interviews, a list of 22 principal behaviors was generated, then ranked by additional teachers and principals. Results indicated that positive teacher-principal relationships related to satisfied teachers, who were likely to stay, high levels of school morale, and teachers who worked harder to meet their students' needs. Teachers did not feel supported by principals who did not practice and take seriously what they considered to be two of the five most important behaviors: supporting teachers with parents and supporting teachers in matters of student discipline. Teachers who reported having supportive principals mentioned that their principals were highly visible and gave suggestions and guidance. They felt respected, and in turn, they respected, liked, and listened to their principals. Teachers who reported having unsupportive principals felt that their judgment was not respected, they did not feel trusted, and they did not feel a high degree of trust in their principals. The interview questions are attached. (Contains 16 references.) (SM)

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**Principal Behaviors that Encourage Teachers to Stay in the Profession:  
Perceptions of K-8 Teachers in their Second to Fifth Year of Teaching**

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Retaining enough teachers to do the job of educating our nation's young has become a persistent problem. The stress of teaching has markedly increased, and many of our teachers are leaving the profession. According to Woolfolk (2001), the ills of society have impacted the classroom. Many children are coming to school unprepared (academically and emotionally), and teachers sense that their role has shifted to that of social worker and counselor as well as teacher (p. 87). Studies have shown that many teachers are walking out of the classroom (Karge, 1993; Ingersoll, 1997) and that teachers in their first five years are most at risk (Feistritzer, 1999; Johnson et al., 2001). The seriousness of the teacher attrition problem cannot be ignored. It is crucial to find ways to slow this exodus and to retain the teachers we have (Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001).

### The Problem

Education researchers have warned of a severe teacher shortage in the next 10 years (USDE, 1999). During this period, when most teachers (who are between 45-55) plan to retire, the nation's school enrollment is projected to increase by one million children. It is estimated that 50,000 additional teachers will be needed to fill the gap (USDE, 1999, ¶ 8). Educational journals comment frequently on our critical shortage of qualified teachers (USDE, 1999; Olson, 2001) and on the fact that, although enough students seem to graduate in education each year, the high rate of those who teach less than five years--or never--continues to concern many school districts (Metlife Survey, 2001; Feistritzer, 1999). Educators are perplexed and frustrated while attrition rates remain unsatisfactorily high.

Many studies have searched for the reasons teachers leave the profession. A number of factors are shown to contribute, such low salaries, discipline problems, school climate, and

working conditions (Karge, 1993; Ingersoll, 2001; Sclan, 1993). According to many research studies, (Karge, 1993; Russell et al. 1987; Goldberg, 2000), one of the most significant of these factors is the level of administrative support. Goldberg (2000) and Johnson et al. (2001) report a strong connection between principal behaviors and teacher job satisfaction and morale. Teachers participating in both of these studies reported a lack of administrative support as the number one reason for leaving the profession. Not much is known, however, about what principals do or say that influence new teachers to stay (Blasé & Kirby, 2000).

Most principals in my acquaintance seem dedicated to the children in their care and work long hours to make a difference in their students' lives. Many of them are experiencing the increasing weight of society's problems--problems that are reflected in their schools: violence, poverty, and the need to make up for deficits with children who are abused, neglected, or living in dysfunctional families. A principal's job is not an easy one. Finding ways to encourage teachers to stay in the profession may help to lighten a principal's burden, provide more stability in his or her school, and improve school climate.

#### Purpose of the Study

Recognizing that there is a teacher shortage, that large numbers of teachers are continuing to leave the profession within their second to fifth year, and that principal behavior may be a strong contributor to the decision to stay or leave, the primary purpose of this study was to identify the principal behaviors and attitudes reported by teachers in their second to fifth year that encourage them to stay in the profession. Since I am hoping the results of this study might be helpful to principals who want to encourage their teachers, a secondary purpose was to determine how principals view the importance of these reported behaviors. Comparing principals' priorities with those of teachers may offer the insight and understanding needed to

improve principal-teacher relationships. Encouraged teachers who stay in the school or profession are likely to affect their educational community in important ways: (a) in their level of professional fulfillment, (b) in the quality of their teaching, (c) in the academic performance of their students, and (d) in their contribution to a school's environment.

### Design

This study employed an integrated design that included both qualitative and quantitative components. The qualitative portion used a phenomenological approach that is described by Creswell (1998) as "primarily an attempt to understand empirical matters from the perspective of those being studied" (p. 275). This qualitative segment of the study (an interview of 15 teacher participants) included 20 open-ended questions that dealt with the teachers' description of principal behaviors that provide support and encouragement, the level of support they reported receiving, and the relationship between the level of support and their decision to stay or leave the school or profession. The questions also addressed levels of job satisfaction, job stress, and school commitment in relationship to principal behaviors. These interview questions were developed for this study from the literature review findings and from the researcher's own experience and observation (see Table 1).

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Insert Table 1

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From the results of the interviews, a list of 22 principal behaviors was generated—behaviors that the participating teachers reported as important to their level of job satisfaction and to their decision to stay in the teaching profession. This list of behaviors was used to create a rating/ranking activity to be given to 100 additional teachers as well as to 100 principals. These two groups (teachers and principals) were asked to rate the importance of each behavior

on a 1-5 scale and to rank the top three behaviors that they believed most encouraged teachers (see Table 2).

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Insert Table 2

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The participants in this study included teachers taking master's level classes at two universities in suburban Southern California and principals in various school districts in the area all of whom filled out the rating/ranking surveys anonymously. Both groups volunteered their participation and were mixed by gender, age, ethnicity, grade level, and years of experience.

### The Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the principal behaviors and attitudes that teachers report as encouraging and supportive?
2. To what extent do these teachers report receiving their preferred forms of encouragement and support? (Scale of 1-5)
3. Does the behavior of the principal make a difference in a teacher's desire to stay in the profession? If so, how?
4. Are there any patterns of difference in teacher interview or survey responses by gender, grade level, age, ethnicity or years of experience?
5. What kinds of principal support are rated (1-5 scale) and ranked (top 3) as most important to teachers in their second through fifth year of teaching?
6. How do principals rate and rank these teacher reported principal behaviors?
7. How do the ratings and rankings of teachers and principals compare?

Although the study was predominantly a phenomenology, a quantitative component was included to add strength and credibility. This quantitative portion of the study was based on interview questions that included a rating scale of 1-5 (see Table 1) as well as the results of the rating/ ranking activity completed by 100 additional teachers in their second to fifth year of teaching and 100 principals. It was supposed that the results of the rating/ranking surveys may suggest a difference in perception between teachers and principals in the behaviors and attitudes

that most encourage teachers to stay in the profession. In particular, it was conjectured that the top five behaviors teachers report as most important to them might be different from the five that principals list, and that this “mismatch” may be one source of the difficulty in retaining teachers—whether in the profession or in the school.

#### Analysis of the Data: Qualitative Component

As Patton (2002) explains,

qualitative data describe. They take us, as readers, into the time and place of the observation so that we know what it was like to have been there. They capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words. (p. 47)

To capture the participating teachers’ “experience of the world,” the interviews were transcribed and read through many times to identify categories of responses, patterns, and themes—both by participant and by individual question. Comparisons of teachers and responses were also considered by teachers’ age, gender, ethnicity, grade taught, and years of experience. In addition, answers to the 20 interview questions were looked at one at a time across all participant answers to find similarities of thought. The interview results were compared to the rating/ranking results of 100 other teachers who were also in their second through fifth year of teaching. In addition, the rating/ranking activities filled out by principals were compared to those filled out by the teachers.

#### Analysis of the Data: Quantitative Component

##### Interview Rating Questions

In the quantitative portion of the study, the results of the interviewed rating questions were reported, giving each a mean score (see Table 1). Using the Likert scale responses from these interviews, the researcher noted the frequency distribution, the total strength of each

response, and any possible connection between responses by teacher age, gender, ethnicity, grade level, or years of experience.

#### Rating/Ranking Activity: Procedure

Both teachers and principals rated each behavior 1-5 in importance. Each group was also asked to rank the top three behaviors they felt were most important in encouraging teachers. On the ranking activity, both teachers and principals were given the opportunity to fill in a behavior they believed is highly encouraging, but that was not listed.

#### Rating/Ranking Activity: Analysis

To analyze the results of the rating/ranking activity, the researcher

1. ranked the results of the 22 principal behaviors in descending order by principals and by teachers
2. ran an independent *t*-test of difference between the means of principals and teachers to note the relative importance that teachers and principals place on these behaviors
3. employed a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) to investigate if there were clusters of variables that shared strong relationships to form underlying factors of the instrument
4. created subscales according to the factor structures revealed by PCA. These subscales were subsequently labeled: (a) *Effective Administrative Behaviors*, (b) *Emotional Support Behaviors*, (c) *Valuing Teachers' Judgment Behaviors*, and (d) *Respect and Care for Teachers as Professionals Behaviors*.
5. ran an independent *t*-test of difference between the means of the subscales to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in perception between

principals and teachers on the relative value of the behaviors represented by these components.

### Findings from the Interviews

Surveys and questionnaires are valuable tools for gaining needed information, but they have limitations in what they can reveal. It is through listening to the “voices” of the participants and getting a feel for the texture of their lived experience that understanding is enhanced. From these interviews, the following themes emerged through the process of inductive analysis: (a) The Need for Emotional Support; (b) Love for Students/Making a Difference; (c) Respect for Teachers as Professionals; (d) The Power of Praise and Acknowledgement; (e) Support in Matters of Discipline; (f) School Morale/Colleague Support; and (g) Powerlessness.

#### The Need for Emotional Support

By far the most prevalent theme was the need for emotional support—a theme expressed in a variety of ways. Some talked about an open door policy, some of the presence or lack of sensitivity to teachers as persons, and some about perceptions of favoritism. For several teachers, issues of trust and authenticity were connected to their felt level of emotional support.

An Open Door Policy. Grace [all participants are referenced by pseudonym] spoke glowingly of principals whose door was always open: “You don’t have to make an appointment for the next day,” she said. “You can walk in. . . . They will support you or help you fix the situation or send you on the right path.” Diane was strong on the subject, saying that her number one need was “having a principal whose door is always open to teachers. . . . I think the main thing is being able to go in and shut the door and vent and have them help you with problems that you have.”

Sensitivity. Quinn described the experience of teachers being “yelled at this year because we were using too much paper and laminating too many things. We are trying to cover the standards—but yelled at for making handouts we need.” This lack of sensitivity has “completely changed the tone of the school.” In contrast, Kelly described her principal as a “very loving person. It’s really nice to see her because she always smiles and has something nice to say to you. . . . She’s the glue that keeps the school together.”

Lack of Favoritism. Part of feeling emotionally supported is the perception that no favoritism is shown. Several teachers commented on principals who obviously had favorites as well as on the hurt caused by such an attitude.

He tends to favor certain teachers. . . he likes those teachers because they're going to pretty much agree with whatever it is that he's saying. . . kind of leaves everyone else from outside looking in. (Quinn)

### Love for Students/Making a Difference

A second powerful theme evident in these teachers’ words was their love for their students and their desire to make a difference in children’s lives. This love for children seemed to be connected to a core of resiliency and internal motivation in all teachers interviewed. When responding to questions about the satisfactions of teaching, all participants mentioned caring deeply for their students and wanting to make a difference in their lives. Abby said,

I teach because it's a passion. I love my students, and I like working with them. . . . I had a really tough class this year and the difference that I saw in them at the end of the year was just—They would just bring tears to anybody's eyes.

Kim described her determination to get through to her disadvantaged students saying, “I would think in my sleep about what I was going to do the next day.” The following sentiments are representative of all these interviewed teachers:

“I go home every day knowing that I have made at least some bit of change in some child's life.” (Bob)

“I think it's about touching that one life, and I [think] that might be your next pro football player, your next lawyer, or your next doctor.” (Amanda)

### The Need for Respect

A third dominant theme from the interviews was the importance of respecting teachers as professionals. This subject was touched on by all participants, some focusing on feeling respected by the principal, others mentioning the public's lack of respect for teaching as a profession. Showing respect to Verona means “having confidence in my judgment, my decisions.” Brenna focused on a time last year when her principal did just that. He had confidence in her judgment when a parent questioned the way she kept her grades:

I think the fact that he supports what I do even if I've made a mistake, like the grading thing I'm dealing with now shows that he respects what I'm doing. Even though he sees that maybe I should have done it another way, he still respects my decision enough to support it with the parents.

Quinn mentioned the lack of respect toward teachers from the public when he said:

Teaching is kind of like the honorable profession that everyone thinks is easy and that a trained monkey could do. That's what everyone thinks and you just want to tell them you know what? Why don't you go in my classroom for five minutes and you tell me how easy this is.

### The Power of Praise and Acknowledgment

When teachers experience little praise and acknowledgment (or positive comments), they can feel “unsure about [their] value” (Abby). When asked what advice they would offer a new principal on ways to encourage teachers, all of the interviewed teachers mentioned the importance of praise and acknowledgment.

I think they need to remember the little things that count like the sticky note. It takes time but I don't think that principals realize that it's those little things that change the way the whole school interacts. . . . That kind of stuff takes 10 minutes out of every principal's day . . . and then you're showing that you care (Abby)

As Brenna said, “It’s like a human thing—thinking you want to be told what you’re doing is good.” Rachel mentioned the positive effects of congratulatory announcements given over the intercom or at meetings. Kim talked about an encouraging note from her principal that she still keeps and looks at when she is not having a good day.

Quinn was picturesque in describing teachers’ longing for praise and acknowledgment:

They need to hear they are valued like the starving orphans in *Oliver Twist* saying “Please sir, more gruel?” You know, you want just a little something in your bowl. Just so you can carry it around. And, you know, he [the principal] doesn’t give at all.

Candace told a charming story of a time her principal recognized her teaching efforts to her fifth-grade students. He came into the class and suddenly announced, “Everybody stand up.” The students did not know what was happening, but they stood. He then instructed them to stop what they were doing and to bow down to Candace and say as a group, “Thank you, Ms. [Candace], thank you.” He reminded these students that they were very fortunate to have such a great teacher. He left the room with a smile saying, “You’re the luckiest kids in this school.”

#### Support in Matters of Discipline or With Parents

All the interviewed teachers indicated that the level of support in issues of discipline connected strongly with their degree of job satisfaction. Two sub-themes were mentioned: (a) support given in student discipline situations, and (b) supporting teachers with parents. Surprisingly, there were far more comments on the need for a principal’s support for teachers with parents than there were for principal support in the handling of disruptive students.

Rachel portrayed her school as being in “the worst neighborhood in the whole district.” Children have seen murders, shootings, beatings, robberies, and drug dealing. She described her principal, saying she “has the highest suspension rates of any other school in the district.” The teachers at Rachel’s school feel very supported in this challenging work environment. The

principal “will back me up with the parents,” Rachel added. Diane talked of her respected principal as having positive negotiation skills:

And what I liked about him was that even if you were wrong, he would make it a win/win situation for you and the parent. He might say, “You might want to rethink this or do this differently,” but not with the parents there. You are supported no matter what your decision was.

Teacher stories on non-support in issues of discipline were powerful. Abby described a student with severe attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who regularly had temper tantrums and hurt other children. Although she referred him to the office at least eight times for endangering other students, he was “never suspended. Never even talked to sternly enough since the problem didn’t end.” When another student brought a knife to school, he was suspended a mere two days. Abby added:

[He] hardly ever suspends and we’ve had horrible behavior problems. . . . I mean we’ve had police at our school on a daily basis. . . . I have kids who have histories of severe behavior problems. You know, kids on anger medicine—that’s something we have to deal with in the classroom and in order for me to have any credibility with them, I need his support.

Quinn told a story of two eighth grade girls whose behavior had been historically problematic. When he instructed them to put on their gym shirts to cover up attire that was against the school’s dress code, they responded with rudeness, answering him with a string of swear words. The parents were subsequently called in for a conference about the incident. Quinn described the frustration of his experience. When the parents started attacking him, the principal “didn’t say a word. He did nothing to defend me at all.” Quinn talked sadly about the order of importance in his school: “District, parents, students, teachers. Teachers are at the bottom. If it comes down to it...he’ll hang anybody out to dry if he feels like it’s going to make him look better.” He is “very willing to make parents feel empowered at the expense of teachers.”

The attitudes of all the interviewed teachers concerning the importance of principal support is evident in Brenna's answer to the question: "What suggestions would you give to a new principal interested in encouraging his or her teachers?"

Most important I would say Number One is to support them, especially when it comes to people from the outside. . . . And even if you don't agree with [them], you can support them to the outside person and then deal with the disagreement with the teacher. Because I think the worst thing would be if he turned around and said [to the parent], "Yeah, you're right. She did it wrong." I couldn't imagine.

### School Morale and Colleague Support

Teachers live within a school community at least seven hours a day, five days a week. All interviewed teachers commented on the importance of the relationships within that community. Yet for several of these teachers, having an unsupportive principal, although connected with low school morale—did not prevent colleague bonding and support from flourishing. While Quinn complained of teachers who were demoralized, he nevertheless described his fellow teachers as a "great staff" and said he "gets energy from other teachers." Although Grace receives little encouragement from her principal, she stated that "teachers around me make me feel very supported. [There is] wonderful support." She added, "Teachers stay because they are bonded. They have to be....I love my colleagues. I absolutely love them," she said.

### Powerlessness/Emotional Safety

The seventh theme suggested in some of the interviewed teachers' responses was a sense of powerlessness stemming from external pressures of the state and internal pressures from within the school itself. Several teachers mentioned the constant stress of state testing requirements and their school's on-going focus on raising Academic Performance Index (API) scores. Grace teaches in a school where poverty is high and many students are English Language Learners.

She reported that she loves teaching, but seeing continually depressing scores is upsetting. She is frustrated with the testing pressure that does not acknowledge or value growth a student may have made over the year. Most of these teachers experience a sense of powerlessness because the state can dictate so much that impacts their teaching experience--textbook choices; allotted time allowed on subjects taught; and the constant measuring, assessing, and testing.

Andrew's feelings of powerlessness were focused on the leadership style of his principal, who "wants to control everything" Teachers in this school have few options. When they asked if they could move to another grade level when there was an opening, they were refused. "And if they didn't like it, he would be happy to write them a letter of recommendation." Andrew concluded by saying, "Basically, there are no options. You're pigeon-holed or told where you're going to go and what you're going to do." The teachers in his school are very distraught. Thirteen of the faculty are leaving.

In contrast, Kelly described her principal as empowering her teachers:

She [the principal] wanted to make sure every teacher had exactly everything that we could possibly [need] to do our jobs. She doesn't skimp on paper. She makes sure the copy machine works . . . and did battle with the district office to get books teachers needed.

Candace also described her principal as supportive, saying: "He's just really supportive. 'What do you need? What can we get you?' I know the one time I really need something, he'll figure out a way to take care of it."

### Findings from the Rating/Ranking Surveys

#### Survey Ranking Results

The results for the ranking portion of the survey are presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. First choice behaviors were given three points, second choice behaviors two points, and third choice behaviors one point. The tables give the total number of points for each item chosen by principal

and teacher. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 rank these behaviors in descending order for principals and teachers respectively.

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Insert Tables 3.1 and 3.2

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The greatest difference in perception is indicated in item 8 (Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development). Principals listed this item first (93 points), while teachers listed it as 20<sup>th</sup> (6 points). Principals listed item 1 (Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family...) as second (84 points), while teachers viewed it as sixth (36 points). Both groups agreed on the importance of item 3 (Respects and values teachers as professionals), item 14 (Is fair, honest, trustworthy), and item 9 (Has an open door policy--accessible, available, willing to listen) as being in the top five behaviors that encourage teachers.

Of the top five principal behaviors most important to *teachers*, two suggest a difference in perception between principals and teachers: Item 5 (Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline), which is second in importance to teachers (65 points), is 8<sup>th</sup> to principals (35 points). Item 21 (Supports teachers with parents) is fifth in importance to teachers (40 points), but is 15<sup>th</sup> to principals (12 points). Teachers seem to view principal support in discipline and with parents as highly important to their level of encouragement.

### Survey Rating Results

Independent Samples T-Test. The differences between the means of principals and teachers reflect the relative importance that principals and teachers place on these principal behaviors. Results of a *t*-test for difference between means of principals and teachers are displayed in Table 4. The means are listed in the order of behaviors mentioned.

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Insert Table 4

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Table 4 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of principals and teachers on a number of listed behaviors. There is a highly statistically significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) in group means on five behaviors: Behavior 1 (Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family, Behavior 11 (Is highly visible in classrooms), Behavior 12 (Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice), Behavior 18 (Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration), and Behavior 22 (Is highly visible on school campus). There is a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in group means on four behaviors: Behavior 13 (Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done), Behavior 14 (Is fair, honest, trustworthy), Behavior 16 (Respects teachers' wish for autonomy), and Behavior 20 (Is interested in his/her teacher as a person). The group mean differences in Behavior 8 (Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development) and Behavior 22 (Is highly visible on school campus) approach statistical significance ( $p = .054$  and  $p = .052$ , respectively).

#### A Comparison of the Ratings and Rankings of Teachers and Principals

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 present the top five principal behaviors as rated and ranked by teachers and by principals.

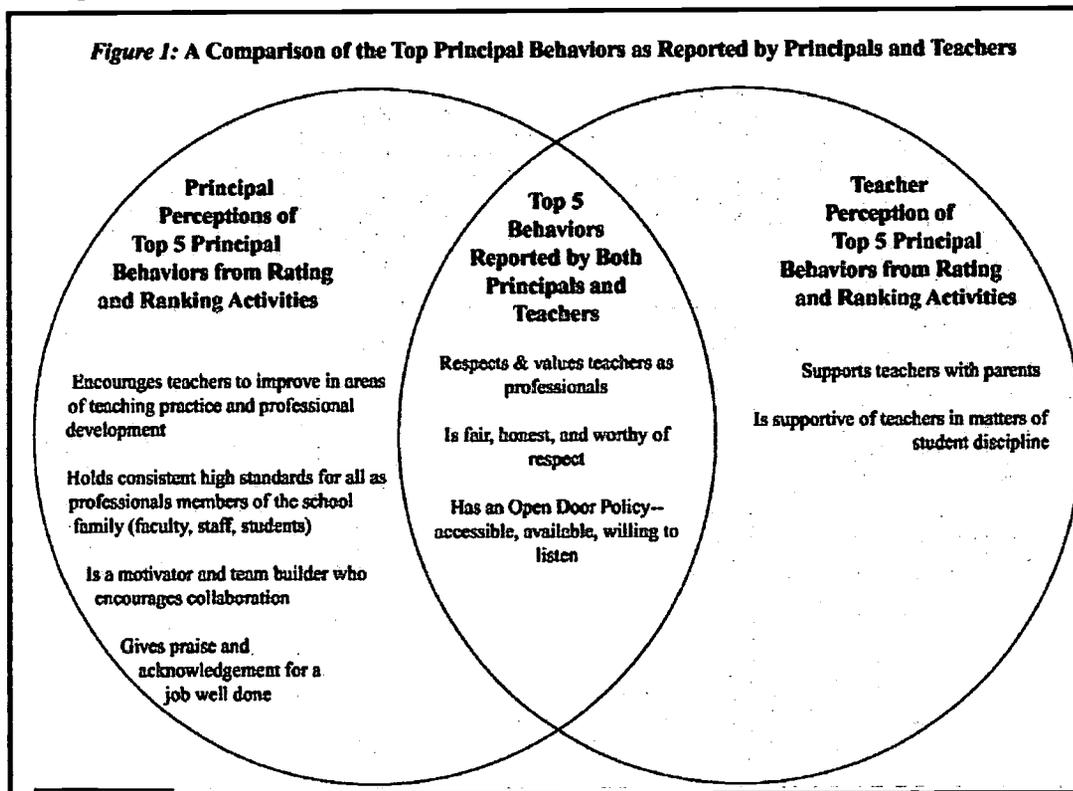
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Insert Tables 5.1 and 5.2

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As is evident in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, principals and teachers agree on three behaviors or attitudes as among the top five needed to encourage teachers: "Respects teachers as professionals," "Is fair, honest, and trustworthy," and "Has an open door policy." While principals indicated that four other important behaviors are needed ("Encourage teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development," "Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family," "Is a motivator and team builder who

encourages collaboration,” and “Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done”), teachers appear to value support in matters of discipline and with parents more highly than do principals. Figure 1, *A Comparison of the Top Principal Behaviors as Reported by Principals and Teachers*, presents a visual integration of these rating and ranking results.



Principal-Components Analysis (PCA) and Cronbach’s Alpha for Principal Behaviors.

In order to reduce the number of variables (22 principal behaviors) to a more manageable number of categories and meaningfully interpret the underlying constructs, a Principal-Components Analysis (PCA) was conducted. Table 6 suggests four clusters of these behaviors based on the PCA results which have been given the following labels: (a) Effective Administrative Behaviors, (b) Emotional Support Behaviors, (c) Valuing Teachers' Judgment Behaviors, and (d) Respect and Care for Teachers as Professionals Behaviors. The results of an internal consistency reliability analysis measured by Cronbach’s Alpha are included in Table 6

for each component. This test suggests a high level of consistency and reliability for all components considered.

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Insert Tables 6

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T-Test of Equality of Means of the Components. Table 7 presents the results of a *t*-test comparing the means of the four components: (a) Effective Administrative Behaviors, (b) Emotional Support Behaviors, (c) Valuing teachers' Judgment Behaviors, and (d) Respect and Care for Teachers as Professionals Behaviors. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in perception between principals and teachers on the relative value of the principal behaviors in Component 1 (Effective Administrative Behaviors) in enhancing teacher job satisfaction (principals'  $M=4.38$ ; teachers'  $M=3.99$ ). The difference in perception on Component 2 (Emotional Support Behaviors) approaches significance (principals'  $M=4.49$ ; teacher's  $M=4.35$ ).

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Insert Table 7

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### Conclusions

There is substantial research to indicate that administrative support is one of the most important factors affecting teacher job satisfaction and morale. (Karge, 1993; Russell et al., 1987; Goldberg, 2000; Johnson et al., 2001). The present study, in both its qualitative and quantitative components, seems to support that conclusion. The themes that emerged in this study are echoed in both previous research findings and in the survey results with 100 teachers.

As people successful in business know, "perspective is everything." Those in any leadership position will benefit by taking seriously the perceptions of those under their supervision. A comparison of principals' and teachers' perceptions on the importance of these listed principal behaviors is enlightening. According to the data displayed in Table 4, it appears

that the behaviors with the largest differences in perception are also those behaviors listed together as Component I: “Effective Administrative Behaviors” (see Table 6). All five of these behaviors were ranked as more important by principals than they were by teachers. In contrast, both the rating and ranking results indicated that teachers value most being treated with respect and fairness, and receiving support in matters of discipline. If those behaviors are demonstrated, perhaps teachers would then view the five administrative behaviors differently. It may be that when emotional supportive behaviors are missing, then these “effective administrative behaviors” are viewed as demands or manipulations. The interviewed teachers who reported having unsupportive principals also said that they felt their judgment was not respected; they did not feel trusted—and in turn, they did not feel a high degree of trust toward their principals. Conversely, the interviewed teachers who reported having supportive principals also mentioned that their principals were highly visible and gave suggestions and guidance. These teachers reported feeling respected, and in turn, they respected, liked, and listened to their principals.

#### Implications and Recommendations

If the results and implications of this study could be reduced to one page, they would be presented in the form of Figure 1 (previously displayed). This diagram suggests that teachers will not feel supported by principals who do not practice and take seriously what they consider to be two of the five most important behaviors: (a) Supports teachers with parents, and (b) Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline. These behaviors touch on the most basic needs teachers have during their stressful day. They need to know with certainty that their efforts to maintain positive classroom behavior are backed up by the administration. Since these behaviors are crucial to a teacher’s job satisfaction, perhaps principals need to reflect on the following questions regularly so that they will truly encourage teachers to stay:

1. Do I respect and value teachers as professionals? How do I demonstrate that attitude?
2. Am I fair, honest, and worthy of respect? How do I show those qualities?
3. Do I encourage an open door policy? Am I accessible, available, and willing to listen?
4. Do I support teachers in matter of student discipline? If a new teacher needs assistance in learning classroom management strategies, what form does my help take?
5. Other than cases involving legal or moral violation, do I support teachers with parents—even if the teacher’s judgment could have been better? Do I try to make teacher-parent conflicts into “win-win” learning experiences rather than “win-lose” encounters? Do I make it a practice to point out what *should* have been done in a private conversation rather than in front of the parent?

Principals reported to be encouraging and appreciated by the interviewed teachers were those who operated most within the framework of these five important principal behaviors.

The results of this study and others suggest both short-term and long-term ramifications for the quest to retain teachers in our nation’s classrooms. In the short-term, a positive teacher-principal relationship is connected to (a) satisfied teachers who are likely to stay; (b) a high level of school morale; and (c) teachers who work harder to meet the needs of their students. The stability of the school is thus enhanced. The long-term ramifications of these findings should be considered as well. The power of principal encouragement needs to be included in the philosophy and foundational principles of university administrative training programs as well as in leadership training seminars offered by local school districts. Such a shift in emphasis on what it means to be an effective principal may help to encourage teachers to stay in a profession that desperately needs them.

Table 1: *Interview Questions*

1. Would you say you are satisfied with the experience being a teacher? Why? Why not?

Rate your present level of satisfaction:

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
Low High

Explain why you chose this number.

2. How long do you see yourself teaching? Have you ever considered leaving? What would or did cause you to change your mind?

3. Have you ever regretted going into teaching? What prompted that feeling?

4. What are some things that make you (or would make you) feel supported as a teacher?

5.a. What do you think is the most important way your principal could support you? What kind of support is important to you?

b. To what extent does he or she support you in the ways you prefer?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
Little support Strong support

6. Can you think of a time when you felt really supported by your principal? Describe the circumstances and how this feeling of support affected the way you felt about your job.

7. Can you think of a time you felt a lack of support from the principal? Describe the circumstances and how this feeling of a lack of support affected the way you felt about your job.

8. How does your principal support teachers in matters of student discipline? What happens if you have a discipline problem? How does your principal show support or nonsupport in problems with students or parents?

9. How does your principal encourage you to improve in the areas of teaching practice and professional development?

10. To what extent does your principal provide adequate resources to do your job?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
Little effort to provide Great effort to provide  
resources resources

11. How important is the principal to your level of happiness and job satisfaction?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
Not important Very important

Explain why you chose this number.

(Table 1 continues)

(Table 1 continued)

12. To what extent does the behavior of the principal make a difference in your desire to stay in the profession?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 Little influence High influence

Explain why you chose this number.

13. How would you describe your principal? (Probe only if needed: friendly, cool, approachable, etc.)

- 14a. How do you think your principal views you as a teacher?

b. Give an example of a time your principal demonstrated this attitude.

15. How does your principal demonstrate his respect for you as a professional?

16. To what extent does your principal recognize you for a job well done?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 Low recognition high recognition

17. To what extent do you have a sense of camaraderie in your school and to what extent do teachers seem happy and satisfied to work there? Describe the school climate and level of morale in your school (teacher support, parent support, etc.)

Rate the level of teacher job satisfaction and morale in your school:

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 Low High

Explain why you chose this number.

- 18.a. How motivated do you feel now compared to when you first started teaching?

b. To what extent do you see yourself as making a difference in the students' lives?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 Little Great  
 difference difference

19. If you could give advice to a new principal on ways to encourage teachers, what would you say?

20. Is there anything else you could add to help me better understand your perceptions on this subject?

**Table 2: *Rating/Ranking Activity of Principal Behaviors that Encourage Teachers***  
*(Each principal behavior was rated 1-5 in importance.)*

- 
1. Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family (faculty, staff, students)
  2. Cares about what makes teachers happy in their jobs
  3. Respects & values teachers as professionals
  4. Has developed a strong mentor program for new teachers that includes frequent opportunities to observe master teachers
  5. Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline
  6. Respects teachers' preparation time as valuable by working to minimize, meetings, duties, and unnecessary paperwork
  7. Provides adequate resources & supplies to do the job
  8. Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development
  9. Has An Open Door Policy--accessible, available, willing to listen
  10. Sees the principal role as protector, problem solver, nurturer, and encourager
  11. Is highly visible in classrooms
  12. Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice
  13. Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done
  14. Is fair, honest, trustworthy
  15. Respects differences in teaching styles
  16. Respects teachers' wish for autonomy
  17. Values teacher input and opinion and gives teachers opportunities for responsibility and decision-making
  18. Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration
  19. Demonstrates warmth and friendliness to teachers and students
  20. Is interested in his/her teacher as a person
  21. Supports teachers with parents
  22. Is highly visible on school campus

Please rank the numbers of what you consider the three top behaviors in the order of what you think is most important. If you think a behavior should be considered as one of the top three, but it is not listed, write it on the appropriate line below.

Table 3.1: *Ranking Results of Principal Behaviors by Principals (In Descending Order)*

<u>Ranking</u>	<u>Behaviors</u>	<u>Ranking Points</u>
1	<u>Item 8</u> : Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development	93
2	<u>Item 1</u> : Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family (faculty, staff, students)	84
3	<u>Item 3</u> : Respects and values teachers as professionals	78
4	<u>Item 14</u> : Is fair, honest, trustworthy	52
5	<u>Item 9</u> : Has an open door policy--accessible, available, willing to listen	47
6	<u>Item 13</u> : Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done	37
7	<u>Item 17</u> : Values teacher input and opinion and gives teachers opportunities for responsibility and decision-making	37
8	<u>Item 5</u> : Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline	35
9	<u>Item 18</u> : Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration	35
10	<u>Item 4</u> : Has developed a strong mentor program for new teachers that includes frequent opportunities to observe . . .	33
11	<u>Item 7</u> : Provides adequate resources & supplies to do the job	22
12	<u>Item 11</u> : Is highly visible in classrooms	17
13	<u>Item 10</u> : Sees the principal role as protector, problem solver, nurturer, and encourager	15
14	<u>Item 22</u> : Is highly visible on school campus	14
15	<u>Item 21</u> : Supports teachers with parents	12
16	<u>Item 2</u> : Cares about what makes teachers happy in their jobs	11
17	<u>Item 12</u> : Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice	10
18	<u>Item 20</u> : Is interested in his/her teacher as a person	10
19	<u>Item 19</u> : Demonstrates warmth and friendliness to teachers and students	9
20	<u>Item 6</u> : Respects teachers' preparation time as valuable by working to minimize meetings . . .	6
21	<u>Item 15</u> : Respects differences in teaching styles	3
22	<u>Item 16</u> : Respects teachers' wish for autonomy	

Table 3.2: *Ranking Results of Principal Behaviors by Teachers (In Descending Order)*

<u>Ranking</u>	<u>Behaviors</u>	<u>Ranking Points</u>
1	<u>Item 3</u> : Respects and values teachers as professionals	76
2	<u>Item 5</u> : Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline	65
3	<u>Item 9</u> : Has an open door policy—accessible, available, willing to listen	54
4	<u>Item 14</u> : Is fair, honest, trustworthy	47
5	<u>Item 21</u> : Supports teachers with parents	40
6	<u>Item 1</u> : Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family (faculty, staff, students)	36
7	<u>Item 4</u> : Has developed a strong mentor program for new teachers that includes frequent opportunities to observe	32
8	<u>Item 6</u> : Respects teachers' preparation time as valuable by working to minimize, meetings, duties, and unnecessary paperwork	29
9	<u>Item 13</u> : Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done	29
10	<u>Item 18</u> : Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration	28
11	<u>Item 2</u> : Cares about what makes teachers happy in their jobs	25
12	<u>Item 17</u> : Values teacher input and opinion and gives teachers opportunities for responsibility and decision-making	20
13	<u>Item 7</u> : Provides adequate resources & supplies to do the job	17
14	<u>Item 11</u> : Is highly visible in classrooms	16
15	<u>Item 15</u> : Respects differences in teaching styles	16
16	<u>Item 10</u> : Sees the principal role as protector, problem solver, nurturer, and encourager	14
17	<u>Item 22</u> : Is highly visible on school campus	13
18	<u>Item 20</u> : Is interested in his/her teacher as a person	9
19	<u>Item 19</u> : Demonstrates warmth and friendliness to teachers and students	8
20	<u>Item 8</u> : Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice	6
21	<u>Item 12</u> : Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice	2
22	<u>Item 16</u> : Respects teachers' wish for autonomy	0

Table 4: *Independent Samples T-Test for Equality of Means by Principals and Teachers in Terms of Importance of Principal Behaviors to Teacher Job Satisfaction*

Behavior	Principals		Teachers				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
1. Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family, faculty, staff, students)	4.56	.69	4.16	.96	179	3.39 ***	.40
2. Cares about what makes teachers happy	4.15	.86	4.25	.86	198	-.83	-.10
3. Respects & values teachers as professionals	4.75	.50	4.70	.58	194	.66	.05
4. Has developed a strong mentor program for new teachers	4.20	.92	4.00	1.07	193	1.41	.20
5. Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline	4.50	.64	4.51	.66	197	-.11	.01
6. Respects teachers' preparation time as valuable by working to minimize meetings/duties/unnecessary paperwork	4.20	.88	4.22	.93	197	-.16	-.02
7. Provides adequate resources & supplies to do the job	4.37	.81	4.21	.74	196	1.45	.16
8. Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice and professional development	4.37	.81	4.15	.80	197	1.93	.22
9. Has an open door policy—accessible, available, door policy, willing to listen	4.61	.65	4.63	.58	195	-.23	.01
10. Sees the principal role as protector, problem solver, nurturer, and encourager	4.21	.78	4.12	.88	195	.77	.09
11. Is highly visible in classroom	4.35	.77	3.54	1.11	176	6.01 ***	.81
12. Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice	4.12	.76	3.72	.97	187	3.26 ***	.40
13. Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done	4.57	.57	4.37	.73	187	2.15 *	.20
14. Is fair, honest, trustworthy	4.79	.46	4.63	.66	176	1.99 *	.16
15. Respects differences in teaching styles	4.31	.80	4.33	.77	198	.18	-.02
16. Respects teachers' wish for autonomy	3.63	1.04	3.93	.91	195	-2.17 *	.30
17. Values teacher input and opinion and gives teachers opportunities for responsibility and decision-making	4.49	.66	4.30	.76	194	1.89	.19
18. Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration	4.61	.53	4.24	.83	168	3.76 ***	.37
19. Demonstrates warmth and friendliness to teachers and students	4.47	.69	4.34	.82	192	1.22	.13
20. Is interested in his/her teacher as a person	4.27	.76	4.00	.96	188	2.20 *	.27
21. Supports teachers with parents	4.44	.70	4.62	.60	193	-1.95	-.18
22. Is highly visible on school campus	4.47	.66	4.14	.99	172	2.79 **	.33

Note. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 5.1: *Principal Behaviors Rated and Ranked as the Top Five by 100 Teachers Surveyed*

Rating Results (Mean scores)	Ranking Results (Points counted)
1. Respects and values teachers as professionals ( $M=4.70$ )	1. Respects and values teachers as professionals (76 points)
2. Has an open door policy ( $M=4.63$ )	2. Supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline (65 points)
3. Is fair, honest, trustworthy ( $M=4.63$ )	3. Has an open door policy (54 points)
4. Supports teachers with parents ( $M=4.62$ )	4. Is fair, honest, trustworthy (47 points)
5. Supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline ( $M=4.51$ )	5. Supports teachers with parents (40 points)

Table 5.2: *Principal Behaviors Rated and Ranked as the Top Five by 100 Principals Surveyed*

Rating Results (Mean scores)	Ranking Results (points counted)
1. Fair, honest, trustworthy ( $M=4.79$ )	1. Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching practice & professional development (93 points)
2. Respects and values teachers as professionals ( $M=4.75$ )	2. Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family (84 points)
*3. Has an open door policy ( $M=4.61$ )	3. Respects and values teachers as professionals (78 points)
*3. Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration ( $M=4.61$ )	
4. Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done ( $M=4.57$ )	4. Is fair, honest, trustworthy (52 points)
5. Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family ( $M=4.56$ )	5. Has an open door policy (47 points)

\* These results were tied

**Table 6: Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation and Coefficient Alphas for Principal Behaviors**

<b>Component 1: Effective Administrative Behaviors</b>		
<b>(<math>\alpha = .80</math>)</b>		
<u>Behavior</u>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
11. Is highly visible in classroom		.82
12. Gives suggestions and guidance in teaching practice		.80
22. Is highly visible on school campus		.68
8. Encourages teachers to improve in areas of teaching		.63
1. Holds consistent, high standards for all members of the school family		.62
18. Is a motivator and team builder who encourages collaboration		.52
4. Has developed a strong mentor program for new teachers		.39
<b>Component 2: Emotional Support Behaviors</b>		
<b>(<math>\alpha = .78</math>)</b>		
<u>Behavior</u>		<u>Factor Loading</u>
20. Is interested in his/her teacher as a person		.78
19. Demonstrates warmth and friendliness to teachers and students		.77
14. Is fair, honest, trustworthy		.62
9. Has an open door policy		.55
13. Gives praise and acknowledgement for a job well done		.46
10. Sees the principal role as protector, problem solver...		.37

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**Component 3: Valuing Teachers' Judgment Behaviors**


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 $(\alpha = .69)$ 

<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Factor Loading</u>
16. Respects teachers	.72
15. Respects differences in teaching styles	.65
17. Values teacher input and opinion . . .	.45
21. Supports teachers with parents	.43
7. Provides adequate resources & supplies to do the job	.41

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**Component 4: Respect and Care for Teachers as Professionals**


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 $(\alpha = .66)$ 

<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Factor Loading</u>
5. Is supportive of teachers in matters of student discipline	.71
3. Respects & values teachers as professionals	.69
6. Respects teachers' preparation time...	.57

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Table 7: *T-Test of Equality of Means of Components (Equal Variance not Assumed)*

Component	<u>Principals</u>		<u>Teachers</u>		df	t	Mean Diff
	M	SD	M	SD			
1. Effective Administrative Behaviors	4.38	.50	3.99	.63	189	4.85 ***	.40
2. Emotional Support Behaviors	4.49	.47	4.35	.52	196	1.96	.14
3. Valuing Teachers Judgment Behaviors	4.25	.55	4.28	.51	197	-.40	-.03
4. Respect and Care for Teachers as Professionals Behaviors	4.48	.54	4.48	.53	197	.08	.01

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Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$

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