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Effective Supervision: Teacher Perceptions Regarding the Influence of Feedback on Job  
Satisfaction and Career Decisions

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

By

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## ABSTRACT

Effective supervision: Teacher perceptions regarding the influence of feedback on job satisfaction and career decisions

By

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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of a two-way feedback system between teachers and school administrators in order to better understand how teachers perceive the influence of feedback on their job satisfaction, as well as in their decision to stay in teaching or leave the profession. Research has shown that teacher attrition negatively impacts schools and students (NCTAF, 2007) and teachers have expectations for the support they receive from their administrators (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Therefore, it is vital that school administrators learn more about the factors that influence teacher job satisfaction in order to combat the issue of teacher attrition. According to a study by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) in 2003, nearly 1,000 teachers were leaving the profession every day for reasons other than retirement (NCTAF, 2003). Ingersoll (2004) found that a significant number of those teachers reported leaving because they received inadequate support from

school administration. The goal of the study under investigation here was to learn from participants their perceptions on how feedback influenced their job satisfaction and decision to stay or leave the profession of teaching. The teachers in this study identified the value of both evaluation and supervision on their job satisfaction. A lack of either consistent evaluation or compassion in the delivery of evaluations had a negative impact on the teachers' feelings about their work. Supervision that was supportive and coaching in nature positively influenced job satisfaction, whereas supervision that was too data-driven was a frustration for the teachers.

This mixed-methods study used a phenomenological case study approach to examine a two-way feedback system; the data was collected through interviews with teachers and principals, observations of interactions between teachers and administrators, a survey of a larger sampling of teachers, and a review of human resources documents pertaining to attrition rates and exit interviews. This approach allowed for future and present administrators to learn from the perceptions of current teachers and administrators, as well as those teachers who have chosen to leave the school.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Feedback takes many forms and serves many purposes. A wife says to her husband “you’re going to wear that?” A teacher asks his students “are you making a good choice?” Regardless of the purpose or delivery method, feedback influences our decisions every day. When a teacher is working to improve his or her craft, feedback from administrators is essential. When asking what teachers need from their principals, one teacher said “as a first-year teacher, I make mistakes, and I would like to know something that she sees that she would have me to do better instead of just giving me praise” (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 690). Riley, one of the teachers interviewed for this study, agrees, “definitely, give me feedback, give me the critical feedback, but then give me something to help me improve that. Some support, ideas, or something maybe I’m not thinking about doing or trying”. The structure and delivery of feedback clearly influences the way a teacher feels about his or her job, up to and including the decision to stay or leave the profession.

Teachers identify many factors that influence their satisfaction with their work, which include opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, professional development, and support from administrators, among others (Gonzalez, Brown, & Slate, 2008; Ingersoll, 2004). Support from administrators includes help with student behavior issues, collegiality, and feedback. As one example of the need for administrator support, in schools everywhere teachers are struggling to implement new standards, curriculum, and assessments. “I’m sure every teacher in America would say that Common Core has been frustrating...but it’s pretty much like ‘hey, here are the parts for a hang glider, and there’s the cliff’” (Jason, personal communication, November 18, 2014).

This phenomenological case study explored teacher perceptions of how their job satisfaction was influenced by feedback, and how this would influence their career decisions. Jacob, Vidvarthi, Carroll, and The New Teacher Project (TNTP) (2012) found that in many cases the actions of the school principal influence the decision of a teacher to leave the profession of teaching. They also found that more than half of the teachers studied stated they were more likely to leave a school if it did not have a strong instructional culture, meaning that these teachers find it important to work for an organization that holds teachers to high expectations. Furthermore, when interviewing teachers who had left the teaching profession, Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate (2008) found that administration played a large role in the career decisions of teachers. Similarly, Certo and Fox (2002) found that quality administrators who support the teachers' work retain more teachers. In addition, Feeney (2007) found that teachers are better prepared to analyze their teaching when they are provided with effective feedback. It seems clear that teachers are in need of effective support and communicative relationships with their administrators.

Teacher turnover has become of increasing concern in the United States as education funding has been drastically reduced and the focus on student achievement has increased, with teachers, administrators, and schools being held more accountable for student success. The incidence of teacher turnover among teachers in their first five years has been rising in the past decade (Ingersoll, 2001; National Center for Teaching and America's Future, 2003). When teachers choose to leave the profession there are costs to students, schools, districts, states, and the nation (NCTAF, 2007). These costs are both

financial and emotional, and negatively impact students; therefore the issue of the high rates of teacher attrition must be addressed.

This study was conducted at a charter high school in a large urban area of the western United States. The perceptions of six teachers and three administrators who participate in structured, non-evaluative, feedback sessions with one another were closely examined. One-on-one interviews were conducted with each of the participants to learn more about their perceptions, and feedback sessions between the teachers and administrators were observed. Surveys were distributed to all of the teachers and administrators at the school site in order to gather the perceptions of a larger group of participants. In addition, a review of human resources documents, including exit interviews of teachers who have left the school, was conducted.

Teacher attrition negatively impacts the field of education, and therefore it is critical that school administrators do what they can to improve the job satisfaction of their teachers. Through effective communication and focusing more energy on supervision, including ongoing feedback, administrators may be able to positively influence the job satisfaction of teachers.

## **Problem**

Research has shown that teacher attrition negatively impacts schools and students (NCTAF, 2007) and teachers have expectations for the support they receive from their administrators (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). According to Ingersoll (2001), nationally about 30% of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. This attrition rate is 50% higher with teachers in high-poverty urban schools than in schools in more affluent areas (Ingersoll, 2001). According to a study by the National Commission on

Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) in 2003, nearly 1,000 teachers were leaving the profession every day for reasons other than retirement (NCTAF, 2003). When surveyed to determine their reasons for leaving, Ingersoll (2004) found that a significant number of teachers reported that they received inadequate support from their supervisor, and this led to their decision to leave the profession.

Just as traditional school districts are dealing with the cost and concerns surrounding teacher attrition, charter school leaders are sharing similar struggles. Stuit and Smith (2012) found that teachers in charter schools are twice as likely to leave when compared to their traditional school counterparts. While charter schools are released from some of the guidelines and restrictions placed on traditional public schools, in return they are held to a higher level of accountability in terms of student achievement (AB 1137, 2003). This accountability is intended to ensure that students in charter schools are receiving instruction at or above the level in a district that has a state or district-mandated structure in place to guide instruction and assessment (AB 1137, 2003). One reason charter schools are able to experiment with new school models is that most are non-union. This means that they are at-will employers, and teachers are working without the protection of a long-term contract, tenure, or teachers' unions. While this deters many teachers from working in charter schools, those that do make this choice find that they are given the freedom to take risks, be innovative, and modify the curriculum in their classrooms. However, with the increased accountability for the school comes increased accountability for the teachers. Without proper support from administrators, many charter school teachers find the job too challenging and choose to either transfer back to a traditional public school or leave the profession altogether (Stuit & Smith, 2012). In

addition, Newton, Rivero, Fuller, and Dauter (2011) found that charter school teachers in urban areas are even more likely to leave their school at the end of the year. These teachers find the increased workload and a lack of support from administrators to be the strongest deterrent to staying in their current position. While teachers in charter schools are required to hold valid teaching credentials, many charter school administrators do not hold administrative credentials (Stuit & Smith, 2012). This lack of training and expertise could play a role in their effectiveness, and could influence teacher turnover.

In the charter school that is the focus of this study, as with many secondary charter schools, teacher attrition is of great interest and worry. This school serves a unique population of high school students, most of whom are either significantly deficient in credits or have previously dropped out of school. Given the additional challenges posed by working with such an underserved population (Ingersoll, 2001), combined with the high level of accountability that comes with working in a charter school (AB 1137, 2003), teacher turnover in this school is high. Understanding that this student population demands stability and a highly qualified teaching staff, providing supportive supervision to teachers and the retention of high-quality teachers are of great concern to the administration of the school.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine how teachers perceive that feedback influences their job satisfaction, as well as their decisions to stay in teaching or leave the profession. It was important for school administrators at the school under study to learn how to provide effective support to teachers who are both new to the profession and those who are veterans through feedback, both evaluative and supervisory. By conducting this

study, I was able to shed light on how teachers perceive that receiving non-evaluative feedback from their administrators influences their feelings about the job of teaching in this secondary charter school. This includes the need for both evaluation and supervision, in order to provide teachers with the support necessary to be successful in, and feel good about, their work. In addition, the findings of this study can serve as a guide for administrators who are sharing similar struggles with teacher attrition. By shedding a light on the importance of feedback and supervision, recommendations are made to aid school leaders in developing a school culture that is supportive of teachers and students alike.

### **Research Question**

In order to better understand how teachers perceive the influence of feedback on their job satisfaction, this study answers the question:

- How do teachers perceive that feedback from their principals influences their job satisfaction and decisions to stay in teaching or leave the profession?

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was conceptualized around the distinction between teacher evaluation and teacher supervision presented by Nolan and Hoover (2011). Nolan and Hoover define evaluation as “an organizational function designed to make comprehensive judgments concerning teacher performance and competence for the purposes of personnel decisions such as tenure and continuing employment” (p. 5), such as in an annual performance review. In contrast, supervision is a formative process designed as “an organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, leading to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning. Supervision is not concerned with making

global judgments concerning the teacher's competence and performance" (p. 6). Under this premise, the non-evaluative feedback between administrators and teachers that was explored in this study would be considered supervision.

Nolan and Hoover (2011) suggest that through evaluation administrators have no power to force teachers to grow or improve. In contrast, supervision is "a voluntary relationship with mutual vulnerability and shared power" (p. 10) allowing the teachers to have some control over what is being observed and the goals that are set. This shared power allows teachers to identify the areas where they would like to focus attention, and the supervisor is able to use his or her experiences to assist the teacher with growth. In addition, supervision is not limited to the administrator/teacher interaction. It can take place between two teachers, a teacher and an instructional coach, and also between administrators. In this way, the professionalism and the unique talents of all parties are valued.

This study was framed around the conceptual framework of supervision and evaluation because the distinction applies to the differences between non-evaluative feedback and teacher performance evaluations. As I wished to learn more about the perceptions of teachers participating in non-evaluative feedback sessions with their administrators, this framework was appropriate. When analyzing the data from this study, feedback was examined through the lenses of both evaluation and supervision, including specific characteristics of each as identified by Nolan and Hoover (2011). Evaluation includes the following characteristics: global focus, summative judgment, same standards for all teachers, top-down leadership (administrators hold all of the power), and assessing the quality of performance while identifying areas for growth. Supervision, on the other

hand, employs the following characteristics: narrow focus, supervisor aids teachers in making judgments, but does not make judgments for them, data collection is differentiated, individualized, and teacher driven, leadership is shared, and roles are blended (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). Each of these characteristics will be described in detail in Chapter Two.

## **Methodology**

A phenomenological case study was conducted in order to collect data that would address the research question central to this study. In phenomenological studies, the researcher examines the lived experiences of a group of people based on a specific idea or phenomenon (Schram, 2006). The phenomenon under study was a two-way feedback system, in which teachers and administrators provided one another with non-evaluative feedback on their performance. This two-way feedback system is one in which both the teacher and the administrator identify practices they themselves are doing well, and areas in which they could improve. Next they identify strengths and areas for growth for the other party. Once these actions have been identified, the two parties sit together and share their thoughts. This process is non-evaluative, and is conducted in a conversational manner with the intention of mutual growth. In addition, this was a bounded case study focusing on a location that was implementing a two-way feedback system (Merriam, 2009). A bounded case study is one that “takes place at a particular site or location” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 149).

Interviews were conducted with six teachers, two assistant principals, and one principal in order to learn about teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions. Each interview was transcribed and then coded to look for evidence of evaluation and supervision, as

well as emergent themes, in order to better understand the perceptions of the teachers and administrators (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). It was important to capture the voices of the administrators to see how they might be in concert with or dissonant from the perceptions of teachers. Observations were also conducted of the teachers and administrators during normal day-to-day activities in order to learn more about the interactions among them. During observations, notes were recorded and, at the conclusion of the observation, these notes were expanded upon to formulate detailed descriptions of the interactions between teachers and administrators, including tone and body language (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In addition, a survey was distributed to all the teachers at the school sites under study to collect data on the opinions of a wider sample of participants (Creswell, 2012). The survey focused on the supervision provided by their administrators, their job satisfaction, their feelings regarding the likelihood they would stay in the profession of teaching, and their thoughts on the two-way feedback system under study. Finally, a review of human resources documents was conducted, including exit interviews of teachers who had left, to look for evidence of evaluation and supervision, and critical codes and emergent themes were identified (Creswell, 2012). These exit interviews included teachers who had left the region where the two-way feedback system was in place, as well as those from other regions not using this feedback system.

### **Definition of Terms**

Throughout this study several key terms will be used.

**Two-way Feedback System:** This is the phenomenon under examination in this study. It refers to a planned discussion between two parties in which each person contributes several ideas. This includes the identification of areas in which each

party feels that he or she is doing well, and those areas in which improvement is needed. Following this, each party shares several areas where they feel the other participant is doing well, along with suggestions for growth. This feedback is non-evaluative and confidential. The time is used for discussion as well as goal setting, and at the conclusion those involved select a time to meet again.

**Non-evaluative Feedback:** Non-evaluative feedback is feedback that is not used to determine salary, job placement, or likelihood of future employment. Rather, it is used to identify areas of strength and areas of growth for the participant, and then to recommend actions that can be taken for improvement. Non-evaluative feedback is intended to be an ongoing process, where participants regularly check for growth toward goals.

**Supervision:** Supervision is a formative process designed as “an organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, leading to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning. Supervision is not concerned with making global judgments concerning the teacher’s competence and performance” (Nolan & Hoover, 2011, p. 6).

**Evaluation:** Nolan and Hoover (2011) define evaluation as “an organizational function designed to make comprehensive judgments concerning teacher performance and competence for the purposes of personnel decisions such as tenure and continuing employment” (p. 5), such as in an annual performance review.

## **Delimitations and Limitations**

**Delimitations.** This study is delimited to a small group of six teachers and three administrators in a single charter school setting, whose views were collected through interviews and observations, as well as a survey of 23 teachers. Thus, it did not include the viewpoints of teachers or of administrators in a traditional school setting. Additionally, the study was delimited in that the questions asked explored the perceptions of the teachers and administrators providing feedback to one another. In this way, I did not compare two different systems or measure changes in the level of job satisfaction.

**Limitations.** As this study examined a small sample of teachers from a charter high school, generalizability of the study will be limited. An additional limitation of this study was that it only followed these six teachers and three administrators through nine months of implementation of the two-way feedback system; it is possible that their perceptions would be very different after a year or longer of implementation. This study was also limited in that it looked at two sites in a single school, due to time constraints; a multi-site study may have had different results and looking at a traditional school setting may also have produced different results. Finally, a limitation of this study was that it only examined a secondary school, and therefore the results may have been very different had I examined a primary school.

## **Organization**

This introductory chapter is designed to introduce the reader to the topic of study, identify the purpose and focus of the researcher, introduce the conceptual framework around which the study was based, and introduce the reader to the methodology that was used in data collection. In chapter two, relevant literature related to this study is

introduced, including the research on teacher attrition, administrator roles, evaluation, and supervision. Chapter three describes in detail the methodology that was used in this study, as well as how data was collected and analyzed. The findings of the study are discussed in chapter four, and in chapter five I provide recommendations to school administrators as well as recommendations for future researchers.

This study of the perceptions of teachers regarding the feedback and supervision of their administrators is intended to highlight the issue of teacher attrition and the role that evaluation and supervision can play in the retention of teachers. The goal of this research was twofold: to reduce the rate of attrition in the charter school under study, and to provide recommendations to administrators in other schools to help meet the needs of teachers. Feedback, both evaluative and supervisory, is a critical factor in the job satisfaction of teachers. While both forms of feedback are important, the delivery of feedback is equally important and can ultimately influence the career decisions of teachers.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Educators have long been concerned with the issue of teacher turnover (Helfeldt, Capraro, Capraro, Foster, & Carter, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001; NCTAF, 2003) and the impact it has on the nation, districts, schools, and students. In this review of the literature surrounding teacher turnover and the role of feedback in teacher job satisfaction I discuss the scholarship surrounding teacher attrition including a focus on charter schools, the role of the administrator in teacher attrition, and the aspects of evaluation and supervision that influence teacher job satisfaction and turnover.

### **Teacher Attrition**

**Teacher Attrition Generally.** The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) found that the rate of teacher attrition in the United States has risen over 50% in the past fifteen years and the U.S. spends over seven billion dollars each year to cover the cost of replacing teachers who have left the profession (NCTAF, 2007). In 2007 the cost of teacher turnover in a large urban city in the western United States, which was the focus of this study, was over 94 million dollars (NCTAF, 2007), or one seventh of the total cost in the nation. Not only does this high rate of teacher turnover cost schools, districts, and states billions of dollars, it also reduces the teacher quality in the schools with the greatest need, as turnover is significantly higher in schools in urban settings and new teachers with limited experience and training are often placed in these schools (NCTAF, 2007). When surveyed to determine their reasons for leaving, Ingersoll (2004) states that a significant number of teachers reported that they received inadequate support from school administration. Given the fact that individuals generally enter the teaching profession based on a desire to make a positive change in the futures of children,

the fact that one in two new teachers working in urban schools will leave the profession in the first five years should be of great concern, as this means that the schools with the greatest need are experiencing the greatest turnover of teachers (Ingersoll, 2001).

According to the MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, from 2008 to 2012 teacher job satisfaction decreased 23 percentage points (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013). Only 39% of K-12 teachers in 2012 noted that they were very satisfied with the job of teaching. Teachers surveyed also stated that they felt they were currently under increased stress compared with what they experienced in past years (Markow et al., 2013). The decrease in job satisfaction in recent years could be contributing to the rise in teacher attrition over the past decade (Ingersoll, 2004).

Equally important to the issue of teacher retention is keeping the most effective teachers in the schools where they are needed the most. A study by Jacob et al. (2012) found that when a highly effective teacher leaves a low-achieving school it can take up to 11 new hires to find a teacher of equivalent quality. In addition, students in the classrooms of highly effective teachers perform nearly half a school year ahead of students in classrooms taught by less effective teachers. Therefore, when a highly effective teacher leaves a school the students are more likely to have an ineffective teacher than a highly effective teacher the following year. In their study of four large school districts in the United States, Jacob et al. (2012) estimated that nearly 10,000 highly effective teachers were leaving those districts each year.

Jacob et al. (2012) found that for nearly 70% of the highly effective teachers they studied, the actions of the school principal influenced their decision to leave the profession. Perhaps even more surprising was their discovery that highly effective

teachers were over 50% more likely to leave a school if it did not have a strong instructional culture, meaning that these teachers find it important to work at a school that holds teachers to high expectations. This provides evidence that although teachers perceive that the job of teaching has grown more difficult over the past decade, with the implementation of No Child Left Behind and the reduced budgets schools and districts now have to work with, the most effective teachers still hold themselves and their colleagues to high standards (Jacob et al., 2012). Markow et al. (2013) found that 48% of principals and 52% of teachers felt that retaining effective teachers in schools was either challenging or very challenging for principals. This indicates that both teachers and administrators identify personnel decisions as an important but difficult aspect of the job of the principal.

When working to discover what factors impact teacher attrition, it is important to consider the difference between teachers' feelings about the teaching profession itself and their feelings about the job of teaching (Perrachione, Petersen, & Rosser, 2008). For some teachers, the level of autonomy they are afforded in their classroom can be a determining factor, as well as the resources provided to them. For others, the level of support provided to teachers by administrators, parents, and colleagues is a stronger determinant of job satisfaction. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) found that the reasons teachers chose to transfer to other schools included a lack of planning time, a workload that was too heavy, problems with student behavior, and lack of a voice in the implementation of school policies. Buchanan (2009) also found that teachers who left the profession felt the amount of work required outside the workday was a deterrent to remaining a teacher. Teachers in that study also said that the high expectations placed on

teachers make the workload seem even greater. In order to address these concerns on a site-level, Cochran-Smith et al. (2012) observed new teachers and found that they often display signs of exhaustion and frustration with the profession. When surveying these teachers to find what they believed would improve their job satisfaction, teachers identified the need for more professional development and time for collaboration with colleagues (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012).

The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (Markow et al., 2013) provides educators with recent data on the job satisfaction of America's teachers. In their "profile of teachers with lower job satisfaction" (p. 48) Markow et al. (2013) identified that these teachers were more than twice as likely to state that they were under great stress at work. They were also more likely to teach in schools with low-income students who were performing below grade level in English and mathematics. In addition, these teachers identified that collaboration time at their school had decreased over the past year.

Therefore, providing a collegial work environment that includes support from others and collaborative planning time are crucial factors in addressing the issue of teacher attrition (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Perrachione et al., 2008). By understanding the specific reasons why teachers leave, school administrators will be better prepared to address the issue of attrition in their schools.

**Teacher Attrition in Charter Schools.** As one example of the increased rate of teacher turnover, in the secondary charter school in a large urban area of the western United States that was the setting of this study, the problem can be seen in data that shows that over 30% of the teaching staff have left the school over the past year (S.

Huynh, personal communication, February 18, 2015). According to a recent study by Newton, Rivero, Fuller, and Dauter (2011), teachers in urban charter schools at the elementary level are three times more likely to leave their school at the end of the year compared to teachers at traditional public schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). In secondary charter schools, teachers are four times more likely to leave each year (Newton et al., 2011). Newton et al. suggest that this could be caused, in part, by the higher demands on teachers in charter schools in terms of student achievement as well as extended school days and school years, and a disparity in pay when compared to a traditional public school.

Stuit and Smith (2012), in their quantitative study of this inequality in turnover rates for teachers in charter schools as compared to traditional public school teachers, found that there were several factors that influenced teachers' decisions to stay or leave charter schools. One factor with a significant influence was "school staffing actions" (p. 276), which is in reference to the increased control over personnel decisions that charter school leaders possess (Stuit & Smith, 2012). This increase in control is due to the fact that the majority of charter schools are not unionized and teachers, as well as all other school staff, are at-will employees. This creates a decreased sense of job security, and can influence the decision of teachers to stay or leave a school. Charter teachers also cited an increased focus on the performance of their students as a job stressor. Lastly, displeasure with the conditions of the workplace was cited by nearly half of the charter teachers in this study as a reason to leave the profession (Stuit & Smith, 2012). The rate of turnover is concerning because high rates of teacher turnover year after year have lasting negative effects on the learning organization as a whole.

## **Administrator Roles**

It was important in this study to include the voice of the school administrators, as their intentions may or may not match the perceptions of teachers. For this reason, it is critical to understand the role administrators play in teacher attrition. There are many ways in which principals can provide feedback to teachers. The most common form of feedback is through annual performance reviews or evaluations, but research has shown that when feedback is provided on such a limited basis it is much less effective than when it is given on an ongoing basis (Feeney, 2007). In contrast, Wirt and Kirst (2001) discuss the idea of a feedback loop. They explain that this feedback loop occurs in education when governmental or social factors influence the decisions made in schools. The authors described the way in which an idea is introduced and gains either positive or negative attention, which then results in a change in educational policy. The feedback loop consists of wants, demands, and supports, which then lead to change (Wirt & Kirst, 2001). This same idea can be applied to the implementation of feedback between teachers and principals. Creating a feedback loop where the principal provides the teacher with feedback on what he or she would like to see in terms of performance (wants and demands), as well as what he or she, the principal, could do to help (supports), followed by the teacher in turn providing feedback on the performance of the principal, allows both parties to set individual and collective goals for professional improvement.

Similarly, Nolan and Hoover (2011) examine the significance of teacher supervision and evaluation as they relate to teacher effectiveness. They make a distinction between the purpose behind each method, as well as the potential outcomes from each. While they identify the necessity of both evaluation and supervision, they

suggest that the non-evaluative nature of supervision allows it to have a greater impact on the improvement of teachers. Through collaboration, shared power, and shared vulnerability teachers and supervisors are able to work together to improve teacher effectiveness and ultimately student learning (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). This loop of feedback from teachers to administrators and back to teachers can assist in the development of a collegial atmosphere that fosters trust and collaboration (Jacob et al., 2012; Nolan & Hoover, 2011; Wirt & Kirst, 2001). The two-way feedback system under review in this study had many similarities to the feedback loop, particularly in the connection of identified areas of needed support, followed by specific actions to address those needs.

### **Evaluation**

The more educators know about how the leadership within a school impacts a teacher's decision to stay or leave, the better school administrators can provide necessary supports to teachers. Gonzalez et al. (2008) found that the administration of the school played a large role in the career decisions of teachers who had left the profession. The teachers interviewed identified the lack of consistency in expectations from one teacher to the next as one area of frustration, as well as the fact that favoritism of teachers was apparent at the schools. The interviewees also identified a lack of support from principals with student discipline issues and parent complaints as a reason for departure (Gonzalez et al., 2008).

With the increased national focus on student achievement, it is important that principals are able to provide feedback that impacts both the job satisfaction of teachers, as well as the instruction teachers are providing to students. Principals are ultimately held

accountable for the student achievement gains in the schools they supervise, meaning they need to be able to effectively evaluate the instructional practices of their teachers (Kersten & Israel, 2005). Teacher evaluation over the past 20 years has moved from checklists to detailed observation and reflection practices that require a great deal of time for principals. In addition, the increased use of these formative measures of teacher evaluation has led to concerns over the subjectivity of such measures. Both teachers and principals agree that more time to communicate and collaborate would result in increased student achievement through improved instruction (Kersten & Israel, 2005).

When principals neglect to provide teachers with quality feedback it is difficult for teachers to reflect mindfully on their practice and set appropriate goals for improvement (Feeney, 2007). Both teachers and principals find goal setting to be a positive outcome of the teacher evaluation process (Kersten & Israel, 2005). In addition, the instructional ability of teachers is increased through collaboration with others and thorough reflection on the link between their instruction and student achievement. When teachers are provided with effective feedback they are better prepared to analyze the evaluation of their teaching critically (Feeney, 2007). These findings support the focus of school principals on collaboration among teachers, as well as on the frequent use of feedback between teachers and administrators.

According to Nolan and Hoover (2011), evaluation includes the following characteristics: global focus, summative judgment, same standards for all teachers, top-down leadership (administrators hold all of the power), and assessing the quality of performance while identifying areas for growth. Global focus refers to principals taking into consideration the many varying indicators of teacher effectiveness. Rather than

evaluating teachers on a narrow set of characteristics that are determined on an individual basis, maintaining a global focus requires administrators to consider all of the ways in which a teacher contributes to the school. While this can allow for the inclusion of a variety of teacher strengths, it lacks the focused feedback that is often necessary for both teacher buy-in and measurable growth. Summative judgment most often takes the form of an annual observation or performance review. Teachers are measured against a prescribed set of standards, and are given a rating based on the assessment of their progress toward these standards.

With summative judgments, the second of Nolan and Hoover's evaluation characteristics, there is a stronger likelihood that teachers will all be held to the same standard. This means that what is considered good instruction in one classroom would be considered good instruction in another classroom. Similarly, when teachers are assessed on student performance data they are measured against the same set of standards. Evaluation also includes top-down leadership, in which administrators hold all of the power and teachers have all of the vulnerability. As administrators, especially those in charter schools, hold the power to hire and fire, teachers often feel the effects of top-down leadership when systems are not put into place to combat this phenomenon. Finally, Nolan and Hoover remind us that evaluation also includes assessing the quality of performance while identifying areas for growth. This assessment is most often tied to annual performance reviews, and the identification of areas of growth will be aligned to teacher performance standards set by the school, district, or state and/or the school-wide goals (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

## **Supervision**

Certo and Fox (2002), in their study of how to retain quality teachers, found that the teachers who chose to stay at their current school identified that quality administration played a large role in their choice. The descriptors for quality administrators included providing support for teachers' work and treating teachers collegially. By contrast, when they contacted teachers who had chosen to leave their school they found that inadequate administration, described as a lack of presence in the classroom, a lack of support with behavior issues, and insufficient instructional leadership, were major factors. It is important for leaders to acknowledge their role in the way teachers feel about their jobs, given the significant role principals play in creating the culture of a school (Vanderslice, 2010). When principals promote the growth of every staff member the school, as a whole, will improve (Whitaker, 2003).

When teacher attrition rates are high, student achievement is negatively impacted. It is important that principals are providing time for teachers to collaborate and reflect on their teaching with colleagues. Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2011), in their quantitative study of how turnover impacts student achievement, found that high rates of turnover not only negatively impact the English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics scores of the students taught by teachers who leave, but also those of students with teachers who stay in those same schools. This implies that high rates of teacher attrition in schools have a measureable impact on the effectiveness of those teachers who stay. Ronfeldt et al. suggest that this may be attributed to the impact on "collegiality or relational trust among faculty" (p. 18), meaning that the departure of teaching colleagues influences the job satisfaction of teachers who stay. They also propose that it is difficult for teachers to collaborate when they work together for just a short time. Buchanan

(2009) also found, when interviewing teachers who had left the profession, that they felt the profession lacked a collegiality between teachers, as well as between the teachers and administrators. One teacher in this study noted that there were some teachers who appeared to enjoy watching a colleague fail. This lack of professionalism can lead teachers to feel isolated and is one of the reasons educators leave the profession. It is imperative that school principals keep the conversations focused on the personal growth of the teachers and on student achievement. They must instill a culture where the status quo will constantly be challenged and teachers will be empowered (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2001).

In contrast, a study by Brown and Wynn (2007) concluded that principals in schools with low teacher attrition rates share several common characteristics, including providing new teachers with continuous support and collaboration, as well as drawing on the individual expertise of the teachers in their school in the spirit of shared leadership. Markow et al. (2013) found that 53% of principals and 56% of teachers believe that providing teachers with opportunities for growth was challenging or very challenging. However, both teachers and principals identified the benefits associated with providing these opportunities. Furthermore, Davis and Wilson (2000) found that one way to improve the job satisfaction of teachers, as well as teacher retention, is through empowering teachers. This requires the school leader to provide opportunities for teachers to make decisions regarding their work, both in their classrooms and for the organization as a whole (Davis & Wilson, 2000). That is, by treating teachers as professionals and providing them with opportunities to take on leadership roles within

schools, job satisfaction will increase (Brown & Wynn, 2007; Davis & Wilson, 2000; Markow et al., 2013).

While principals generally have high expectations for their newest teachers, research has shown that teachers have high expectations of their leaders as well. Roberson and Roberson (2009) found that novice teachers have expectations for their principals in terms of the support offered during the first year. These expectations stem from the fact that the principal is often the person with whom the new teacher has the most contact during the hiring process, as well as the fact that the principal is the instructional leader of the school. New teachers also expect that their principal will provide them with honest, constructive feedback on their performance (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). By providing teachers with personalized, timely, constructive feedback on their performance, principals are able to show their support for teachers, while ensuring that students are receiving high-quality instruction.

Teachers feel that another factor that influences the effectiveness of a principal is time spent as a classroom teacher (Markow et al., 2013). That is, teachers are more likely to feel their principal is prepared for the job, and able to effectively supervise the school, if the principal has spent several years as a teacher. This could, in turn, impact the way in which a teacher views the performance appraisal of a principal. For example, when the principal gives feedback on instructional delivery, the teacher is more likely to view the feedback as credible if the principal was an effective teacher.

It is important to identify the characteristics of school principals that are retaining the most effective teachers. Streshly and Gray (2008), in their study of “super star principals” (p. 116), found that the common characteristics of the most successful

principals are similar to those found in successful businesses. Traits such as living out the vision of the organization, as well as giving credit to others were common between CEOs and exceptional principals. One trait that was unique to the field of education was the ability to build strong relationships with colleagues. Principals who were able to foster these strong relationships not only showed improved student success, but also were well respected by teachers, students, and parents (Streshly & Gray, 2008). This shows that teachers, more so than professionals in other fields, are more satisfied in their work when they are able to build strong professional relationships with their supervisors.

Supervision, as opposed to evaluation, employs the following characteristics: narrow focus, supervisors aid teachers in making judgments but do not make judgments for them, data collection is differentiated, individualized, and teacher driven, leadership is shared, and roles are blended (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). Unlike the global focus seen in evaluation, the narrow focus of supervision allows teachers to work on one or two identified areas for growth with the ongoing guidance and support of their administrators. By focusing on just one or two areas, teachers are able to self-monitor their progress, seek specific feedback when needed, and work collaboratively with their administrators to increase their instructional capacity. As part of this coaching style of supervision, the administrators aid the teacher in making judgments about their instruction, rather than making judgments for them. By making judgments for themselves, teachers learn to be reflective on their practice, and the teachers and administrators can practice productive candor. When administrators practice supervision, data collection can be differentiated, individualized, and teacher-driven. This increases teacher buy-in, allows administrators to clearly understand the instructional capacity of each of their teachers, and can work to

ensure that all each individual teacher is progressing throughout the year. Finally, through supervision leadership is shared and the roles of supervisors and subordinates are blended. This allows both parties to learn from one another, allows teacher-leaders to emerge within the school, and draws on the expertise of each member of the team (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

Another important factor that can influence the career decisions of teachers is the feedback they receive on their teaching. Effective communication and feedback play an important role in the job satisfaction of employees in any field. As van Vuuren, de Jong, and Seydel (2007) found in their quantitative study of the job satisfaction of employees of a telecommunications company “the most important factor turns out to be the feedback from the manager” (p. 122). Second to feedback was feeling that the manager listened to what they had to say, which means that the employees appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback to their manager. In their quantitative study of the response by employees to performance feedback, Kinicki, Prussia, Wu, and McKee-Ryan (2004) found that employee’s perception of the validity of feedback directly related to the desire of the employee to respond to that feedback. Furthermore, they found that when employees view their supervisor as credible and trustworthy, they are more inclined to respond to both positive and negative feedback. Additionally, Kinicki et al. found that the way in which feedback is delivered to employees has the greatest impact on the perception of said feedback. In both of these studies the researchers found that feedback that is perceived to be an honest appraisal of work performance, as well as feedback that is timely and delivered in a professional manner, impacts the desire of employees to respond through action (Kinicki et al., 2004; van Vuuren et al, 2007).

In another study conducted in the business world on the importance of supervisor feedback, Billikopf (2010) found that when feedback is not provided, employees make assumptions about their performance. These assumptions are often much more critical than the feedback supervisors would provide, and can lead to employee resentment. Billikopf also found that when supervisors provide feedback overstating the positive aspects of an employee's work, it could cause long-term negative effects. Furthermore, providing employees with satisfactory or effective ratings decreases job performance. Instead, feedback that identified the work of the employee as either exceptional or needing improvement led to action by the employee (Billikopf, 2010). These findings from the business world support the argument for honest and timely feedback of school principals to teachers, given that performance is most strongly impacted when this form of ongoing performance appraisal is practiced.

By studying the implementation of a feedback system between teachers and principals within schools, recommendations can be made to administrators regarding one way to influence the job satisfaction of teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to better understand how the implementation of a two-way feedback system between teachers and school administrators plays a role in a teacher's perceived job satisfaction, as well as his or her decision to stay or leave the profession.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

While there has been extensive research in the areas of teacher attrition and retention, as well as in the professional development of teachers, there is a lack of empirical research into the role that non-evaluative feedback plays in the job satisfaction of teachers. In addition, the similarities and differences between the evaluation and

supervision of teachers, and the role these play in teacher attrition could benefit from further research. Therefore, this study will seek to contribute to the field of education by providing suggestions to school leaders to increase the contentment of teachers and combat the issue of teacher attrition.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to better understand how teachers perceive that the implementation of a two-way feedback system with their administrators plays a role in their job satisfaction, as well as their decision to stay in teaching or leave the profession. Based on a review of the relevant literature surrounding employee feedback and teacher attrition, as well as this analysis, recommendations for improving the perceived job satisfaction of teachers are made. This research contributes to the field of education by providing school administrators with recommendations that can help improve the job satisfaction of teachers, and in turn ensure that the most effective teachers continue to instruct our students.

#### **Research questions.**

This study examined the following question:

How do teachers perceive that feedback from their principals influences their job satisfaction and decisions to stay in teaching or leave the profession?

#### **Chapter organization.**

This chapter begins with an introduction to this study and the value of this research. The research tradition that was used is described, along with the rationale for that methodology. The research setting and context are then explained, including student and staff demographic information, along with the unique organization of the school. An explanation of the research sample and data sources that were used follows. The data collection instruments and procedures are described, followed by the data analysis procedures. Finally, I describe my role as the researcher. As the assistant superintendent

of education programs for the school that is the focus of this study, I have first-hand knowledge of the student population served, as well as the unique setting and challenges that presents.

### **Research Design**

The design of this study is a phenomenological case study. A case study examines and provides a description of a bounded social phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A case study is also particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 2009). This study was bounded because it looked at a specific school over a specific period of time as interviews and observations were conducted. It was particularistic because it looked at a particular phenomenon, the perceptions of teachers on the influence of two-way feedback sessions with their principals. A thick description of the nine interviews, four observations, and the document review conducted all support the descriptive nature of this study. Finally, this study was heuristic because it enhanced our understanding of how teachers perceive the changes in their job satisfaction when provided the opportunity to give feedback to and receive feedback from their principals.

### **Research Tradition**

A phenomenological research tradition guided this study. In phenomenological studies, the researcher examines a group of people based on a specific idea or phenomenon (Schram, 2006). The focus of the phenomenological study is what an experience means for the person or persons who have experienced it (Schram, 2006). According to Schram (2006), phenomenologists have several basic assumptions. These include: (1) human behavior is only understandable in relationship to things, people, events, and situations; (2) perceptions present us with evidence of the world as it is lived;

(3) the reality of anything is attached to consciousness; (4) language is the central medium through which we construct meaning; and (5) it is possible to convey the essence of a concept or phenomenon as experienced by a number of individuals. Creswell (1996) highlights the focus on the lived experience of participants in phenomenological studies. Data collection is often in the form of lengthy interviews with a small number of participants where the researcher focuses on both the outward observations and inward consciousness of the participants (Creswell, 1996). The researcher then uses transcriptions of these in-depth interviews to find “clusters of meanings” (Creswell, 1996, p. 55) that help explain the perceptions of the phenomenon.

This tradition is most appropriate for this study because I was seeking to understand the perceptions of teachers who were given the opportunity to participate in a two-way feedback process with their principals on how this played a role in their perceived job satisfaction, as well as the decision to stay in teaching or leave the profession. I believe that in order to understand how to improve teacher job satisfaction, we must listen to the voices of the teachers; that feedback is often given to teachers, but not elicited from them. By understanding the perceptions of teachers who are given this opportunity we better understand the influence it has on their job satisfaction and I make recommendations to principals and other educational leaders.

**Connection to purpose and questions.** The phenomenological approach was in line with the intended outcomes of this study, as I wished to understand how teachers perceived that a specific phenomenon, the two-way feedback system, influenced their job satisfaction. This experience was unique for each teacher, and I wished to use the behavior and perceptions of each teacher to describe this phenomenon. A

phenomenological case study gave structure to my research as I conducted interviews with teachers and principals, as well as observations of the interactions between teachers and administrators. Other methodologies I incorporated are a document review of human resources documents, including exit interviews, as well as a survey on teacher job satisfaction.

### **Research Setting and Context**

The site that was the focus of this study, Achievement for All (AFA) Public Charter Schools, a pseudonym, is a large urban charter high school in the western United States. AFA is comprised of 36 learning centers divided into six regions located throughout a large geographic area. This study focused on one of those regions, known as the Valley region.

**Description of school sites.** Within the Valley region there are six learning centers spread over approximately 20 square miles. In the 2014-2015 school year 86.2% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders passed the ELA portion of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), while 74.9% passed the math portion in the Valley region. This is only slightly below passage rates for AFA as a whole, with 88.6% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders passing the ELA portion, with 80.6% passage on the math portion. For the purposes of this study, I focused on two of the learning centers within that region. The first of the two sites, the Franklin site, is located in a high-poverty, high-crime area and serves approximately 420 students. There are nine teachers, three small group instructors, one tutor, and three support staff on site. Of the student population, 97% of students qualify for free or reduced price lunch, 97% are Hispanic/Latino, 1% are African American, and 31% are designated as English Language Learners. The second site, the Washington site, is also

located in a high-poverty, high-crime area and serves approximately 320 students. This site includes seven teachers, three small group instructors, and two support staff. Of the student population, 91% qualify for free or reduced price lunch, 55% are Hispanic/Latino, 44% are African American, and 16% are designated as English Language Learners. One assistant principal directly supervises each site, while the principal supervises these two sites along with the other four within the region. All of the administrators are White, are native English speakers, and are between 25-35 years old. During the collection of data I focused on three teachers from each learning center, each of the assistant principals, and the principal.

AFA was founded in 1999 with the purpose of providing an alternative educational experience for the most underserved students in the western United States. This included recovered dropouts, credit recovery, and students whose life experiences made it difficult to attend a comprehensive classroom-based high school. Since that time AFA has grown steadily, and in the 2013-2014 school year served over 30,000 students. At AFA, students have a flexible schedule and generally spend between four and 20 hours at school each week. They do much of their work at home or online, coming in regularly for one-on-one tutoring, small group instruction classes, or to take assessments. This flexible schedule allows for students to work, take care of family members, or take courses at a community college or vocational school while still in high school. Throughout the past five years AFA has also begun to focus beyond the high school diploma, and is now offering students the curriculum and direct instruction necessary to graduate having met all of the requirements necessary to enroll in a four-year university in California. This focus has significantly increased the demands on the teachers at AFA,

with only a slight increase in compensation. Being an at-will employer, and given the unique student population and the increasing demands on the teachers, AFA faces unique challenges in terms of staffing. This makes the issues of teacher job satisfaction and attrition very real concerns for the administrators and management of the school.

**Site selection and access.** A criterion-based sampling strategy was used for site selection in this study. Criterion sampling is effective in phenomenological studies, as it allows the researcher to select locations that are implementing the phenomenon under study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). AFA is implementing the two-way feedback system between principals and teachers that I studied. I wished to learn more about how teachers perceived that the implementation of this phenomenon was influencing their job satisfaction and their decision to stay or leave the profession. Therefore, the criterion for selection into this study was that both teachers and administrators participated in a two-way feedback system on at least a monthly basis, and were willing to discuss this process with me throughout my research.

Gaining approval from several gatekeepers was necessary in order for me to gain access to those sites. This process started by explaining the purpose of the study to the director of instruction and assistant superintendent of the school. After receiving their approval, the manager of the human resources department was approached and granted approval. Finally, the legal department and the founders of the school granted permission. Once all of the necessary approvals were received, the last step was to speak to the principal of the school sites where research was to be conducted. At the time, I was a principal in another region of the same organization, and I had a professional relationship with each of these gatekeepers. This allowed me to have prior knowledge of the proper

channels to follow in order to gain necessary approvals, as well as an understanding of the unique structure of the school.

As I am an employee of the organization where I conducted my study, it was important for me to be clear about my current role in all situations, both when I was a researcher and when I was a colleague. When I was collecting data I was sure to request time off from work, so as not to take advantage of my role within the organization. I also needed to make sure that the study participants were aware of my role as a researcher when I was in their school site. While still being open to discussing emerging themes in my study as a sign of appreciation for their cooperation, it was important for me to protect the anonymity of the participants when the gatekeepers had questions (Glesne, 2011).

### **Research Sample and Data Sources**

As the purpose of this study was to examine how teachers perceived that feedback influenced their job satisfaction, as well as their decisions to stay in teaching or leave the profession, the voices of the teachers were documented through a phenomenological case study. As the phenomenological research tradition focuses on in-depth descriptions of the lived experience of participants, it was necessary to keep the research sample small. For this reason, I conducted interviews and observations of teachers in one charter school that was implementing the two-way feedback system, and I also identified critical codes and themes that emerged from human resources documents related to teachers who had left the school.

**Sampling strategies.** A criterion sampling strategy was used for this study. That is, a sample where “all the individuals studied represent people who have experienced the

same phenomenon” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 104). I was interested in learning about the perceptions of teachers who were experiencing a two-way feedback system, and therefore only included in my study those teachers experiencing that phenomenon. After selecting school sites in which to conduct the study, it was necessary to identify teachers who were actively participating in the two-way feedback system. I asked the principal of the region to allow me to speak to the teachers in their learning centers in order to explain my study to potential participants. Once I was able to speak to the teachers and administrators, I left my contact information for anyone interested in discussing the study with me further, and I also distributed participant letters. After enough participant agreement letters had been returned, initial contact was made with the teachers by visiting the school and discussing the process that would be used to collect data. At that time interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the teachers.

The sample group in the study included six teachers who had from one to ten years of teaching experience, two assistant principals with one to four years of administrative experience, and one principal with five years of experience. One-on-one interviews were conducted with each of these participants and observations of the interactions between each of the teachers and his or her administrator occurred. It was critical to listen to the voices of both the teachers and their administrators in order to understand if the intentions of the feedback sessions matched how the teachers perceived them.

In addition, a typical case sampling method was utilized in the review of documents, where individuals have characteristics that represent the norm, as human resources documents were reviewed including years of service and confidential exit

interview forms from teachers who had left the school for various reasons (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A typical case sampling method was appropriate for this study, as these former teachers represented the norm and were not exceptional or unusual (Glesne, 2011). The conceptual framework that guided this study aided in the formation of a document summary form that was used to help identify instances of evaluation and supervision in the exit surveys. This document summary form “summarize[d] the relevant findings and record[ed] these systematically” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 149) to organize the information gathered during this document review.

**Sample characteristics.** The participants that were included in this study had some key shared history and experiences. Each participant made the purposeful choice to work in a charter school with a unique student population. They also chose to work in a school that is an at-will employer, where the employees are non-unionized. It was important to remember this when reviewing interview transcripts and field notes for themes and critical codes, as this population of teachers differs from one in a traditional school setting. The group had also experienced a significant change in leadership over the past three years, which could have played a role in the comfort level of all participants during the two-way feedback sessions. Given this change, it was necessary to remain mindful of the feelings of the staff during the data collection process.

**Ethical considerations.** There were potential ethical issues that may have arisen during this study, and it was important to remain aware of, and sensitive to, these issues. In order to protect the participants, they were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study, and each participant granted permission to be included in the study. This agreement included information about withdrawing from the study at any time if

they chose. To be prepared for the possibility of one or more participants choosing to withdraw from the study I kept the contact information of other interested staff and let them know that I would be in touch should the need for their participation arise.

Conversations with potential participants began by speaking to the group about the research purpose and significance, as well as the questions the study was seeking to answer. Letters were then distributed to the potential participants explaining what their participation would entail, and how they could communicate their choice to withdraw from the study at any point. During this process, the measures that would be taken to protect their confidentiality were communicated, such as the use of pseudonyms and broad generalizations in regards to location. Additionally the potential benefits of the study were identified, including stronger relationships between participants and the chance to reflect on their job satisfaction, as well as the cost of teacher attrition to schools and students and the potential for this research to positively influence teacher job satisfaction.

In addition to gaining consent from all participants during the study and providing them with confidentiality both during and after data collection, approval was obtained for this study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university. This process included the submission of the participant consent form, the data collection instruments, and consent from the organization where research was conducted. Participants were not selected and data was not collected until IRB approval had been granted.

## **Data Collection Instruments**

Several data collection instruments were utilized in this study. Interviews were conducted using interview protocols, which ensured consistency from one interview to the next, and helped to ensure that the research questions were addressed. When interactions between teachers and administrators were being observed, a journal was kept to record field notes. These notes helped when reflecting upon these observations to look for emergent themes. Also, a document summary form assisted in the organization of the human resources documents that were reviewed, as they could not be removed from the department.

**Interview protocols.** As phenomenological case studies focus on the lived experiences of participants, the primary research method for this study consisted of semi-structured in-depth interviews intended to document the perceptions of teachers regarding the two-way feedback system under study. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) note, the use of semi-structured interviews allows for a specific set of questions to be asked centered on the research question(s), while still allowing participants to respond openly. In phenomenological studies, interviews play a critical role in describing the lived experiences of participants (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

A review of relevant literature and the conceptual framework that guided this study aided in the development of interview questions. These questions were seeking to answer the research question around which the study was designed. The interview questions were open-ended with the intent of understanding the perceptions of the participants on the role that feedback and supervision play in their work. The questions also allowed for the participants to insert observations and thoughts that may not have

been directly linked to a question. During this study the hope was to learn how teachers perceived that the implementation of a two-way feedback system influenced their job satisfaction, and furthermore what role the supervision of administrators played in teacher attrition. In order to learn from the teachers, it was necessary to hear their stories.

Therefore, questions needed to be developed that centered on the conceptual framework and that helped to answer the research question, but it was also vital that I listened to the participants and allowed them to take the conversation in a direction of their choosing when they had something to share. Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest that this is a key to phenomenological studies, as through this study I wished to give a voice to “the deep structures of the participants’ lived experience of the phenomenon” (p. 191) of the two-way feedback system. Additionally, it was important to interview the administrators in order to determine whether the intent behind the supervision they were providing matched both what was seen during observations and what the teachers identified.

**Descriptive observation guide.** In addition to interviews, observations of the interactions between teachers and administrators were conducted. The inclusion of observations assisted in the triangulation of data, as both the comments and actions of teachers and administrators were documented. A descriptive observation guide was developed that helped to focus attention on activities, objects, interactions, feelings, and times that were relevant to this study. This guide was designed around the research purpose and question, allowing for a focus on relevant information and dissuading me from losing focus and missing valuable data. Through the use of observations I was able to examine the similarities and differences between the way a teacher described an interaction with his or her principal and the way in which I observed such interactions

(McCall & Simmons, 1969). Rossman and Rallis (2003) point out that even in studies that focus heavily on interviews, as this study did, observation plays a key role.

**Descriptive document guide.** In order to identify themes that related to teacher turnover within the school, human resources documents were examined. This document review provided direction for interview questions, as well as things to watch for during observations (Glesne, 2011). These documents included information on teacher retention and years of service, as well as written exit interviews of teachers who had either left the school by choice or through involuntary termination. In order to ensure that the focus of the review was on information that was relevant to this study, a descriptive document guide was developed that allowed for the organization of information into sections that helped to answer the research question that guided this study.

Due to the limited access to teachers who had left the school, this review of documents allowed for the inclusion of relevant information related to teachers who were no longer available for interviews or observations. Unfortunately, these exit interviews are optional and a very limited number were available for review. A table was used to organize and compile information gathered through the review of documents, as I was not able to make copies or take the information out of the human resources department. As these exit interviews are confidential and I was not provided with any personally identifying information for them, I was unable to attempt to make contact with these participants.

Document review provided this study with a historical context that interviews and observations were unable to provide (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). These documents

broadened the understanding of the ways in which school administrators influenced teacher job satisfaction, as well as the length of time that teachers stayed with the school.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

For this study, data was collected using participant interviews, observations, and a document review to gain the emic, or insider, views regarding the perceptions of teachers about a two-way feedback system with their administrators. Rossman and Rallis (2003) support the phenomenological research tradition and the use of interviews, observations, and document review to clearly understand the perceptions of individuals of a specific phenomenon.

**Interviews.** Interviews were the primary source of data in this study. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), interviews in a phenomenological study use in-depth questions to elicit “people’s stories about their lives” (p. 190). Interviewing teachers who were participating in the phenomenon under study provided this research with relevant data, helping me to understand the perceptions of teachers.

In order to make initial contact with potential participants, visits to the school sites were made and the study was discussed with the staff. The purpose and relevance of the study was explained, as well as what participation would entail. Before leaving, the contact information of the principal researcher was shared with all in attendance, in case they had any further questions. Confidentiality and security measures in place for the collected data were described, as well as the consent to participate forms. To begin the participant selection process, I provided a participant invitation to all teachers at the two school sites. Once enough responses had been received from potential participants I reviewed the information provided to ensure the volunteers fit the criteria of the study,

meaning they were either a teacher or administrator at one of the two school sites, were actively participating in the two-way feedback system, had been in education for one to ten years, and were willing to participate in interviews and observations. Upon agreement to participate, one-on-one interviews were scheduled with each teacher and administrator.

Each interview took approximately 60 minutes, and each teacher and administrator participated in one interview. Interviews were conducted inside an office, to ensure confidentiality and privacy during the interviews. Before the interview, the space was secured to ensure that it was quiet enough for a conversation, allowing the audio recording device to pick up our voices, but also comfortable enough to ensure the participant felt as relaxed as possible and open to a discussion. When the participants arrived I began by thanking them for their participation and answering any questions they had. The interviewees then signed the informed consent to participate forms and a copy was given to them for their records. Throughout the interview, the questions and probes asked were seeking to answer the research question guiding this study, and teachers were encouraged to add their own thoughts, even if they fell outside the scope of the question. I reminded each participant that everything stated in the interview was confidential and that they could withdraw their consent at any time for any reason. An audio recorder was used to document each interview and I transcribed each one using Microsoft Word within 48 hours to ensure I had collected the data necessary to answer my research question, and also to document as many non-verbal notes as possible (Glesne, 2011).

**Observations.** Observations play a key role in qualitative studies, as they assist in the triangulation of data. In addition, in phenomenological studies it is the job of the researcher to interpret “the meaning of the lived experience” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012,

p. 32), and conducting observations allowed me to focus on the daily interactions between administrators and teachers. Collecting data from interviews alone can sometimes be misleading, and using observation allows researchers to make connections between what is said and what is seen (McCall & Simmons, 1969). Also, the use of observations allows the researcher to provide a more emic, or native, view of the data (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In order to develop an emic sense of the context and setting within the school, it was necessary for me to observe the interactions between the administrators and teachers. The focus of the observations was determined by the purpose of this study, which was to understand how teachers perceived the implementation of a two-way feedback system with their administrator influenced their job satisfaction. Attention to the tone, temperament, and body language of teachers as they interacted with administrators was a focus of the observations, as they can be indicators of the working relationship between administrators and teachers (Streshly & Gray, 2008). Therefore, the main purpose of the observations was to learn about interactions and infer the meaning of those interactions (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Each of the two school sites was observed on separate occasions. Before beginning each observation I talked with the administrator and teaching staff about my presence and the intent of my observation. A location was secured within the school site that allowed me to observe as much of the site as possible, without being in the way of staff or students. As I work within the organization, I am familiar with the general layout and cultural norms of the school. This allowed me to navigate the site with little disruption. While conducting observations, notes were recorded about the interactions between the teachers and the administrators, as well as any other relevant interactions

taking place within the school. At the completion of the observation, contact was made with the participants to thank them for their time and to ask any necessary clarifying questions.

Once returning home, the notes were elaborated upon to add additional observations and details in order to turn them into thick descriptions of the interactions, as my memories of the observation were much stronger that day than they would have been days later (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In order to ensure I was telling the story of the participants, the use of observations in conjunction with interviews provided a richer description.

**Review of documents.** The review of documents was conducted in the human resources department of the school. Both the human resources manager and the legal representative of the school provided the researcher with permission to view documents and take relevant notes. No photocopies were made, and no documents were removed from the department. Before entering the field I set an appointment with the human resources manager so that I did not infringe on his or her time. During that appointment, employment dates were reviewed to look for trends in teacher retention as well as times of year when the largest number of teachers were beginning or ending their tenure with the school. Following that, a review of the confidential exit interviews that are requested from all departing employees occurred. Dates of employment were recorded, along with job titles. I examined the exit interviews to look for trends in reasons for leaving, as well as for patterns in language surrounding job satisfaction.

### **Data Collection Timeframe**

Data collection took place between the spring and winter of 2014 and began with interviews, followed by observations. The review of documents was conducted throughout the interview and observation process, based on the availability of human resources personnel to provide necessary access.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

A thematic analysis procedure was used to analyze the data collected during this study. Thematic analysis relies on the coding of collected data (Glesne, 2011). The conceptual framework that guided this study provided a predictive template for the coding of data. All data was reviewed through the lenses of evaluation and supervision, and more specifically at the identified characteristics of evaluation and supervision (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). These included for evaluation: global focus, summative judgment, same standards for all teachers, top-down evaluation, and assessment of quality of performance with identified areas for growth; and for supervision: narrow focus, supervisors aiding in judgments, differentiated, individualized, and teacher driven data collection, and shared leadership. Some additional themes naturally emerged through analysis. In the following section the process for analyzing the data obtained from each of three methods: interviews, observations, and document review is described.

**Interviews.** In phenomenological case studies, interviews play a key role in data collection (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As such, the analysis of the interview transcripts provided me with the largest number of relevant codes and themes. I transcribed all interviews within two days of conducting the interviews in order to ensure that I was able to notate any expressions, body language, or other relevant details from the interview process that I may have forgotten as time passed. During transcription a denaturalized

approach was utilized, which “preserves the features of oral language such as ‘ums’ and ‘ers’” (Davidson, 2009, p. 39). This assisted in accurately recording the tone of each speaker. Random digit identifiers were used to de-identify interview transcripts and protect the anonymity of participants. In addition, all personally identifying information was redacted from the transcripts and all records were kept on a password-protected computer. Immediately after transcription, I reviewed each response and identified codes that emerged based around the conceptual framework that guided this study. Once each transcription was coded, the codes were chunked into themes and then organized for quick reference. Transcriptions of all interviews will be kept in a secure location for five years following the conclusion of this study, after which they will be destroyed.

**Observations.** Immediately upon returning home from each observation the written notes were reviewed, and reflective field notes were created in order to develop a thick description of what was observed. Once the thick description was developed the notes were reviewed along with the interview transcripts and codes and themes that emerged were identified. Once each observation was documented these themes and codes were reviewed and chunked into categories.

**Review of documents.** Utilizing the descriptive document guide, I placed relevant quotes, dates, and similar information into categories. I then reflected on these categories and the information they contained and applied codes to the data. These codes were then divided into themes and the themes were compared to those that emerged from the interview and observation analysis.

As each form of data collected was analyzed for codes and themes, a thematic data analysis process was most appropriate for this study. Interview transcripts,

observations, and the documents that were reviewed were coded. These codes were then organized both around the conceptual framework guiding this study, and naturally emerging themes. Interviews were transcribed and coded, field notes were developed into thick descriptions, and the review of documents was categorized within two days of each event. These codes were then organized into themes before beginning to interpret the results of these findings.

### **Researcher Roles**

During my study I filled many roles. Some of the key roles were: doctoral student, researcher, administrator, and advocate for teachers. As a doctoral student and researcher, I was entering the school sites with a clear focus and intent on my research purpose. This limited my observations to those interactions I was interested in learning more about.

Being an administrator within the organization, I am a key decision-maker for the school under study. This was important to remember throughout the study, as it could have influenced both the way I viewed interactions and the way teachers and vice principals behaved in front of me. It was very important for me to be clear with the participants the role I was playing when in their sites. In order to achieve this I made sure to discuss with the participants my role as a researcher, and the confidentiality of anything I saw, heard, or read when I was in that role. I also refrained from making any recommendations until the conclusion of my study. As this research was conducted at, and designed to help improve, my school this study was an Action Research project that can continue on a larger scale moving forward (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). By conducting Action Research within my organization I hope to inspire other school leaders to design projects of their own.

The focus of my study was on the perceptions of teacher job satisfaction, which came from my desire to be an advocate for teachers. I needed to remain mindful of my role as an advocate during my interactions with administrators. With these roles came some biases, which I describe below, along with ways in which I controlled for these during my study.

### **Researcher Bias**

As a former teacher and principal, as well as acting assistant superintendent, I brought several biases to this study. First and foremost, I believe that all teachers do the best job they know how to do. I also believe that when teachers are provided with professional development that includes ongoing, constructive, and conversational feedback, both their job satisfaction and their effectiveness will improve. I controlled for these biases by keeping a researcher journal throughout the data collection process where I documented my personal thoughts about what I was learning through interviews, observations, and the review of documents. This helped me to remain aware of my biases, while omitting them from the data in my study. An additional bias I have is that I believe teachers who make the choice to teach in a charter school are willing to work hard and are open to the idea that they must constantly improve. I controlled for this bias by letting the data speak for itself, meaning that I allowed teachers to tell me through their interviews their personal reasons for choosing to work in a charter school, rather than making assumptions.

### **Participant Reactivity**

Throughout my study I needed to account for my influence on the participants. The fact that I am an administrator within the organization could have played a role in the

way teachers and administrators behaved. I controlled for this by clearly identifying myself as a researcher when I was visiting those sites. In addition, I used peer review throughout the process. Before beginning data collection I asked a fellow researcher to look over my interview protocols and observation guide to check for objectivity. During interviews and observations I needed to refrain from showing emotion that might lead participants in their responses. After conducting interviews and observations I asked a peer to code an interview transcript to ensure my biases did not influence my development of codes.

The participants also may have looked to me to provide accounts of my own experiences as a teacher and principal, which I controlled for by reminding them of my purpose during observations and interviews. Also, the fact that I was observing conversations that would normally be confidential could have influenced how much the teachers or administrators were willing to say. In order to combat this I spent time in the sites so that the participants could grow more comfortable with me, and I also needed to refrain from interjecting with my own experiences or direction as they conducted their work.

### **Effects of Case on the Researcher**

The research process could potentially have led to the formation of friendships with teachers and administrators. These relationships could have affected me as a researcher by limiting my ability to remain objective. I controlled for this by having clear boundaries between my researcher role and my colleague role. Things could have taken place in these sites that were very different from what happens in the sites that I formerly supervised, so I could have been affected by seeing these things taking place. I was

mindful of not trying to influence the administrators or teachers to change their way of doing things during my study, and instead let the data speak for itself. At the conclusion of my study I make recommendations, but during the data collection process I needed to hold back.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher attrition is a common concern for many of America's school administrators. The costs to students and schools are significant, and the culture of schools can be negatively impacted by a high rate of attrition. This study examined a two-way non-evaluative feedback system between teachers and school administrators to better understand how teachers perceive this form of supervision influences their job satisfaction. Based on the findings of this study recommendations are made to present and future administrators regarding the impact of supervision on teacher job satisfaction.

## Chapter 4: Findings

Feedback plays a critical role in the job satisfaction of teachers. Of the Achievement for All teachers who were surveyed for this study, 51% said they did not plan to remain in their current position. While this does not give further information regarding their plans after leaving their current position, it does point to a general discontent with being a teacher at AFA, and supports the need for this research. Perhaps to a greater extent than other professionals, teachers are in the business of learning, development, and growth. Therefore, they themselves tend to be more eager to continue to learn and grow throughout their careers. This was reinforced throughout the data collection and analysis phase of this study, and can help administrators both at AFA and in education as a whole to better support teachers.

In looking at feedback through the lenses of evaluation and supervision, the following characteristics identified by Nolan and Hoover (2011) were examined:

<b>Feedback</b>	
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Supervision</b>
Global Focus	Narrow Focus
Summative Judgment	Supervisor aids teachers in making judgments, but does not make judgments for them
Same standards for all teachers	Data collection is differentiated, individualized, and teacher driven
Top-down (admin has all power)	Leadership is shared, roles are blended
Assess quality of performance and identify areas for growth	

Both teachers and administrators identified each of these characteristics during the interviews, observations, and surveys conducted in this study. Teachers and administrators identified that the most important characteristics of evaluation are:

summative judgment, having the same standards for all teachers, and that evaluation is often top-down. The teachers interviewed identified the most important characteristics of supervision to be: supervisors aiding in making judgments, but not making judgments for teachers, data collection is differentiated, individualized, and teacher driven, and that leadership is shared. Each of these characteristics will be explored in detail throughout this chapter.

### **Evaluation**

Nolan and Hoover (2011) define evaluation as “an organizational function designed to make comprehensive judgments concerning teacher performance and competence for the purposes of personnel decisions such as tenure and continuing employment” (p. 5). At AFA, evaluation most often takes the form of monthly data reports and annual performance evaluations written and delivered by assistant principals and principals. However, many of the teachers interviewed in this study pointed out that their performance evaluations are rarely delivered on time, and that they often have to request or demand their evaluation before it is completed. Administrators agreed that evaluations are often delivered late, citing both the heavy workload and the large quantity of employees they supervise as reasons for these delays. In terms of evaluation at AFA, teachers and administrators shared their feelings about the characteristics of global focus, summative judgment, holding the same standards for all teachers, top-down management, and assessment of quality of performance and identification of areas for growth. Each of these characteristics is discussed below.

**Global focus.** Teachers at AFA appreciate when the leadership shares with them the larger organizational focus and goals. Scott, a new teacher at the Washington center,

shared “what helped me was just talking about the bigger picture and reinforcing [that] what we’re doing is important”. Administrators agree that using a global focus is important not only for the continued growth and success of the organization, but also in the evaluation of teachers. John, the principal of the Valley region at AFA, told me:

We have a number of quantitative ways that we evaluate the teachers and what they have, whether that be percentage of students turning in work each month, or passage rates of state tests, or things like that. I think there's that quantitative piece that we evaluate on. We also evaluate them on how they get along, how well they interact with employees, how they work together with each other, how they motivate students. Things that are a little less quantitative, but equally as important to the position.

Teachers at AFA also believe that they work in an organization that has a clear vision and mission. Fully 70% of teachers surveyed agreed or completely agreed with the statement “I share similar beliefs and values with my colleagues regarding the central mission of this school.” Both teachers and administrators told me that because of the unique student population that AFA serves, a general belief that what they are doing is valuable and necessary pervades the school. While this helps to motivate and inspire all employees, it also drives the vision, mission, and goals of the school. This allows for buy-in from all employees, as goals are aligned to the needs of this persistently underserved student population.

However, when teacher evaluations are not aligned with this global focus, or are not delivered in a timely manner, it can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. Josh, a teacher in the Washington center, told me:

After being here for two years I recently just got my first evaluation. I'm more of the type where I need to know how I'm doing, where I'm not meeting the standard, so I'm able to change, able to adapt, versus just waiting and hearing it all at the evaluation.

Josh is currently in his ninth year of teaching, and spent seven years working in traditional district schools before coming to AFA. While he understands what most administrators look for in a teacher, he knows that AFA has unique measures of student progress, and a unique focus, and therefore was eager to know how his administrators felt he was doing in his work. By needing to wait over two years for a formal performance evaluation, he was forced to rely on his own assumptions as to his level of success at the school. This was both frustrating and unnerving for Josh, and is unfortunately not a unique situation. Many teachers that were interviewed and surveyed for this study shared that they go two or even three years between formal evaluations. It is important to note that these formal observations are different from the two-way feedback sessions, in that they are designed to be administered annually and are linked to both the potential for continued employment, as well as incremental salary increases based on the rating received.

Both teachers and administrators at AFA believe that the mission and vision of the school are clear, and that looking at a wide range of student and teacher data is a way to globally measure success. However, teachers and administrators have differing views on the importance of this global focus on teacher evaluation. While administrators feel it is highly important, and is and should be used in contractual decisions, teachers feel it plays a less important role, especially because the delivery of performance evaluations is

inconsistent. Teachers also believe that the unique needs of the students should be factored into this data, which is something that is hard to quantify. Jessica, who has worked in the Washington center for five years, told me:

I think in education in general there's a gap, a misunderstanding, of what exactly is student performance. In traditional schools, we base it on grades. Here, it's a little bit different because it's based on how many units they're turning in. No one's really looking at the scores, their grades. As long as they get the minimum score [of 70% on the unit assessment] it doesn't matter. I think it would be interesting if, somehow, we found more of a way to first, decide what exactly is good student performance. Maybe a different scale, other than just the typical grading scale. Getting outside of that box, and then finding a way to relate that to what teachers are doing. Instead of just looking at how your students are scoring on tests, or maybe the grades of your students, looking at a more holistic picture of where the learning is happening. Measuring that, not just the product. I think that learning is very much a process, and we don't measure the process. We just measure the end result, and then we judge teachers based on that.

Although the teachers know and understand that the numbers don't lie, and that it is very important to measure the success of the students and teachers on the indicators that equal student progress in this unique school setting, they believe the unique stories of the students play a role in their level of accomplishment. These unique factors are difficult to capture when administrators are evaluating based on a global focus.

**Summative judgment.** Teachers at AFA believe that administrators use summative judgments to determine a teacher's level of success. These summative

judgments include: student data (work product, attendance, course completion, length of stay, formative and summative assessment results, standardized test scores, graduation rates, etc.), audits of student files, and collegiality toward other staff, students, and parents. Melissa, who has worked at the Franklin center for four months, shared:

We are evaluated based on student performance, which is measured in terms of how many units [of work] are turned in per month. In terms of, I would assume, coming to work on time, taking on extra leadership tasks, or all that basic stuff that goes into the job. Ability to work with others, being able to motivate students, how students respond to you. Creating a positive environment for students.

Teachers at AFA know that their administrators are looking at their “numbers” regularly, and making judgments of performance based on this data. They also understand that these numbers directly correlate to student progress. In addition, Melissa is correct in her assumption that teachers are evaluated on their professionalism, quality and quantity of work, and student progress. Scott, who has worked at the Washington center for eight months, shared:

Well, most of the time it feels like the only feedback I get is when it's coming down to an audit [of student files] or something that is looming over us. It just seems like numbers are a big thing. I guess that's what we're being evaluated on, our numbers. When I hear that, it's like you're talking to me and it makes me feel, I don't know, like I don't like my job. Or I'm not doing good enough.

Feeling like they are judged solely on this raw data can be disheartening for teachers.

However, when teachers are not provided with these summative judgments, the results

can be equally destructive. Josh was very eager to know what his administrators were looking for. He told me:

It was very stressful, being my first year. I didn't know what [my supervisor] was coming in for. It wasn't until later that I found out she was coming in to make sure my lessons were being presented correctly, so my students were able to get it.

One of Josh's first forms of summative evaluation came unexpectedly from both his principal and assistant principal:

They said, 'Josh, you need to get the numbers up here, and you need to do this and that,' but I never really knew where my line was, what my mark was. It was always just 'you need to get here,' but give me some information on how I can get there.

By not sharing the expectations for student growth, Josh felt as though he was unable to personally measure his level of success. Additionally, being presented with the data suddenly, and being told he was not meeting expectations, Josh felt frustrated, discouraged, and misaligned with the vision of his supervisors.

While 65% of the teachers surveyed in this study agreed or completely agreed with the statement "I am evaluated fairly in this school," personal relationships seem to have significant impacts on how these evaluations are perceived by teachers. Jason, who has worked at AFA for six years and has been at the Franklin center for three years, shared with me "I always feel like I have a pretty good relationship with [my administrators]. I just have a general respect for them, which helps me to take criticism and listen to them, and try to move forward." Without these strong working relationships, accepting criticism, constructive or not, can be discouraging for teachers. For these

reasons it is important to not only share the goals and expectations of the organization with all teachers, but to provide them with regular feedback on their progress toward these goals so that these summative judgments do not feel like a surprise. When providing these summative judgments, clarity of both expectations and teacher performance are extremely important.

**Holding all teachers to the same standard.** While teachers need to believe that what they are doing matters, and feel that they have a clear picture of the mission and goals of the school in which they work, teachers also have a need to be treated fairly and to be held to a standard they feel is consistent and equal. At least 65% of teachers surveyed for this study agree or completely agree with the statement “My administrators let me know what is expected.” Even so, each of the teachers I spoke to identified this as an area of frustration. Jason believes that the standard teachers are held to is less about their personal teaching style and connection to students, and rather just about the data:

There's what we all hate, the raw data. Monthly, they will send us out at the end of the academic month; we get an email that says, ‘this was your math completion. This was your unit completion average, this was your course difficulty average.’ I get that, and it's always, at least for myself, it lets me know where I'm at compared to where I've been, whether it's a worse response or better, things along those lines. There's just so much that's not said in that because you could have less percent of work completed, but have higher difficulty classes finished or have higher average grades in general. I don't think that's really looked at, and that's frustrating.

Scott shared a similar reaction, telling me “it's more about your feedback is going to come from what your numbers look like, and then you're going to have a review at the end of the year.” This focus on raw data, while providing concrete numbers for the teachers to use as they track their progress and allowing administrators to hold all teachers to equal expectations, falls short in helping teachers set goals for growth. This is where performance evaluations can be extremely beneficial, and as Josh shared “I had to initiate getting my evaluation. I had to ask ‘when am I going to be getting my evaluation to let me know how I’m doing?’”

Administrators at AFA agree that this is an area in need of growth for the organization. Due to the structure of AFA, raw data is critically important to the continued success of the school, but teachers need to be provided with feedback that is more complex and specific. While the administrators have pride in the fact that they hold the same basic standards for all teachers, they know that due to the unique student population there are other, equally important, factors to include. These qualitative factors are more difficult to measure, but are no less important. Nancy, who spent four years as a teacher at AFA before becoming an administrator, and is now in her third year as an assistant principal, shared with me:

We need to do better observing our teachers. Even if it's a formalized observation form that we use to observe their interactions with students. It could be a checklist as a kind of way to evaluate, how are they teaching and what is the quality?

Numbers are the easiest way to evaluate someone, because numbers don't lie, but it is really difficult to watch and measure a person on the relationship they are developing with another person.

There must be a balance between raw data and measuring the quality of instruction, as well as the interactions between teachers and students, when looking at the level of teacher success. Administrators can hold equal standards for teachers without relying solely on raw data, but this requires the development of procedures and the training of administrators.

**Top-down leadership.** Top-down leadership in organizations means that administrators or supervisors hold all of the power. Subordinates are at the mercy of the decisions of their leaders, whether or not these decisions are sound. When teachers experience top-down leadership, their voices are rarely heard in the development of goals. Several of the teachers I interviewed in this study shared with me times when they experienced top-down leadership. Scott mentioned “I think my supervisor is more checking in with what we’re doing and how we’re doing it, rather than kind of stepping in to guide us where she wants us to go.” Josh had similar feelings about his assistant principal, telling me:

I feel my supervisor, after she comes in and gives me information, I'm always left feeling like I'm not doing the best job I can. It's like pow, you need to work on this, and then she walks away and follows up with emails. I get it. My supervisor has a boss she needs to report to, but I feel that there is a way that things can be said.

While the teachers at AFA know that leadership examines student data on an ongoing basis, they would like to feel as though they are working together with their supervisor to improve, rather than just being told they are not being successful. Teachers would like to

work as a team to improve student success, and when they experience top-down leadership their trust is eroded.

This top-down style of leadership is quite common in many professions, and in most cases is not effective. Melissa remembered experiencing top-down leadership before becoming a teacher:

In a previous job my coworkers and I were very good workers, highly efficient, but it was like any time we made the smallest mistake, that's what got pointed out. Never 'hey, you guys are doing a great job, keep it up.' More it was like 'oh, wow, you've done this great job and you made one mistake, so let me focus on that.' It's definitely distressing. It makes you feel like you're not doing a good enough job, when in reality you're doing a great job and you're just getting negative attention all the time.

Although it causes frustration and anxiety, when surveying teachers at AFA, teachers responded that this top-down leadership did not make them fearful of losing their job. Again, 65% of teachers surveyed disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement "I worry about the security of my job because of my performance on administrative duties, such as file audits." Of these same teachers, 48% disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement "I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state and local tests," showing that this was an area of slightly greater anxiety to teachers than administrative tasks, but still not a significant concern. In contrast, 70% of the teachers surveyed disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement "Often, I find it difficult to agree with this school's policies on

important matters relating to its employees,” meaning that although the top-down format of the data-driven focus is frustrating for teachers, more than half believe it to be fair.

**Assess quality of performance and identify areas for growth.** In theory, performance evaluations are developed and delivered to identify both areas of strength and areas of growth for teachers. When evaluations are provided on an ongoing and timely basis, teachers find them to not only be fair and relevant, but useful. When discussing monthly emails from her assistant principal on her students’ performance, Riley, who has worked at the Franklin center for four months and had five years of experience before coming to AFA, said, “definitely give me feedback, give me the critical feedback, but then give me something to help me improve that. Some support, ideas, or something maybe I’m not thinking about doing or trying.” Melissa agreed that hearing about her progress was important:

I’ve only been here a short period of time, so I haven’t had a review yet. After my first month Sharon emailed me, showed me my numbers and said ‘great first month. You’re already hitting the target.’ Just a nice little email.

Administrators at AFA believe that they provide teachers with a great deal of feedback, and in particular that they assess progress and identify needed areas of growth. As Sharon, who has worked at AFA for seven years, four as a teacher and three as an assistant principal, told me:

I give a lot of feedback. At least once a month I send every single teacher a progress report on how their students did during that academic month, just so that they can keep up on the progress of their students, knowing that it’s a reflection of them. Then, sometimes, we take it into conversation after that.

By providing this feedback on a monthly basis, the administrators feel as though they are giving the teachers all the necessary information to self-assess progress, success, or needed growth areas, despite the fact that formal performance evaluations happen, at most, once per year, but often with even less frequency. The administrators also told me that feel like they provide one another with valuable feedback on a regular basis. This peer-level feedback helps them to work through difficult decisions, feel more secure about their process, and have a sounding board for frustrations. Nancy said:

For me, personally, I feel like I get feedback all the time. I have a relationship where, if I feel like I am not getting enough, I will say 'I want more,' or 'what do you think about this?' 'This is how I responded, was that a good way or a bad way?' I think we are constantly getting feedback from other administrators, our bosses, and our teachers.

John, in particular, sees the value in receiving feedback from not only other administrators, but teachers as well, so that he can continue to grow. He shared:

I think, as a principal, I get very little direct feedback from teachers. I hear it through the grapevine more than I get direct feedback. That's just the way it is. I think that's just a culture piece in education. I hold the power to hire and fire. They're not going to say too many things that are too harsh. I constantly put out there the desire for open communication. Up, down, and sideways. I will continue to put that out there. That doesn't mean that's going to necessarily happen though. I think more of it is based on the relationship. I think the feedback I get is more anecdotal than direct. If my teachers are doing well, if my teachers are happy, if

my teachers are progressing in their growth, then I'm doing my job well. That's where I get the feedback on my supervision.

Overall, both teachers and administrators at AFA believe that evaluation plays an important role in their professional growth, as well as the growth of students. While administrators believe that maintaining a global focus and summative judgment are critical aspects of evaluation, based on interviews and surveys teachers are more likely to place value in being held to the same standard as all other teachers within the school, as well as being treated fairly and respectfully. Teachers also feel that the fact that performance evaluations are not delivered on time limits the effectiveness of this form of feedback.

### **Supervision**

Nolan and Hoover (2011) define supervision as “an organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, leading to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning” (p. 6). At AFA, supervision most often takes the form of casual conversations between teachers and their instructional coaches, trainers, assistant principals, and principals. However, many of the teachers interviewed in this study also pointed out the importance of all teachers in a center coming together and making joint decisions regarding the needs of the school and the students. In terms of supervision at AFA, teachers and administrators shared their feelings about the characteristics of narrow focus, supervisors aiding in making judgments, but not making judgments for teachers, data collection that is differentiated, individualized, teacher-driven, and shared leadership. Each of these characteristics is discussed below.

**Narrow focus.** Having a narrow focus while providing supervision means that together teachers and administrators identify one or two areas for growth that the teacher will work on, and that the administrator will provide coaching and guidance throughout the growth process. These areas for growth may come from performance evaluations, but more often they come out of conversations between teachers and their supervisor(s) regarding some point of stress or conflict for the teacher. When teachers are new to the profession this narrow focus can be especially helpful. As Scott said, when he was new to AFA his administrator told him, “this is what you need to do. Don’t worry about all the other stuff.” This conversation put Scott at ease as he was learning the most effective way to do his job. Melissa agreed, saying:

I like hearing what I'm doing well, because it's always nice to hear the positive first. But I also do like hearing what could be improved on. But I don't want to just hear it in the way like ‘oh, this is what you're doing wrong.’ I want you to tell me how I can do it better. ‘This is how you can improve and this is how you can do it,’ or ‘this is what I've done that worked for me.’

Slightly more than half of the teachers who were surveyed in this study agreed, with 52% agreeing or completely agreeing with the statement, “In this school, I am recognized for a job well done.” This suggests that, while administrators believe it is important to keep the bigger picture in mind, teachers appreciate a more narrow focus with recognition along the way.

Although many teachers feel that they are recognized when they are doing well, they feel that there is work to be done in terms of providing teachers supervision with a

narrow focus. When discussing a previous performance evaluation, Jason highlighted this concern:

With Common Core coming out last year I was frustrated with my view on how it went. I said, 'I think I'm the teacher who did the most Common Core in the area. That's what everyone was asked to do, and I don't see anyone else doing it really but me. If you're saying that I was only this successful, can you show me how I stacked up against the rest of the region?' Oh, well it turned out yes; you did get out more of this class than anyone else. Obviously that would affect everything else that went with it.

Not only does a narrow focus provide teachers with a realistic set of achievable goals, and a sense of clarity, but it also lets them know that the administrators really are paying attention to the work they do, and that what they do matters. Identifying specific goals with a narrow focus for every teacher on staff takes time, but is a critical factor in teacher job satisfaction.

**Supervisors aid in making judgments, but do not make judgments for teachers.** It is important to teachers that they are involved in the determination of professional goals set for them. This can be as simple as asking, "this is where you are doing well, what do you want to work on?" as Scott was asked by his administrator during a two-way feedback session. Scott also identified the importance of tone during these conversations, saying:

Something that's very hard to kind of evaluate as feedback, I know it's cliché, but it's very important how you say things. You can say what you want, and have it come across completely wrong, just because of the words you've chosen to use.

Your inability to add in just a little bit of 'I understand where you're coming from.'

Veteran teachers at AFA feel that this is an area in need of growth for the administration. Jessica shared with me, "I feel like I'm not supervised here. I'm kind of doing my own thing...she'll kind of tell me how I should be doing this or how she would be doing it, but she doesn't ask for my input." Jason agreed, saying:

Two or three years ago I would have felt like I had, in more of an evaluation sort of discussion with people above me, I might have felt like there might have been a change [based on my input], whereas now it seems like maybe that decision's being made higher above my supervisor or the regional leadership, to where it's kind of, it's there and that's what's going to happen, where it used to be a little more conversational.

These feelings were echoed in the surveys, with 61% disagreeing or completely disagreeing with the statement, "My administrators talk to me frequently about my instructional practice." Although monthly student data and annual performance evaluations are used to share teacher progress toward established goals and guidelines, it appears through the analysis of data and shared identification of areas for growth is lacking at AFA. Administrators, on the other hand, feel that they do this well. Sharon told me:

I like my feedback to be more a coaching type situation, where I am not telling them what I want to see from them, but we talk about what's going on because I don't ever want somebody to feel like they have to do something, just the way I

see it. Everyone is an individual, and they have their own strengths and weaknesses, with everything.

This disconnect between teacher and administrator perceptions of the level of instructional supervision provided to teachers is cause for concern, and points to the importance of open communication between teachers and administrators. Through consistent two-way feedback sessions, teachers could be receiving the necessary coaching to make appropriate goals for improvement.

**Data collection is differentiated, individualized, and teacher driven.** At AFA, with such a strong focus on student data, administrators have a difficult time with this characteristic of supervision. Scott shared:

It's hard to fall in love with your numbers. It's just hard. It's just the numbers sometimes. Then, I don't want to be the teacher who makes excuses and says 'hey, my students were horrible this month. That's why my numbers are bad.' But there are stories, there are reasons and things like that.

Melissa said that individualizing data collection is possible at AFA, noting, "it's just a mixture of individual needs, coaching, and mentoring." Riley is looking for this personalized support as well, saying:

I want something that I'm not doing so well. Maybe there is something I can improve on. I want [the supervisors] to not be critical and mean about it, but maybe like, 'here, this is what you seem to be struggling with.' Then I want them to basically give me the support that I need to overcome that. Suggestions like, 'try this with this particular student,' or something. Something to help me

improve in that area and not just say, ‘this is where you are doing bad,’ then moving on to the next subject.

Teachers at AFA are not looking for administrators to go easy on them, or gloss over important student progress data. Rather, they are looking for their administrators to dig a little deeper, and consider the many other factors that both positively and negatively impact student success. By holding regular two-way feedback sessions with teachers, as well as conducting regular informal observations, school leaders would be able to provide this differentiated level of support.

Administrators at AFA agree that data collection should include more than raw data on student progress, but they struggle to find the right balance. John shared:

I think there's a constant struggle in our school between quantity and quality. We evaluate well in quantity, but we don't evaluate well in quality. We look for quantitative ways to measure everything, and we don't have the quantitative data to measure quality. I think that's an area where we lack and definitely an area for growth in our evaluation of teachers, as the quality of their teaching in some sort of qualitative measure. That's something that I don't think is out there currently for our program, and really not many programs at all, to measure student progress. That's an area that absolutely could be explored a lot further.

Survey data shows that while more than half of the teachers surveyed believe they are provided with support from their administrators, they believe that two-way feedback sessions could be used more effectively to differentiate support. Of the three administrators interviewed for this study, Nancy uses the two-way feedback sessions most frequently. She shared with me “during two-way feedback sessions we often open

the gateway to conversation.” In observing these feedback sessions I noticed that both Nancy and the teachers seemed more relaxed, with open body posture. There was laughter, and the tone of the meetings demonstrated mutual trust and respect between Nancy and the teachers. I observed several instances of direct, constructive feedback, around which there was discussion and then goals were set. In observing two-way feedback sessions with the other administrators in this study the meetings were shorter, both the administrator and the teacher often seemed tense, and little of substance was accomplished. This points to the fact that consistency plays a large role in the effectiveness of these two-way feedback sessions. When teachers and their administrator(s) meet regularly to discuss goals, struggles, and successes teachers feel that they are given targeted areas to focus on, and are able to celebrate success.

**Leadership is shared, roles are blended.** One major outcome of regular two-way feedback sessions is that the roles of leader and subordinate are blurred, leadership is shared, and both parties support, and are held accountable by, the other. When Scott came to AFA and experienced his first two-way feedback session he was surprised, “it was an awesome experience. It was a very different management style than I’ve been used to.” He did say that it took some time to grow accustomed to this style, and that at first he did a lot of listening, while his administrator did a lot of talking, “it was such an uncomfortable place to be, but I do like to sit down and talk to somebody. I feel less comfortable doing that, but I feel more sincere when I do that.” Over time, it became more and more comfortable, as trust was built and what was discussed in these sessions was not used against him in an evaluative way.

Jason, one of the veteran teachers in the group of interviewees, has a different perspective on the two-way feedback sessions. He shared:

One time that stands out when previous leadership asked for my input and feedback it really felt like I've, what's the best way to say this, like 'I'm in over my head, and I'm in trouble, and I'm going to have this meeting so we can say we had it.' Now, I feel like I talk to Sharon, I can talk to her. I think she takes into account what I say, but obviously she's in charge of how many teachers? They all have different styles, and everything else. I'm older; I'm not going to beat around the bush. I try to be direct. I mean, in life it's healthy to play multiple roles. You shouldn't always be the person in charge; you shouldn't always be the person at the bottom. I mean if you are at work the person working above other people, then it's probably healthy to hear what they have to say about how you're doing or how they could help you.

Jason feels as though administrators should be asking for feedback from their teachers on a regular basis, but his preference is for this to happen in a more casual, conversational format. He believes that no feedback is helpful unless there is respect and trust between both parties, and he has experienced times at AFA when he lacked this respect for his supervisors. During those periods, he shared that the feedback he received was much less useful because he felt it was insincere and coming from administrators that had not spent enough time with him to make reasonable judgments.

In terms of leadership styles in general, the teachers I interviewed feel that they have opportunities to demonstrate shared leadership. Jason shared:

It's very easy to work with [John], because he's somebody who leads by example. For me, I don't like people who don't give you that example to go by. So, at this point in time, I have a lot of respect for him and what he's done.

Melissa agreed with Jason that having respect for your administrators is key to feeling satisfied in your job and being open to receiving feedback. She shared with me:

One of the first things I noticed working here was how comfortable and open the relationship is between the assistant principals and the teachers. Sharon is very helpful. She's very supportive. She's always offering assistance. She lets you do your thing, I mean she steps in when she needs to but she doesn't really hover or micro-manage, which is really nice.

This shared leadership is in some ways a result of the design of the organization itself. Administrators are split between several buildings, meaning they are not in the building every day. Although each of the sites is small in size, and therefore the number of direct reports is manageable, the geographical distance does limit access to administrators.

Melissa commented on this, saying:

Because our leadership has to go between so many buildings [Sharon's] not here every single day, which I think is interesting because I've never really worked in an environment where your boss isn't there every day. But everyone still is highly motivated. We don't need her here to feel like we have to do the work. We're going to work and do a good job regardless. I don't really feel pressure if she's here, like, 'oh, I have to impress her,' or 'oh, I really need to be on my toes.' It's just the same thing, like 'oh, great, she's here so all these questions I had I can ask her.' I like that.

This shared leadership is also apparent between the teaching staff. The teachers often meet together to discuss concerns about their center, and come up with potential solutions. These meetings happen both with and without the administrators present. Josh shared:

As teachers, we talk amongst ourselves and try to come up with solutions amongst ourselves, so we can have our center run a lot smoother and when we come up with solutions we then talk to our supervisors about it. I feel the more opportunities we as teachers have to let our supervisors know how we can make our center better, how we can better serve our students, the better we'll be. After a while, it just becomes like second nature.

The teachers shared with me that these meetings are often called spontaneously, when they realize that something in the center is becoming an issue, or when students or parents present an issue to the staff. While decisions are not made without input from their administrators, they like to have solutions in mind, as they feel they have the first-hand knowledge of the issue and how it is impacting the day-to-day operations of the site. Scott said he sometimes uses these meetings to share ideas that might otherwise go unheard.

I believe in what I'm doing and I believe this is what's going to work. I feel the better way is to just hear [the teachers] out and understand why people fight for what they're doing so much. It's not because I'm combative, it's just because it's what I believe in.

Jason also uses both center meetings and two-way feedback sessions to share frustrations with his administrators. He told me:

I've multiple times told leadership, even before it was John, like, 'hey, I don't agree with this. I'd like to sit down and talk about it, because it makes me frustrated with my job.' so I've had conversations to varying degrees of success.

As a newer teacher, Melissa enjoys the opportunity to have face time with her administrator, and feels that the two-way feedback sessions provide her with support she would not get in a more traditional setting, but she also shared that she still feels a bit uncomfortable giving feedback to her assistant principal:

I like that it's one-on-one. I'd like there to be a rubric, so it's not just my personal judgment. It would be like, this is a predetermined rubric and I'm just picking things. That would be a little bit more objective, not so personal. Definitely one-on-one is most comfortable though. And face-to-face is important, because it would be weird just over email or something.

In order for these two-way feedback sessions to truly feel like shared leadership, they need to happen regularly and over an extended period of time, in addition to being consistent and clear. Melissa shared that she believes she will grow more comfortable with providing her supervisor with feedback over time. Riley enjoys the personalized feedback she receives from her assistant principal, and being able to step in and say what it is she needs from her as well:

I feel more confident in my choices, like I'm ok, I'm doing the right things. If my supervisor was constantly giving me feedback that I wasn't doing things right, kind of more critical and not so much as a coach, I would definitely be questioning what I'm doing. I wouldn't feel comfortable teaching the students, but

the way she approaches it and the way I can approach her, I feel much better about what I'm doing and telling her what I need from her.

The administrators also enjoy the opportunity to spend one-on-one time with their teachers, as well as being provided with feedback on how they are doing as leaders. John believes that:

Feedback, for me, should come on a level playing field. If there is feedback, I want to make sure that it's given in a non-confrontational situation. Unless it needs to be direct and following protocol, generally it's in conversations on a casual basis.

Nancy agreed with John, and spoke about how it took some time for the teachers to be comfortable providing her with feedback. She shared:

The first time I did the two-way feedback with my teachers it was really hard for them to give me feedback. The comfort level wasn't there. Once I presented it in a way where 'this helps me be a better administrator, this helps me identify what my strengths and what my weaknesses are and work on them. If you want me to be a better administrator you need to tell me that. I promise that it won't hurt my feelings. I promise I won't cry. I want the feedback.' Then, the next time I did it, it opened up the gates to a lot more things that people felt.

Although it takes time, and there is still plenty of room for growth, the administrators believe that hearing from their teachers is very important and that this feedback positively impacts their level of job satisfaction as a leader. As all of the administrators in the Valley region are relatively new to school leadership, they know that there is still much room for growth. Sharon shared:

Lately the two-way feedback sessions have been pushing me because what I've gotten is that they want me to provide them with something that I don't naturally provide as a leader. Right now it's about challenging me because they're practically screaming for it. At the same time, I feel like I'm trying to challenge them to develop that themselves. That's job satisfaction in the sense that it's challenging. You want to be challenged at work, so you can develop.

She went on to share that her teachers are asking for more affirmations when they are doing a good job. Sharon knows that, as public recognition is not something that motivates her in her work, providing this praise to teachers is something she will need to work on daily. As a principal, John also enjoys the challenge of being pushed by his staff to improve. He told me:

I think the more that I'm challenged to better myself and to better my leadership capacity, the better off I'm going to be in whatever role that I take in the future. The more honest feedback I can get from my teachers, the better off I will be, which in turn the better off they will be. That isn't always the line of reasoning that's taken. It's often a difficult road to go down with that. I also value honesty, and I feel that honesty is a sign of respect. When people are honest it shows that they're mature, they're respectful, and they value what they do. That honesty and that respect shows that they care about what they're doing, which then in turn shows that they care about their students.

Even with the two-way feedback sessions, and the desire expressed by the administrators to have open communication with their staff, the teachers at AFA express frustration with the decision-making process at the school. Of the teachers surveyed for

this study, 74% disagree or completely disagree with the statement “I participate in making the most important educational decisions in my center.” In addition, only 43% of teachers surveyed agreed or completely agreed with the statement “I feel like I am able to give my administrators feedback without fear of retaliation.” Josh echoed the data from the surveys, telling me “my supervisor has an open-door policy, but at the same time I feel that I don’t know how it’s going to be perceived, and I don’t know how it’s going to come back to me.” This uncertainty means that Josh often holds back when he has feedback for his administrators, and based on survey data it would appear that he is not alone. Clearly, there is still work to be done in the aspect of shared leadership at AFA. However, the two-way feedback sessions do appear to be having a positive impact on teacher job satisfaction, especially for the new teachers.

### **Reasons Beyond Evaluation and Supervision**

Although all employees who leave AFA are asked to fill out a written exit interview so that the leadership of the school can receive valuable feedback, a very small number of departing employees actually complete this form. Exit interviews that were completed by teachers who had left over the past 18 months were reviewed by the researcher in the human resources department for job title, dates of service, whether the termination was voluntary or involuntary, as well as any relevant information from the exit interview itself.

In order to help answer the question guiding this study, only the employment information and exit interviews of teaching staff were examined, as the perceptions of other support staff were outside the scope of this study. Of the 44 teachers that had left the school over the past 18 months, the average length of employment was 3.2 years, and

of these terminations 87.5% were voluntary, while 12.5% were involuntary. For staff that left voluntarily, the reasons for leaving included relocation, wanting to stay home with family, accepting a job with a traditional school district, and/or frustration with one or more aspects of AFA. One teacher, who had been with AFA for just eight months and accepted a position with a local district, cited the reason for leaving as:

My new job has higher pay, better benefits, and supervisors with more experience and credentials. I have been unhappy with my pay at AFA, and have always felt like I had to fight to get what was owed to me.

Another teacher, who was with AFA for three years, also cited leadership as a reason for leaving. This teacher stated, “I don’t feel like there is an advocate for teachers at this school. We’re left to fight our own battles and don’t get the support we need.” In interviews the teachers discussed the impact of leadership on their job satisfaction, in particular how well they felt their leaders understood the job of the teacher. Jason told me “there are always new leaders at this school. People who yesterday were my peers are all of a sudden my supervisor and I’m expected to rely on them to make decisions for me.” He went on to tell me that his current assistant principal has been working in education for a shorter period of time than he has, and that while he respects her he sometimes feels that he has more knowledge about what works than she does.

Several of the teachers who completed exit surveys cited inadequate pay as a reason for leaving, while others mentioned high stress or heavy work load as reasons they did not stay. While 35% of the teachers who left over this 18-month period were leaving to work at a traditional school, only 15% left to pursue a career other than teaching. These findings support the research that charter school teachers sometimes find the

increased stress to be too much, and that some charter school teachers choose to leave not just their position, but the teaching profession itself (Newton et al., 2011; Stuit & Smith, 2012). The other 50% of teachers who had left transitioned to a new role within the organization, moved away from the area, or were involuntarily terminated. Josh, who came to AFA from a traditional school, shared that he often considers leaving the charter school to go back to the district. He stated:

What keeps me here is feeling like I'm helping kids who are just like I was at that age. It's frustrating because things change all the time, and our leadership doesn't always share information with us right away, but I stay for the kids.

He went on to tell me that he would be making more money if he were to return to the district, and that he misses having summer vacations with his own children, but he feels like his students need him.

Of those teachers who had left the school within the past 18 months and completed the voluntary exit interviews, 27.5%, or nine teachers, came from the Valley region, and had been participating in the two-way feedback sessions prior to leaving. Although none of these teachers cited the feedback sessions in their exit interviews, the reasons for leaving for these teachers were almost entirely personal, such as moving away or staying home to take care of children or other family members. Only one of these teachers cited leadership as a reason for leaving, saying he or she did not feel supported by administrators. This would suggest that the personalized feedback being provided by administrators in the Valley region has had some impact on teacher job satisfaction, although the data sample is too small to verify this with any degree of certainty.

## **What is Most Important?**

Although both evaluation and supervision are important aspects of feedback for teachers and administrators, the degree of importance appears to vary by job title. While the teachers I interviewed and surveyed for this study appear to value supervision over evaluation, in particular the aspects of shared leadership and individualized data collection, the administrators see greater value in evaluation. This misalignment could explain many of the frustrations expressed by teachers in their interviews, particularly their feeling that they are judged solely on their “numbers,” meaning the raw student data that is collected and shared out on a monthly basis.

Teachers value the relationship that develops with their administrators through the two-way feedback sessions. Melissa shared:

There’s a huge correlation between getting along well with your boss, and feeling supported by your boss, and being happy with your job. I definitely think that keeps me here. The job itself also does, but if I didn’t like my supervisors as much then it would be tempting to look for another job if a better opportunity arose.

During observations, I was able to see evidence of these strong professional relationships in the way teachers and administrators interacted. For example, Melissa, who describes how much she likes and respects her supervisors, was seen laughing and smiling throughout conversations with her assistant principal, and she also self-identified several areas where she was struggling and needed support. This suggests that her comfort level with her administrator allowed her to be vulnerable and ask for help. In contrast, Josh, who described his frustration with a lack of feedback during his interview, remained highly professional and reserved in his conversations with his assistant principal, and

held back from sharing his struggles. While none of the participants of this study shared that they had suffered from any negative consequences as a result of these two-way feedback sessions, there was a marked difference in the comfort level of those teachers who participated in regular feedback sessions with their administrators and those who did not.

It is important for all leaders, but in particular school leaders, to build strong working relationships with employees that involve trust and mutual respect (Streshly & Gray, 2008). This has been proven through research, and is supported by the data in this study. The teachers and administrators in this study who had strong working relationships displayed more commitment to the organization, happiness at work, and comfort with both giving and receiving feedback.

## **Conclusion**

The research question guiding this study was: how do teachers perceive that feedback from their principals influences their job satisfaction and decisions to stay in teaching or leave the profession? Based on the interviews, observations, survey data, and document review conducted in this study, it is apparent that teachers perceive that a strong working relationship with their administrators plays a critical role in their job satisfaction and career decisions. In addition, it is clear that feedback, both evaluative and supervisory, play a significant part in how teachers feel about their jobs. When either evaluation or supervision is provided too infrequently or inconsistently, teachers become frustrated and become dissatisfied with their work. Overall, the teachers in this study identified that their administrators had quite a significant impact on their job satisfaction,

and that the frequency and delivery method of feedback from these administrators was influential.

## **Chapter 5: Recommendations**

The teachers and administrators in this study are just a small sample of the staff working at Achievement for All, which currently employs 145 teachers, 20 assistant principals, and six principals. Although the sample size was small, and the research was bounded to a specific school over a specific period of time (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012), there is still much to be learned from this study. Both teachers and administrators identify the importance of feedback and support, as well as the value of the work they are doing. However, it was clear that there is work to be done in terms of providing teachers with valuable, consistent, and clearly measureable feedback through both evaluation and supervision at this school. In order for feedback to be effective, it needs to happen with consistency, based on a set of clearly identified outcomes, and be mutually developed to ensure buy-in from both parties.

### **Recommendations for AFA Administrators**

For the administrators of AFA's Valley region, there are many things that are going well. Teachers, in general, appear to be happy in their work, to have a clear understanding of the vision and goals of not only the region but also the school as a whole, and they seem eager to learn and grow. That said there are some clear areas for growth. While the administrators perceive the value of evaluation and raw student data to be critical forms of feedback, the teachers value supervision over evaluation and are asking for more support. In particular, they want feedback on their instructional practice and they would like to be an active participant in the determination of goals and indicators of student success.

In order to meet the needs of the teachers at AFA, the evaluation and supervision structures should be examined and revised. I strongly recommend that a formalized structure be put in place that is clearly defined and consistently implemented in regard to teacher observations. While this will need to be an internally developed structure, due to the unique instructional model of the school, it is not only possible, but also necessary. The process of designing this structure must include all stakeholders in the teacher observation process, including principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and teachers. There must be buy-in from both administrators and teachers if it is to be successful. Once the model is in place, there needs to be a structure developed for implementation, including frequency of observations, formats for conferencing both before and after observations, and what is to be done with observations upon completion. Decisions need to be made regarding if and how these observations will be included in performance evaluations, and if so to what extent. Will these observations be used as a factor in determining continued employment? If so, what weight will they carry in that decision? What role will the teachers play in these determinations? Other factors that must be considered include but are not limited to: support for teachers who receive a poor rating from observations, consequences of multiple poor ratings, training for administrators on how to conduct effective observations from the pre-conference through the post-conference, and a schedule for revisions to the observation structure or template.

In addition, it will be important for the principals and assistant principals at AFA to work to provide teachers with timely performance evaluations. A theme of both the interviews and surveys of teachers was the fact that annual performance reviews are rarely delivered on time. Teachers are eager to be provided with this feedback, as well as

to set professional goals for themselves, and part of increasing their job satisfaction is delivery of this feedback on time. The administrators of AFA also need to keep in mind that nothing that is addressed in an annual performance evaluation should be a surprise to the teacher. If there are issues that need to be addressed and/or corrected, the teacher must be made aware of those issues immediately so that he or she has time to make necessary corrections prior to the annual review.

In addition to more feedback on instructional practice, teachers also expressed a desire for more supervisory feedback from their administrators. Although leadership at AFA is stretched thin, in part due to geographical distances, it is important to make the time to supervise and coach employees. While the school has increased supports for both teachers and students through additional support staff such as instructional coaches and trainers, teachers still prefer to receive these supervisory supports from their principal and/or assistant principal (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). While AFA administrators do a good job of providing teachers with the raw student data that is used to measure effectiveness at this school, teachers want more individualized, differentiated feedback. Continuing regular two-way feedback sessions will be a great way to address this need, as will both informal and formal observations by assistant principals and principals.

As fewer than half of the teachers surveyed expressed the intent to stay in their current positions, addressing the needs of the teachers in the Valley region is very important in order to increase the retention of teachers. The Valley region serves a population of historically underserved students, and therefore it is especially important to ensure teachers stay in their positions as long as possible. One of the factors that most influences the success of students at AFA is the personal connections they build with

their teachers. High teacher turnover not only reduces student performance and increases the stress of the other staff at the site, it reinforces some of the negative school experiences many of the students had prior to coming to AFA.

### **Recommendations for Charter School Administrators**

As charter school teachers face higher levels of scrutiny, work longer hours and more days of the year, and are often not provided the protection of the teacher's union, providing increased levels of support and guidance through supervision is critical for both their success and their desire to remain working in the school. High rates of teacher turnover negatively impact students and schools as a whole (Jacob et al., 2012; NCTAF, 2007). While teachers in charter schools are often held to very high expectations, these expectations are also held for administrators. Therefore, it is important for charter schools to build a structure of shared leadership, so that all students receive the supports they need and the school as a whole can succeed. This shared leadership can be fostered through regular two-way feedback sessions between teachers and administrators.

Most charter school teachers face longer hours than their traditional school counterparts, are held to higher expectations, and are at-will employees, and therefore it takes a conscious choice to work in a charter school. This means that, most often, the teachers are already holding themselves to a higher expectation, and are going to be their own worst critic. It is important, therefore, that charter school administrators be knowledgeable, present, and highly supportive. This includes not only strong leadership, but a strong background in instruction as well, in order to provide assistance in making judgments that have a narrow focus and to collect data that is differentiated and specific. Administrators in charter schools would be wise to work to remain up to date on current

trends in instruction, curriculum, and leadership, as well as to invest in the professional development of their entire staff.

In addition to site-level supports, charter school administrators need to invest time and energy building strong working relationships with their teachers. By spending time in classrooms conducting both formal and informal observations a great deal can be learned. Even more can be learned, however, through co-teaching, working together to develop unit plans, and conducting two-way feedback sessions on a regular basis to ensure all parties are receiving the support and feedback necessary to thrive.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Given the limited timeframe and resources, this research study is limited in its transferability. Given more time, I would have liked to include a larger sample of charter school teachers and administrators, along with teachers and administrators from traditional public schools, K-8 schools, and private schools. In order to learn as much as possible about how teachers perceive the influence of both evaluative and supervisory feedback on their job satisfaction, this larger sample would be necessary.

In addition, it would be interesting to do a comparative study between schools who are introduced to the two-way feedback sessions and implement them regularly over the course of one to two years, alongside a school that is not implementing these structured feedback sessions. By comparing similar school settings that are and are not using this model, we could learn a great deal about both the impact of the model, as well as the influence of regular meetings between teachers and administrators on teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Finally, it is my recommendation that research be conducted in the area of teacher perceptions of the influence of formal observations on their job satisfaction and career decisions. By exploring teachers' thoughts about these formal observations we can learn what works, what does not, and what needs to be changed. While not many would argue that administrators should never observe teachers, the ambiguity of many teacher observations, along with limited training for administrators, often leads to a devaluing of the results of these observations. While they could be incredibly valuable tools in the development of teachers, their misuse and/or lack of use have discredited their importance for both teachers and administrators.

### **Final Thoughts**

Teachers are the most important factor in the success of students. Therefore, school administrators must help ensure that teachers feel satisfied with the job of teaching in order to reduce teacher attrition. Teachers tell us that feedback is important, but that it must be delivered clearly and with consistency.

Administrators at Achievement for All must begin to support teachers in the area of instructional feedback. A formalized structure for teacher observations must be developed, along with a process for implementation. This needs to include a uniform teacher observation rubric that is developed through a collaborative effort by administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers. Once this rubric is developed all instructional staff must be adequately trained on the implementation, including the functions of the observation. If formal observations are to be used in annual performance reviews, this must be clearly communicated to the teachers prior to implementation. If they are not to be used in an evaluative capacity, both teachers and administrators need to

understand why, as well as what true the purpose is. If they are to be used as a coaching tool, what supports and follow-up will be put into place to ensure they are effective? These, and many more, decisions must be made in the development process and must be clearly communicated.

Additionally, administrators at AFA must deliver annual performance evaluations on time. Teachers deserve honest, timely feedback, and require it if they are to continue to develop as educators. Just as we expect teachers to provide their students with feedback on the work they produce, teachers can and should expect feedback from their supervisors. Clear, consistent, and honest feedback can only be provided when administrators spend time observing and collaborating with teachers, and therefore time must be allotted for this. When assistant principals supervise multiple locations, and many teachers, their ability to provide this level of support is limited. This issue needs to be addressed by the upper management of the organization.

Furthermore, the teachers of AFA made the conscious choice to work in this charter school with this student population. This commitment to underserved youth should be honored and respected. These teachers are working longer hours, twelve months of the year, and often come to work in the evening and on weekends to support their students. They are working outside the protection of a teachers union, knowing that they will never achieve tenure. Providing these teachers with the necessary supervision and evaluation to do their best work as efficiently and effectively as possible can honor this dedication to the mission of the school and can help to reduce the turnover of teachers at AFA.

Finally, if these supports and policies are put into place they must include a clearly defined process that can withstand the test of time. By training all parties on the purpose, process, and intended outcomes, these supports will be sustainable over time regardless of veteran leaders moving on (or up), new leaders coming into place, new and experienced teachers, or the addition of instructional coaches and/or trainers.

Addressing the issue of teacher attrition is of concern to all educators, particularly those in charter schools. While much research has been done on factors that influence the career decisions of teachers, this study focuses on the role feedback plays in these decisions. It is my hope that administrators at AFA, and in charter schools in general, will take the perceptions of the teachers in this study as a sampling of the perceptions of charter teachers in general, and will evaluate the ways in which they provide feedback to their staff.

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Appendix A: Research Invitation

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE  
THE ROLE OF FEEDBACK IN TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION STUDY  
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Dear Teacher,

I am writing to inform you about a dissertation study that is being conducted at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) regarding the role of feedback on teacher job satisfaction. Laura Sloan, a doctoral candidate, is conducting the study as part of the Ed.D. degree requirements.

The purpose of Laura Sloan's dissertation study is to examine the implementation of a two-way feedback system between teachers and school administrators in order to better understand how teachers perceive the influence of feedback on their job satisfaction, as well as their decision to stay in teaching or leave the profession. This study will add new knowledge to existing information regarding the factors that influence teacher job satisfaction, and ultimately teacher turnover. Your participation in this study would include participation in one 60-minute one-on-one interview, one 30-minute observation with your administrator, and the completion of a survey.

Any personally identifiable characteristics, such as your name or school, will not appear in the study. Participating in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Your time investment in this study is greatly appreciated. If you would like to participate, please contact Laura Sloan at [laurasloan2015@gmail.com](mailto:laurasloan2015@gmail.com) or (661) 388-6624. Thank you in advance for considering participation in this study.

Best,

Laura Sloan

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

**California State University, Northridge**  
**CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

**The Role of Feedback in Teacher Job Satisfaction: A Qualitative Inquiry into Teacher Perceptions**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The Role of Feedback in Teacher Job Satisfaction: A Qualitative Inquiry into Teacher Perceptions, a study conducted by Laura Sloan as part of the requirements for the Ed.D degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. The researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

**RESEARCH TEAM**

**Researcher:**

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**PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purpose of this research study is to examine the implementation of a two-way feedback system between teachers and school administrators in order to better understand how teachers perceive the influence of feedback on their job satisfaction, as well as in their decision to stay in teaching or leave the profession.

**SUBJECTS**

***Inclusion Requirements***

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are:

- A teacher or administrator in a charter high school
- Participate in a two-way feedback system with your principal

- Have between one and ten years of teaching/administrative experience

### ***Time Commitment***

This study will involve approximately 2 hours of your time over the course of 7 months.

### **PROCEDURES**

The following procedures will occur: You will participate in one 60-minute one-on-one interview with the researcher. This interview will take place at a time that is convenient for you, in a location of your choice. The interview will be recorded, so that the researcher will be able to transcribe the content. You will then be observed in one two-way feedback session with your administrator for approximately 30 minutes. Finally, you will be asked to complete a survey, which should take you no more than 30 minutes to complete.

### **RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include: fatigue, boredom, mild emotional discomfort, embarrassment. In order to minimize these risks and/or discomforts the researcher will keep the interview moving and try to maintain a conversational tone, will remain sensitive to emotional discomforts, and will keep all responses confidential. This study involves no more than minimal risk. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life.

### **BENEFITS**

#### ***Subject Benefits***

You may not directly benefit from participation in this study.

#### ***Benefits to Others or Society***

Although you may not directly benefit from participation in this study, because it is looking at the perceived influence of feedback on teacher job satisfaction it has the potential to positively impact the teacher/administrator relationship.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION**

The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

### **COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT**

#### ***Compensation for Participation***

You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.

#### ***Costs***

There is no cost to you for participation in this study.

#### ***Reimbursement***

You will not be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses, such as parking or transportation fees.

### **WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION FROM THE STUDY AND CONSEQUENCES**

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. **If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify the researcher immediately.** The research team may also end your participation in this study if you do not follow instructions, miss scheduled visits, or if your safety and welfare are at risk.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

#### ***Subject Identifiable Data***

All identifiable information that will be collected about you will be removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and your identifiable information will be kept separate from the research data.

#### ***Data Storage***

All research data will be stored on a laptop computer that is password-protected.

The audio recordings will also be stored on a password-protected laptop. They will be transcribed and then kept for five years following the completion of the study. After this time period they will be destroyed.

#### ***Data Access***

The researcher named on the first page of this form will have access to your study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you.

#### ***Data Retention***

The researcher intends to keep the research data for approximately 5 years following the conclusion of this study, and then it will be destroyed.

### **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS**

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Research and

Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

***I agree to participate in the study.***

\_\_\_ *I agree to be audio recorded*

\_\_\_ *I do not wish to be audio recorded*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Researcher

## Appendix C: Interview Protocol

### CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF FEEDBACK INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### 1. Pre-Interview Session: Introduction/Background

##### **Welcome and Introduction:**

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to meet with me today. Before we begin, I want to take the time for you to read and sign this Consent to Participate in Research form.

##### **Purpose of the Interview:**

As we have discussed, this one-on-one interview is designed so that I can collect information for a research study that explores teacher perceptions regarding the implementation of a two-way feedback system between teachers and administrators. During this interview, we will talk about your experiences in two-way feedback sessions with your administrator(s).

##### **Timing:**

Today's interview will last approximately one hour. Do you have any questions before we get started?

#### 2. Interview Session

##### **Questions:**

1. How long have you been teaching? How long have you worked at this school?
2. Tell me about your relationship with your administrators.
  - a. In what ways are you provided with feedback regarding your work?
  - b. In what ways do you believe other teachers in this school are provided with feedback?
3. In what ways do you feel you are evaluated in your job?
  - a. How well do you feel these methods measure your effectiveness?
  - b. In what other ways do you feel a teacher should be evaluated?
4. In what ways does your administrator supervise your work?

- a. How supportive do you believe these methods to be?
  - b. What types of supervision do you think would be most effective in providing you with support?
5. Tell me about your experience with the two-way feedback meetings you have had with your administrator.
  - a. Can you tell me about a specific memory you have from one of those meetings?
6. How do you feel that these two-way feedback meetings have influenced your level of job satisfaction? In what ways?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
7. What other forms of feedback have you received from administrators in the past?
  - a. Did you find these styles of feedback helpful?
8. When receiving feedback from an administrator, what is most valuable to you?
9. What are your thoughts about being asked to provide feedback to your administrators?

**Closing Questions:**

I would like to give you a final opportunity to help me examine these issues. Before we end, is there anything I have missed? Do you have anything else to add? Have you said everything you wanted to say? Have you shared everything significant about these two-way feedback meetings with me? If there is anything else that you think of after our interview session, I invite you to contact me.

**3. Post-Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing:**

Thank you for participating in this interview session. I greatly appreciate your time and that you were so willing to share your thoughts with me. I also want to remind you that everything you have shared with me is confidential. No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to give you the chance to ask any questions you may have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time?

## Appendix D: Administrator Interview Protocol

### CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS OF FEEDBACK INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### 1. Pre-Interview Session: Introduction/Background

##### **Welcome and Introduction:**

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to meet with me today. Before we begin, I want to take the time for you to read and sign this Consent to Participate in Research form.

##### **Purpose of the Interview:**

As we have discussed, this one-on-one interview is designed so that I can collect information for a research study that explores teacher perceptions regarding the implementation of a two-way feedback system between teachers and administrators. During this interview, we will talk about your experiences in two-way feedback sessions with your teachers.

##### **Timing:**

Today's interview will last approximately one hour. Do you have any questions before we get started?

#### 2. Interview Session

##### **Questions:**

1. How long have you been an administrator? How long have you worked at this school?
2. Tell me about your relationship with your teachers.
  - a. In what ways do you provide feedback to your teachers?
  - b. In what ways are you provided with feedback regarding your work?
  - c. In what ways do you believe other administrators in this school are provided with feedback from teachers? From their supervisors?
3. In what ways do you feel you evaluate teachers on their job?

- a. How well do you feel these methods measure their effectiveness?
  - b. In what other ways to you feel a teacher should be evaluated?
4. In what ways do your teachers supervise your work?
  - a. How supportive do you believe these methods to be?
  - b. What types of supervision do you think would be most effective in providing you with feedback on your job?
5. Tell me about your experience with the two-way feedback meetings you have had with your teachers.
  - a. Can you tell me about a specific memory you have from one of those meetings?
6. How do you feel that these two-way feedback meetings have influenced your level of job satisfaction? In what ways?
  - a. Can you give me an example?
7. What other forms of feedback have you received from teachers or supervisors in the past?
  - a. Did you find these styles of feedback helpful?
8. When receiving feedback from a teacher, what is most valuable to you?
9. What are your thoughts about being asked to provide feedback to your teachers

and receiving feedback from them?

**Closing Questions:**

I would like to give you a final opportunity to help me examine these issues. Before we end, is there anything I have missed? Do you have anything else to add? Have you said everything you wanted to say? Have you shared everything significant about these two-way feedback meetings with me? If there is anything else that you think of after our interview session, I invite you to contact me.

**3. Post-Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing:**

Thank you for participating in this interview session. I greatly appreciate your time and that you were so willing to share your thoughts with me. I also want to remind you that everything you have shared with me is confidential. No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to give you the chance to ask any questions you may have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time?

Appendix E: Teacher Survey

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE  
TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF FEEDBACK  
TEACHER SURVEY**

Please answer the questions below to help me understand your feelings about the influences of feedback on your feelings about the job of teaching. Your responses to this survey will be anonymous. Please do not write your name on this survey.

Please completely fill the one circle that represents your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.

1-Completely Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4- Agree, 5-Completely Agree

	Completely Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Completely Agree 5
1. My administrators let me know what is expected.	0	0	0	0	0
2. The school administration's behavior toward me is supportive and encouraging.	0	0	0	0	0
3. I am satisfied with the support I receive from my administrators.	0	0	0	0	0
4. My administrators provide me with non-evaluative supervision to help me improve.	0	0	0	0	0
5. Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my work as a teacher.	0	0	0	0	0
6. My administrators enforce school rules for student conduct and back me up when I need it.	0	0	0	0	0
7. My administrators talk to me frequently about my instructional practice.	0	0	0	0	0
8. I share similar beliefs and values with my colleagues regarding the central mission of this school.	0	0	0	0	0

	Completely Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Completely Agree 5
9. I am evaluated fairly in this school.	0	0	0	0	0
10. I participate in making the most important educational decisions in my center.	0	0	0	0	0
11. I understand clearly the goals set for my center and my students.	0	0	0	0	0
12. My administrators know what kind of school they want and have communicated it to me.	0	0	0	0	0
13. I feel there is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members.	0	0	0	0	0
14. In this school, I am recognized for a job well done.	0	0	0	0	0
15. I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state and local tests.	0	0	0	0	0
16. I worry about the security of my job because of my performance on administrative duties, such as file audits.	0	0	0	0	0
17. I am given the support I need to teach my students.	0	0	0	0	0
18. I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher.	0	0	0	0	0
19. I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at this school.	0	0	0	0	0
20. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this school's policies on important matters relating to its employees.	0	0	0	0	0
21. I feel that one-on-one meetings with my administrator(s) is/are effective in providing me with support.	0	0	0	0	0
22. I feel like I am able to give my administrators feedback without fear of retaliation.	0	0	0	0	0
23. I plan to remain in this position.	0	0	0	0	0
24. I plan to remain at this school.	0	0	0	0	0

	Completely Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Completely Agree 5
25. I plan to remain in this profession.	0	0	0	0	0

Please completely fill in one circle for the following two questions AND explain your reasons for each choice. THEN completely answer question 3. Please use another sheet of paper if you need more room.

**1. How satisfied are you with teaching as a profession?**

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Why?

**2. How satisfied do you feel with your job at this time?**

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Why?

**3. If you indicated you were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” what is the number one reason you attribute to this satisfaction?**

Why?

Please completely fill in one circle for the following two questions AND explain your reasons for each choice. THEN completely answer question 3. Please use another sheet of paper if you need more room.

**1. If the opportunity arose, would you leave the teaching profession for another occupation?**

- Certainly would
- Probably would
- Chances about even
- Probably would not
- Certainly would not

Why?

**2. How likely are you to remain in teaching for at least five more years?**

- Highly likely to stay
- Very likely to stay
- Neutral
- Not likely to stay
- Definitely not staying

Why?

**3. If you have been a teacher for over five years, what is your number one reason for remaining in teaching? If you have been teaching for fewer than five years, what is the number one reason you became a teacher?**

Why?

Please completely fill in one circle for each of the following questions.

1. What is your gender?  
 Male     Female
  
2. What is your ethnic background?  
 American Indian/Alaska Native     Asian or Pacific Islander  
 African American/Black     Hispanic  
 Caucasian/White     Other  
 Choose not to respond
  
3. What is your age?  
 30 or under     31-40     41-50  
 51-60     61 or older
  
4. What is the highest degree you have earned?  
 Bachelor's Degree     Master's Degree  
 Education Specialist     Doctorate Degree
  
5. What is the number of years you have been teaching?  
 0-5     6-10     11-15     16 or more
  
6. What is the number of years you have worked at this school?  
 0-3     4-6     7-10     11 or more

***Thank you again for your cooperation and participation.***

Appendix F: Data Collection Matrix

Exit Interview Data					
	Employment Dates	Job Title	Center	Termination Voluntary? Y/N	Key Quotes
Teacher A					
Teacher B					
Teacher C					
Teacher D					
Teacher E					
Teacher F					