

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

FACTORS THAT SHAPE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership

by

Lisa Dachs-Ornelas

August 2017

© Copyright by
Lisa Dachs-Ornelas
2017

Acknowledgement

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Michael Wayne Ornelas, who has always been my biggest supporter. He is the wind beneath my wings. To my beautiful daughter, Lisamarie, who always tells me how proud she is of me, thank you for cheering me on. My son Ryan, who was my study partner and read much of my work. We bonded at the kitchen table doing our homework together. I will miss those moments. I hope I have made my kids proud and have left a legacy for them to continue to pursue their dreams. To my sister Julie and my brother Harold, we were all we had after we lost our parents at such a young age. We persevered! I wish to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Jody Dunlap, for her countless hours of reading, reflecting, revising, encouraging, and most of all for her immediate feedback and patience through the entire process. She helped make this possible. Thank you to Dr. Bagwell and Dr. Castallo for agreeing to serve on my committee. Their time and expertise is greatly appreciated. A special feeling of gratitude to my family and friends whose words of encouragement and tenacity ring in my ears. Lastly, nothing would be possible without my faith in God. I thank God for this experience and opportunity.

Table of Contents

Coypright page.....	ii
Signature Page	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	vii
Abstract.....	viii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement.....	3
Purpose.....	11
Significance.....	11
Conceptual Framework.....	12
Overview of Methodology.....	14
Definition of Terms.....	16
Delimitations and Limitations.....	18
Organization of the Dissertation.....	19
Chapter II: Review of Literature.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Teachers’ Perspectives on Challenging Behaviors.....	22
Teacher Preparation in Working with Challenging Student Behaviors.....	27
Administrative Support for Teachers Facing Challenging Behaviors	30
Discrepancies of Administrative Support	34
Alternatives to Suspension.....	37
Interventions for Students with Challenging Behaviors	40
Social-Emotional Learning Program	45
Gaps in the Literature.....	50
Summary.....	50
Chapter III: Methodology	52
Introduction.....	52
Purpose of the Study	52
Research Design.....	53
Research Setting.....	56
Research Sample and Data Sources.....	58
Data Collection Instruments	61

Data Collection Procedures.....	65
Data Analysis	68
Role of the Researcher	71
Summary	74
Chapter IV: Findings.....	75
Introduction.....	75
Study Context	75
Data Analysis Process.....	77
Research Question 1: Finding and Analysis	82
Research Question 1a – Finding and Analysis	87
Research Question 1b - Findings and Analysis	96
Research Question 1c – Findings and Analysis.....	102
Research Question 2 – Findings and Analysis.....	108
Classroom Observations During an SEL Lesson.....	115
Document Review.....	118
Summary of Findings.....	118
Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions.....	120
Introduction.....	120
Summary of the Problem	120
Review of the Methodology.....	123
Summary of Findings.....	125
Validity and Limitations	139
Conclusion	139
Summary	141
Implications for Policy and Practice	143
Recommendations for Future Research	146
References.....	148
Appendix A – Letter	160
Appendix B – Informed Consent Form	161
Appendix C – Interview Protocol	165
Appendix D – Critical Incident Form	171
Appendix E – Classroom Observation Template.....	176

List of Tables

4.0 Study Participants	77
4.1 Emerging Categories.....	81
4.2 Emerging Themes	81
4.3 Research Question 1c: Principal and Teacher Interview Questions	103
4.4 List of Social-Emotional Learning Programs by School Site.....	108

Abstract

FACTORS THAT SHAPE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

by

LISA DACHS-ORNELAS

Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership

Students in general education K-2 classrooms may exhibit behaviors characteristic of Emotional or Behavioral Disturbances (EBD), but due to the fact that these students have not received special education services yet, they are in the classroom without special education supports. General education teachers find themselves ill-equipped to work with such students whose needs exceed their expertise, thus resulting in loss of instructional time and an increased level of frustration. In addition, school principals may lack adequate knowledge to address the challenges these students present. This qualitative, multi-case study examined teachers' and principals' perspectives on administrative support for teachers who were struggling to work with students with challenging behaviors as well as on the effectiveness of an SEL program. The findings suggest that the conceptual framework of the social-emotional leader provides administrative support with coaching and mentoring, professional development, parental involvement, empathy, encouragement, and an open-door policy. The results also suggest that the implementation of an SEL program on a regular basis contributes to a positive classroom climate; however, it does not affect the student with challenging behaviors. It is recommended that school districts take a closer look at the K-2 grade classrooms and provide schools with sufficient funds and resources.

Chapter I: Introduction

There has been a continuous shortage of teachers qualified and willing to teach students with challenging behaviors (Albrecht, Johns, Mounsteven, & Olorundo, 2009). Among those children with severe behavioral problems, about 1% of students in public schools in the United States receive special education under the Emotional Disturbance (ED) or EBD categories (U.S. Department of Education, 2005; as cited in Kauffman, 2009); however, the prevalence of students with these problems is at least five times greater (Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; as cited in Kauffman, 2009). In most cases, students with EBD are not identified until their problems are severe and prolonged, often because educators are afraid of making a mistake in identification. As a consequence, “students with EBD are often ignored or mislabeled” (Kauffman, 2009 p. 9). Besides serving students under the label of behavioral disorders, there is a range of mental health or psychiatric disorders including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression, and anxiety disorders (Forness, 2011). In addition, there is a “service gap” between children with EBD who potentially need special education services and those who actually receive these services. In the general education, K-2 classrooms, students may exhibit EBD-like behaviors, but because the students have not yet received special education services, they are in the classrooms without the special education supports (Forness, Kim, & Walker, 2012).

Meanwhile, approximately 20-50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Hughes, 2012; Lee, Patterson, & Vega, 2011; Pearman & Lefever-Davis, 2012). High levels of stress combined with decreased job satisfaction are factors contributing to teachers leaving the field (Billingsley, 2004; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor, & Miels, 2011; Hughes, 2012). For teachers who work with students with challenging behaviors,

such as EBD, another contributing factor is lack of administrative support (Albrecht et al., 2009; Cancio & Conderman, 2008; Otto & Arnold, 2005; Prather-Jones, 2011).

This problem is seen in many elementary schools where teachers struggle to manage students with challenging behaviors which results in loss of instructional time and increased levels of frustration for teachers, which ultimately affects the instructional program for all students (Alter, Walker, & Landers, 2013; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Gottfried & Harven, 2014; Noonruddin & Gaig, 2014; Pearman & Lefever-Davis, 2012). This situation worsens in the K-2 classrooms in which the number of students with special needs, especially those with EBD, is underreported (Forness & Walker, 2012; Landrum, Tankersley, & Kauffman, 2003).

General education teachers find themselves ill-equipped to work with students whose needs exceed their training, resulting in loss of instructional time and an increased level of frustration for these teachers (Gettinger, Stoiber, & Kosciak, 2008; Niesyn, 2009). In addition, school principals may lack adequate knowledge to address the many challenges these students present (Prather-Jones, 2011). This is a problem because teachers depend on their principal's support to address challenging behaviors that create high stress and anxiety for the teachers (Albrecht et al., 2009). If the principals cannot address these problems effectively, the learning of the child with the challenging behavior is affected, as it is for the other students in the class, resulting in disruption and inability to access the curriculum (Nooruddin et al., 2014). Attending to this problem is critical in K-2 grade classrooms to protect the foundation of the students' instructional program and to sustain teachers working with the most challenging students.

Problem Statement

The problem of this research study was to examine principals' support for teachers with challenging student populations to protect the instructional programs in the affected classrooms and retain teachers in the profession. To be effective, principals must be knowledgeable and skilled in identifying student behaviors and to provide support and training for the teaching staff. This support and training benefits students by increasing the time devoted to classroom instruction. The teaching staff also benefits as they learn and implement best practices for students with challenging behaviors. This is a critical need for the retention of teachers.

Challenging student behaviors

According to Powell, Fixsen, Dunlap, Smith, and Fox (2007), challenging student behavior is defined as "any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults" (p. 83). The most common forms of challenging behaviors for young children are aggression, noncompliance, defiance, tantrums, and destruction of property. Children who engage in these behaviors are considered "most troubling," and are most likely to be recommended for special education services (Powell et al., 2007). Challenging behavior exhibited by young children can be a serious barrier to social-emotional development and a sign of severe maladjustment in school and adulthood. When the challenging behavior of young children is not addressed in an appropriate and timely way, the likelihood increases for low academic achievement, referrals for comprehensive evaluations towards special education identification, low sense of self-worth, and increased school dropout rates (Nahgahgwon, Umbreit, Liaupsin, & Turtin, 2010 p.538; Dunlap et. al, 2006). Furthermore, if these challenging

behaviors are not changed by the end of third grade, the intervention process becomes costlier, as these behaviors will be treated as a chronic condition (Dunlap et al., 2006).

Some of these challenging behaviors could eventually lead to eligibility for EBD. EBD has many definitions, but what they all have in common is the presence of extreme behaviors, which are a chronic problem and a violation of social or cultural expectations (Kauffman, 2009). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2015), EBD is the fourth largest disability category amongst males and fifth largest amongst females. Specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, other health impairment, and autism are the disability categories more prevalent than EBD (NCES, 2015), but not more problematic (Kauffman, 2009). Males are significantly more likely than females to fall within the EBD disability group. A disproportionate number of students identified as having EBD amongst certain minority groups exists predominantly with African-American males (Bradley, Henderson, & Monfore, 2004; Kauffman, Simpson, & Mock, 2009; NCES, 2015).

According to Conroy and Davis (2000), “only 17.4% of the children identified as ‘seriously emotionally disturbed’ have been identified by age nine, and less than 50% of these children have been identified by 12 years old” (p. 2). Most students with EBD are not identified until their problems are severe and prolonged (Kauffman, 2009). By the time students are assessed and identified, their behavior has become serious and it is too late for them to fully benefit from early prevention. If young children with challenging behaviors do not get the intervention needed, they will be affected negatively both in school and in later life (Powell et al., 2007; Strain & Timm, 2001). Therefore, it is critical to identify children with EBD when they are young, preferably during the primary years of elementary school.

Disruption of the instructional program

One student's challenging behaviors negatively affects the ability of the rest of the class to learn. When the teacher has to manage and discipline students, valuable instructional time is lost (Gottfried & Harven, 2014; Nooruddin & Gaig, 2014; Pearman & Lefever-Davis, 2012; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008). In a poll by the American Federation of Teachers (as cited in Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2003), 17% of teachers said they lost four hours or more of teaching time per week due to disruptive student behavior. This increased to 21% in urban areas. This loss of instructional time, in addition to the stress that is produced by the frequent disruptions, negatively affects students' academic achievement (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2003).

Research supports that the most challenging students with disabilities to include in general educational classrooms are students with EBD (Gottfried & Harven, 2014). According to Kauffman (2009), "Every teacher will have at least one student who is extraordinarily difficult because of his or her behavior, simply due to the fact that most students with EBD have not been identified and placed in special education" (p.1). However, many general education teachers do not have a clear understanding of the developmental progression of such behavior, hence are not skilled in dealing with moderate to severe levels of challenging behavior (Kauffman, 2009; Niesyn, 2009). The older these students become and the further along they progress in the education system with these behaviors, the more serious their problems become and the more difficult they are to manage (Walker et al., 2003).

Managing and disciplining students with difficult behaviors, such as EBD, deprives the teacher of valuable instructional time, limiting the opportunity to teach foundational skills and to foster the achievement of other students (Gottfried & Harven, 2014). As these children move

through schools without effective intervention services and supports, their problems are likely to become difficult and more resistant to change, as well as more expensive to treat (Sutherland et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2003).

Teacher stress and students' challenging behaviors

Teacher attrition is highest among special education teachers. According to Cancio and Conderman (2008), 7-15% more special education teachers leave the profession annually than general education teachers, which is approximately half the special education attrition rate (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008). While there are many factors that cause high attrition rates, one for instance, is the high stress level when teachers work with students with challenging behaviors, such as those with EBD. The same EBD-like behaviors are exhibited by students in many of the K-2 general education classrooms without the special education supports because in many cases, the children have not been identified for special education services (Forness et al., 2012). This leaves the general education teacher without the essential supports to handle the stressful situations these children bring to the classroom. The students' lack of motivation, frequent disruptions, and aggressive behavior can overwhelm a teacher's attempt to provide instruction, especially within a classroom context where numerous students have multiple academic and behavior needs (Sutherland et al., 2008).

Consequently, the disruptive behavior and disciplinary problems caused by students with EBD or behaviors similar to EBD in general education contribute to the high stress levels and teacher burnout that affects the teachers' decisions to leave the classroom (Billingsley, 2004; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Nooruddin & Gaig, 2014). High levels of frustration and stress may cause an emotional strain that negatively affects teachers' self-efficacy and levels of commitment, resulting in negative and depersonalizing attitudes towards students (McCarthy,

Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2009). The impact of a high rate of problem behaviors can lead to a negative pattern of interactions between teachers and students. Thus, the teacher's negative response may have a strong impact on the students' behaviors, increasing the likelihood that children will develop a negative relationship with their teachers (Sutherland et al., 2008). It is not surprising to hear of teachers taking stress leave due to student behavior, thus disrupting the continuity of the instructional program for the rest of the students (Schonfeld, 2001 as cited in Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2013). Without adequate support from administrators and colleagues, teachers who already feel stressed, overworked, and underappreciated, are more likely to leave the profession (Billingsley, 2004; Otto & Arnold, 2005).

The social-emotional leader and teacher resilience

As the leader of an organization, the emotional state of the person in charge has a ripple effect on the emotions of everyone else (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001), whether the leader is the principal in a school or a teacher in the classroom. A leader's emotional intelligence creates a culture or work environment. On the one hand, high levels of emotional intelligence create a climate in which information is communicated, learning thrives, and trust and healthy risk-taking exist. On the other hand, low levels of emotional intelligence create climates of fear and anxiety. Leaders need to make sure that they are positive, genuine, and energetic; and that their subordinates feel and act that way, too, which suggests that the best climate for learning occurs when all stakeholders take steps to become more emotionally self-aware and socially intelligent. Therefore, teachers' emotions in the classroom may influence the response from the students. If teachers are angry or frustrated, the students may react to those emotions because the teachers, being the leaders, have an effect in the classroom. Research suggests that the best

practice for learning is a positive school environment that includes trust and caring relationships among all stakeholders. Therefore, school leaders can make a crucial difference when they help teachers achieve and maintain an optimal state in which they can work to their best ability (Goleman, 2006).

The stressful conditions associated with teaching make it necessary for all teachers to be resilient, which is critical for classroom success and teacher retention. Some of the most powerful interactions that promote and preserve resilience occur in school settings between teachers, students, and their environment. Resilience is best promoted through several key factors: by fostering positive relationships with adults and mentors, being actively engaged in a community of learners, and sharing perspectives with one another (Knight & Wadhwa, 2014). Teachers' abilities to return to school, positive and re-energized, even after a rough day, establishes the tone and culture of a school (Goleman, 2006; Knight & Wadhwa, 2014). The feeling of hope, that next year will be better, bolsters resiliency and allows teachers to set themselves up for success (Huisman, Singer, & Carapano, 2010).

Cozolino and Sprokay (2006) suggest that we need others to show interest in us, help us feel safe, and encourage our understanding of the world around us. As with factors that build resiliency and characteristics of effective administrative support, caring mentors may support more meaningful learning for teachers and students. Conversely, in a stressful learning environment, fear, or problems in students' lives can negatively impact learning. Knowing one is not alone is a powerful remedy to anxiety so hearing another's strategies and incentives may give teachers specific tools for success. Factors related to Emotional Intelligence (EI) include: the ability to know one's emotions, to manage emotions, to motivate oneself, to recognize

emotions in others, and to handle relationships (Goleman, Barlow, & Bennett, 2010). Therefore, one might say the stronger our EI is the more resilient we can become.

Administrator support for teachers facing challenging behaviors in the classroom

Studies have found that administrative support has a strong influence on teachers' decisions to remain in the field and to continue to teach students with challenging behaviors (Albrecht et al., 2009; Billingsley, 2004; Cancio & Conderman, 2008; Otto & Arnold, 2005; Prather-Jones, 2011). Emotional and instrumental supports provided by school administrators were linked to teacher job satisfaction and commitment (Billingsley, 2004; Kass, 2013). For example, an administrator can show appreciation, take an interest in teachers' work, and have an open-door policy to maintain an open line of communication, as well as assist teachers with work tasks, and ensure there is enough time for teaching and non-teaching duties.

According to Nooruddin and Gaig (2014), it is the school leader's responsibility, "as the captain of the ship to have systems in place to prevent disruptive behavior" (p.21). However, since challenging students and disciplinary matters consume time for both administrators and teachers, both are widely regarded as the greatest sources of workplace stress (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). When teachers are not able to manage a student with problem behaviors, they should feel secure that support is available and will be readily provided by school leaders. For example, when teachers ask for assistance with a disruptive student, they report that they need it immediately, not in 20 minutes (Cancio & Conderman, 2008). School leadership plays an essential role in protecting instructional time from interruptions. Ongoing communication between the administrator and the teacher is required not only when requested but also during crisis. The availability of support personnel and opportunities for effective professional

development are additional indicators of administrative support (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2014; Correa & Wagner, 2011; Leko & Smith, 2010).

School leaders who understand students with severe behaviors and who have effective practices for helping them are better prepared to provide students and their teachers with the appropriate support (DiPaola, Tshannen-Moran, & Walther-Thomas, 2004). One of the most important functions of an administrator is to show an understanding of the role of the teacher (Otto & Arnold, 2005). Unfortunately, many school leaders have limited knowledge and experience with issues related to special education, and, therefore, are not well equipped to provide leadership in this area (McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, & Terry, 2010; Prather-Jones, 2011). According to McHatton et al. (2010), with increased awareness of special education issues, principals can provide greater support for teachers, respond to program issues, and promote ongoing reflection. Otherwise, teacher retention is negatively impacted.

Cancio and Conderman (2008) proposed several ideas to promote retention for teachers working with students with EBD, such as collaborating between teachers and administrators, scheduling daily or weekly meetings with principals, keeping written journals, or surrounding oneself with positive people. However, what is missing from the literature are suggestions for teachers who have students with challenging behaviors in the classroom, who may be on the verge of taking a stress leave, or are considering leaving the profession. We need to continue to find effective ways to address problem behaviors to prevent children from following a predictable course of school and social failure (Nahgahgwon, et al., 2010). More importantly, we need to consider the teachers' social-emotional well-being as well as the well-being of the students.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the social-emotional factors that shape school leaders' practices in response to teachers who have students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 classrooms. The more elementary school principals understand effective leadership practices through a social-emotional lens, the better they can respond to teachers' needs to provide a safe and caring learning environment for the most challenging students. In addition, this study examined the extent a social-emotional learning program affects classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors. Ultimately, the goal is for teachers to enter the classroom feeling adequately prepared and supported to address the challenges these students bring, thus making them less likely to leave the profession due to a high level of stress, frustration, and low self-efficacy.

Significance

Results from this study will serve to inform policy and practice for professional development and supervision that is more responsive to the needs of teachers and students. Additionally, it will inform school leaders about effective social-emotional leadership practices from both the administrators' and teachers' points of view that support K-2 teachers who are dealing with students' challenging behaviors. The findings of this study will contribute to our understanding of preventative and intervention strategies through the lens of social-emotional learning as well as offering professional development strategies to build teacher resilience through a trusting and caring school climate, which is significant, as it may lead to a more thorough grounding for elementary school principals to support teachers' effectiveness and resilience as they educate all young children in K-2, including those with EBD-like behaviors.

Research questions

The research questions that will guide this study are as follows:

1. What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?
 - a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging students' behaviors in the classroom?
 - b. What specific characteristics of "administrative support" do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
 - c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. To what extent does a social-emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was developed around the social-emotional leader. Emotional Intelligence (EI) involves two broad components: awareness and management of one's own emotions as well as awareness and management of other's emotions. The two dimensions of EI include self-regulation abilities and social skills (Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, & Weissberg, 2006). EI is defined as the ability to know one's emotions, manage emotions, motivate oneself, recognize emotions in others, and handle relationships (Goleman, 2006). 'Socially intelligent' is defined as encompassing both interpersonal awareness and social ability. To better understand this concept, Goleman (2006) refers to "mirror neurons," which are created when a person's brain imitates the brain's state of whomever they are with, such as when two

people interact their emotional states influence each other. For example, when a person sees someone with an angry, hurt, or happy expression, that person's "mirror neurons" activate circuits in the brain for those same emotions. Hence, the social-emotional leader is self-aware and is able to monitor them through self-management. The leader will act in ways that will motivate other peoples' moods to create a personable climate through positive interactions (Goleman et al., 2001).

As the leader of an organization, a leader's mood has the greatest impact on performance when it matches the situation at hand with a sense of optimism. This kind of performance is called resonance, which encompasses the four components of emotional intelligence in action: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001).

Leaders with self-awareness have the ability to read their own emotions. It allows them to know their strengths, their limitations, and to feel confident about their self-worth. Resonant leaders use self-awareness to assess their own moods accurately, and they know how they are affecting others.

Self-management is the ability of leaders to control their emotions and to act with honesty and integrity in reliable and adaptable ways. Using their self-management, leaders do not allow their bad moods to dominate. They use self-management to control their feelings.

Social awareness includes the key capabilities of empathy and organizational intuition. Resonant leaders understand how their words and actions make others feel, and they are able to change them if the impact is negative. The ability to be socially aware allows leaders to not only sense or recognize other peoples' emotions but to demonstrate that they care.

Leaders with relationship management skills have the ability to persuade others,

communicate clearly, defuse conflicts, and build strong personal bonds. Resonant leaders use these skills to share their enthusiasm and solve disagreements with humor and kindness.

The manner in which school principals collaborate with staff to support each other's efforts is essential to the school's success. To confront the difficulties presented by students with challenging behaviors school principals must work with all stakeholders within the school community to identify and address not only the target behaviors of the student but also the social-emotional well-being of the teacher and the rest of the class.



Overview of Methodology

This study used qualitative methods to examine the factors that shape school leaders' practices in response to teachers who have students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 classrooms. This qualitative multi-case study collected data from six elementary school sites. An opportunistic/network sampling strategy was used to gain access to specific teachers. By surveying a selected group of principals who were implementing an SEL program at their school sites, the researcher was able to identify those who worked with K-2 teachers who

were struggling at the time with students exhibiting challenging behaviors in their classrooms. The selection of teachers for this study was based on the principals' responses to the survey. To safeguard against any bias, the researcher did not include principals or teachers whom she knew or with whom she had worked.

Affected teachers and their school site principals were interviewed to gather insights about their perceptions of effective leadership practices that supported teachers who had challenging students that continuously disrupted the instructional program. Semi-structured interviews were collected from the six elementary school principals and 12 K-2 classroom teachers who currently teach students with challenging behaviors in their classrooms. Approximately 23-25 open-ended and probing questions were developed to explore and understand the leadership practices that supported teachers who were challenged at the time by students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

A critical incident report was provided to respondents to describe a student incident with as much detail as possible to reveal their perceptions of the experience that might not have been captured during the interview (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The teachers were asked to recall a time when they were confronted with a student with challenging behaviors and to complete a critical incident report detailing what took place. The researcher analyzed the critical incident reports with the intention of confirming the interview data and uncovering perceptions that might not have been revealed through the interview.

The researcher conducted classroom observations to provide a rich, detailed description of a classroom setting and its participants, complemented by a thematic analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A classroom observation guide was used to assist the researcher in taking extensive notes to describe the setting, classroom dynamics, relationships, and classroom

management. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of the teacher's response to a student's challenging behaviors and the principal's response to the teachers' needs in such challenging situations.

Lastly, to attain triangulation, documents and artifacts were a critical part of the data collection process for this study. The researcher collected, copied, and categorized the documents and artifacts to answer the research questions and to have a deeper understanding of how they contributed to the knowledge of leadership practices that support teachers. By drawing on these multiple methods at six school sites, the researcher identified and described effective social-emotional leadership practices that supported the teachers with students with challenging behaviors in the classroom.

Definition of Terms

- Administrative Support – Administrative support for teachers includes four specific behavioral areas: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support (House, 1981 as cited in Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013)
- Capacity Building – The “process of turning constituents into leaders-making people capable of acting on their own initiative” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012 p.268).
- Challenging Behavior – “[A]ny repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults” (Powell, Fixsen, Dunlap, Smith, & Fox, 2007 p. 83).
- EBD - IDEA (2004) – Section 300.8 defines emotional disturbance as a condition that negatively affects the child's educational performance characterized by an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; inability to build

or maintain relationships with peers or teachers; depression; and the development of physical symptoms of fears associated with personal or school problems. Many definitions have been proposed for EBD, but what they have in common is the presence of extreme behaviors, which are a chronic problem and a violation of social or cultural expectations (Kauffman, 2009).

- Emotional Intelligence – The ability of an individual to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions, and to recognize, understand, and influence other people’s emotions (Goleman, 2006)
- Resiliency – The ability to adjust to varied situations that require adaptation and to view difficult situations as learning opportunities (Huisman et al., 2010).
- Self-Efficacy – The belief in one’s capability to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1997).
- Service Gap – The gap between the number of children with EBD that need special education and the number of children who have been determined to be eligible for the ED category of special education (Forness, Kim, & Walker, 2012)
- Social-Emotional Leadership – Leaders who are actively involved in keeping the morale of their groups at a high level through alleviating fears, mediating arguments, reducing tensions, and settling disagreements (retrieved from: thelawdictionary.org/social-emotional-leader/). As the role is defined, the social-emotional leader has the following four attributes: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management skills. Social-emotional leaders ensure that they are regularly positive, genuine, and energetic; and that their subordinates feel and act that way, too. These positive interactions can create a climate for learning where all stakeholders take steps to

become more emotionally self-aware and socially intelligent (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2001).

- Social-Intelligence – The ability to encompass both interpersonal awareness and social facility (Goleman, 2006).
- Stakeholders – In education, the term stakeholder typically refers to anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials such as school board members, city councilors, and state representatives. Retrieved from: Hidden curriculum (2014, August 26). In S. Abbott (Ed.), The glossary of education reform (retrieved from: <http://edglossary.org/hidden-curriculum>).

Delimitations and Limitations

This study was limited to a small group of elementary school principals and teachers in a district that is currently dealing with students with challenging behaviors in their K-2 grade classrooms. Their views and actions were documented through semi-structured interviews, observations, and critical incident reports. Thus, the study did not include the viewpoints of parents, of school staff, or of educators in other types of settings. The study was also limited to three specific SEL programs at the six school sites. Other SEL programs may have had other results.

A limitation of this study was that it only followed administrators and teachers in the first semester of the school year because of the time frame for this research. It is possible that the participants' responses would be different at the completion of the school year.

Organization of the Dissertation

The introductory chapter covers the problem statement, the study's purpose and significance, research questions, and an overview of the methodology and limitations. Chapter 2 offers a review of the literature and the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 details the methodology with a rationale for the approach, and describes the research setting, sample, and data collection and analysis, as well as role of the researcher. Chapter 4 organizes and reports the study's main results and findings, including the presentation of relevant qualitative data. Chapter 5 interprets and discusses the results in light of the study's research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework, concluding with recommendations for policy and practice.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Introduction

The preliminary review of literature was based on an electronic literature search in ERIC databases using terms such as administrative support, challenging behaviors, EBD, elementary teachers, resiliency, and social-emotional competencies. It was limited to empirical studies from educational journals since 2001.

This chapter begins with what research has determined about the different perspectives teachers have regarding challenging student behaviors. This section is followed by an investigation into the lack of teacher preparation in working with students with challenging behaviors. The difference of opinion between what principals think they are providing in terms of support and what teachers believe the principals are doing is also discussed. This chapter concludes with the interventions based on the needs of students with challenging behaviors with a strong focus on SEL.

Social-Emotional-Learning (SEL) is defined as the process of obtaining a set of social-emotional skills, which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills. SEL is acquired within the framework of a safe, supportive environment that encourages social, emotional, and cognitive development and provides opportunities for practicing social-emotional skills (Cherniss et al., 2006; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Payton et al., 2008). By incorporating the SEL program into classrooms, the research leads to teacher resilience and to administrative support through the lens of the social-emotional leader.

Furthermore, given the most recent research in neuroscience, incorporating a social-emotional component can provide teachers and students with a positive emotional climate

(Cherniss et al., 2006; Goleman, 2006 & 2008; Goleman, et al., 2001). This is relevant to this study because stress leaves may be a precursor to teacher attrition. If the administrative support is focused on the social-emotional component this may help teachers build resilience while working to get the needed support for the challenging student and maintaining an effective instructional program for the rest of the class. While there are a number of studies that address administrative practices that support both beginning general education and special education teachers, there is little empirical study for highly skilled and passionate teachers who have lost their enthusiasm due to the severity of challenging student behaviors in their classrooms.

The research questions that will guide the review of the literature are:

1. What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?
 - a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging students' behaviors in the classroom?
 - b. What specific characteristics of "administrative support" do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
 - c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. To what extent does a social-emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

Teachers' Perspectives on Challenging Behaviors

This section reviewed those studies of different perspectives that teachers had regarding challenging student behaviors. Additionally, this section highlights studies that address challenging student behaviors in terms of teacher judgment, teacher and school demographics, teachers' self-efficacy, and how teachers' responses to challenging student behaviors affected their own perspectives.

Most researchers agree that teachers' perceptions and judgments in determining the severity of challenging student behaviors are dependent on factors such as demographics, frequency of the challenging student behavior, teacher self-efficacy, and the teachers' responses to challenging behaviors. Challenging behaviors are characterized in many ways, such as aggression, general disruption, off-task behavior, and disrespect. However, teachers determine what constitutes challenging student behavior based on their views of the most prevalent and problematic behavior in the classroom and how they are affected by the behavior (Alter et al., 2013; Landers, Alter, & Servilio, 2008). For example, Alter et al. (2013) and Landers et al. (2008) conducted similar studies using surveys with K-12 teachers in public school districts in the eastern part of the United States to determine the most prevalent and problematic challenging behaviors in the classroom. Teachers in Alter et al. (2013), cited off-task behavior as most problematic and isolation/no social interaction as the least problematic, whereas disrespect directed towards adults was found to be the most prevalent and problematic in the study by Landers et al. (2008). The results of this study indicated disrespect towards adults had a significant impact on job satisfaction across the grades and the level of satisfaction decreased as grade levels progressed. This suggests that teachers' job satisfaction is affected when the disruptive behavior touches them emotionally.

Teacher demographics affect perceptions regarding the severity of challenging behaviors. Other findings from Alter et al. (2013) who surveyed 833 teachers, cited that female teachers judged verbal disruptions to be more prevalent and off-task behaviors to be more problematic, while male teachers indicated isolation/no-social interaction to be more prevalent and problematic. Similarly, elementary teachers ranked all categories of behavior more problematic than teachers did in the middle and high school grades. This raises concerns as to whether elementary teachers are more sensitive to students' behavior needs or are less tolerant. Furthermore, elementary teachers may see the need to provide early intervention before the challenging behaviors become persistent and more difficult to change. As a result, this study suggests that leaders with an understanding of the different perspectives between males and females and elementary and secondary may differentiate the type of support they are more likely to provide to teachers while being sensitive to the importance of the classroom organization.

Research on the referral-to-placement process suggests that teachers' opinions of student behavior are extremely important in determining eligibility for special education services (Abidin & Robinson, 2002). Wiley et al. (2008) and Abidin and Robinson (2002) reported significant effects of challenging behaviors on student referrals although teachers' perspectives varied by school socio-economic demographics and teacher judgments. Wiley et al. (2008) examined the characteristics of 140 K-6 students with Emotional Disturbance (ED) in relationship to school socio-economic status (SES), academic achievement, and the rate of disciplinary actions. Results from this study found that the academic profile for a student served as ED varied significantly from school to school. For example, one student at one school might be considered for a student case study or psychological testing and be identified as ED, while the same type of student might not be considered for study at another school site because the

characteristics might not be perceived as problematic or prevalent compared to the rest of the students at that particular school. Since the ED definition is unclear and left to the interpretation of the teacher, there was inconsistency from school to school as to who received ED services, thus underlining the importance of teachers' judgments in the eligibility process. This study found a discrepancy in how students with challenging behaviors were served. That these services were dependent upon how these students compared to the entire school population, could affect the way teachers and administrators responded to these behaviors.

By contrast, Abidin and Robinson (2002), who surveyed 30 K-5 grade teachers from three elementary schools in a rural county in Virginia, found that a teacher's perception of students was based on actual behavior in the classroom. During the observations as the student's off-task behavior increased, the teacher's classroom behavior modification also increased. The teacher's use of social-skills instruction would fluctuate depending upon the severity of the behavior. As a result, as the off-task behaviors increased, so did the teacher's opinion of the severity of the student's behavior. These results suggest that teachers are the best people to determine whether students should be referred for behavior problems and/or lack of academic competence. This study contradicts the previous research that suggested that teachers' judgments may be jaded when they are feeling stressed by a specific student, thus resulting in negative outcomes for the students.

Classroom organization, teacher self-efficacy, and the manner in which teachers respond to challenging behaviors may either help or hinder a teacher's perception of behaviors (Baker, 2005; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Sutherland et al., 2008; Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, & Powers, 2008). For example, Thomas et al. (2008) studied first-grade students with school risk factors and aggressive disruptive behaviors in a qualitative longitudinal study in an

economically- disadvantaged, high-crime neighborhood. This study confirmed that students with attention problems and a weak classroom environment had a strong likelihood of misbehaving in school. It was also noted that teachers removed themselves from students who demonstrated off-task and uncooperative behaviors. These teachers constantly complained that these types of students failed to follow directions, respect the rules, and complete class work, which resulted in frustrated teachers who responded by using ineffective strategies, threats, or other methods to achieve compliance, which only worsened the situation (Thomas et al., 2008).

These results were supported by Sutherland et al. (2008) who argued that the impact of high rates of problem behaviors could lead to negative interactions between teachers and students, thus increasing the likelihood that the students would develop negative relationships with their teachers. Problematic relationships with teachers, especially those who showed symptoms of burnout, resulted in a decrease of positive teacher attention, such as teacher praise and opportunities to respond in classrooms for students with EBD. McCarthy et al. (2009) suggested that teachers who remained in their jobs despite burnout symptoms would also develop a poor attitude, put forth less effort, and as a result, their performances would decline. For teachers, this may develop into uncaring, negative, sarcastic, and cynical attitudes towards students and the school environment. The data from their study was collected over two academic years involved 451 teachers in 13 elementary schools in a large urban region of the southeastern U.S. They found that teacher perceptions of stress were related to having higher numbers of challenging students and that the difference between teachers reporting high stress and average stress was caused by only a few students with special needs. This finding is also supported from a student's perspective where Blankemeyer, Flannery, and Vazsonyi (2002) studied the combined effects of child aggression and social competence on the child's perceived relationship

with his/her teacher. The results indicated that poor school adjustment was linked to negatively-perceived child and teacher relationships among boys more so than girls. For example, “boys who do not use their free time appropriately, hand in poor quality work, and do not listen to instructions, perceive their teachers as less supportive than girls who engage in similar behaviors” (p.301). All in all, students with and at risk for developing EBD are significantly influenced by teacher-student interactions in general education classrooms. Unfortunately, students perceived as having challenging behaviors are at risk for social and academic failure and rejection by their teachers.

Baker (2005) and Collie et al. (2012), however, found a significant correlation between perceived self-efficacy for classroom management and teacher readiness for managing challenging behaviors. Collie et al. (2012) found that teachers were influenced by their perceptions of their working environment which had an impact on their well-being and motivation. Six hundred forty-four participants, the majority from elementary schools, recruited from 17 different school districts in British Columbia and Ontario, Canada completed surveys. The results indicated that when teachers perceived students’ behavior had improved, the teachers reported a decrease in their stress level, an increase in their sense of teaching efficacy and job satisfaction. It is possible that the teachers who experience stress as a consequence of student behavior do not perceive themselves as successfully implementing effective behavior management strategies. The results from Baker (2005) indicate that a teacher’s confidence level affects overall effectiveness in providing a positive classroom environment, better preparation, and a willingness to support challenging students with specialized behavior management techniques. Therefore, it is possible that teachers with high self-efficacy may not perceive the behaviors as so extreme compared to teachers with low self-efficacy (Baker, 2005 & Collie et al.,

2012). In other words, teachers may perceive certain student behaviors as more severe and pervasive if they do not feel equipped to meet student needs. If teachers do not feel equipped, they may be less willing to have children with challenging behaviors in their classrooms. Therefore, the teachers may try to expedite the process of having students with challenging behaviors removed through referrals for testing, or, the teachers themselves may become frustrated and less resilient, and eventually leave the teaching profession.

Based on the research cited above, challenging behaviors that are considered problematic are dependent affected by teachers' perceptions and also by how well prepared they are to respond to behaviors that vary from lack of attention and off-task behaviors to disrespect and verbal disruption. To meet the needs of the most challenged teachers, it is critical to ensure that teachers are prepared to deal with a variety of student behaviors.

Teacher Preparation in Working with Challenging Student Behaviors

This section reviews studies of teacher preparation in relation to students with challenging behaviors and with teacher attrition. This section highlights EBD as a challenging behavior because many times students enter elementary school without a diagnosis, but display similar behaviors. This section also focuses on the lack of qualifications, experience, and comfort level of teachers that affects not only the students' ability to learn but also the teachers' resiliency to teach.

There is a shortage of qualified special educators, and those teaching students with difficult behaviors, such as EBD, are among the least qualified (Billingsley et al., 2006). EBD students are difficult to manage, and they are at a high risk for academic failure. Therefore, it is critical to have a qualified teacher assigned to these students; an inadequate teacher might only aggravate the situation (Short & Bullock, 2013). Most researchers agree that teacher

qualifications, experience, and comfort level are key factors in teacher preparation for working with challenging behaviors in the classroom (Alter et al., 2013; Billingsley et al., 2006; Short & Bullock, 2013; Sutherland et al., 2005). For example, Billingsley et al. (2006) found that only a small proportion of teachers were certified to work with the EBD group. They were significantly younger and with fewer years of special education experience. Their study compared the characteristics and qualifications of teachers of students with EBD with other special education teachers in the United States. The sample included 859 K-12 teachers who served students with EBD. Many of the teachers had an emergency or alternative certification; others had none. Leaders need to be aware of the importance of teachers having experience before including a student with challenging behaviors such as EBD in their classroom. Otherwise, the lack of experience and/or training may worsen an already unpredictable situation (Billingsley et al., 2006). When teachers are not prepared, they tend to react ineffectively to students' progressively negative behaviors, thus aggravating the situation and possibly placing children with EBD at greater risk (Short & Bullock, 2013).

Billingsley et al. (2006) also found that the teacher preparation programs for students with EBD needed improvement because teachers did not feel equipped to deal with the realities of their first year of teaching. The lack of certification and ineffective preparation contributes to the high teacher attrition rates resulting in a revolving door of ineffective teachers, which adds to the instability in the classroom. As a result, students with EBD are at a higher risk for failure not only because of their disabilities but also because they are more likely to encounter teachers who lack preparation. This was evident in a study by Albrecht et al. (2009) in which 21.4% of special education teachers indicated their intent to leave the profession. Having a large number of students with a range of special needs was a factor influencing their decision. For example, one

teacher had 75 students while another teacher with an emergency license had 110 students. One teacher stated, “I feel as if I am thrown to the wolves on a daily basis” (p. 1015). This suggests that students with challenging behaviors are one of the greatest causes of stress and burnout for classroom teachers because they are not prepared for these challenges.

Teacher comfort level and self-efficacy are also key factors when working with students with challenging behaviors. For example, Sutherland, Denny, and Gunter (2005) conducted a study on professional development needs reported by 109 fully licensed and emergency-licensed teachers of students with EBD, in four school districts in a metropolitan area in the eastern U.S. The study found that teachers of students with EBD would collaborate with their colleagues about their instructional practices; however, these teachers were uncomfortable following through and providing academic instruction for these students. Similarly, Baker (2005) reported significant effects on a teacher’s willingness to manage challenging behaviors. It was found that as a teacher’s perceived self-efficacy increased so did their ability, willingness, and readiness for managing challenging behaviors. When teachers feel confident in their overall effectiveness in providing a positive classroom environment, they also feel more ready, able, and willing to support challenging students with specialized behavior strategies. The fact that some teachers are not ready or willing to teach students with challenging behaviors is disturbing because students with EBD are academically at risk and need explicit instruction from teachers. Although none of the teachers from the study by Sutherland et al. (2005) felt comfortable teaching students with EBD, the experienced and licensed teachers felt more competent than the emergency-licensed teachers. Veteran teachers were also more comfortable with lesson planning and classroom management for students with challenging behaviors than emergency-licensed

teachers. The results from this study concluded that teacher training, classroom organization, and behavior management are significant for providing high-quality instruction.

In summary, the studies demonstrated that if teachers' needs are not met, especially those who work with our most challenging students, the profession will continue to see unusually high teacher attrition rates because these teachers feel overwhelmed and unprepared to deal effectively with the range of student behaviors. Like the teachers, the ones that also suffer are the students (Sutherland et al., 2005). Effective teacher preparation is crucial when teaching students with challenging behaviors. However, administrative support is also critical and has a strong impact on teacher retention. Principals should provide the necessary leadership and support to build capacity among their staff to increase resiliency, success, and help sustain the desire to stay in the teaching profession.

Administrative Support for Teachers Facing Challenging Behaviors

This section reviews studies of administrative support in relation to teacher retention and leadership practices. It highlights the importance of providing professional development, mentoring programs, resources, while maintaining a positive and caring school climate in which respect and appreciation towards teachers is evident. Research suggests that administrative support is a key factor in teacher retention when dealing with challenging behaviors. In a study by Albrecht et al. (2009) who examined the working conditions reported by special education teachers, 78.6% of the 776 survey respondents indicated their intent to stay in the profession and 82.4% of these respondents said administrative support was a significant factor. In a qualitative study by Prather-Jones (2011), 13 teachers who taught at various grade levels in a range of settings indicated that administrative support was key to their decision to stay in the field of teaching students with EBD.

For a better understanding of effective leadership styles, Brown and Wynn (2007 & 2009) interviewed teachers and principals in two different qualitative studies at schools with low teacher attrition and transfer rates. Based on interviews, several categories and themes emerged under what they called an “umbrella of support.” One principal said, “Support means a lot of different things...discipline, organization, affirmation, resources, curriculum, instruction, everything you do, I think, falls under the umbrella of support” (2009, p.51). The results of their study indicated that the leader’s role is to provide the environment and resources to support teachers in their professional growth and to do what is best for students. Ultimately, teachers are prone to mental exhaustion from stressful workdays. It is essential that a principal stay in touch with the reality of what is occurring to provide individualized support (Hughes et al., 2015). Research suggests that administrators can support teachers by providing opportunities for effective professional development that is unique to teachers’ needs and that will advance their knowledge and preparedness (Albrecht et al., 2009; Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2014; Leko & Smith, 2010). For example, Huisman et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study with 12 teachers who participated in an interview that pertained to the support, resources, and their own views of their success in the classroom. Several themes emerged; professional development was viewed as a way to embrace lifelong learning that allowed teachers to look for new ways to teach, revise, and stretch their abilities to perfect their classroom practice. Although it is necessary to send teachers for training, it is also important to provide them time to collaborate, and to provide mentors to those teachers that need them (Prather-Jones, 2011). Mentorship can provide teachers with needed support when they are working with challenging students. In a study by Huisman et al. (2010), mentoring was characterized through empathy for others, giving advice, and sharing materials. One teacher stated, “...I was able to share experiences with them and see if they were

having similar experiences and kind of brainstorm on how to handle those situations.” Not only did teachers connect with other professionals for advice and support, they felt as if they belonged to a group with similar challenges, and therefore, did not feel isolated.

Supplies and resources should be provided to teachers, including paraprofessionals in the classroom, that are necessary for them to do their jobs (Albrecht et al., 2009; Cancio et al., 2014). More time for lesson planning and for staff to collaborate to meet the needs of students were also considered as additional resources (Hughes et al., 2015; Prather-Jones, 2011), as well as outside resources and support such as professional expertise for behavioral outbursts from students (Cancio et al., 2014). Albrecht et al. (2009) suggested that new teachers develop a network of support by building positive relationships with their administrators and colleagues. This allows them to seek advice and assistance from veteran teachers who understand the frustrations of beginning teaching and who can offer positive suggestions, while instilling enthusiasm for the profession. Otto and Arnold (2005), whose focus was on special education teachers, suggested scheduled time for collaboration, time to complete special education paperwork, and time for planning with other general education teachers. It was also suggested that teacher caseloads and class size be reduced and that adequate technology and materials be made available for special education students.

Providing a caring school community is one way an administrator can support the teachers where the principal’s role is to support and foster collaboration among all stakeholders. In a qualitative study by Prather-Jones (2011), teachers noted that they needed support from their colleagues at their school site and believed that administrators were responsible for fostering those working relationships. For example, one teacher stated that she stayed at the school because she liked her colleagues and felt like she was part of a community. To build this sense

of community the administrators played a vital role in fostering positive relationships between general and special educators and in acceptance by general educators of students with disabilities. The administrators provided the teachers with avenues for support and knowledge needed to work with students with disabilities. Teachers specifically referred to the necessity of having administrative as well as collegial support in the workplace, which are examples of a caring school community. Similarly, a study by Collie et al. (2012) of 644 teachers who completed online questionnaires about teacher commitment, school climate, and social-emotional learning found that teachers develop healthy relationships in satisfying and supportive work environments that allow them to collaborate with other teachers. Their findings suggested that the more teachers collaborate with one another, the more support each one will receive in the areas of instructional strategy and behavior management. Teachers who feel isolated and overwhelmed need support from other adults for them to try new strategies and grow as professionals (Huisman et al., 2010).

Teachers feel supported when administrators respect and show them appreciation. Being part of the decision-making process involving consequences for misbehaved students was cited in the study by Prather-Jones (2011). Although teachers expected administrators to follow through, they also wanted to be included in making the decision about the consequence. For example, one teacher stated, “It’s not really about discipline but more that I feel they listen to me. It’s like brainstorming with me about what we need to do with a student. Then I feel that they are really supportive” (p.5). Listening to the teacher’s input about their students and acknowledging the teachers for their work was how the teacher felt respected and appreciated.

In summary, providing an “umbrella of support,” by being available for the teacher, works well in general education classrooms. Effective school principals promote a positive

school climate that fosters collaboration among all stakeholders, serve as instructional leaders who support professional development for beginning teachers, and actively support induction and mentor programs. Having a challenging student such as a student with EBD in a classroom changes the dynamics and support that a teacher may need. Administrators should provide effective working conditions for teachers who are working with students with challenging behaviors. Daily support and an open line of communication (not just during a crisis phase) were cited as significant factors for teacher satisfaction and for their intent to stay in the profession (Albrecht et al., 2009). Administrators should be aware of what specific conditions are necessary to provide targeted support to these teachers.

Discrepancies of Administrative Support

This section reviews studies of administrative support in relation to teacher perceptions versus administrative perceptions including the discrepancy of administrative preparation.

Several studies on leadership styles and support practices suggest that there is a discrepancy in perceptions of administrative support between teachers and administrators (Bird, Wang, Watson, & Murray, 2012; Hughes et al., 2015; Kelly, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Valero, 2008). In some cases, administrators may believe they are providing needed support when in fact from the teacher's perspective they are not. For example, in a survey of 789 teachers and principals, Hughes et al. (2015) found principals perceived their support for teachers was greater than the support teachers felt they received, especially regarding instructional support. The results indicated that personal growth and administrative support in the areas of emotional, environmental, and instructional guidance had a significant impact on teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession. Areas of emotional and environmental support rated as the most important. This is evident in a qualitative study by Valero (2008) in

which teachers resented what they saw as a lack of administrative support for monitoring the inclusion of students with special behavioral needs, while the principal assumed they were providing support by trusting them as professionals and allowing them to run their own instructional program. Time constraints were one of the main concerns in trying to meet the needs of all the students, which affected the teachers at the emotional level creating stress and frustration. One teacher noted in reference to a student distracting the rest of the class, “The behavior adjustment child... would explode unannounced. And that would result, not only in a break in my program, but it would result in me spending a good hour after his explosion in trying to calm the class down” (p.11). The lack of support this teacher received increased the teacher’s level of frustration.

Similarly, in studies by Bird et al. (2012) and Kelly et al. (2005) teachers’ responses did not support the confidence that principals projected regarding leadership styles. For example, in a study involving 31 principals and 155 teachers, Kelly et al. (2005) found that school climate was rated high if the principals were perceived by teachers as having high leadership styles and low if the principals had low ratings of leadership styles by teachers. Teachers rated school climate lower when the principal’s leadership style was inconsistent, particularly with regard to student discipline. Similarly, Bird et al. (2012) surveyed 633 teachers and 28 principals and found that principals who rated themselves high, received low-level ratings from the teachers while principals who rated themselves lower received higher ratings from the teachers. The principals’ inflated perceptions compared to the teachers’ perceptions were based on the level of the teachers’ trust and engagement levels and to the authenticity of the school principal. A principal with strong self-awareness, who openly relates to staff, formulates sound decisions, and demonstrates moral integrity had higher levels of teacher trust and engagement. Once again,

these studies found that the principal's perception of their leadership style was inconsistent with their teachers' perceptions.

There were also discrepancies between what the school administrators do on a daily basis in comparison to what is stressed in their preparation programs and professional development (McHatton, Glenn, Sue, & Gordon, 2012). For example, although principals participated in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, classroom observations, and reviewed lesson plans, few principals agreed that they were well prepared to engage in those activities. Likewise, principals reported a high sense of self-efficacy in the area of discipline even though it was not an area of emphasis in preparation programs and district professional development. The study suggested that principals learn "on the job," and there could be a discrepancy between what they believe they know and what they actually know.

In summary, the principal needs to have both self-awareness and awareness of others to meet the needs of the teachers (Bird et al., 2012 & Hughes et al., 2015). Principals need the background knowledge and experience supporting teachers to reduce the risk of teachers leaving the field. The discrepancy of support between what administrators perceive they are providing in comparison to what teachers need is an area of concern. Principals should become better prepared to support their teachers especially those who lack knowledge in special education (Cancio et al., 2014; Correa & Wagner, 2011; Prather-Jones, 2011). Many of the students with challenging behaviors in K-2nd grade could be eligible candidates for special education or may need a strong social-emotional learning base, and therefore, principals should have a strong foundation in these areas not only to support the teachers but also to be able to identify the necessary steps to intervene.

Alternatives to Suspension

This section reviews the policies regarding suspension. It highlights the importance of alternative methods. School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) and Restorative Justice are programs recommended as alternatives to school suspension.

According to Hanover Research (2012), suspension has been associated with negative consequences for individual students, schools, districts, and communities. Studies indicate that suspension fails to result in positive conditioning. Suspension may intensify misbehavior by increasing shame, alienation, and rejection among students. A study by the state of Texas found that students are five times more likely to dropout, six times more likely to repeat a grade, and three times more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system if they have been suspended (Hanover Research, 2012). In removing misbehaving students from the classroom, especially those with disabilities, schools deny education to the students who may need it most.

Studies by EdSource indicated that a large number of suspensions are commonly attributed to willful defiance (E.C. 48900), which accounts for nearly 43% of suspensions in California (Frey, 2014). The California Education Code permits the superintendent or the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled to suspend a student if it is determined that the student committed any acts listed under E.C. Sections: 48900, 48900.2, 48900.3, 48900.4, 48900.7, or 48915. Many school district policies prohibit the use of suspension and expulsion as corrective measures in response to student misconduct of willful defiance as described in E.C. Section 48900 (k). Additionally, students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade shall not be suspended or expelled due to sexual harassment (E.C. Section 48900.2), an act of hate violence (E.C. Section 48900.3), or threats and intimidation against district personnel or other students (E.C. Section 48900.7).

New legislation requires schools to rethink their disciplinary processes. In January of 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, announced new federal guidelines for school discipline. He called on schools to “rethink” their disciplinary approaches, emphasizing alternatives to suspension and expulsion (Hanover Research, 2012). In 2014, the California legislature passed the Assembly Bill 420, which limited the suspension of students for “willful defiance” of school authorities. Because it is considered a subjective category that has been used disproportionately to suspend African-American students.

The state legislature also limits suspension to cases where other disciplinary actions have failed and encourages the use of non-exclusionary alternatives in response to disruption and defiance (Skiba & Losen, 2015). The guidelines issued by the Office of Civil Rights are in response to national data that show African-American students are three times as likely as white students to be suspended or expelled, often for similar nonviolent offenses (Hanover Research, 2012). It was determined that students of color and those with disabilities are disproportionately suspended. The guidelines clarify the rules districts must follow under Title IV and Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, which forbids discriminatory practices. Secretary Duncan called for fair and appropriate disciplinary policies that keep students in school and learning. Along with the guidelines, the department included resources for districts and schools on alternatives to suspensions and expulsions such as setting high expectations for behavior, involving parents, and promoting social and emotional learning strategies. Additionally, Assembly Bill 1729 encourages districts to implement positive discipline policies such as restorative practices, such as misbehaving students being asked to make amends to anyone they have harmed.

Pursuant to E.C. Section 48910, a teacher may suspend a student from class for any acts enumerated in the E.C. Section 48900, except for willful defiance as described in E.C. Section 48900 (k) for the remainder of that day and for the following day. The teacher shall immediately report the suspension to the principal and send the student to the administrator for appropriate action. However, pursuant to E.C. Section 48911.2, schools with out-of-school suspension numbers that exceed 30% of their enrollment from the previous school year shall consider implementing alternatives to suspension.

Pursuant to E.C. Section 48911.2, school districts may establish an in-school suspension program as an alternative to off-campus suspension. The intent was to encourage schools to examine alternatives to off-campus suspension that lead to resolution of student misconduct without sending students off campus. The principal may assign students to a “supervised suspension classroom” for the entire period of suspension (not more than five consecutive school days), if the student poses no imminent danger or threat to the school campus, other students, or staff. Students who violated E.C. Sections: 48900.3, 48900.4 and 48900.7 are precluded by California law for in-school suspensions.

With the adoption of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Discipline Foundation Policy, school districts have established a consistent framework for implementing and developing a culture of discipline grounded in positive behavioral interventions instead of punitive approaches that infringe on the instructional time. School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a recommended approach to school discipline that has been widely supported for working with students with disabilities as well as other students. SWPBS is a proactive, tiered program for preventing problem behaviors that offers universal supports for all students including more intensive supports for small groups and individual students (LACOE,

2006). Other alternatives to suspension include peer mediation programs such as Restorative Justice “circles” where students and teachers discuss behavior and other issues as a group, discuss the infraction and attempt to restore the harm that was done (Hopkins, 2014).

Restorative Justice approaches are being implemented that build on and work in conjunction with the positive behavior interventions in the Discipline Foundation Policy. Restorative Justice seeks accountability by understanding the impact of school discipline incidents. It seeks to repair the harm through a shared decision-making process, which addresses root causes to prevent future harm and supports the healing of all parties (LAUSD BUL-6231.0).

School districts should provide the schools with sufficient funds to train all teachers in alternative intervention programs to suspensions. Otherwise, there will be different interpretations of these programs from teacher to teacher within a school and among schools within a district. All teachers should be well trained to positively affect student discipline and fulfill the policies that have been put in place.

Interventions for Students with Challenging Behaviors

This section reviews studies of positive behavioral interventions for students with challenging behaviors in relation to a supportive classroom environment with an emphasis on classroom composition, relationship building, and effective social-skills instruction. It highlights the importance of building a positive school climate through social-emotional learning.

School should be a place that allows students to focus on the academic and social tasks that will promote and produce healthy, productive adults. In recent years, by teaching and modeling the expected behaviors, many school leaders have implemented school-wide positive behavior support to reduce office referrals. This process is followed by classroom positive behavioral support intended to improve the feedback of all children in the class including the

targeted child. A more intensive intervention is initiated that is systemically directed towards helping the targeted child find success in the classroom when the primary prevention is unsuccessful.

One such support is known as a Positive Behavioral Support Plan (PBSP), which includes an action plan to address challenging behavior(s) that interferes with learning. A PBSP is an “evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to decrease disciplinary problems, increase a student’s sense of security, and support improved academic outcomes” (Wright & Faer, 2015 p.14). According to Lohrmann and Bambara (2006), a PBSP is a tool that is used for individual students who require more intensive behavioral support. It provides positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports that identify why the behavior occurred, then focuses on teaching and reinforcing an alternative behavior that meets the needs of the student. A PBSP may require modification to the instructional program and in the classroom environment. For it to be successful, it must be continuously monitored and tailored to the student’s specific behaviors. Patience and diligence are required to effectively change the student’s behavior over time.

The implementation of positive behavioral interventions has made an impact on young children in helping with their challenging behaviors. Conroy, Dunlap, Clark, and Alter (2005) suggested that students who suffer from problem behaviors benefit when positive behavioral interventions are effectively utilized. The students can eventually have a successful school experience if the teacher is strategic with the implementation. In other words, the teacher needs to implement the right strategy at the right time to alter the behavior. Bradley et al. (2004) provided a national perspective on children with Emotional Disturbance (ED) and suggested that effective interventions at the first sign of problems may eliminate or significantly reduce the intensity or duration of services needed throughout a child’s lifetime. Their initial findings

indicated that there was a reduction in behavioral problems by third grade when schools implemented effective school-wide models as well as tiered intervention in early reading and behavior in kindergarten and first grade. The reduction of problem behavior eventually has a positive effect on academic progress.

A supportive classroom environment is also a key factor in providing interventions for students with challenging behaviors. For example, research by Alter et al. (2013), Short and Bullock (2013), Sutherland et al. (2005), and Thomas et al. (2008) suggested that classroom composition be considered as a form of intervention. Gottfried and Harven (2014) conducted a longitudinal study involving kindergarten and first-grade students across the U.S. that followed them through eighth grade. The study hypothesized that the protective nature of girls decreased the negative dynamic between classmates exposed to other students with EBD and improved their academic success in math and reading in kindergarten and first grade. The study relied on applying quasi-experimental methods to a nationally representative data set. The findings suggested that the girls in the classroom had a moderating effect in math over several years except in kindergarten where it was more pronounced in reading. Based on this study it was suggested to include more girls in the classroom with an EBD student to possibly change the dynamics in the classroom. The study suggested that developing supportive classroom environments could be one way an administrator can support teachers who have students with challenging behaviors. In the context of this study that could mean increasing the percentage of girls in a challenging classroom, because it may balance negative relations.

Research suggests that relationship-building is a critical piece for the intervention process when working with students with challenging behaviors. As mentioned previously by Landers et al. (2008), such behaviors become a problem when they affect the teachers at an emotional level.

As a result of their study to address challenging behaviors such as disrespect, they recommended a three-model approach: “1.) The use of antecedent strategies, 2.) Teach the appropriate social skills, and 3.) Use consequence-based strategies to reinforce respectful behavior” (p.30).

However, Landers et al. (2008) suggested that the most important strategy to preventing the targeted behavior, such as disrespect, is relationship-building. This key finding is also supported by Sutherland et al. (2008) who contended that the relationship between learning and behavior problems of students with EBD is complex and possibly influenced by a variety of factors including classroom circumstances. The study found that there was an association over time between the effects of the teacher and student relationship in terms of how they treated each other. This relationship resulted in changes in the behavior of both the teacher and the students, which affected academic progress. Goleman (2006) suggests that a teacher’s emotions in the classroom can influence the response from the students. If a teacher is angry or frustrated, the students will react to those emotions; since the teacher, being the in charge, may have a ripple effect in the classroom.

Research suggests that the best practice for learning is in a positive school environment that includes trust and caring relationships by all stakeholders. Knight and Wadhwa (2014) revealed the importance of relationship-building in a social-emotional program called Restorative Justice. As part of the program students participated in “peace circles” in which they engaged in heartfelt discussions. It not only allowed students to understand and feel empathy towards one another but also it gave the teacher insight and understanding about the root of problem behavior while building the teacher-student relationship.

Effective social-skills instruction is an important part of the intervention process for students with challenging behaviors. For example, Lander et al. (2008) suggested that

administrators support the working conditions as part of the three-model approach to address challenging behavior to provide and model effective social-skills instruction school-wide. Their study reiterated the importance of providing a positive school climate in which educators model and teach respectful behavior. Many of the SEL programs that were implemented nationwide included the social-skills instruction as seen in Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum (Mindess, Chen, & Brenner, 2008) and the MindUP Curriculum (The Hawn Foundation, 2011). In both programs the social-skills instruction included role-playing, vignettes, and rehearsing, contributed to students' academic, behavioral, and social gains.

To address challenging behaviors such as off-task and aggressive-disruptive ones, it was recommended that training programs be provided to encourage positive teacher-student interactions and effective social skills instruction (Alters et al., 2013). An administrator's responsibility is to ensure that the instructional program is effective and rigorous and therefore, the distribution of at-risk students needs to be carefully examined. To support teachers, a school administrator should have a strong knowledge base of intervention strategies (Conroy et al., 2005). Furthermore, with the most recent research on neuroscience, incorporating a social-emotional component can provide teachers and students a positive emotional climate (Goleman, 2006) that could possibly affect the student with the challenging behavior and have a ripple effect on the classroom dynamic as well as the teacher's resiliency.

Social-Emotional Learning Program

This section reviews the key factors of SEL. Studies highlight the effects of SEL programs for all students, especially those at risk. It highlights the reduction in behavioral problems, the increase in academic progress, resiliency in students and adults, and relationship building.

Research proposes that SEL programs improve student attitudes, behavior, and school climate, which in turn improve students' school success (Goleman, 2006). Social-Emotional Learning is defined as the process of obtaining a set of social-emotional skills, which include: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, which are acquired within the framework of a safe, supportive environment that encourages social, emotional, and cognitive development and provides opportunities for practicing social-emotional skills (Cherniss et al., 2006; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Payton et al., 2008). The implementation of a school-based SEL program that integrates risk-reduction strategies not only decreases problem behaviors but also provides the foundations for healthy development and school success. The research found that increased student self-awareness and confidence level encouraged students to try harder. This in turn improved student motivation, goal setting, stress management, organizational skills, and problem solving, which enabled those same students to overcome obstacles and improve their performances (Durlak et al., 2011). Furthermore, the caring relationships that are developed between all stakeholders – staff, students, and parents – will promote greater student commitment, engagement, and connection to school (Goleman, 2006).

Most researchers agree that self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making are key factors in social-emotional

learning (Payton, 2008; Cozolino & Sprokay, 2006; Durlak et al., 2001; Knight & Wadhwa, 2014). From an emotional stance, Cozolino & Sprokay (2006) suggested that excellent teachers create emotionally supportive learning experiences through encouragement. They do not personalize the negative behaviors from their students, and they find creative ways for a struggling student to approach a difficult situation. Their studies found that high-risk students who were eventually successful credited their success to one or two people in their lives who took an interest in them. Students were provided the opportunity to interact using the face-to-face, mind-to-mind, and heart-to heart approach when they participated in a social-emotional program in the classroom. Cherniss et al. (2006) also supported the concept where an SEL program incorporates strategies to reduce the risk factors and to enhance the protective mechanisms to decrease problem behaviors and provide the foundation for healthy development and school success. Similar research by Immordino-Yang & Damasio (2007) suggested that emotions play a fundamental role in helping children decide when and how to apply what they have learned in school and to the rest of their lives.

Several SEL programs have been implemented across the nation with positive benefits to the students. Such programs are Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum, The MindUP Curriculum, and Restorative Justice. Each one showed positive results especially on student behavior, which positively affected their academic progress. For example, with the implementation of the Second Step program, which focuses on the following four self-regulation skills: attention, listening, using self-talk, and being assertive; the Committee for Children (2012) found that these skills support school readiness and academic achievement, and students learn to apply these skills to be successful in the classroom. This program was developed to increase students' school success and to decrease problem behaviors by promoting social-emotional

competence and self-regulation. It teaches skills that strengthen students' ability to learn, have empathy, manage emotions, and solve problems. The Second Step program targets key risk and protective factors related to a variety of problem behaviors. Students who are equipped with Second Step skills help to create a safer, more respectful learning environment that promotes school success for all (Committee for Children, 2002, as cited in Mindess, Chen, & Brenner, 2008).

Similar findings were evident with the MindUP curriculum, which uses the latest information about the brain to improve behavior and learning for all students. It is a comprehensive, classroom-tested, and research-based curriculum framed around 15 lessons that foster social and emotional awareness, enhance psychological well-being, and promote academic success. Each lesson offers easy strategies for helping students focus their attention, improve their self-regulation skills, build resilience to stress, and develop a positive mind-set in both school and life (The Hawm Foundation, 2011). Evidence supporting both of these programs, Second Step and MindUP, are illustrated in a recent study by Durlak et al. (2011) in which students in SEL programs demonstrated significant improvement in social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance reflected in an 11-percentage-point gain in achievement.

Restorative Justice is an alternative approach to discipline using opportunities for students and adults to build relationships through open sharing. It focuses on conflict resolution education including character education, moral education, and emotional literacy, which centers on building social and emotional intelligence, and encourages positive values and behaviors (Reimer, 2011). One strategy that Restorative Justice uses is the "peace circle," which is a school-level, resilience-building strategy that helps teachers and students understand the cause of

the conflict; provides students with an opportunity to take responsibility for their actions; teaches social and emotional literacy; promotes a sense of community; and improves academic outcomes, relationships, and school climate. Knight & Wadhwa (2014) shared testimonies from students, teachers, and community members on their experience with Restorative Justice. For example, one teacher shared that the entire class was disruptive – students were yelling profanities, throwing papers, sleeping and/or refusing to do the work. Instead of writing office referrals, where students would be suspended, the teacher decided to organize a healing circle and invited parents and students to attend. Over time, the teacher noticed a positive difference in their attitudes, behaviors, and motivation to work. Through these circles, the teacher discovered that students came to class affected by outside factors, such as domestic abuse, work, and homelessness. The heartfelt exchange from the students was an example of their vulnerability, which allowed them to reveal what they shared in common and to make connections which eventually produced changes in their behavior. The circle created an area for students to share with one another in a safe and respectful manner to overcome previous conflicts.

Building resiliency was also a common factor amongst the SEL programs. It was most evident with the implementation of Restorative Justice from Knight and Wadhwa's (2014) study. Through Restorative Justice, teachers and other adults are given the opportunity to learn more about their students and not overlook the "goodness in them." As a Restorative Justice practice, "peacemaking circles" have two goals: to nurture developing opportunities such as relationships and student voice, which contribute to student resilience and to establishing alternatives, asset-based approaches to handling student discipline. When students listen to another student's story, they may realize they are not alone. They are given the opportunity to share strategies and perspectives, which may provide students specific tools for success. It helped to deepen and

strengthen relationships and as a result, every student described in their study did better academically.

Restorative Justice also developed resilience among the staff and allowed them to increase their ability to provide safe and supportive classroom environments for students (Knight & Wadhwa, 2014). Reimer (2011) conducted a qualitative study with four teachers, one school administrator, and a school board administrator in a school setting in Ontario, Canada to provide an overall sense of the school environment in terms of Restorative Justice. Based on the data from interviews and questionnaires the staff perceived Restorative Justice to be effective, and they praised the benefits on students, teachers themselves, the school as a whole, and on parents. It also conveyed the teachers' feelings about their teaching practices, as one teacher stated, "I've learned patience, learned listening, and learned that everybody just wants to be heard" (p.32). Similar findings were evident in a study by Collie, et al. (2012), where the results from a survey of 644 teachers on teacher commitment, school climate, and social-emotional learning suggested that by fostering improved relations between teachers and students and by endorsing and supporting an SEL culture, schools will be able to attain higher levels of teacher commitment. In other words, as student relations improved so did the teacher commitments because they were related to improved teacher performance. For example, teachers who perceive improved student behavior and motivation for learning, experienced less stress, greater job satisfaction, and greater sense of efficacy.

Overall, SEL programs help students become successful in school through a safe, caring relationship with all stakeholders. Furthermore, caring relationships promote greater student commitment, engagement, and connection to school. Many times after a traumatic experience with a challenging student, the rest of the class is ignored while the teacher focuses on that one

child. The rest of the class rarely has time to talk about that experience and is expected to continue with the instructional program. Taking the time to include an SEL program may enhance a positive emotional climate, one in which students can maximize their potential for learning. Students who participated in social-emotional learning in comparison to those who did not did better on achievement tests (Goleman, 2006). Integrating programs such as Restorative Justice allowed students to focus on repairing harm rather than punishing offenders (Goleman et al., 2010). The more teachers understand the relationship between emotion and cognition, the better they can influence this relationship and how they design their learning environments (Cozolino & Sprokay, 2006).

Gaps in the Literature

The literature raises an important question for this study: Why do students with challenging behaviors cause effective, successful, innovative teachers to quit teaching or take stress leave? Why are some teachers more resilient than others? How do social-emotional programs affect the classroom climate including the teacher's emotional well-being? This study addressed this gap in the literature and built on previous research by examining the social-emotional factors that lead to effective school leadership in supporting teachers' resilience who have students with challenging behaviors in their classrooms. It is anticipated that the knowledge generated from this study will provide new insight and inform educational leadership practices.

Summary

In summary, this literature review suggests that challenging behaviors are dependent on the perspectives of the teachers and how prepared teachers are able to work with students with challenging behaviors. Having administrative support that teachers find as immediate and

targeted is one way to reduce the teacher attrition rate. Interventions such as positive behavior support and SEL programs, such as Second Step, MindUP, and Restorative Justice, are interventions that can be used in the classroom. These interventions can reduce the problematic behaviors and possibly increase not only the students' resilience but also the resilience of the teachers working with students with challenging behaviors. This is relevant to this study because teachers are leaving the field of education due to the many stress factors involved in teaching. Researchers have learned a great deal about teacher stress factors, challenging student behaviors, interventions, and the role of administrative support. However, there is little empirical evidence about administrative support for teachers who have had successful careers, but are now electing to leave the field because they are frustrated and burned out from the severity of challenging student behaviors in their classrooms.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

This study explored factors that shaped administrative leadership practices when confronted with teachers who were overwhelmed by students in their classrooms exhibiting challenging behaviors. An emphasis was placed on teacher and administrator perceptions of effective characteristics of administrative support as it related to teachers' resilience, perceptions of job satisfaction, and effectively responding to students with challenging behaviors. This study also explored whether teachers and administrators believed the implementation of an SEL program was effective in creating a positive classroom climate to deal with the challenges of disruptive students.

This chapter describes the study's research methodology and includes discussions of the following areas: rationale for the research approach, descriptions of the research sample and setting, overview of the research design, methods of data collection, analysis and synthesis of data, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations to the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the factors that shaped school leadership practices in response to teachers who had students with challenging behaviors in their classrooms.

Problem behaviors among young children present the greatest challenges to classroom teachers (Gettinger et al., 2008). Instructional leaders who understand students with challenging behaviors and who have a collection of effective leadership practices are better prepared to provide students and their teachers with the appropriate support (DiPaola et al., 2004).

The researcher anticipated that the knowledge generated from this study would provide new insights and inform educational practices. In seeking to understand this phenomenon, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?
 - a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging students' behaviors in the classroom?
 - b. What specific characteristics of "administrative support" do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
 - c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. To what extent does a social-emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

Research Design

The researcher used a multi-case study tradition. A case study is one that is bounded, particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. By using case-study methodology, the researcher was seeking an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded social phenomenon based on extensive data collection (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Creswell, 2014). By using a multi-case study, multiple identities were described in detail to classify emerging themes, patterns, and issues within each case, followed by a thematic analysis across cases (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A multi-case study was appropriate because cases were described and compared to provide insight into an issue (Creswell, 2014).

The purpose of conducting a case study was to provide a more thorough analysis of a situation or “case” in which the researcher explored the bounded system over time through in-depth data collection methods, involving multiple approaches. Using a case-study tradition, the goal for the researcher was transferability, which refers to “how and in what ways understanding and knowledge can be applied in similar contexts and settings” (Bloomberg & Volpe, p.31). The researcher’s responsibility was to focus on the complexity and uniqueness within the case and to attempt to link it to the social context of which it is a part (Glesne, 2016). Thus, transferability occurred through rich description to provide a qualitative claim that would be applicable in a larger context. Accordingly, six elementary schools of similar size and demographics benefitted from this study, which provided a greater understanding of how teachers were impacted by students’ challenging behaviors as well as what supports teachers needed from their school site principals. In addition, the researcher examined the supports that were in place and how the implementation of an SEL program affected the student with challenging behavior as well as the remaining students in the classroom. This study also shed light on effective leadership practices, through the social-emotional lens, that supported teachers who had students with challenging behaviors in the classroom.

A multi-case study was selected as the most appropriate research tradition because it allowed for a rich and detailed description based on the data obtained via interviews, observations, document review, and a critical incident report. By drawing on these multiple methods at six school sites, the purpose was to identify and analyze the themes, patterns, and issues related to administrative support across cases and then use it to provide a literal description that formed the basis of the understanding of the phenomena under study. Ultimately,

the goal was to identify and describe effective leadership practices that supported the teachers with challenging student behaviors in the classroom.

The multi-case study focused on classroom observations to observe the interaction between the teacher and the student with the challenging behaviors and how the targeted student's behavior affected the instructional program. Additionally, an observation was completed during an SEL lesson to see whether it made an impact on the classroom climate. The researcher interviewed the affected teachers and the school site principals to gather their insights about the support needed with challenging behaved students who disrupted the instructional program. The researcher reviewed documents, such as behavior support plans, behavior charts, and teacher journals in search of themes and patterns to better understand the issue. The researcher took advantage of a critical incident report, which was provided by the teacher and principal to obtain rich descriptive data that supported the understanding of the phenomenon.

The research questions were oriented towards administrative support while understanding the issue of students with challenging behaviors across multiple sites and to show how these students' behaviors affected teachers. This was an intensive case study of teachers' and principals' perceptions and insights bounded by the challenging student behaviors within their schools. Ultimately, the study sought to provide a qualitative claim that would be applicable in a larger context. Consequently, this study included detailed descriptions of the learning environments, direct quotations from principals and teachers, and samples of behavior charts, support plans, and teacher journals to provide meaningful answers to the research questions.

Research Setting

The research study was conducted at six elementary schools located in an urban school district in Southern California. These specific schools are part of Sunshine Unified School District (pseudonym) with an elevated English Language Learner and Socio-Economic Disadvantaged student population ranging at each site from 400 to 900 students. The school enrollment at these sites spanned from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The schools in this district were in full implementation of Second Step: A Violence Prevention curriculum, which focuses on the following four self-regulation skills: attention, listening, using self-talk, and being assertive. Most schools were in their first or second year of implementing Restorative Justice, an alternative approach to discipline that focuses on conflict resolution through peace circles. One school was in full implementation of MindUP curriculum that fosters social and emotional awareness, enhances psychological well-being, and promotes academic success.

With the passing of California Assembly Bill 420: Pupil Discipline, schools can no longer expel or suspend students in the primary grades for willful defiance or disruption of school activities. Under this new law, teachers can send a misbehaving student to the principal's office, but the principal can no longer send the student home (Frey, 2014). In the Sunshine Unified School District, the focus has been on the reduction of office referrals with the full implementation of prevention and intervention programs under the Discipline Foundation Policy. Most recently, the focus has been on the implementation of a social-emotional program, Restorative Justice, with an emphasis on Community Circles. At the elementary level, Restorative Justice can be used in conjunction with the Second Step program.

These sites were selected because they had implemented the positive behavior intervention programs school-wide as well as at the individual classroom level with the

implementation of an SEL program. For each of the selected schools, six administrators had identified a total of 12 teachers with a challenging student in their classroom who continuously disrupted the instructional program despite the intervention programs that were in place.

Instrumentation

A criterion and opportunistic/network sampling procedure was used in this multi-case study on leadership practices that supported teachers who had students with challenging behaviors in the classroom at the time of the study. A criterion-based sampling worked well when “all the individuals studied represent people who have experienced the same phenomenon” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p.104). The elementary school sites were specifically identified with the focus on kindergarten through second grade where students with challenging behaviors had been identified but had yet to experience or finalize the IEP process. A criterion-based sampling strategy was appropriate because the researcher worked with small samples of people nested within their context who were studied in depth on a specific problem (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By interviewing the six principals and affected 12 teachers and by conducting observations in their classrooms at those specific sites, the researcher gained descriptive insight on the research problem.

Procedures

To gain access to the sites, an opportunistic/network sampling strategy was used. In this sample strategy, “a few participants who have particular characteristics are selected and they are asked to identify and refer others who are known to have the same or similar characteristics” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 248). This site selection strategy was appropriate for the following reason: The researcher worked with the local district instructional director who referred the researcher to principals who were currently working with teachers who had students

with challenging behaviors in their classrooms. In addition, by surveying a group of elementary principals at the end of a principals' meeting so they could leave if they were not interested in participating in the study, the researcher was able to identify specific school sites with the criterion mentioned. Based on the input from the questionnaire, six principals permitted the researcher to have access to the 12 affected teachers noted as capable, whom she interviewed and observed to complete the research study.

Research Sample and Data Sources

Data sources

Teachers and principals were used as data sources through surveys and personal interviews. After each interview, the participants were provided with a critical incident report to complete and return within a week. A critical incident report is an instrument that asks respondents to think about a specific time when they experienced a student with challenging behavior. In this report, respondents were asked to briefly describe the incident, what they learned, and how they thought their learning would influence how they would handle similar situations in the future (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In addition, the researcher conducted classroom observations to describe and record the classroom dynamics, implementation of an SEL program, and the interaction between the teacher and the behaviorally challenged student. Included in the data sources were a document review comprised of copies of behavior charts, behavior support plans, and teachers' journals about students with challenging behaviors. The participants were informed at the beginning and during the process to not say or write anything that would identify a student, in other words, to maintain confidentiality.

Sampling strategies

A combination of two strategies was used in this multi-case study on a leader's role in supporting teachers who had students with challenging behaviors in the classroom. A criterion sampling strategy was used to select the participants. Kindergarten through second grade teachers who had students with challenging behaviors in their classroom who had yet to experience or finalize the IEP process were selected to participate, as well as their site administrators who volunteered to participate in the study. By interviewing the principals and affected teachers as well as conducting observations in their classrooms and reviewing the behavioral charts and records, the researcher was able to gain insight into the challenging behaviors and to determine how the teacher and administrator responded to those problems.

An opportunistic/network sampling strategy was used to gain access to the specific teachers. In this sample strategy participants were asked to refer other individuals who they knew to have the same or similar characteristics (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). By surveying a group of six principals, the researcher was able to identify those 12 teachers who worked with kindergarten through second grade classrooms who were struggling with students who had challenging behaviors.

Procedure

The researcher took advantage of the networking opportunity to determine at which sites to conduct the study based on the principals' responses on the survey from a principals' meeting. Participating principals, based on the criteria, also recommended other principals to include in this study. If the principal was selected, a consent form to participate in the study was signed in advance of completing the survey. As soon as the surveys were read, the researcher obtained a verbal agreement from those principals who met the criteria. Each principal selected the teachers

that met the criteria. With the principal's permission, the researcher wrote an email to the selected teacher to pursue the study. The teachers were also asked to sign the consent form prior to completing the surveys. A follow-up invitation to participate in the study was sent via email to the targeted teachers who qualified for the research study. All of the teachers who had been identified agreed to participate in the study.

Sample characteristics

The participants in this study varied in gender, ethnicity, age, and longevity of teaching and administrative service. Once the researcher confirmed their willingness of the six school site principals and 12 teachers to participate in the study, she conducted in-depth interviews, observed the classroom dynamics with the students who had challenging behaviors during an SEL lesson, and reviewed the teachers' documentation on behavior support plans, behavior charts, and teacher notes. The participants were provided with a critical incident report to complete after the interview and return to the researcher via U.S. mail.

Ethical issues

There were advantages to this sampling strategy since the researcher had worked closely with many principals from the initial pool and had built a strong relationship with them. However, the researcher was also aware that these relationships could lead to potential ethical issues, such as a "backyard research," in which the researcher had easy access and where the foundation for rapport was already there (Glesne, 2016). Therefore, to safeguard against any bias, the researcher excluded principals with whom she worked closely. To protect the rights of the research subjects an informed consent to participate in the study was obtained, confidentiality of all participants through the use of pseudonyms was maintained, and participants were informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time.

Data Collection Instruments

A multi-case study design was used to develop an in-depth understanding of leadership practices that supported teachers' responses to students with challenging behaviors in the classroom. Multiple school sites were used to examine teachers' and administrators' perspectives that allowed the researcher to provide a detailed description of themes within each case, followed by a thematic analysis across cases (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Research invitation

A research invitation is a letter inviting selected individuals to participate in a study. The purpose of the letter was to introduce the researcher, the research study, and to elicit participants for the research. A letter was written for school principals who had shown an interest in participating in this study following a survey completed at the conclusion of a principals' meeting. A second letter was created for K-2 teachers who had shown an interest in participating in the study and who met the criteria from a similar survey based on their principal's recommendation. A follow-up email was also created for those who did not respond within a one-week period. The components of the letter included the following: brief introduction of the researcher, description of the research purpose, nature of the participation, confidential nature of the data, compensation for participating in this study, and contact information if they were interested in participating (see Appendix A).

Informed consent form

An informed consent form is a statement that participants sign before they participate in research (Creswell, 2014). It is a written explanation that informs research participants about the research purpose, the specific procedures, the expected ways of sharing the research results, and the voluntary nature of their participation (Glesne, 2016). The purpose behind the written

consent form was to disclose to the potential participants all the information necessary for them to make decisions about participation in the study. Specific procedures and time commitments were provided for the interview processes as well as potential benefits for the participant and for the field of education. In addition, the voluntary nature of being a study participant and compensation for their participation were also included in the informed consent. The researcher was committed to keeping the names and significant identifying characteristics confidential. Cautionary measures were taken to secure the storage of research-related records and data. Careful organization as well as a physical “workspace” was required to manage the work and keep records throughout the research process. Therefore, the researcher made sure that the data was sorted systemically, stored safely and securely, and easily retrievable. In addition, before making revisions, original drafts were kept and each revised version was labeled, dated, and stored in a designated electronic file for easy retrieval (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher provided contact information in the event the participants had any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the study (see Appendix B).

Interview protocol

An interview protocol is a procedure designed by the researcher that contains instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and spaces to take notes of the responses from the interviewee (Creswell, 2014). The purpose behind the protocol was to remind the researcher of the questions, the purpose of the study, and provide a means of recording notes. In designing the interview questions that were tied to the research questions, the researcher used bold font for each of the research questions and underneath each question, brainstormed three to four questions that would elicit the research question (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). By following this protocol, approximately 23-25 questions were developed to explore and understand

administrative leadership practices that support teachers who were challenged at the time with disruptive student behaviors in the classroom. The researcher conducted a pilot study to validate these questions with a small number of principals and teachers. The results of the pilot study allowed the researcher to eliminate some questions due to redundancy and/or edit some of the questions to provide more clarity and understanding, resulting in a final set of questions that the researcher used with all participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect information on the leadership practices that support teachers with students who display challenging behaviors. Semi-structured interviews allowed questions to emerge in the course of the fieldwork that possibly added to or replaced pre-established ones for the participants to share additional information and insights (Glesne, 2016). Each interview lasted approximately 40-60 minutes. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions and probing questions to allow opportunities for new information and perspectives to emerge during the interview process (see Appendix C).

Critical incident report

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), a critical incident report is a data collection method, which allows for the “uncovering of perceptions that might not have been revealed through the interviews” (p.122). This instrument asked respondents to describe an incident indicating who was involved, what they learned, and how they thought their learning would influence how they would handle similar situations in the future. This tool provided a means to gather more information about an experience when the teacher was confronted with a student with challenging behaviors and what supports were provided to the teacher. Also, this tool was used with school principals to discover what support they had provided to teachers during critical incidents (see Appendix D).

Classroom observation guide

To create an in-depth, multi-case study that depends on a detailed description of a setting and its participants, accompanied by an analysis of the data for themes, patterns, and issues (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) the researcher conducted classroom observations. With the use of an observation guide, the researcher took extensive notes to describe the setting, classroom dynamics, relationships, and classroom management. Research questions were used to guide the descriptive observations with the focus on the physical environment, the implementation of an SEL program, the interactions between the teacher and the student with challenging behaviors, and behavior management strategies. In addition, a reflection journal was used based on the categories from the observation guide (see Appendix E). The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' responses to students' challenging behaviors and the principal's response to the teachers' needs in such situations.

Instrument rationale

The instruments used facilitated the organization of this research study. The purpose of the research invitation was to elicit participants for the study, provide them with an introduction to the researcher, and inform them of the specifics of the study. An informed consent form disclosed to potential participants the necessary information for them to make decisions about participation in the study. The purpose behind the interview protocol was to remind the researcher of the questions, the purpose of the study, and provided a means of recording notes. The critical incident report served as a means to gain more insight about an actual student experience as well as the support provided by the principal to the teacher in the classroom. Lastly, the researcher used an observation guide to take extensive and descriptive notes as it related to the research questions.

Data Collection Procedures

Personal interviews

The primary data sources in this multi-case study came from the semi-structured interviews, which were used to collect information on the leadership practices that supported teachers with students who display challenging behaviors. Semi-structured interviews allowed “questions to emerge in the course of the fieldwork that may add to or replace pre-established ones” (p.96) for the participants to share additional information and insights (Glesne, 2016). Moreover, the interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions and probing questions that allowed opportunities for new information and perspectives to emerge during the interview process (see Appendix C).

In designing interview questions that were specific to the research questions, four supporting questions for each research question were developed including grand tour questions to acquire a better understanding of the participant as a whole. A total of 23-25 questions were used by the researcher to explore and understand the leadership practices that supported teachers who were confronted with student with challenging behaviors in the classroom. The interview process began with grand tour questions and eventually moved to experience, opinion, and knowledge questions. Questions and probes (requests for more explanation, clarification, description, and evaluation) were developed for the participants based on the conceptual framework, literature review, and research questions (Glesne, 2016). The questions differed slightly between the teachers and administrators based on their roles and experiences with students with challenging behaviors. Each interview lasted approximately 40-60 minutes based on their responses and experiences with students with challenging behaviors.

The interviews were completed during the middle and end of the fall semester of the 2016/2017 school year. The teachers and principals needed time to adjust to the new school year and get to know their students. They also needed time to implement behavior management strategies, interventions, and SEL lessons that were included in the study. Once the participants were confirmed from the surveys, the researcher emailed the interview invitations and followed-up with a second email for those that did not respond within a few days. Once a date and time was confirmed, the researcher met the participant at a location of their choice. On the day of the interview a few minutes was spent engaging the respondent in an informal conversation to put them at ease before beginning the interview process. The researcher began with a review of the confidentiality protocol, informed the participants that the interview would be recorded, and reviewed their signed consent before beginning the interview.

Critical incident report

A critical incident report (Appendix D) is a form for respondents to describe an incident with a student with challenging behaviors in as much detail as possible to reveal their perceptions of the experience that might not have been captured during the interview (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Therefore, after interviewing the participants the researcher provided each with a self-addressed envelope and encouraged them to complete the critical incident form within the week. The teachers were asked to recall a time when they were confronted with a student with challenging behaviors. In addition, principals were asked to think of a time they had to provide a teacher with support when confronted with a student with challenging behaviors. The researcher analyzed the critical incident reports with the intention to confirm the interview data and uncover perceptions that might not have been revealed through the interview.

Classroom observation

The researcher conducted classroom observations to provide a rich, detailed description of a classroom setting and its participants, complemented by a thematic analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). After interviewing the teachers, the researcher asked permission to conduct an observation in their respective classrooms and obtain any behavior support plans or behavior charts for the document review. The researcher needed to be flexible to observe the classroom during an SEL lesson to capture descriptive details of the highest period of disruptive behaviors as identified by the teachers. Upon entering each classroom, the researcher sat in the back where she was not a distraction. A classroom observation guide was used to assist the researcher in taking extensive notes to describe the setting, classroom dynamics, relationships, and classroom management. In addition, the researcher used a journal to reflect on the observations. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of the teacher's response to students' challenging behaviors and the principal's response to the teacher's needs in such challenging situations.

Documents and artifacts

To attain triangulation, documents and artifacts were a critical part of the data collection process for this study. These documents were a useful tool to help collate and organize the information that the researcher gathered (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The data collection process began with a review of classroom management charts, behavior support plans, and any other documents that teachers had recorded over time. The researcher collected, copied, and categorized the documents and artifacts to answer the research questions and to deepen her understanding of how they contributed to the knowledge of leadership practices that support teachers. By copying and collecting these documents, the researcher gained insight into how teachers respond to a student with challenging behaviors.

Data Analysis

Preliminary data analysis

In the preliminary phase of the data analysis, the researcher relied heavily on field notes and interview transcripts that allowed the data to come to life (Glesne, 2016). The literature review, research questions, and conceptual framework were used to guide, formulate, and describe concepts. However, the researcher kept an open mind to recurring and frequent patterns and prepared for the unexpected allowing the data to emerge (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

As data was collected through the interviews, classroom observations, document reviews, and critical incident reports, the researcher had to manage, organize, and make sense of all the separate pieces of accrued information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A document summary form was used to record and organize all the information that was gathered from the document reviews. The interviews were transcribed using a transcription service immediately after each interview. The use of this service was mainly for expediency so that the researcher could make better use of her time analyzing the data. The researcher also listened to the recordings while reading the transcriptions to gain a naturalized approach, which referred to “written down talk exhibits many features of written language that do not actually occur in spoken talk” (Davidson, 2009, p.38). The goal was to provide a rich description of the participants’ excitement or frustration, laughter or tears, change in tone of voice, as well as moments of silence. Therefore, to provide a transcription that was readable and detailed, the researcher ensured that the transcriber included the commas, full stops, and paraphrasing. The researcher reviewed and compared several of the transcriptions to the interview recordings.

After reading each transcription from the interviews, field notes from the classroom observations, and critical incident reports, the researcher made summary notes for each

participant. The researcher immersed herself in this data by reading and re-reading the transcriptions and listening to the recordings to see the big picture, which she later reduced to categories and subcategories. By using a data summary table, a tool for recording and tracking the number and percentages of responses, the researcher was able to summarize participant data by documenting their quotes for each category of the conceptual framework (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The researcher focused on the concentration of similar responses across the participants to look for patterns and themes.

During the data collection phase the researcher used a reflection journal to assist with the organization of the data and to determine whether more data was needed. By writing memos in a reflective field log (Glesne, 2016) the researcher recorded what she thought was going on and captured new patterns or themes that emerged through the readings and coding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In addition, by managing the data and applying codes to what had been collected she began to learn and keep track of the information she had received. At that early stage, inter-rater reliability was required to check for accuracy. Member checks were conducted as part of the preliminary data analysis, and a colleague and her dissertation chair reviewed the work to see whether the codes were appropriate and relevant to the research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Thematic data analysis

The purpose of thematic data analysis is to search for themes and patterns through data transformation. It moved away from description towards identification of patterns and trends in the data through coding, data displays, and comparisons. Coding was used to discern themes, patterns, and processes to make comparisons and build a theoretical explanation (Glesne, 2016). Coding is a “system of classification – the process of noting what is of interest or significance,

identifying different segments of data, and labeling them to organize the information contained in the data” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p.142).

The data summary table was one tool that helped the researcher identify the themes that emerged from the data analysis. For the researcher to immerse herself in the data, she coded several interviews and field observations line by line to identify further concepts. Afterwards she created a codebook where she generated a list of codes to help her organize the data by categories and subcategories. From this codebook, the researcher once again looked for patterns that emerged, made comparisons, made new connections, analyzed, and interpreted the results that were meaningful (Glesne, 2016). Additionally, the transcripts were also loaded into NVivo, a software tool designed to assist in qualitative analysis, to store, manage, and organize the data. Using NVivo allowed the researcher to code and categorize the data once more to ensure accuracy.

Interpretation

Interpretation moves beyond description and analysis to explore what is to be made of the data (Glesne, 2016). The study is only as good as the data the researcher has taken care to analyze as well as its validity. Having reduced the data into categories and subcategories, the researcher linked them back together to make meaning of the data as it related to the study. In other words, the researcher took the data apart to analyze participants’ responses and put it together again to summarize it (Creswell, 2012). The researcher did this by exploring the codes using visual representations such as graphs and flow charts that assisted in identifying the concepts, processes, and relationships (Glesne, 2016). By applying a theoretical lens to the results of data analysis, the researcher transformed the data into a useful form that communicated descriptive patterns and findings from the data analysis. Ultimately, the goal was to analyze and

interpret the data to answer the research questions. In completing this study, the researcher summarized key findings, developed an explanation for results, suggested limitations in the research, and made recommendations for future research (Creswell, 2012).

Role of the Researcher

Identity

The researcher came into this study as a 46-year-old female. Her mother died when she was five years old and her father lost his battle to cancer six years later. Her stepmother raised her. She experienced a life of prosperity when her father was alive as well as poverty and homelessness after his passing. She had her moments of difficulty in school and could have easily gone down the wrong path considering her childhood background. However, she persevered and worked hard to make it in this world. Early on, she knew education was her ticket to a better life.

She is currently an elementary school principal, married to a police officer; she has two adult children. She has come a long way from that homeless teenager who had lost her parents. She attributes her success to the educational opportunities she has received. She strongly believes in hard work, determination, and perseverance. Her motto is “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” Since education has made such a positive difference in her life, she wants to ensure that all students receive the same opportunity, even the most challenging ones.

Researcher/research effects

As a former teacher and current school principal, she has witnessed first-hand the violence and disruption caused by students with challenging behaviors. As a teacher, she fell victim to the violence caused by these students and saw her instructional program completely disrupted. She saw how one student affected the learning of other students in her classroom

despite all the research-based strategies, interventions, and prevention plans in place. As an administrator, she has witnessed teachers in tears because of stress, frustration, and hopelessness. Therefore, she entered into this study with a negative mindset, one of frustration and bitterness. She believed that these disruptive students needed more support than what the teachers and school administrators were able to provide. The researcher believed that the system had failed our most challenged students including the rest of the students as victims to the violence and disruption to their instructional program. She believed that our general education teachers and administrators were ill equipped to handle the challenges these students brought to the classroom. As an administrator, she felt she had failed her teachers by not being able to provide them with the proper support.

The researcher believed that in her role as a researcher and with her professional experience would facilitate the development of the study especially in creating the interview questions and knowing what key features to look for when conducting the observations and the document review. However, the researcher understood that her interpretation of the data might be perceived through the lens of an administrator, teacher, and even as a parent. There was also the possibility that she would come in as the empathetic listener and fail to notice important information. As a novice researcher, she needed to be aware of which lens she was using when she documented what she was observing. She may have failed to recognize what she was not noticing. For example, if she went in with a negative mindset, she might have only focused on the negative behaviors and negative results thus failing to recognize the positive occurrences. That would be like observing the construction of a house and focusing only on the painter and ignoring the plumber.

Safeguarding strategies

To provide a study that was trustworthy and ethical, the researcher needed to be aware of her perspective, which required her to direct her attention beyond who and what she brought to the study and be attuned to her intersubjectivity (Glesne, 2016). Therefore, the researcher took a reflective stance by critically thinking and journaling about the investigation throughout the research process. To guide her study, she used the following questions created by Hollway and Jefferson (2000): 1.) What do you notice? What do you not notice? 2.) Why do you notice what you notice? 3.) How can you interpret what you notice? 4.) How can you know that your interpretation is the “right” one? In addition, the researcher assessed the study’s trustworthiness by using the following concepts: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, with features of reflectivity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Glesne, 2016).

For the study to be credible, to interpret what she noticed, and to see whether it was transferable, the researcher committed to prolonged engagement and persistent observations. This practice allowed for thick and rich description notes. Providing a dependable study requires reflecting on the researcher’s subjectivity and positionality, which led her to interpret and behave in certain ways. Therefore, it was critical that she debriefed with peers and included member checks when she shared the interpretive process with research participants (Glesne, 2016). The researcher widened her perspective by sharing her working drafts with peers (i.e. principals, classmates, and fellow educators), who listened, shared their perspectives, and asked thought-provoking questions. She allowed them to work with small portions of the data to develop and to apply codes or to interpret field notes. Lastly, by continuously challenging her assumptions and biases she was able to know whether her interpretations were correct. Journaling assisted in this area by focusing on her reflective accounts, “requiring thought about the researcher’s position

and how the researcher affects and is affected by the fieldwork and field relationships” (Glesne, p.220).

In conclusion, to account for trustworthiness and to safeguard the researcher’s biases, this study ensured several strategies of trustworthiness based on multiple methods to ensure triangulation.

Summary

In summary, this chapter provided a detailed description of this study’s research methodology. Qualitative multi-case study methodology was employed to explore teacher and administrator perceptions of effective leadership practices as they related to teachers’ resilience, perceptions of job satisfaction, and how to effectively respond to students with challenging behaviors. The researcher also explored whether a Social-Emotional Learning program was effective in creating a positive classroom climate with the challenges of a disruptive student based on teachers and administrators’ perspectives. The participant sample was made up of six elementary school principals and 12 K-2 teachers purposefully selected. Four data collection methods were employed, including individual interviews, classroom observations, critical incident reports, and document review. Credibility and dependability were accounted for through various strategies, including source and method triangulation.

Chapter IV: Findings

Introduction

This chapter addresses the findings that emerged from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, critical incident reports, and document review as they relate to the research questions. This chapter begins with a brief description of the purpose of this study, the study's context, and a description of the participants in the study. The findings are presented with the main purpose of providing information to answer the research questions that guided this study.

Research questions

1. What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?
 - a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging students' behaviors in the classroom?
 - b. What specific characteristics of "administrative support" do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
 - c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. To what extent does a social-emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

Study Context

The purpose of this study was to investigate the social-emotional factors that shape school leaders' practices in response to teachers who had students with challenging behaviors in

their general education K-2 classrooms. Through a social-emotional lens, the study sought to explore principals' and teachers' perspectives of effective administrative leadership practices in response to teachers' needs so that they could provide a safe and caring learning environment for the most challenged students. In addition, this study examined the extent that an SEL program affected the classroom climate, which included a student with challenging behaviors.

The research study was developed around the social-emotional leader. Social-emotional leaders are concerned with keeping the morale of their groups at a high level through alleviating fears, mediating arguments, reducing tension, and settling disagreements. Social –Emotional Intelligence (SEI) refers to the competencies linked to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. These competencies are within a safe, supportive environment that encourages social, emotional, and cognitive development as well as providing opportunities for practicing social-emotional skills (Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, & Weissberg, 2006).

The qualitative research design of this study involved data collection through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, critical incident forms, and document review. In understanding factors that shape leadership practices for primary teachers with students with challenging behaviors, a multi-case study was conducted at six elementary schools in a large urban school district in southern California.

The criterion utilized by the researcher in selecting these six elementary schools was the implementation of school-wide positive behavior intervention programs at the individual classroom level as well as the implementation of an SEL program. In addition, for each of the selected schools, the school administrator had identified primary teachers with a student in their classroom with challenging behaviors who continuously disrupted the instructional program

despite the intervention programs used. The participants for this research included six principals and 12 teachers. The sample for this research study included six elementary schools, which are located in the northern area of the Sunshine Unified School District. The demographics varied among each school with two of the selected sites being identified as high performing.

Table 4.0

Study Participants

Role of Participants	Number of Participants
Principals	6
Teachers	12
Total Participants	18

Data Analysis Process

The data analysis process for this study began in February 2017 and concluded in April 2017; the analysis was iterative, and occurred concurrently with the data collection. Each of the interviews with the principals and teachers was audio recorded, and the researcher took notes during the interview. The first initial phase of the analysis consisted of submitting the recordings to a transcription service. Once the transcriptions were delivered, the researcher listened to the recordings while reading the transcriptions and comparing it to the notes that were taken to make sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning. The researcher analyzed and organized the data into tables. Additionally, NVivo, a software tool designed to assist in qualitative analysis was used to store, manage, and organize the data.

First, the study design utilized a paper-pencil questionnaire instrument that was administered to six principals and 12 teachers. The questionnaire instrument consisted of six yes-no questions to determine whether the participants qualified for the study. The response rate

was 100% from the principals and teachers. The six principals were selected based on school demographics and their willingness to participate in the interview process.

Second, the study design involved semi-structured interviews at six elementary school sites. The interviews for the principals were conducted at their school site offices. The interviews for the teachers were conducted in their classrooms and for three teachers, at local coffee shops near the participants' residences. The sample population interviewed included six principals and 12 teachers. The time commitment for each interview was approximately 40-60 minutes. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended and probing questions to capture descriptive responses. The data from all interviews was broken down by responses to each interview question and by each school site in search of themes and patterns. The transcripts were also loaded into NVivo, which permitted the researcher to code and categorize the data a second time to ensure accuracy.

Third, the study design included a classroom observation for each teacher who was interviewed. Eight observations were completed. The observations were completed during an SEL lesson while also observing the targeted student with challenging behaviors. These observations provided the researcher with insight into the types of behaviors the student with challenging behaviors displayed, whether the student responded to the SEL lesson, as well as the teacher's response to that student in relation to the classroom management systems that were in place. In addition, the researcher observed how the rest of the class responded to the SEL lesson and to the student with challenging behaviors. Field notes were recorded during every observation and analyzed. The researcher took a reflective stance by critically thinking and journaling about the classroom observation. To guide the researcher's observation, she answered the following questions created by Hollway and Jefferson (2000): 1.) What do you notice? What

do you not notice? 2.) Why do you notice what you notice? 3.) How can you interpret what you notice? 4.) How can you know that your interpretation is the “right” one?

The study design also included a critical incident report that was provided to each participant after the interview. This instrument asked respondents to describe an incident indicating who was involved, what they learned, and how they thought their learning would influence how they would handle similar situations in the future. This tool was used as a means of getting more information about an experience involving the teacher who had been confronted by a student with challenging behaviors as well as the types of supports that were provided to the teacher. This tool was also used with the school principals to discover what supports they had provided to teachers during critical incidents.

The data from the interviews, field notes from the classroom observations, and critical incident reports were analyzed manually to identify initial sets of coding categories based on emerging themes in the data. The coding process involved “constant comparison” – addressing the grouping of data from different school settings or interview questions and a “cross case analysis” – addressing the grouping of data from different instances of similar observational settings or responses to the same questions. To ensure a wider perspective and additional accuracy, all of the data was entered into NVivo to be organized and coded a second time.

Additionally, a comprehensive document review was completed as part of this study. Classroom behavior charts, behavior support plans, and behavior monitoring tools were reviewed. The researcher collected, copied, and categorized the documents and artifacts to answer the research questions and to deepen her understanding of how they contributed to the knowledge of leadership practices that support teachers. In addition, the researcher gained some insight into how teachers responded to the student’s challenging behaviors.

Lastly, the perceptions of the principals and teachers were presented. These perceptions were intended to describe the supports that were provided to teachers based on the perceptions of principals and teachers. Based on the analysis of the data collected, the researcher sought to identify categories and themes. There were four to five categories that emerged from each research question and three themes that emerged from the interview transcripts, observations, critical incident reports, and document review. Table 4.1 lists the major categories associated with each research question. Table 4.2 lists the three major themes with the associated categories identified from the thematic and analytical analysis of the data collected. The information in Table 4.1 and 4.2 will be referred to in relationship to the research questions mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter.

Table 4.1

Emerging Categories

Research Question	Categories
1. What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?	Coaching and mentoring Responding to the needs of others Parental involvement
1a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers’ needs regarding challenging students’ behaviors in the classroom?	Availability of resources Professional development Immediate response
1b. What specific characteristics of “administrative support” do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students’ challenging behaviors in the classroom?	Empathy Encouragement Open-door policy - Availability Building capacity
1c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers’ resilience and their willingness to work with students’ challenging behaviors in the classroom?	Developing others Service – Being present and available Fostering positive relationships
2. To what extent does a social-emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?	Coping skills Caring school community Consistency No difference*

* No difference (students with challenging behaviors were not affected)

Table 4.2

Emerging Themes

Building Capacity	Availability of Resources	School Climate
Coaching and mentoring	Responding to the needs of others	Empathy
Professional development	Availability of resources	Encouragement
Capacity building	Immediate response	Fostering positive relationships
Developing others	Open-door policy	Caring school community
Coping skills	Service - being present and available	Parental support
Consistency		

Research Question 1: Finding and Analysis

This section will identify those systems and structures that were utilized by the participating site principals at the six elementary school sites based on teachers and principals' perceptions through semi-structured interviews. The data collected provided the foundation for the context of the discussion and the lens to further develop the ideas shared.

RQ1: What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?

The factors that shape school principal practices include: parental involvement, teacher competence, professional development, and support personnel. The first research question sought to understand how the principals used their administrative leadership practices to support the teachers at the school site with students who displayed challenging behaviors. The teachers and principals who responded to the open-ended questions during the semi-structured interviews identified several categories related to the principals' practices in supporting teachers who were struggling with students with challenging behaviors in their classroom. The following categories were identified: (1) coaching and mentoring; (2) responding to the needs of others; and, (3) parental involvement. Their perceptions were that these practices facilitated the process of identifying and fostering the support systems that teachers needed when students in their classroom with challenging behaviors confronted them.

Building Capacity - Coaching and Mentoring. In response to Research Question 1 (Q1) on the principals' interview protocol, the principal from School A summarized:

It can be me giving one to one support.... I sit down with the teachers ... I try to identify what the behaviors are that we are concerned about, try to make sure the teachers know all of the resources at their disposal, which could be referring for SSPT, referring for

counseling immediately, getting support from our instructional coach or our AP for behavioral issues. It just depends. Try to identify the times that the student is having issues and if there's systems that we can set up.

Providing assistance by coaching and mentoring was what the principal from School C did as she shared the following:

I am having her work with the RSP [Resource Specialist Program] teacher as push-in and model. I have given her opportunities to go observe other classrooms. I have had meetings with her ... and I have also had to go in and observe and give her feedback in writing about my observations and suggestions on what can happen in a similar situation next time.

To further make the case for the importance of coaching and mentoring, the principal from School F stated:

I tend to go to the class first to just observe. Then the teacher and I conference and I basically have the teacher ... tell me ... what is going on, what is the pattern, do you see a pattern, are there triggers that you see? Sometimes in reflecting on what is going on, we see triggers, we see patterns. The teacher usually just needs to talk about it and the teacher needs to feel like someone is listening...Let us brainstorm and see are there some other things we can do?

To build on what the principals shared about coaching and mentoring, Teacher 1 from School F shared:

I know that in the past the principal has asked me, "Show me your behavior logs. What have you done? Have you notified the parent? What caused this action?" The principal is really good about talking us through and, "Why do you think this behavior is happening?"

What have you tried? What is working? What is not working?" The principal is supportive. At least she has been for me.

Based on the data there appears to be a strong strand from most principals as it relates to coaching and mentoring. Mentorship can provide teachers with needed support when they are working with challenging students, which may build the teacher's capacity with time. Mentoring is characterized through empathy for others, giving advice, and sharing materials (Huisman, 2010). Although five of six principals stated that they had provided some form of mentoring or coaching to their teachers, only three teachers out of the 12 referred to coaching and mentoring as a factor in addressing research question 1 (Q1).

Availability of Support Personnel - Responding to the Needs of Others. As the leader of the school, it is critical to have additional support available such as personnel to meet the needs of the teachers. This category was quite evident as demonstrated by the teachers' responses to research question 1 (Q1), where eight teachers stated that their principal provided support by means of responding to their needs immediately. Teacher 2 from School A shared:

If I call and ask them to come over, they do respond, I think as quickly as they can, somebody comes over. They will come either just to sit in the classroom with that student, to kind of talk to them or be another adult in the room.... Sometimes they will walk that student out if the student is willing to go with them, and they will have a little conference with them ... they will stay in the classroom ... calm that student down so at least I can continue teaching.

All three teachers from School B emphasized the importance of having administration respond to their needs. Teacher 2 stated:

If I have to go somewhere and he (student) refuses to go with me, I call the office and they send help and stay with him. Then once he cools down and he decides to come with us, then they will walk him to us.

Teacher 2 from School C shared how the principal made herself available to respond to her immediate needs:

If anything happened, he used to escape school as well and so, she always just had her phone with her. I have her direct line as well. If I needed anything, she always made sure an administrator was always on staff to support me to be there ... to get him out of my classroom, to keep him safe and my students safe.

Lastly, Teacher 1 from School F added:

When I have had students, who are physically out of control, they come right away ... They will observe the child for a few minutes to see if that behavior is still going on. If it is a violent thing, they will immediately ask the other kids to go out of the classroom, and they will stay in the classroom and speak to that child. Then if the child calms down, then they take him to the office and they go from there.

Although teachers noted that responding to their needs immediately was a way they felt supported, only two principals suggested that this was a common factor in their leadership practices. However, most principals did state that they observed the classroom. The principal from School F shared:

The first thing I do is actually go to the classroom.... Sometimes kids just need to be taken out of the setting there. Me, as an administrator, I tend to go to the class first to just observe.... if there are still moments when things are just not working, I give them a carte blanche to call me and I will come get the kid or to just send the kid to the office.

As a means to support her teacher, the principal from School E offered the following, “I gave her a walkie-talkie so she could call me personally, and it would be a quicker turnaround time.”

Caring School Community - Parental Involvement. Developing collaboration between families and schools to promote academic success has a long-standing basis in research (Epstein et al., 2002). This is especially true when it relates to supporting teachers who are struggling in their classrooms with students with challenging behaviors. The principals’ comments are supportive in their views of parental involvement; however, a few principals shared their frustrations as they reached out to parents, but to no avail. Four out of the six principals mentioned in their responses that they try to involve the parents, but in some cases, parental support is absent. The principal from School F shared her frustration,

Contacting the parent, we usually start with a phone call. Then after the phone call, then we ask for a conference. What usually happens, which is really, really frustrating and difficult, is the kids that are having the most difficulty, their parents do not come to the conferences.

The principal from School E also shared similar sentiments regarding parental involvement as she added, “Obviously, I reached out, we had numerous conferences with the mother. Really, to no avail for quite a while. A lot of times, these parents are in denial. You get, ‘Oh, well they do not do this at home.’”

Four of the teachers also stated that their principal used parental involvement to support them with their students who displayed challenging behaviors. Teacher 3 from School B stated, “She’ll make phone calls home. They set up meetings with the parents.” Teacher 1 from School C shared the following, also in frustration,

He [the student] has to do a reflection ... on whatever rule he broke, or if he injured someone ... and then he goes home and mom signs it, but half the time I am chasing after her to return it. She does not follow through...

Another teacher from School D responded during the interview by stating,

The principal does call the parents. Just like today, she called mom. She had a conference with the mom and with the little boy regarding the incident. The mom talked to him. It was okay. We will see how it goes tomorrow.

It is evident that the school principal attempts to involve parents when their students' behavior becomes challenging. It is apparent that the result of this type of support is dependent on how involved the parent becomes. The above narrative supports those factors that shape leadership practices, which support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors including mentoring and coaching, responding to the needs of others, as well as parental involvement.

Research Question 1a – Finding and Analysis

To develop the answer to the main research question, three sub-questions were provided. After listening to participants share what supports were provided to teachers to respond to students' challenging behaviors, the following question (Q2) asked whether the supports were enough. Every principal stated that his/her support was not enough. Four out of the 12 teachers felt that the support was enough. The four teachers stated that they had enough support as there was already an assistant in the classroom, they had received assistance from a behaviorist, they felt listened to by their administrator or were waiting for the IEP to take place in the near future. In responding to the fact that most participants did not believe the support they were receiving was adequate, the following first sub-question asked,

1a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging students' behaviors in the classroom?

This sub-question 1a (Q1) sought to understand whether principals perceived they were equipped to support teachers who are challenged with disruptive students in their classroom. The teachers were asked the same question of themselves as well as of their school site principals. The participants all had mixed responses. Each participant felt they were equipped and within the same answer also felt that they were not equipped, based on the supports they had at their school site. This question led to the following research sub question 1a (Q2) that asked the participants what supports principals needed to support their teachers at their participating sites. In an effort to address this question, the research utilized data collected from the principal interviews, classroom observation, and the critical incident reports. The following categories were identified: (1) district and school site resources; (2) professional development; and, (3) immediate response.

Availability of Support Personnel - Resources. In response to question 1a (Q1 and 2) on the principals' interview protocol, which addresses their perceived capacity and assistance needed to support teachers who are challenged with disruptive students in their classroom, all principals stated that having necessary resources were critical. For example, the principal from School A summarized:

Personnel. When I want somebody to be able to get counseling, it can take months.... The school psychologist usually does not have time anymore to do groups or individual counseling, unless it is a crisis situation, which we have had a few of those.... I would like to be able in some of these classes, even having a teaching assistant or somebody

else in the room, it would be nice to have someone able to support in the classes if the students need support.

To further make the case for the importance of school resources, the principal of School B responded:

Well, I think that every school should have more time provided by the district for this, because we are seeing more and more of it: a psychiatric social worker, or school psychologist, or counselor ... where they are trained; they have resources. It is their background to deal with issues of behavior, because a lot of it comes from the student's home, or social background, or their socioeconomic background, or divorce. It is all those kinds of issues that seem to come into the school.

The principal from School D added,

I think a lot of the time for a lot of our kids with challenging issues, we might need additional support. We might need a behaviorist to come out to the school and observe the child, and talk to them about their concerns, and maybe look at different strategies that they might have for us to implement for this child in the classroom. Maybe if the child is in need of counseling, provide them with that extra counseling. Unfortunately, my school psychologist is only here 1.5 days a week.... I think we need additional support such as a psychologist, a behaviorist support, and district support.

Based on this data there appears to be a strong correlation in each school as it relates to resources. All the principals reported without exception that they need resources to support the teachers as well as students with challenging behaviors, and particularly, the principal from School F stated out of frustration:

It's not always that the teacher or that I am ineffective at resolving conflicts ... most times, it is way deeper than that. We are not equipped. I need a psychologist every day in the week. I need a psychiatric social worker for every day in the week. I need funding to run small counseling groups ... I think that our kids need social services in a big way.

Collectively, these comments demonstrate that principals at the school sites comprehend the urgency for additional resources to support teachers with students with challenging behaviors.

At School B during a kindergarten classroom observation, the teacher was observed teaching a Second Step lesson with the child who displayed challenging behaviors. During the 40-minute observation, the disruptive student was observed touching and disturbing several of the students seated around him and yelling out profanities, which disrupted the teacher's lesson. Within the first 10 minutes, the teacher called the office for support, and a substitute RSP teacher arrived within minutes to work with the child in the back of the classroom. The researcher did not witness this type of personnel response in the other classroom observations. In most instances, the teachers were left to handle the disruptive behaviors on their own with no evidence of resources.

During the interviews with the teachers, the issue of school resources was also an important component in addressing research question 1a, based on the following three interview questions:

1. Do you feel you are equipped to respond effectively to challenging student behaviors in your classroom?
2. Do you feel that your administrator is equipped to support you with challenging students?
3. What supports do you need from your principal to respond effectively to challenging student behaviors in the classroom?

Teacher 1 from School D shared:

I know it's a hard job being a principal ... but ... some type of support for this little boy, ... maybe another adult just to monitor him during his outside time so the other aide who is out there supervising the other kids has time to supervise the other kids too.... My main issue with him is his safety and the safety of the other kids.

Teacher 1 from School E shared the following statement in frustration:

It's just really difficult to get enough support.... And it is not always available. Just having somebody ... who is available to provide assistance ... and I know most teachers try to handle as much as they can themselves without involving the administrators. Just know that we are calling because there is something that we feel is either unsafe or it needs somebody to handle above what we can do.

Lastly, Teacher 2 from School F stated the following:

When there are extreme cases, I do not know if it is ever enough. You know, when you have a class of 25 and you have one who is so disruptive, unless you have another person there with you the majority of the day, it is really not enough.... I just feel like there needs to be maybe a TA or somebody ... who has more experience dealing with behavior issues so that they can calm the child down or talk to them, whatever they need to do. I just feel like you can not just leave the teacher on her own dealing with teaching a class and dealing with a behavior issue of that magnitude.

However, for some teachers, they felt they had the supports they needed because they had an assistant. For example, Teacher 1 from School A stated, "For me it was enough support, because... I had a brand new aide." Teacher 2 from School B also felt she was supported because she had constant contact with the school psychologist, "I have seen changes in his behavior. ... I also did talk to the psychologist and the psychologist helped me create a behavior

sheet for him. That helped me get that going.” Teacher 3 from School B had assistants embedded into her program and she too felt she had enough resources as she stated the following:

I actually have two aides and one aide that at one time or another who can actually work with the child. If he runs into the next room, the child gets that assistance from one of the aides. I feel like until something can be settled, the best thing is to have somebody in the classroom. I think that is what I would want that can assist with that one child so I can actually teach and work with the rest of the class.

Based on critical incident reports that were submitted, the following statements were included by a principal who was seeking support from the school district: “The district needs to understand that the people in the field, classroom teacher, administrators, support personnel, need support when a student’s severe behaviors affect the learning of all students in class.”

Another principal included the following in her critical incident report, “Behavior supports, guidance and assistance. I needed someone to come to my school and help with the safety plan and implementation of classroom strategies to help with the behavior.”

Capacity Building - Professional Development. Research suggests that administrators can support teachers by providing opportunities for effective professional development that is unique to teachers’ needs and that will advance their knowledge and preparedness (Albrecht et al., 2009; Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2014; Leko & Smith, 2010). The responses to questions 1a (Q 1 & 2) of the interview protocol revealed the importance of professional development to support teachers with students who displayed challenging behaviors. Although only one principal acknowledged professional development, it was a lot more evident by the teachers’ responses. In responding to Q1a, the principal from School C stated:

I'd like a list or a bunch of ideas, strategies to use. I would also like a series of PDs. They don't have to be long and involved because the teachers do not have a lot of time, but something we could show on a Tuesday, maybe a series, and people could take from these videos or these PDs what they need, what works for them, These children take so much time and they take away from the rest of the children. I would like to be able to just intercede and get them young and start changing behaviors very early.

Teacher 2 from School A shared her sentiments out of frustration because of the lack of training received:

I feel like my hands are tied when those situations escalate. I do not know, maybe there is better training on severe cases of students.... I think it is those students that we are talking about that are so extreme that we have very little tools for.

Teacher 1 from School B had similar sentiments:

More training in handling challenging students within the classroom... Show me how to do it because sometimes we will get psychologists or RSP teachers that will come in and will suggest things. They will say, "Well, what are you doing to support the child? ... Where is the behavior support plan?" You tried all that and now show me how it is done. ... What is it you want me to do when this child who is throwing things with the rest of the class? ... Just more training on how to deal with this, because you hear it in the PD's and you might see it on a positive reinforcement video but to actually see it done.... Sometimes it is easier said than done.

Teacher 1 from School C stated:

I think, definitely, having experts come and talk to the staff would be wonderful, or at least most recent research could help with that, because after teaching for so long.... It is a

different world. We are dealing with different parenting styles and everything is entirely different. Maybe if there is researched-based ... just sharing any kind of new research or other suggestions in terms of how to help with misbehavior. I think that would be very beneficial.

Teacher 1 from School F also shared:

As far as redirecting them, moving their seat, modifying their assignment. We have a lot of tools in our belt ... I had never had, in all my years of teaching, had a student of that extreme, but I learned early on what to do when he became like this. As a teacher, I did not have that training. Now, I probably could have taken classes in that particular disability, but I had not, so it was a little shocking to me.

On a positive note, Teacher 1 from School D had been receiving training from a behaviorist and shared the following:

I guess with all the behaviorists that came in I got a better understanding of what I can do as a teacher, and how I can help the students who are having certain issues.... it made me ... better equipped to handle the situation.... when I did have a student literally would just stand up, would lay down, cry, get a chair and throw it, and then just getting all the kids out for their safety ... I learned from those behaviors ... if you are expecting them to do x amount of work, reduce it, give them some incentive, some extra time here and let them express themselves, and just using other techniques that they taught me has really helped me with him.

Availability of Support Personnel - Immediate Response. The third category that emerged from these sets of questions was the importance of responding immediately to a crisis situation. School leadership plays an essential role in protecting instructional time from interruptions

(Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2014; Correa & Wagner, 2011; Leko & Smith, 2010). However, the principal from School A shared with exasperation the unavailability of support personnel:

When I want somebody to be able to get counseling, it can take months. We try to expedite it. We have two outside counseling agencies that I have MOUs with.... When we put a referral in, it takes usually almost a month, four weeks, for it to be processed, for a counselor to meet with the parent, and the parent agrees.

The principal from School F shared the same sentiment, but with hopelessness about getting the supports needed for the student, “No. It's too little, too late. It takes us too long to really get substantive help. I can think of, well this kid is one example. He's gonna fall through the cracks....”

According to Cancio and Conderman (2008), when teachers ask for assistance with a disruptive student, they report that they need it immediately, not in 20 minutes. The following teachers also shared the same sentiment. Teacher 2 from School A shared her concerns:

There's always those critical moments that right when it's happening, before an administrator comes over, it could be 10, 15 minutes ... where I have a student who's out of control. I've had students grabbing stuff off the walls, throwing them, moving all the desks, toppling them over, so I know to get my other kids safe, but then, as I said, there's 15 minutes going by, so I am not equipped in that moment, I cannot do anything to that child, I am just waiting for further assistance. My other kids are sort of held hostage because they are now not doing anything because I have to keep my eye on both parties ... I feel like my hands are tied when those situations escalate.

Teacher 1 from School E who was concerned about other's safety said:

When it becomes physical, then I feel that I do not have enough resources because I cannot physically restrain the child. I just worry about the other's safety ... I feel like my hands are tied. Other than calling and hoping that somebody is going to be able to come. ... I have 24 kids and there is a child who is being unsafe. He will get on the tables too, and I cannot really physically stop him.

She continued and stated with frustration:

Someone will ... come into your classroom to observe but then somebody else will call with a more serious situation, then my situation gets pushed back. Then I have to go back again and again and again and keep saying, "I still need help. I still need help." I think it is just there's too many behaviors and not enough people that you can get the help when you need it. Normally, like I said, I do not call unless it's I need it now.

On a positive note, Teacher 2 from School C was appreciative of her administrator's immediate response as she shared the following:

I'm a phone call away from ... the administration, they responded very quickly. I do not know, there were times where I was worried for my safety but I know that administration would always be there. I did feel safe at the same time.

Ongoing communication between the administrator and the teacher is required not only when requested but also during a crisis situation. The availability of support personnel are indicators of administrative support (Cancio et al, 2014; Correa & Wagner, 2011; Leko & Smith, 2010).

Research Question 1b - Findings and Analysis

1b. What specific characteristics of "administrative support" do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?

This question was divided into two interview questions (Q1 and 2) on the interview protocol, one focused on efficacy and the second question focused on teacher willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors. Based on the two questions the following categories emerged: (1) Empathy, (2) Encouragement, (3) Open-door policy, and (4) Capacity building.

Caring School Community - Empathy. According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2001), social awareness includes the key capabilities of empathy and organizational intuition. Resonant leaders understand how their words and actions make others feel and they are sensitive enough to change them when the impact is negative. The ability to be socially aware allows leaders to not only sense or recognize other peoples' emotions but to demonstrate that they care.

In responding to sub-question 1b Q1, the principal from School D stated,

I think just making sure that teachers know that you are there for them, that you do care for the child, that you do care for the teacher's mental state, and that you are there to work with them no matter what.... I think you have to be compassionate towards the teacher. You have to care for the teacher's needs as well ... I have to remind myself that they are dealing with a challenging situation in the classroom, and it can be overwhelming for them, and they might not have the necessary tools to deal with a situation like that. Just showing them compassion, meeting with them, giving them the time, and the support, and guidance is what teachers need.

The principal from School E added, "Trust. Mutual understanding. A genuine empathy for what they're going through, and how hard that can be on them."

In addition, the principal from School C shared:

I think we really have to recognize the teacher, praise the teacher for working so hard and exercising the patience and really putting so much extra time and effort into the particular child and the behavior, because it is difficult.... I think you have to come in with, “Okay, what do you need?” For every child, it's different. “What can I do to support you? What can I do to help you?”

From a teacher’s perspective, it was revealing that they noticed that their administrators cared about them as Teacher 3 from School B shared with reference to Q1:

I really feel she has been supportive and that I am able to go and speak with her and feel comfortable doing it and knowing that she cares. She validates the situation and our feelings about what is happening in the classroom.

Also, Teacher 1 from School F shared:

I think when there is empathy, and the principal really saw that I was very frustrated and almost afraid of that one particular child. She was there, and she gets it. Just to have her say, “It's tough.” There was one day she even said to me, because I was so upset, she said, “Why don't you go home? Let me take over your class.” ... She was willing to take my class, and she steps in when she can.

Teacher 2 from the same school reiterated a similar sentiment:

I think an administrator who is supportive and understanding of how much work it takes to work with students with challenging behaviors is helpful. She does understand how hard it is and she does try to provide us with support so that we are not so overwhelmed or frustrated with the situation. She will come if she needs to, maybe take the child out for a walk or something just to give both of us a breathing opportunity. So, I think she is understanding of how hard it is to work with challenging students.

Caring School Community - Encouragement. The second category that emerged from question 1b (Q1 & 2) was encouragement. Cozolino & Sprokay (2006) suggested that excellent teachers create emotionally supportive learning experiences through encouragement. This was evident in the response given by the principal from School D:

Just reminding the teacher that you know they are doing their best.... Just reminding the teacher, "I know you are working very hard, it is not you.... I need you to continue working as hard as you are." I think that will help them with their self-esteem as well.

The principal from School F shared:

I celebrate the good stuff. I celebrate when the parent is not screaming at them and me too.... I try to make it very clear that I am here to protect them. That I will run the interference and I will take the blame. The buck stops at me.

Lastly, the principal from School E stated:

A tremendous amount of encouragement, allowing them to vent and tell you how upset they are, continuing to try to engage them, that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and we will get somewhere.

From a teacher's point of view, they also referred to encouragement as an administrative characteristic that positively affected their efficacy and willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors. Teacher 1 from School B felt encouraged by her administrator and shared, "The principal is very positive in her words. She is aware of my patience and my ability and me being a team player, she just always says, 'Thank you.' She is appreciative. ..." She added in Q2, "I do not tend to give up on the child ever. I do not tend to get too frustrated. I tend to start the day again on a new note. The principal always says, 'Let's try again tomorrow.'"

Also, Teacher 2 from School C shared her experience during her struggles:

They trusted that I was always doing the right thing. They would remind me all the time ... to stay focused and just to teach to the students and that I was doing the best that I could.... If I needed to cry I would go in their office, they would close the door, I would cry, they would just listen. Even that just helped.

Availability of Support Personnel – Open-Door Policy. Lastly, the third category that emerged from sub-question 1b, was having an open-door policy where principals were approachable and available to positively affect teachers' efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors. An open line of communication and daily support were cited as significant factors for teacher satisfaction and their commitment to stay in the profession (Albrecht et al., 2009). In addressing the open-door policy, the principal from School C shared from Q1:

I think just having that open-door policy and not judging the teacher and letting them know I have been there and this may work and it may not work. I do not expect perfection. Let's try it until we get it right. Let's work together as a team.

The principal from School B shared a similar answer for Q2:

I think that I try to be positive with teachers and open to listening to what is going on in their classroom. I want people to feel like they can come to me and talk and not feel like they will get in trouble or be judged, because we are the boss. I keep my door open and I am always trying to help them feel comfortable when they come in the office ... I will listen to them and we will solve it together, rather than "You're not doing something right."

Teachers also felt that having an open-door policy provided them support as referenced by Teacher 1 from School B:

She's got an open-door policy. I do not have to make an appointment with her. She always, regardless of how busy she looks, she always has the time. I do not think I've ever walked into her office where she has ever said, "Oh, I'm too busy for you." She is always, "What's up?" She's ready to listen.

Teacher 1 from School D reiterated similar sentiments as he shared, "The principal's openness. She is always offering her support when you do have students who are going to be challenging in your classroom. When you have a question, her door is always open."

Building capacity. According to responses from the interviews, the teachers and principals highlighted that building capacity positively affected teachers' efficacy and willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors.

The principal from School A leads by examples as he shared the following:

Proactively providing support whether it is letting the teachers know, "Hey, here is the training that we have in Restorative Justice. Make sure we are doing the circles.... Are we following our school-wide discipline plan? Make sure you are doing the four to ones and the three B's, and you are attaching everything when you are doing reflections with students." I can lead by example and model, and that is the characteristic I think that they need to see to be willing to go that extra step as well.

He reiterated a similar response in Q2 as he stated:

Reminding them of the steps that they have taken already, the things they have done, how they have supported a student already.... I know that we are "transparent," but making sure they see processes that we are using, how we are supporting them, what we are doing so that they have the ability to go do it themselves the next time ... debriefing with them, discussing issues that when there was a problem, what happened with the student,

what did the teacher do, what could we have done differently? Just giving them the opportunity to kind of reflect and think about the way that a situation was handled, and the way they may have handled it differently in the future or with different students.

The principal from School D reaffirmed this point of view:

Just helping the teacher look at different strategies to build that consistency and that structure in the classroom. Looking at programs such as The Second Step.... Just reminding the teacher, “I know you are working very hard, it is not you, but I need you to be more consistent, I need you to continue working as hard as you are.”

On a positive note, Teacher 2 from School F was receiving feedback as she added:

I have been getting positive feedback from people who do come in to my classroom and observe how I am with this student.... They're like, “You are so good with her and you are doing so well.” I think that ... my administrator's willingness, to send in people in to my classroom to maybe observe me and give me feedback that has been helpful.

School administrators must be able to provide the necessary leadership and support to build capacity among their staff to increase teacher efficacy, resiliency, and sustain their desire to stay in the teaching profession.

Research Question 1c – Findings and Analysis

1c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers’ resilience and their willingness to work with students’ challenging behaviors in the classroom?

Table 4.3

Research Question 1c: Principal and Teacher Interview Questions

Principal Interview Questions	Teacher Interview Questions
1. What is your relationship like with your teachers?	1. What is your relationship like with your principal?
2. How aware are you of their emotional state? How do you know?	2. How aware is your principal of your emotional state? How do you know?
3. What do you do to build resiliency amongst your teachers who are struggling with students' challenging behaviors?	3. What does your principal do to build resiliency amongst you and the other teachers who are working with students' challenging behaviors?
4. What do you do to help teacher's willingness to work with these challenging students?	4. What does your principal do to help teacher's willingness to work with these challenging students?

The answers to this question were developed through four interview questions (Q1, 2, 3 & 4) under sub question 1c on the interview protocol. The question began by asking the participants what they perceived their relationship to be with either the teachers or principals. All participants stated that their relationship was positive in varying degrees. The question was followed by an inquiry about how aware the principal was of the teachers' emotional states. For the teachers' interview protocol, it asked for the teachers' perceptions of how aware their principals were of the teachers' emotional states. The majority of the responses was that the principal was aware of the teacher's emotional state, mainly because the principals had an open-door policy and the teachers walked in at any given moment. In general, the teachers felt comfortable enough to go into the principals' offices and share their concerns, including their personal issues. Based on the responses, teachers also communicated via texting, emailing, or calling after hours. The last two questions focused on administrative characteristics that build resiliency among teachers who are struggling with students' challenging behaviors, and Q4 focused on what administrators do to help teacher's willingness to work with these challenging

students. Based on the two last questions the following category emerged: (1) building capacity by developing others, (2) service and, (3) fostering positive relationships.

Capacity Building - Developing Others. Building capacity by developing others was a common response by both principals and teachers. The principal from School E shared:

Try to let them share at grade level with their colleagues.... Let them problem solve.

Give them the time to think about and reflect and maybe visit another classroom, talk to the special day class teachers, what things do they use that work?

She also reiterated the importance of developing others as she answered Q2 where she added:

The resource teachers help them with behavior. I make sure they get extra planning time.... Give them a Tuesday to ... problem solve with other people. We do have a social- emotional coach here. She does a lot of stuff with them.

From a teacher's perspective, they also appreciated the time to develop himself or herself to build resiliency and to be willing to work with students with challenging behaviors. Teacher 2 from School B shared how she was chosen to be a part of a committee:

The principal actually chose me to become part of the Social-Emotional Learning Committee. To get training on some programs, for example, Second Step. Analyzing the data of our survey, our school survey. From there, we are going to choose a plan from the questions to see how we can build on them.

Teacher 1 from School C added:

The principal allows ... a lot of time for us to grade-level plan, and I think that is very beneficial, not only for team-building but also it is accomplishing a lot at the same time, in terms of just planning and all that it entails...

Teacher 1 from School D expressed, “The principal brings the outside specialists to come and speak to us. During our faculty meeting she will discuss issues that have been happening and how we as a school can resolve them.” The same teacher also added in Q4, “We have a school psychologist who comes here once a week and have him also work with us and with the child on how we can help them.”

Also, Teacher 1 from School E shared how her principal is open to having her observe other classrooms to develop her practice:

She [the principal] is very open to you going and seeing what is going on in other classrooms. Just to see something that is different that maybe is worth a try, because everybody's class is different and every teacher's personality is different. Because of our jobs you never know what is going on in the other classrooms, that is the only way you are ever going to see, because everyone can tell you, “Well I do this, this, and this.” To me, I like to see it in action. She is open to that kind of thing.

Availability of Support Personnel - Service Through Availability. According to research conducted by Brown and Wynn (2007 & 2009), providing an “umbrella of support” especially by being available for the teacher works well in a general education classroom. Providing service as a means of support by being present and available for teachers was what the principal from School A briefly shared:

I will be in there. I will check on them. I will see if I have other resources. It could be a person to send to the room. It could be counseling, support right away. It could be having someone go to pick up the student and walk them to the library at this time or that time. Again, trying to let them know that here is what I can do to help support you....

The principal from School E shared her way of providing service through a sense of empathy as well:

I had a couple teachers that were really struggling with one student, oh my god. I just told them, bring your kids to the auditorium and I will watch them. Take a break. I created some reason why. I think I told them something about I noticed they missed a grade level meeting. Some cockamamie something. I wanted them to have a break because I could see that they were at the end of their rope.... One of the teachers had come to the lunch areas and burst into tears... She said I just cannot do it anymore. I said, just go. I got this. I got this. It's okay, just go.

Although only two principals mentioned the area of service through availability, there were several teachers, who had similar responses as shared by Teacher 2 from School A, “If ... I was dealing with an incident that happened at recess or lunch and he sees that ... he will offer to cover my class or have somebody cover my class if I need to extend my recess or lunch....”

Teacher 2 from School B shared:

I mean the principal tries to help us as much as she can.... Again, not just staying inside her office but going out with the children and talking to the parents about the children's behaviors and calling the parents if we need extra help. Letting them know about these certain behaviors that happen.

Also, Teacher 1 from School D added:

She makes ... herself available to us. If need be, she will come in and address the issue with the whole class regarding the student at hand.... She will visit the classrooms. Also, she will take a couple of students out and talk to them, and discuss the issues, or she will have one of the instructional coaches who will also counsel the students.

Caring School Community - Fostering Positive Relationships. The third category that surfaced from the responses to sub-question 1C (Q 3 & 4) suggested fostering positive relationships as a means to build resiliency and willingness among teachers who are struggling with students with challenging behaviors. According to Knight and Wadhwa (2014), resilience is best promoted through several key factors, including positive relationships with adults and mentors, by being actively engaged in a community of learners, and by sharing perspectives with one another. This theme was reinforced by the principal from School F who shared:

I try to really make sure they get their grade level time. Once a month we have “collabo-conversations.” They get to take their kids out. We extend recess by 10 minutes. I do not put an assignment up on the board. They have time to just talk. I think that we underestimate the value of teachers having time to just talk.

Teacher 2 from School A added:

We do community building at staff (meetings), like the Restorative Justice ... and sometimes our questions posed are like, what are the ... successes we had that day. It is just a time to focus maybe on something positive that happened that day as opposed to the one incident that ruined your whole day. They ... will host brunches or little snacks and things just to show their general appreciation for us.

Teacher 1 from School C emphasized the following, “I think she really tries to create that unified feeling amongst the staff and aides as well, and does a great job of letting us know that she respects us and values us, which goes a long way.”

Teacher 1 from School E added, “We have a really good staff, so there are times when there are just different kinds of parties, and the PDs.... The staff here is really close.”

To build this sense of a caring school community the administrators play a vital role in fostering positive relationships between educators.

Research Question 2 – Findings and Analysis

RQ 2. To what extent does a social-emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

Research Question 2 sought to gather principals and teachers’ perceptions regarding the effects of the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program on the classroom climate as well as on the student who displayed the challenging behaviors. The results of the interviews, classroom observations and documents will be discussed in this section. The narrative will provide a greater depth of understanding of the effects of the SEL curriculum.

This research question contained three questions on the interview protocol. Q1 simply asked what SEL programs were implemented at their school site. At some school sites, two SEL programs were in implementation so teachers were asked what program they used in their classroom. Below is the table demonstrating the programs implemented:

Table 4.4

Social-Emotional Learning Programs

Schools	SEL Programs
School A	Second Step Restorative Justice
School B	Second Step
School C	Second Step
School D	Second Step Restorative Justice – early implementation
School E	Second Step Restorative Justice
School F	MindUP

To address the research question, it was separated into two questions. Question 2 asked to what extent does the SEL program affect the classroom climate. Question 3 probed further and asked to what extent does it affect the students with challenging behaviors. The emerging categories include: (1) Coping skills; (2) Caring school community; (3) Consistent implementation; and, (4) No difference.

Capacity Building - Coping Skills. According to responses from the interviews, both teachers and principals indicated that students learn coping skills from the implementation of the SEL program. The principal from School B commented:

Well, I think it gives the other students in the class coping skills for the student with challenging behavior, because we are directly addressing behavior, and getting along. It gives you something to talk about with the other kids ... to help them understand that student. Oftentimes the other children are just as bothered as the teacher by the behavior of the student.

The principal from School C reaffirmed this point of view:

I think it helps a lot.... I think the modeling piece of it and ... they are all hearing the same message.... I think many of the children ... do not have the skills. I think we assume that they are born with the skills for conflict resolution but they are not, so they need to be explicitly taught. I think bullying is a big word, and I think Second Step helps the children to see the difference between unkind and bullying.” She also added, “The children become able to self-talk and self-regulate themselves through those programs.

Another principal from School D expressed a similar explanation regarding how students learn to reflect and ask for forgiveness after a conflict:

They actually talk about their feelings, they apologize to one another, and it seems that after a counsel, their behavior does improve. They are being nicer to one another ... it really helps them reflect on their behavior, and start thinking about why they have done it, or why they should not, and why it is an inappropriate behavior.

From a teacher's point of view, Teacher 3 from School B shared:

You can see the child applying little bits and pieces of it. The parts about calming down, rethinking something, if we try to work with the child to use some of those skills, it does tend to help a little bit to redirect them.

Teacher 1 from School E stated:

For modeling in kinder they really pick up on what is right and wrong, which is the right way, which is the wrong way. It is still hard for them and I think a lot of it is just that they are young and they don't have the school experience.

Also, both teachers from School F emphasized the importance of coping skills. Teacher 2 stated:

I think it calms them down. The whole MindUP is like using your mind, using your brain before you really do anything.... It is basically making mindful decisions, so if you push someone, was that a mindful decision? No, but if you talk to someone or using your mind to solve a problem that is a mindful thinking.... Kindergarten is a little hard because they come in kind of blank slates with school. They have come a long way and they know for sure, absolutely that hands are not for hitting and all that stuff, so we have definitely come a long way.

Caring school community. The findings from the interviews indicate that the implementation of the SEL program created a caring school community because students were excited to participate in the lessons and learned to be understanding and tolerant of the child with

challenging behaviors. According to Goleman (2006), the caring relationships that are developed between all stakeholders – staff, students, and parents promote greater student commitment, engagement, and connection to school. The participants indicated a sense of respect among the students and a decrease of office referrals. The principal from School A shared his experience with the implementation of the SEL programs at his school:

I can tell you this year we have felt a sense of less ... extreme behaviors in students, they do seem to be treating each other with a little more respect and kindness I think the atmosphere where the students are understanding. We live in a tough community. There are gangs all around.... To have them here and they are just being sweet and kind to each other here.... This year we have less referrals than we did at the beginning of last year.... Yeah, it's been positive. What I am hearing from the teachers has been positive.

He also stated, “It has made an impact in a roundabout way, because the students that are around that child with the challenging behaviors seem to be a little more understanding.”

The principal from School D shared similar sentiments, “I think it (Restorative Justice) affects in a very positive way.... just the fact that teachers let them know we are here, we care about you.... It has made a positive influence.”

The principal from School F added:

Yeah, we do Restorative Justice.... children do feel connected and part of the classroom and a team member ... Second Step has been very good.... I think it gives kind of a touchstone, and a place to talk about their feelings.

Regarding the child with challenging behaviors, she stated the following, “I don't know how much it affects the child. I think it helps the classroom tolerate the child. That is a horrible way to say it, but it helps give the classroom skills to be understanding.”

Teacher 1 from School B shared enthusiastically:

I think it makes my classroom climate ... positive, they support each other, they are positive about anything that has to do with their classmates.... If we teach Second Step ... we teach them respecting others and be happy for others, it tends to be a contagious thing.... You can hear little ones saying, "I like your coloring," or "That's such good handwriting," "Thank you." You hear, it is almost scripted but they are just repeating what you are teaching them.... They start using your language. They use the words from the program in their everyday language.

Despite the difficulty, Teacher 2 from School C had, she was able to see that her students were understanding and tolerant of the disruptive child, which contributed to a positive learning environment as was evident in her sharing:

They were very accepting, compassionate. As destructive as the classroom was, the class just kept on going The students, they kept sitting on the rug when he is destroying my classroom in the back because I kept on going. I tried not to make it into a big deal if it did not affect their safety ... but because we talked a lot about how everyone is different they respected each other. Like I said, when he would do something positive they were all like his big brother and sister where they were, "Good job," and going up to him and they were the first one, "Do you want to be my partner?" We talked about it a lot because I did not want them to be scared when he was having his moments.

Capacity Building - Consistency. Implementing the SEL program on a consistent basis was shared as critical to having a positive effect on the classroom climate, as well as building the capacity among the students and school staff. The principal from School C shared the

importance of training everyone with the SEL curriculum so that everyone would be speaking the same language:

The problem is we need to have the aides who are out on the yard involved in the Second Step. I think that is a piece that maybe as a school we need to work on because they may not be observing the lessons.... honestly, the TAs and the Special Ed aides are the ones who are out where a lot of the conflicts and the meltdowns happen, on the yard, but they are not trained.

The principal from School F stated the difference it makes when a teacher teaches it consistently and skillfully, and students know what to do:

There is a structure for how we handle Joe Schmoes when he is having a bad day. I have seen the kids just go on. It is like it's not even happening. I have seen the teacher sit there and work closely with him and really deal with the problematic behavior. The kids just continue right on as if it is not even happening.

From a teacher's standpoint, Teacher 1 from School A stated, "It's a positive.... if you are going to do it, you have to do it. If you are going to do it every Tuesday, it has got to be consistent."

Teacher 2 from School A had not seen much of an improvement because she admits to not doing it regularly:

I have not yet seen the effects ... but we have only done a few, it is the beginning of the year. I get the idea that even if Restorative Justice works, it is definitely a very long term We obviously cannot build a community in my classroom running a circle once a month. It has to be more regular or ... you need ... more time to measure that.

Teacher 3 from School B added, "If we consistently use their ideas throughout the day, eventually children do start referring to it and using some of the skills that are provided."

Teacher 2 from School F concluded:

I think it's just constant reminding her of making mindful decisions, and so if she does decide to push someone, we go back and we talk about it.... I think a lot of behavior is situational, so you do have to just refer back and just constantly have conversations about why certain rules need to be followed.

No Difference. The researcher's finding revealed that both principals and teachers judged that the SEL program was not effective for certain students with extreme challenging behaviors as noted by the principal from School A, "They just cannot control their behavior to want something and grab someone or hit someone. Again, doing a circle... there's no immediate change in behavior. It takes time."

The principal from School B echoed the previous statement, "I don't think it really has a lot of effect... No, because their behavior is beyond what that program can provide."

The principal from School D shared a sense of anger and hopelessness due to the lack of parental support for some of the most difficult students:

Those kids that are not changing, those kids that I've seen that we're not getting through, are those kids who do not have consistency or the support, and we do not have ... the parental support.... They don't have that consistency ... they don't have that supporting guidance from their parents.

The principal from School F added her sentiment about the learning gaps because the child is always sent out of the class:

Sometimes disruptive kids are far behind because they are disruptive. They are always in trouble, they are always out of the classroom, so they have gaps, learning gaps.

Sometimes that triggers their disruptive behavior. Then what happens when you add

MindUP to that ... is yet another gap, another learning gap. They have not acquired those skills. They do not know what to do. They cannot stop and breathe.... It's a habit of mind.

It is effective to an extent, but it is not effective the way it is with the whole class.

Teacher 2 from School A expressed her concern over the fact that the child does not participate and therefore it cannot affect him, "It requires participating in one of the circles, the student was out of the circle, he refused to come sit because he was angry about something, so he was not participating in that circle."

Teacher 1 from School A added, "This particular child it does not affect. It only affects the child if he is able to participate in the actual lesson.... You have to listen to the lesson."

Teacher 2 from School C shared similar views:

No, I do not think it did because he was going through so much internal struggles himself that even though it was geared towards him, he was not listening. He did not care. Just the fact that he did not want to be at school, he did not want to see or hear anything, which was frustrating....

Teacher 1 from School D stated:

He is a good listener. He will go through all the role play and do what is there and then a few minutes later what we are trying to work on with him, he just forgets and goes back with the issues that he's having trouble with, with the touching the other students and not respecting their circle and his impulsiveness.... We have to go back and reteach it with him.

Classroom Observations During an SEL Lesson

The researcher conducted eight classroom observations to collect data on how the student with challenging behaviors responded to the SEL lesson, how the rest of the class responded to

the lesson and to the disruptive student, as well as how the teacher responded to that student with challenging behaviors. Most importantly, the researcher was looking to see if the SEL lesson was successful in creating an effective classroom climate.

The researcher observed first grade Teacher 2 from School A facilitating a Restorative Justice circle. It was apparent that the teacher had been doing these circles for a while because her routines and procedures were in place, as well as her classroom management system. The students knew exactly what to do and the lesson flowed smoothly. The particular student that was being observed did not disrupt the classroom during the lesson. However, once the lesson was over and the students transitioned back to their seats, his disruptive behavior became apparent. However, the teacher used classroom management strategies as well as her proximity to control his impulsivity and disruptive behavior.

This was not the case with kindergarten Teacher 1 from School E who also had an assistant in her class. The transition to the rug took a while and going over the guidelines for a Restorative Justice circle took longer than it should. The students were not engaged. It was difficult to point out which student was the disruptive one. It was apparent that the teacher did not have an effective classroom management system in place. The disruptions in her class were not conducive to an effective SEL lesson.

Kindergarten Teacher 2 from the same school was teaching a Second Step lesson. In this case, it was apparent that she had been doing these lessons on a regular basis. All the students responded to her questions and prompts accordingly. Although the student with challenging behaviors was not in attendance that day, it was obvious that the SEL lesson was conducive to creating an effective classroom climate. All students were well-behaved and engaged before,

during and after the lesson. This could also be attributed to the teacher's behavior management strategies.

Kindergarten Teacher 1 from School D also conducted a Second Step lesson with the student with challenging behaviors present. The student was impulsive and could not sit still, but his behaviors did not impede the teacher from implementing an effective lesson. Most of the classroom observations mirrored this one.

However, there were two classroom observations where students with challenging behaviors were extremely disruptive. In School F, second grade Teacher 1 was conducting a MindUP lesson. As the rest of the class had their eyes closed and were concentrating on their breathing, the particular student was at his seat making crashing noises with all the pencils, erasers, and paperclips he could find. He refused to sit on the rug with the rest of the class. Although his behaviors were loud and disruptive, the rest of the class seemed to ignore him. They were concentrating and responding to the teacher's cues. It was as if students learned to ignore the noises to concentrate on the teacher. In this case, the MindUP program had a positive effect on the classroom, but not on that particular student because he refused to participate.

At School B, the kindergarten teacher also conducted a Second Step lesson. The class was seated on the rug, but the particular student was seated at his desk with an assistant. Once the teacher started the lesson, it was time for the assistant to leave. The student struggled to come to the rug and once he was there, he started tapping the students near to him, saying "knock-knock." The class ignored his behavior including the ones that were being touched. The longer he was ignored, the louder he became, thus making it more difficult for the teacher to teach and for the students to hear her. The teacher eventually stopped to redirect him with positive reinforcement. As soon as she continued with her lesson, he started lying on the rug and

putting his bottom up in the air and yelling out inappropriate language. The disruption became louder and louder. Within 10 minutes, the teacher called the office and immediately a substitute RSP teacher came in to work with the student in back of the class. However, throughout the lesson, despite the student's disruption, the rest of the class was well-behaved and looking at the teacher while trying to respond to her lesson. Once again, the SEL lesson seemed to be effective with the rest of the class except with the one student with challenging behaviors.

Document Review

The documents collected during the study consisted of daily and weekly behavior progress monitoring charts, which the teacher sends home daily or weekly for the parents to sign and return. Teacher 1 from School B provided the researcher with a copy of the Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA) report that was to be used at the upcoming IEP. It described in detail all the behaviors the student displayed throughout the day, as well as the strategies the teacher utilized to respond to those behaviors. Many pictures were taken of the SEL charts and posters that reinforce the positive behavior, which contribute to a positive classroom climate.

Summary of Findings

In conclusion, based on the teachers' and principals' perspectives from semi-structured interviews and critical incident reports, there are some significant factors that can be characterized as support systems for teachers who are struggling with students with challenging behaviors. In addition, the classroom observations and document reviews provides insight on the effectiveness of an SEL program on the classroom climate with a student with challenging behaviors. The conclusion is based on evidence from the findings of this study, summarized in the following paragraph in this section.

The findings of this study indicated that it is critical for principals to have enough support personnel available and to have lines of communication open and available to support teachers who are struggling with students with challenging behaviors. The findings also indicate that building capacity through coaching and mentoring, as well as through professional development, provides support to teachers, allowing them to be better equipped to work with these types of student behaviors. Additionally, it is significant that the principal establishes a caring school community by fostering positive relationships through empathy and encouragement, including parental involvement. Regarding the effectiveness of an SEL program, it is critical that it be implemented consistently in the classroom and throughout the school where everyone is trained and speaking the same language. An effective SEL program has a positive effect for most of the students, where they learn coping skills and tolerance. An effective learning environment is enhanced by those teachers with strong classroom management strategies while those teachers with weak classroom management skills not only exacerbate the behavior problems in the classroom, they also inhibit the continuity of the instructional program. Unfortunately, there was no evidence that the implementation of an SEL program affected students with challenging behaviors.

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the current study, which includes an overview of the problem, purpose statement, research questions, methodology used, and summary of major findings. Following the introduction, the discussion section will provide an analysis of the findings. After the analysis section are the implications for policy and practice, followed by suggestions for future research. The conclusion ends this chapter.

The primary goal of this study included developing an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the factors that shape leadership practices when supporting teachers with students with challenging behaviors. In addition, this study sought to explore whether the implementation of an SEL program had an impact on the classroom climate with the student with challenging behaviors. The key findings summarized here will be discussed through the lens of a social-emotional leader. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the practical components of the study, including its limitations and its implications for policy and practice in the field of educational leadership, a summary, and recommendations for future study.

Summary of the Problem

Teachers are leaving the field of education due to the many stress factors involved in teaching (Billingsley, 2004; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Gebbie, Ceglowski, Taylor, & Miels, 2011; Hughes, 2012). The budget reductions in the last decade have led to a lack of school resources and adult support in the classrooms for teachers trying to manage and educate students. According to a finance survey done by the Legislative Analyst's Office (2012), responses indicated that California schools had experienced notable changes as a result of the recent

recession, including a reduced workforce, larger class sizes, shorter school years, and less extensive programmatic offerings (EdSource, 2012). Having students in the classroom with challenging behaviors adds to the teachers' stress levels. In addition, when the teacher has to manage and discipline such students, learning is negatively affected and robs the teacher of valuable instructional time (Gottfried & Harven, 2014; Nooruddin & Gaig, 2014). This loss of instructional time and lack of resources, in addition to the stress that is produced by the frequent disruption, negatively affects students' academic achievement (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2003).

To retain teachers in the profession and to protect the instructional program when there is a child with challenging behaviors, a principal's support is critical. The manner in which school principals collaborate with staff to support each other's efforts is essential to the school's success. To confront the difficulties presented by students with challenging behaviors, school principals must work with all stakeholders within the school community to identify and address not only the target behaviors of the student but the social-emotional well-being of the teacher and the rest of the class. The problem of practice investigated in this study is the gap in the literature in examining the social-emotional factors of administrative support for teachers who have had successful careers, but due to the severity of challenging student behaviors in their classrooms, are now electing to leave because they are frustrated and burned out. This research investigated the experiences and insights of teachers and principals to determine effective school leadership practices to support the teachers who are working with students with challenging behaviors. The design of the research instrumentation and protocols used in this study signaled an attempt to gain a better understanding of how teachers and principals perceive administrative support

towards their teachers when confronted with a student with challenging behaviors, as well as the effectiveness of an SEL program within their classroom dynamics.

Research questions

1. What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?
 - a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging students' behaviors in the classroom?
 - b. What specific characteristics of "administrative support" do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
 - c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. To what extent does a social-emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

The concept of Social-Emotional Intelligence (SEI) is explained by Cherniss, Extein, Goleman, and Weissberg (2006); it refers to the competencies linked to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. SEI enables people to understand and manage their own and others' emotions in social interactions. SEL, on the other hand, is defined as the process of obtaining a set of social-emotional skills, which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills. These are acquired within the framework of a safe, supportive environment that encourages social, emotional, and cognitive development and provides opportunities for practicing social-

emotional skills (Cherniss et al., 2006; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Payton et al., 2008).

Social-emotional leadership refers to leaders who are actively involved with keeping the morale of their group at a high level through alleviating fears, mediating arguments, reducing tension, and settling disagreements. The practice of social-emotional leadership is to make sure that he/she is regularly positive, genuine, and energetic; and that their subordinates feel and act that way, too. These types of interactions can create a climate for learning where all stakeholders take steps to become more emotionally self-aware and socially intelligent (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001).

Review of the Methodology

A qualitative multi-case methodology was utilized for this study, which sought an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded social phenomenon based on extensive data collection (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Creswell, 2014). This qualitative design explored factors that shaped administrative leadership practices when confronted with teachers who were overwhelmed with students in their classroom exhibiting challenging behaviors. This study also explored whether teachers and administrators believed the implementation of a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program was effective in creating a positive classroom climate with the challenges of a disruptive student. The elements of this study created a lens through which the researcher gained a greater understanding of the perceptions of teachers and principals.

By using a multi-case study, multiple identities were described in detail to classify emerging themes, patterns, and issues within each case followed by a thematic analysis across cases (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). A multi-case study was appropriate because cases were described and compared to provide insight into an issue (Creswell, 2014).

The study's participants included six elementary school principals and 12 K-2 teachers at six elementary schools located in a community in Southern California. The elementary school sites were specifically identified with the focus on kindergarten through second grade where students with challenging behaviors had been identified but had yet to experience or finalize the IEP process. All participants completed a questionnaire prior to the semi-structured interviews. Eight out of the 12 teachers agreed to a classroom observation and submitted documents for review, and only five participants returned the critical incident reports.

This qualitative analysis included the utilization of a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, document review, and critical incident reports that were designed to collect teachers and principals' perspectives on factors that shaped leadership practices when confronted with teachers who were overwhelmed with students in their classrooms exhibiting challenging behaviors. This study also investigated whether the implementation of an SEL program was effective in creating a positive classroom climate with a student with challenging behaviors. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed. Data from semi-structured interviews were tape recorded and sent to a transcription service. Additionally, field notes from classroom observations were recorded and analyzed. The themes that emerged from the data were coded and aligned in relation to each of the research questions.

Triangulation of four data collection methods was employed, including individual interviews, classroom observations, critical incident reports, and document review. Credibility and dependability were accounted for through various strategies, including source and method triangulation. Data sources through documents and artifacts were a critical part of the data collection process for this study (Glesne, 2016, p. 220). The researcher collected, copied, and categorized the documents and artifacts to answer the research questions and deepen her

understanding of how they contributed to the knowledge of leadership practices that support teachers. By copying and collecting these documents, the researcher gained insight into how teachers respond to these challenging student behaviors.

Summary of Findings

The following conclusions were made after exploring the findings related to administrative support for teachers with students with challenging behaviors based on each research question as described in Chapter 4:

1. What factors shape school principal practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?

For principals to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in the general education K-2 grade classrooms, principals need to build capacity through coaching and mentoring, be available to respond to the needs of teachers, and to increase the parental involvement for the students with challenging behaviors.

1a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging students' behaviors in the classroom?

To respond effectively to teachers' needs, so that teachers can respond effectively to students' challenging behaviors in the classroom, principals need the following supports: availability of resources to respond immediately to the needs of others and professional development to build their teachers' capacities, as well as their own.

1b. What specific characteristics of "administrative support" do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom?

Building capacity through coaching and mentoring, and having a positive school climate through empathy, encouragement, and an open-door policy are characteristics of administrative support that teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors in the classroom.

1c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors in the classroom?

A social-emotional leader affects teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors in the classroom by building their capacity through coaching and mentoring, providing service by being present and available, and by creating a positive school climate by fostering positive relationships.

2. To what extent does a social emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

An SEL program positively affects the classroom climate and builds capacity in students by teaching them coping skills, as well as resilience, if it is done consistently. However, the findings show that an SEL program did not make a difference with those students who had severe challenging behaviors.

Conclusion 1 - building capacity

A close examination of the responses from most of the principals and teachers revealed that building the capacity of the teachers through coaching and mentoring, as well as through professional development, was a common thread that was evident in all the research questions. Therefore, it can be said that an element of administrative support for teachers is building

capacity through coaching and mentoring, which positively affects teachers' efficacy, resilience, and willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors in the K-2 classrooms.

Looking at building capacity through the lens of a social-emotional leader, one needs to have a high degree of self-awareness with a solid understanding of his/her emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and motivations. They recognize how their feelings impact them and others around them, including their performance at work. They understand their values and goals and where they are going in life (Deutschendorf, 2015). Furthermore, a social-emotional leader must have strong relationship-management skills. These leaders not only have the ability to influence, guide, and handle other people's emotions, but they inspire, influence, coach, and mentor, as well as use conflict management and facilitate teamwork (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001).

According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), leaders must develop the competence and confidence of their constituents, in this case the teachers, so that they can become more qualified, capable, and effective. By building the teachers' self-confidence, leaders are building the teachers' inner strength to charge ahead in uncharted terrain, to make tough choices, and to face opposition, because they believe in their skills and decision-making abilities. Therefore, as the school leader, the principal needs to coach and mentor the teachers through constructive feedback, probing questions, and active teaching. The principals should be available to offer advice and counsel as people apply what they have learned in real-time situations. This was affirmed by Principal D who stated:

I want to make sure that they know that they are not alone. We talk about strategies...

What can you do in the classroom? Okay, maybe a behavior chart... Mentoring the teacher, mentoring the aide, and talking and looking into different strategies. How to help the child is another way...I support the teacher.

Teacher 2 from School C stated:

The principal and the assistant principal were always there to advise me. Every time I had a question, “What do I need to do? What is the right thing to do? Legally, what am I supposed to do?” They always had the knowledge and told me legally what my responsibilities were.

Teacher 2 from School E shared her desire for more coaching through the feedback cycle, similar to an observation during the evaluation process:

None of the administrators really spent a long enough time in the room to know what we were doing in response to the kids ... some sort of a feedback cycle would be really helpful This is what I am seeing and this is where you need to be, so maybe you could try or what do you think you could try?

However, it was found that principals need more professional development to respond to the teachers’ needs and teachers stated that they needed more professional development to respond to the students with challenging behaviors in their classrooms. Those teachers that did receive professional development and personalized assistance from a behaviorist did acknowledge their ability to work with the students’ challenging behaviors. Overall, the teachers and principals stated that they needed additional research-based professional development focusing on useful strategies to use to respond to students with challenging behaviors. Principal C was a strong advocate for more professional development as she stated:

I would like to see more generalized support. We have to do all these modules about Common Core and NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards), but never is there a module written and delivered regarding behavior modification, how to change behaviors. She continued with frustration:

We need a whole bag of strategies that fits each child. Sometimes the strategy works, then it does not, and then we need to look for something else. No one in the district has given us that bag, and when I've asked for it they cite bulletins or tell me to go look at this book, but I would really like some practical strategies that work in the classroom.

Although the principal believed she needed more training, her teacher trusted that the principal knew what to do, as Teacher 2 from the same school stated:

When he's hurting himself ... I did not know what I was supposed to do. I was not trained to touch him or physically restrain him. That is when they said, "Just call the office."

That's what was so important, is because I was not trained and...the administrator was trained, they were able to take over and physically remove him if he was tearing down my classroom.

Teacher 1 from School F also felt inadequate in her ability to work with students with challenging behaviors as she stated:

We have a lot of tools in our belt... I had never had, in all my years of teaching, had a student of that extreme... As a teacher, I did not have that training....so it was a little shocking to me. Even though I had heard about children who act out like this, I had never had one until that year.

Based on the literature review, Prather-Jones (2011) stated that although it is necessary to send teachers for training, it is important to provide them with time to collaborate and provide mentors to those that need one. Mentorship can provide teachers with needed support when they are working with challenging students. In a study by Huisman et al. (2010), mentoring was characterized through empathy for others, giving advice, and sharing materials. One teacher in Huisman et al. (2010) study stated, "...I was able to share experiences with them and see if they

were having similar experiences and kind of brainstorm on how to handle those situations.” Not only did teachers connect with other professionals for advice and support, they felt as if they belonged to a group with similar challenges, and therefore, did not feel isolated. Cozolino and Sprokay (2006) suggested that we all need others to show interest in us, help us feel safe, and encourage our understanding of the world. As with factors that build resiliency and characteristics of administrative support, the attention of a caring mentor may support the ability for more meaningful learning experience for the teacher or the student.

Lastly, consistently implementing an SEL program in the classroom, builds capacity in students by teaching them coping skills. This means that as students are taught effective social-emotional skills, which include: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills; they are better able to understand, cope with, and tolerate the students with challenging behaviors in their classroom. In other words, students become resilient over time. As Teacher 2 from School E stated:

It helped some of the kids.... I do not know that it helped the troubled kids, but I think it helped the other kids who were having to deal with it. When I was talking to my therapist she was saying, “You know, they're all stressed.” It is like the room of stressed out [kids] ... they were hearing someone screaming obscenities all day too. They never knew when something was going to come flying across the room and hit them in the head. They were in that same kind of crazy atmosphere, which is not what your classroom is supposed to be. I think some of that calming down and self-talk [strategies], I think that was really good for them.

Therefore, students built capacity amongst themselves as characterized through tolerance of others and being able to cope with the stresses in the classroom environment. According to

Berkowicz and Myers (2015), students are better prepared to learn when they are able to be present, and give their whole attention to the learning experience.

Conclusion 2 – availability of resources

In evaluating the responses to the research questions, it was apparent that both principals and teachers strongly suggested that the availability of resources was critical to respond to the needs of others. This response was a common factor and availability of resources was considered a necessity that shaped school principal practices to support and respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding students with challenging behaviors in the classroom. These resources included having a behaviorist, school psychologist, and/or a psychiatric social worker available at the school site, as well as having a teacher's assistant in the classroom. From the teachers' perspective, they also wanted the comfort of knowing that the school administrator was available, especially during a crisis. Although the teachers understood how busy a school principal could be, there was a sense of frustration from the teachers when they shared that many times their principal could not address their immediate needs because they were already dealing with something else. The principals also shared their frustration in that they did not have the necessary resources to support the teacher, they did not know what else to do for the child when parents were not forthcoming and supportive, and they were just as frustrated with the time-consuming process of getting the student mental-health services. Principals and teachers both agreed that the district office has to do a better job of providing the necessary resources to the school in a timely manner. Once again, those teachers who received support from a behaviorist or where students were already in the IEP process seemed to be more positive and hopeful about their situation.

Based on the responses to the interview questions, the characteristics of a social-emotional leader that positively affected teachers' resilience and willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors in the classroom was having the administrator as a resource who provided service to others by being present and available. The principal having an open-door policy where teachers would come into the office and talk characterized this. Most importantly, the principal listened to the teachers and empathized with them. Being available also meant that the principal responded promptly to the teachers' calls in times of crisis by talking to the student and parent. This included the principals' willingness to take the child and/or take over the class so that the teacher could take a break. These actions demonstrated that the principal cared enough to listen and provide needed services to the teachers. The teachers did not feel alone in their struggles. Based on the literature review, Cancio and Conderman (2008) stated that when teachers are not able to manage a student with problem behaviors they should feel secure that support is available and will be readily provided by school leaders. For example, when teachers ask for assistance with a disruptive student, they report that they need it immediately, not in 20 minutes. This was evident in this research study when Teacher 1 from School F shared,

“... when I have had students who are physically out of control, they come right away...

They will observe the child for a few minutes to see if that behavior's still going on.”

Teacher 2 from School C also stated:

I'm a phone call away from either ...the administration, they responded very quickly...There were times where I was worried for my safety but I know that administration would always be there. I did feel safe at the same time.

In the context of social-emotional leadership, this demonstrates that the leader shows they care by being empathic, compassionate, and understanding, which is characterized by being available and present to meet the teacher's needs. The leader also has sound social skills because they can resolve conflicts by removing the student, talking to the parents, and/or giving the teacher a break from his/her classroom responsibilities. These types of leaders set the example with their own behavior. All in all, effective leaders have a solid understanding of how their emotions and actions affect the people around them. The better a leader relates to and works with others, the more successful they will be (retrieved from <https://www.mindtools.com>).

This was evident by Teacher 1 from School F, who confirmed in her response that her principal is a social-emotional leader by being present and empathetic:

I think when there's empathy, and "the principal" really... saw that I was very frustrated and almost afraid of that one particular child. She was there, and she gets it. Just to have her say, "It's tough." There was one day she even said to me, because I was so upset, she said, "Why don't you go home? Let me take over your class."

Conclusion 3 – parental involvement

The importance of parental support and involvement was a common response to the research question as a factor that shaped school principal practices in supporting teachers with students with challenging behaviors. Unfortunately, both principals and teachers shared their frustrations in Chapter 4 regarding the lack of parental support when it related to the specific students with challenging behaviors. Principal C stated:

I feel that we really need to work as a team...because many times the parents are not involved and this is why we are where we are. Not all, but many... parents were not

involved.... We can't write these young kids off, and this is the time that we can change behaviors.

Teacher 1 from School B stated:

I think that it is so, so important to try to understand where they are coming from...

What seems to be the problem, and talk to the parents ... finding out what works for you, how do you do it. I just love when you have all these behaviors and you talk to the parent, "It doesn't happen at home at all." Wow, really?

Teacher 1 from School C was extremely passionate as she shared her frustration:

I think contacting the parents and being very specific, and relaying what happened...

They cannot just close the door and say "well, it happened on school time." ...because parents, they want to chalk it up to "oh, not my so and so," "my Bobby would never do that." Well, guess what? Your Bobby is doing that, so let's talk about it....

Unfortunately, the way it goes is, parents, they don't want to call it what it is, and then they hear it from the first-grade teacher, and then they hear it from the second grade teacher, and by third grade, they go "oh my gosh, there is a problem here," and then the ship has sailed. We have had four years now of the misbehavior... and nothing is going to change. I think it's imperative that it starts with the little ones, like the kinders.

Based on the responses above and those described in Chapter 4, there is a sense of frustration because the principals and teachers see a need to help the child, but without the support of the parents, they feel as if their hands are tied. It is evident that there is a disconnect between the school and the parents. Unfortunately, the one who suffers is the child because he/she is not receiving the necessary supports. It was apparent that the frustration voiced by the principals and teachers is because there is not an immediate solution to the problem. Everyone's

world is being disrupted and the process to control the situation is time-consuming. The school wants the parents to solve the problem and it seems that the parents drop off their child at school relying on the school to make a positive change in their child. This also means that in K-2, some parents are reluctant for assessment for special education services. Parents may be in denial that there is a problem or may not want their child labeled. Therefore, it is critical that the school continues to build the home-to-school connection based on relational trust.

In looking at parental support through the lens of a social-emotional leader, leaders are individuals who can manage their own emotions, stay calm in stressful situations, and create an environment of trust between the school and home. In addition, leaders are successful in motivating others and are not easily discouraged (O'Brien & Resnik, 2009). Furthermore, the emotionally intelligent leader is most likely to build relational trust between themselves and the parents (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Therefore, it seems that principals and teachers would benefit from additional training to address the parents of students with challenging behaviors to be able to better work together. Furthermore, the caring relationships that are developed between all stakeholders – staff, students, and parents will promote greater student commitment, engagement, and connection to school (Goleman, 2006).

Conclusion 4 – school climate

The findings of this study suggest administrative support is characterized by empathy, encouragement, and by providing an open-door policy to positively affect teacher's efficacy and willingness to work with students' challenging behaviors in the classroom. Based on the literature review, Prather-Jones (2011) stated that by listening to the teacher's input about their students and acknowledging the teachers for their work was how the teacher felt respected and appreciated.

Empathy is an important aspect of a social-emotional leader who is aware of the feelings of others and considers those feelings in their words and actions. In other words, the social-emotional leader is aware and takes into consideration the impact on others. They are willing to share their own worries and concerns and openly acknowledge other's emotions (Deutschendorf, 2015). Teacher 2 from School C was reminded to be empathetic by her principal:

There were times where I'm like, "You know what, this kid is driving me crazy and I don't know what to do. I cannot do anything anymore for him." She would remind me to just be empathetic of the parent that adopted this child and for the child who was going through all these struggles. I lost touch of that when he was being explosive like this every second of the day.

The teachers also appreciated the encouragement they received from their principal and the fact that the principal was always available to listen by having an open-door policy. Social-emotional leaders who keep an open line of communication help build people's strengths, with hope that doing so may also improve their areas of weaknesses. They help people open their eyes to find balance and virtue, and ultimately help them feel good about themselves (Alloro, 2008). From the literature review, Albrecht et al. (2009) stated that daily support and an open line of communication (not just during a crisis phase) were cited as significant factors for teacher satisfaction and their intent to stay in the profession. Administrators need to be aware of what specific conditions are necessary to provide targeted support to these teachers.

The findings also suggest that the characteristics of a social-emotional leader were found in a positive school climate where administrators fostered positive relationships that affect teachers' resilience and willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors in the classroom. According to Bird et al. (2012), principals with strong self-awareness, who openly

relates to staff, formulates sound decisions, and demonstrates moral integrity, had higher levels of teacher trust and engagement. Teacher 2 from School B shared the importance of having a good relationship with the principal:

Probably just having a good relationship with your principal and knowing that you can speak to her. Because there are some principals that are hard to talk to...If you build a relationship with your principal, then it builds better and it is a much more comfortable environment to work in if she understands you.

According to Deutschendorf (2015), a social-emotional leader also has a high degree of social-skills to relate and find common ground with a wide range of people. They are excellent team players as they have the ability to move an agenda along and keep focus while at the same time remaining aware of the emotional climate of the group, and possessing the ability to respond to it. The social-emotional leader is excellent at making connections, networking, and bringing people together to work on projects. According to Collie et al. (2012), teachers experience a satisfying and supportive work environment when they collaborate with other teachers that result in healthy relationships. Effective school principals promote a positive school climate that fosters collaboration among all stakeholders and serve as instructional leaders who support professional development.

Lastly, by implementing an SEL program in the classroom, a positive classroom climate is established in which students learn to cope and to tolerate the students with challenging behaviors. According to the principals, the fact that the program is implemented consistently from classroom to classroom school-wide and on a regular basis, benefits the school through a decrease in office referrals. Based on the teachers' responses, students seem to be able to use the same language and there is a sense of increased respect and kindness towards one another. This

study confirms what Goleman (2006) proposed, that Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs improve student attitudes, behavior, and school climate, which improve students' school success.

Conclusion 5 – no difference

Although the implementation of an SEL program positively affected the school and classroom climate when implemented consistently, there was no evidence that it affected students with challenging behaviors. According to the principals and teachers, the students were not influenced by the lessons for various reasons. Students were usually out of the classroom during the SEL lesson because of their disruptive behaviors or they were “eloping,” meaning that they were escaping the instructional area or even the classroom setting. In other circumstances, these students chose not to participate. In some cases, according to Teacher 1 from School D, his student participated, but as soon as the lesson was over, the student continued with the negative behaviors:

He's a good listener. He'll go through all the role play and do what is there and then a few minutes later what we are trying to work on with him, he just forgets and goes back with the issues that he is having trouble with, with the touching ... other students and not respecting their circle and his impulsiveness ... We have to go back and reteach it with him.

It seems that for some of the more extreme behaviors, a higher level of intervention needs to be implemented as in the case with Teacher 2 from School C:

He was going through so many internal struggles himself that even though it (lesson) was geared towards him, he was not listening. He did not care. Just the fact that he did not want to be at school, he did not want to see or hear anything, which was frustrating... For him not to have an explosive outburst he would be playing with Legos at his desk.

However, that is not to say that the teachers give up on their students. Teachers need to continually teach the lessons, but begin to take the next steps towards a more structured intervention program. In some cases, comprehensive social-emotional evaluations of the students may have taken place, but confidentiality requirements prevented the researcher's having access to such information.

Validity and Limitations

The research study was limited to six elementary schools located in the northern area of the Sunshine Unified School District. The demographics varied among each school with two of the selected sites identified as high performing. A total of 18 participants including six principals and 12 teachers were involved in this study. Their views and actions were documented through semi-structured interviews, observations, and critical incident reports. Thus, the study excluded viewpoints of parents, of school staff, or of educators in other types of settings. Additionally, this study was also limited to three specific SEL programs at the six school sites. Other SEL programs may have had other results.

A limitation of this study was that it only followed administrators and teachers in the first semester of the school year due to the time frame for this research. It is possible that the participants' responses would be different at the completion of the school year.

Another limitation was that the principals recommended teachers to participate in this study. It is possible that teachers' responses would be different had they volunteered to participate rather than being recommended by the principal.

Conclusion

The purpose of this leadership study was twofold. First, the study examined administrative support for teachers who were struggling with students with challenging

behaviors. Second, the study investigated whether the implementation of an SEL program affected the classroom climate with the students with challenging behaviors. Specifically, the study utilized the conceptual framework of a social-emotional leader to identify characteristics of effective administrative support. The results and findings of this study included responses from teachers who felt frustrated because they struggled to maintain satisfactory classroom instruction while also dealing with a student with challenging behaviors.

Although there were many examples of administrative support, there were particular types of support that were more prominent than others. However, one finding was noticeable throughout the interviews, but not a focus of any research question. The importance of having systems and/or procedures in place was voiced by four teachers and three principals. For example, Teacher 2 from School A shared her point of view:

I would like there to be a system in place that ... that there is a specific person that I call or a backup, and I know that person is going to respond a certain way and the student and the parents are aware of that. Then also, there's a system in place with the district, some type of, if this student has had three to five incidents, then something is put in place that is sort of more long term. Then again ... if there is a pattern of this behavior ... stronger consequences are put in place ... I know it's not an easy solution, and I want it to be fair, but I think that there just needs to be something more specific in place that all the parties involved know what that is ... Clear expectations that not just that student is legally protected, but my classroom is, that my other students are, and that I am.

Nevertheless, having systems and/or procedures should be addressed to provide transparency and understanding of school expectations and consequences.

In conclusion, this study found that the social-emotional leader provides administrative support through coaching and mentoring, professional development, parental involvement, being empathetic, encouraging and having an open-door policy. Overall, it was found that the social-emotional leaders build capacity among their teachers, and through their social awareness and relationship management, they create a positive school climate. As a result, these dynamics help build teacher's self-efficacy, resilience, and willingness to work with students with challenging behaviors. The implementation of an SEL program on a regular basis contributes to a positive classroom climate where students become resilient as they learn coping skills, tolerance, and understanding. Lastly, students' decision-making skills are enhanced in the SEL program, which has a positive effect on their behavior. However, this study found that even with the implementation of an SEL program the behavior of the targeted student did not change.

Summary

This research explored administrative support for K-2 grade teachers who were struggling with the challenging behaviors of students at six elementary schools. In addition, this research examined the effectiveness of the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program in those classrooms with a student with challenging behaviors. This research looked at administrative support through the lens of a social-emotional leader, which encompasses the following four components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001).

The literature review suggested that challenging behaviors are dependent upon the perspectives of the teachers and how prepared teachers were able to work with students with challenging behaviors. Based on the study, the participants described in detail their experiences with the variety of challenging behaviors exhibited by students in their classrooms and on the

schoolyard. The principals and teachers shared in their responses that although they had many years of experience, they were not prepared to deal effectively with the variety of challenges these students exhibited in their classrooms. Teachers and principals were frustrated with the amount of time lost on instruction because of the behavior of one student, but more specifically, both groups were frustrated with their lack of experience in dealing with the emotional ups and downs of a single child. They both judged that they needed more training in behavior management, as well as the expert support from district resources such as a behaviorist, school psychologist, and a psychiatric social worker.

In the literature review, having administrative support that teachers found to be immediate and targeted was helpful in reducing the teacher attrition rate. This was evident in this study as teachers characterized administrative support through coaching and mentoring, as well as more professional development in behavior management. The desire for immediate support was a common thread demonstrated by the administrator's availability in times of crisis to handle the student's behavior, to communicate with the parent, or to provide the teacher with a break. From the principal's point of view, the district needed to be more timely in terms of providing support personnel, expediting the process to get the necessary services for the child, and working with the students' parents.

Qualities of a social-emotional leader permeated the interviews with the teachers. Teachers recognized that their principals were available and accountable. Teachers appreciated hearing words of encouragement from their principals, having open lines of communication in which the principal listened and empathized, and knowing that the principal recognized their efforts were constructive despite the behavioral challenges of some students. Reciprocally, the principals believed that listening to the teachers' concerns, removing the child to give the teacher

and the class a break from inappropriate student behavior, and providing mentoring was of some value. Yet, in many cases the principals recognized that their efforts were superficial until more appropriate services were provided by the district.

From research studies in the literature review there are suggestions for interventions such as positive behavior support and SEL programs, such as Second Step, MindUP, and Restorative Justice as interventions that can be used in the classroom. These interventions can reduce the problematic behaviors and possibly increase not only the students' resilience but also the resilience of the teachers working with students with challenging behaviors. The findings of this study indicate that SEL programs improve the classroom climate because they teach students coping skills, which helps build their capacity and resilience when their peers poor behaviors are demonstrated. Teachers witnessed students using the language and behaviors taught in the SEL lessons, and the principals saw an improvement in school-wide behaviors based on the decrease in office referrals. However, based on the findings of this study, SEL lessons did nothing to reduce the problematic actions of those students with challenging behaviors.

To reduce teachers' attrition due to the many stress factors involved in teaching, specifically those issues concerning students with challenging behaviors, the findings of this study become even more relevant. For those teachers who are frustrated and burned out from the severity of challenging student behaviors in their classrooms, being provided administrative support by a social-emotional leader may offset their desire to leave the profession.

Implications for Policy and Practice

One implication for policy and practice in elementary schools is for the district to take a closer look at providing the schools with sufficient funds and resources for students who may need more individual attention, including: counseling, mental health services, and intensive drop-

out prevention programs. The district should take a closer look at the school allocations for PSW and school psychologist time, as well as other mental-health services. According to EdSource (2012), school counselors are decreasing in K-12 schools in California at the same time as school officials report that students, especially those from economically distressed households, are likely to need more help. Therefore, more and more schools do not have the personnel, financial, or programmatic resources to provide the necessary services for students to succeed. This leaves the teacher feeling stressed, frustrated, inadequate, and perhaps, thinking about leaving the profession.

It is also recommended that the district take a closer look at the student demographics of K-2 classrooms as the dynamics have changed considerably during the past decade. The dynamics are very different now. There are growing numbers of students with a variety of unidentified disabilities, including serious social-emotional issues that call for additional and immediate assistance from the district. Principals and teachers have the expertise to deal with the day-to-day issues in a classroom and on the school site. They do not have the expertise and/or training to deal with the variety of emotional and behavioral issues that students bring to the classroom. The long-term student behavior issues that impact instructional programs demand more resources than the teachers and principals have access to. Until these resources become imbedded in the structure/organization of the school, classroom management and content instruction will be affected because the educational and emotional needs of a student not being addressed stops the teacher's delivery of instruction for the remaining students.

A new PACE report shows that SEL and school Culture/Climate (CC) can help leaders better understand and improve students and school achievement. Policy makers, educators, and the broader public increasingly agree that students' development of social-emotional skills is

important for success in academic and life outcomes. Research provides evidence that schools can facilitate development of these skills, both directly and through the implementation of policies and practices that improve a school's culture and climate and promote positive relationships (EDCAL, 2017). Therefore, the district should provide training for all teachers and administrators, with SEL programs on site. Otherwise, the program components will be interpreted differently from teacher to teacher and school to school. A school principal cannot expect teachers to know how to develop social-emotional skills in children. If we expect teachers to know how to help children develop their social-emotional skills, we must offer them training, experience, and support. There has to be a guarantee that all students are receiving this type of learning through shared understanding and values that influence the practices of all who work and operate within the school setting. Everyone should learn how to teach and model social-emotional skills. Offering teachers support in their learning is a vital first step (Berkowicz & Myers, 2015).

Lastly, the findings revealed that principals and teachers should receive research-based, quality professional development to: help them identify and understand the genesis of student behavior issues earlier, offer suggestions about changing classroom management procedures that ensure continuity of instruction as well as meeting the needs of the behaviorally challenged student, inform them of behavior intervention strategies necessary for the immediate resolution of a student's behavior issues, and educate them on procedures for special education services. Parents should be included in decision-making regarding their children. And, like school staff, they may lack the expertise to be able to identify and deal with the emotional and behavioral issues of their children. Therefore, that personnel with the expertise should work with both the school staff and the parents to identify and resolve the emotional and behavioral issues of the

child early on to ensure academic success. Sensitivity training should be included to demonstrate how to build relational trust with parents, especially with parents of students with challenging behaviors. In conclusion, more professional development is needed to meet the needs of the diverse student population, especially students with challenging behaviors.

Recommendations for Future Research

While the overall focus of the study was on the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding administrative support for K-2 teachers managing students with challenging behaviors, the study provides additional, and specific, insights. First, the findings validated research related to school programs with social-emotional leadership. Second, the data provided insight into specific recommendations for meeting the needs of students with challenging behaviors. And finally, the study indicated that SEL programs, while valuable overall, may provide little value for students with challenging behaviors.

The study focused primarily on the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the administrative support utilized with students with challenging behaviors in K-2 classrooms. It is recommended that this study be replicated to include the participation of parents, other school staff, school psychologists, and/or behaviorists in K-2 classrooms. A school with a full-time psychologist, psychiatric social worker, or counselor would probably yield different results. Replicating the study to include parents' perspectives on supports needed to become more involved and supportive in the school or classroom setting would broaden the scope.

The study was also limited to three specific Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs in K-2 classrooms for a short period of time in the first semester of the school year. It is recommended that these three SEL programs be examined for an entire school year to look at the long-term effects on the students. Another study might compare the results of two main SEL

programs or monitor student results before, during and at the end of the year using only one SEL program consistently throughout the year.

The study was limited to three specific SEL programs in K-2 classrooms. It is recommended that this study be replicated in K-2 classrooms in suburban and/or rural districts where the student demographics may be somewhat different and district resources may be more limited.

Teacher participation in this study was by principal recommendation. It is recommended that this study be done at six different sites with K-2 teachers who volunteer to be participants. It is possible that teachers' responses would be different if they volunteered to participate without the principal's recommendation.

References

- Abidin, R. R. & Robinson, L. L. (2002). Stress, biases, or professionalism: What drives teachers' referral judgments of students with challenging behaviors? *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 10*(4), 204-212.
- Albrecht S. F., Johns, B. H., Mounsteven, J., & Olorundo, O. (2009). Working conditions as risk or resiliency factors for teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. *Psychology in Schools, 46*(10), 1006-1022.
- Alter, P., Walker, J. & Landers, E. (2013). Teachers' perception of students' challenging behavior and the impact of teacher demographics. *Education and Treatment of Children, 36*(4), 51-69.
- Baker, P. H. (2005). Managing student behavior: How ready are teachers to meet the challenge? *American Secondary Education, 33*(3), 51-64.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Berkowicz, J. & Myers, A. (2015). Will your leadership help teachers develop social-emotional skills in their students? *Education Week's blog, Leadership 360*. Retrieved from: http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/leadership_360/2015/07/will_your_leader...p_help_teachers_develop_social_emotional_skills_in_their_students.html
- Billingsley, B. S. (2004). Special education teacher retention and attrition: A critical analysis of the research literature. *The Journal of Special Education, 38*(1), 39-55.
- Billingsley, B. S., Fall, A. M., & Williams, Jr., T. O. (2006). Who is teaching students with emotional and behavioral disorders?: A profile and comparison to other special educators. *Behavioral Disorders, 31*(3), 252-264.

- Bird, J. J., Wang, C., Watson, J., & Murray, L. (2012). Teacher and principal perceptions of authentic leadership: Implications for trust, engagement, and intention to return. *Journal of School Leadership, 22*(3), 425-461.
- Blankemeyer, M., Flannery, D. J., & Vazsonyi, A. T. (2002). The role of aggression and social competence in children's perceptions of the child-teacher relationship. *Psychology in the Schools, 39*(3), 293-304.
- Bloomberg, L. D. & Volpe, M. (2012). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Boe, E. E., Cook, L. H., & Sunderland, R. J. (2008). Teacher turnover: Examining exit attrition, teaching area transfer, and school migration. *Exceptional Children, 75*(1), 7-31.
- Bradley, R., Henderson, K., & Monfore, D. A. (2004). A national perspective on children with emotional disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 29*(3), 211-223.
- Brown, K. M. & Wynn, S. R. (2007). Teacher retention issues: How some principals are supporting and keeping new teachers. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*, 664-698.
- Brown, K. M. & Wynn, S. R. (2009). Finding, supporting and keeping: The role of the principal in teacher retention issues. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 8*, 37-63.
- Bryk, A. S. & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- California Assembly Bill No. 420. (2014).
- California Education Code Sections 48900 – 48927.
- Cancio, E. J. & Conderman, G. (2008). Promoting longevity: Strategies for teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Beyond Behavior, 17*(3), 30-36.

- Cancio, E. J., Albrecht, S. F., & Johns, B. H. (2014). Combating the attrition of teachers of students with EBD: What can administrators do? *Intervention in School and Clinic, 49*(5), 306-312.
- Cancio, E. J., Albrecht, S. F., & Johns, B. H. (2013). Defining administrative support and its relationship to the attrition of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Education and Treatment of Children, 36*(4), 71-94.
- Cherniss, C., Extein, M., Goleman, D. & Weissberg, R. P. (2006). Emotional intelligence: What does the research really indicate? *Educational Psychologist, 41*(4), 239-245.
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL: www.casel.org).
- Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., Perry, N. E. (2012). School climate and social-emotional learning: Predicting teacher stress, job satisfaction, and teaching efficacy. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104*(4), 1189-1204.
- Conroy, M. & Davis, C. (2000). Early elementary-aged children with challenging behaviors: Legal and educational issues related to IDEA assessment. *Preventing School Failures, 44*, 163-168.
- Conroy, M. A., Dunlap, G., Clarke, S., & Alter, P. J. (2005). A descriptive analysis of positive behavioral intervention research with young children with challenging behavior. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 25*(3), 157-166.
- Cornell, D. G. & Mayer, J. M. (2010). Why do school order and safety matter? *Educational Research, 39*(1), 7-15.
- Correa, V. I. & Wagner, J. Y. (2011). Principals' roles in supporting the induction of special education teachers. *Journal of Special Education Leadership, 24*(1), 17-25.

- Cozolino, L. & Sprokay, S. (2006). Neuroscience and adult learning. *New Direction for Adult and Continuing Education*, 110, 11-19.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Davidson, C. (2009). Transcription: Imperatives for qualitative research. *The International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(2), 36-52.
- Deutschendorf, H. (2015). Why emotionally intelligent people are more successful. Retrieved from: <https://www.fastcompany.com/30447455/why-emotionally-intelligent-people-are-more-successful>
- DiPaola, M., Tschannen-Moran, M., & Walther-Thomas, C. (2004). School principals and special education: Creating the context for academic success. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 37(1), 1-10.
- Dunlap, G., Strain, P. S., Fox, L., Carta, J. J., Conroy, M., Smith, B. J., Kern, L., Hemmeter, M. L., Timm, M. A., McCart, A., Sailor, W., Markey, U., Markey, D. J., Lardieri, S., & Sowell, C. (2006). Prevention and intervention with young children's challenging behavior: Perspectives regarding current knowledge. *Behavioral Disorders*, 32(1), 29-45.
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D. & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social-emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.
- EdSource (2012). Schools under stress: Pressures mount on California's largest school districts. *EdSource, Inc.*, 1-28.

- Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & VanVoorhis, F. L. (2002). *School, family and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*, (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Forness, S. R. (2011). Special education and the new mental health: A response to the new direction of CCBD? *Behavioral Disorders*, 37(1), 41-46.
- Forness, S. R., Kim, J., Walker, H. M. (2012). Prevalence of students with EBD: Impact on General Education. *Beyond Behavior*, 21(2), 3-10.
- Frey, S. (2014). New federal guidelines support alternatives to suspensions. Retrieved from: www.edsource.org/2014/new-federal-guidelines-support-alternatives-to-suspensions/55852
- Frey, S. (2014). New law limits student discipline measure. *EdSource Highlighting Strategies for Student Success*. Retrieved from: <http://edsource.org/2014/new-law-limits-student-discipline-measure/67836/67836>
- Gebbie, D. H., Ceglowski, D., Taylor, L. K., & Miels, J. (2011). The role of teacher efficacy in strengthening classroom support for preschool children with disabilities who exhibit challenging behaviors. *Early Childhood Education, Journal*, 40, 35-46.
- Gettinger, M., Stoiber, K., & Kosciak, R. (2008). Effects of a preparation program focused on accommodating children with challenging behaviors. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 31(3), 164-181.
- Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

- Goleman, D. (2008). The secret to success: New research says social-emotional learning helps students in every way. *Educational Digest: Essential Reading Condensed for Quick Review*, 74(4) 8-9.
- Goleman, D. (2006). The social intelligent leader. *Educational Leadership*, 64(1), 76-81.
- Goleman, D.; Barlow, Z., & Bennett, L. (2010). Forging new norms in New Orleans: From emotional to ecological intelligence. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 37(4), 87-98.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. E., & McKee, A. (2001). Primal leadership: The great hidden driver of great performance. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from:
<https://hbr.org/2001/12/primal-leadership-the-hidden-driver-of-great-performance/ar/1?cm>
- Gottfried, M. A. & Harven, A. (2014). The effect of having classmates with emotional and behavioral disorders and the protective nature of peer gender. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 108, 45-61.
- Hanover Research (2012). Alternatives to Suspension. Retrieved from:
www.district287.org/uploaded/A_Better_Way/AlternativestoSuspensionHanover_Article.pdf
- Hollway, W. & Jefferson, T. (2000). *Doing qualitative research differently: Free association, narrative and the interview method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hopkins, B. (2014). *The restorative classroom: Using restorative approaches to foster effective learning*. London, United Kingdom: Speechmark.
- Hughes, G. D. (2012). Teacher retention: Teacher characteristics, school characteristics, organizational characteristics, and teacher efficacy. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 105, 245-255.

- Hughes, A. L., Matt, M. M., O'Reilly, F. L. (2015). Principal support is imperative to the retention in hard-to-staff schools. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 3(1), 129-134.
- Huisman, S., Singer, N. R., & Carapano, S. (2010). Resiliency to success: Supporting novice urban teachers. *Teacher Development*, 14(4), 483-499.
- Immordino-Yang, M. H. & Damasio, A. (2007). We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Mind, Brain, and Education* 1(1), 3-10.
- Jennings, P., Frank, J. L., Snowberg, K. E., Coccia, M. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2013). Improving classroom learning environments by cultivating awareness and resilience in education (CARE): Results of a randomized controlled trial. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 28(4), 374-390.
- Kass, E. (2013). "A compliment is all I need" – Teachers telling principals how to promote their staff's self-efficacy. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 59(2), 208-225.
- Kauffman, J. (2009). Emotional/Behavioral Disorders. Education.com. Retrieved from [http:// www.education.com/reference/article/emotionalbehavioral-disorders](http://www.education.com/reference/article/emotionalbehavioral-disorders)
- Kauffman, J. M., Simpson, R. L. & Mock, D. R. (2009). Problems related to underservice: A Rejoinder. *Behavioral Disorders*, 34(3), 172-180.
- Kelly, R. C., Thornton, B., & Daugherty, R. (2005). Relationships between measures of leadership and school climate. *Education*, 126(1), 17-25.
- Knight, D. & Wadhwa, A. (2014). Expanding opportunities through critical restorative justice: Portraits of resilience at the individual and school level. *Schools: Studies in Education*, 11(1), 11-33.
- Kouzes, J. M. & Posner B. Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Landers, E., Alter, P., & Servilio, K. (2008). Students' challenging behavior and teachers' job satisfaction. *Beyond Behavior, 18*(1), 26-33.
- Landrum, T. J., Tankersley, M., & Kauffman, J. M. (2003). What is special about special education for students with emotional or behavioral disorders? *The Journal of Special Education, 37*(3), 148-156.
- Lee, Y., Patterson, P. P., & Vega, L.A. (2011). Perils to self-efficacy perceptions and teacher-preparation quality among special education intern teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 38*(2), 61-76.
- Legislative Analyst's Office. (2012). Year-three survey: Update on school district finance in California. Retrieved from www.lao.ca.gov.
- Leko, M. M. & Smith, S. W. (2010). Retaining beginning special educators: What should administrators know and do? *Intervention in School and Clinic, 45*(5), 321-325.
- Lohrmann, S. & Bambara, L. M. (2006). Elementary education teachers' beliefs about essential supports needed to successfully include students with developmental disabilities who engage in challenging behaviors. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 31*(2), 157-173.
- Los Angeles County of Education. (2006). Teaching alternative behaviors school wide: A resource guide to prevent discipline problems.
- Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). (2014). Discipline Foundation Policy: School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, BUL-6231.0. Los Angeles. School Operations.

- McCarthy, C. J., Lambert, R.G., O'Donnell, M., & Melendres, L. T. (2009). The relation of elementary teachers' experience, stress, and coping resources to burnout symptoms. *The Elementary School Journal, 109* (3), 282-300.
- McHatton, P. A., Boyer, N. R., Shaunessy, E., & Terry, P. M. (2010). Principals' perception of preparation and practice in gifted and special education content: Are we doing enough? *Journal of Research and Leadership Education, 5*(1), 1-21.
- McHatton, P. A., Glenn, T. L., Sue, Gordon, K. D. (2012). Troubling special education leadership: Finding purpose, potential, and possibility in challenging contexts. *Journal of Special Education Leadership, 25*(1), 38-47.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mindess, Chen, & Brenner (2008). Social-emotional learning in the primary curriculum. *Young Children, 56*-59.
- Nahgahgwon, K. N., Umbreit, J., Liaupsin, C. J., & Turtin, A. M., (2010). Function-based planning for young children at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders. *Education and Treatment of Children, 33*(4), 537-559.
- National Center for Health Statistics (2015). Retrieved from:
<http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/health3.asp>.
- Niesyn, M. E. (2009). Strategies for success: Evidence-based instructional practices for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Heldref Publication*.
- Nooruddin, S. & Gaig, S. (2014). Student behavior management: School leader's role in the eyes of the teachers and students. *International Journal of Whole Schooling, 11*(1), 19-39.

- O'Brien, M. U. & Resnik, H. (2009). The Illinois social and emotional learning (SEL) standards: Leading the way for school and student success. *Illinois Principals Association*, 16(7), 1-5.
- Otto, S. J. & Arnold, M. (2005). A study of experienced special education teachers' perceptions of administrative support. *The H.W. Wilson Company*.
- Payton, J., Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., Schhellinger, K. B., & Pachan, M. (2008). The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews. Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional learning (CASEL).
- Pearman, C. J. & Lefever-Davis, S. (2012). Roots of attrition: Reflections of teacher candidates to Title 1 schools. *Critical Questions in Education*, 3(1), 1-11.
- Powell, D., Fixsen, D., Dunlap, G., Smith, B., & Fox, L. (2007). A synthesis of knowledge relevant to pathways of service delivery for young children with or at risk of challenging behavior. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 29(2), 81-106.
- Prather-Jones, B. (2011). How school administrators influence the retention of teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *The Clearing House*, 84, 1-8.
- Reimer, K. (2011). An exploration of the implementation of restorative justice in an Ontario public school. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Public Issue*, 119, 1-42.
- Short, M. N. & Bullock, L. M. (2013). Perspectives on select field-based experiences for pre-service teachers of students with emotional and behavioural disorders. *Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties*, 18(4), 396-406.

- Skiba, R. J. & Losen, D. J. (2015). From reaction to prevention: Turning the page on school discipline. *American Educator: A Quarterly Journal of Educational Research and Ideas*, 39(4) 4-11.
- Strain, P. S., Timm, M. A. (2001). Remediation and prevention of aggression: An evaluation of the regional intervention program over a quarter century. *Behavioral Disorders*, 26(4), 297-313.
- Sutherland, K. S., Denny, K. R., & Gunter, P. L. (2005). Teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders reported professional development needs: Differences between fully licensed and emergency-licensed teachers. *Preventing School Failure*, 49(2), 41-46.
- Sutherland, K. S., Lewis-Palmer, T., Stichter, J., & Morgan, P. L. (2008). Examining the influence of teacher behavior and classroom context on the behavioral and academic outcomes for students with emotional or behavioral disorders. *Journal of Special Education*, 41(4), 223-233.
- The Hawn Foundation. (2011). The mindUP curriculum: Grades pre-K-2. Scholastic.
- Thomas, D.E., Bierman, K.L., Thompson, C., & Powers, C.J. (2008). Double jeopardy: Child and school characteristics that predict aggressive-disruptive behavior in first grade. *School Psychology Review*, 37(4), 516-532.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2007). 27th annual report to congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004. Washington, DC.
- Valero, A. (2008). Inclusive education support systems: Teacher and administrator views. *Internal Journal of Special Education*, 23(2), 8-16.
- Walker, H., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F. (2003). How early intervention can reduce defiant behavior-and win back teaching time. Heading off disruptive behavior/American

- Federation of Teachers. Retrieved from <http://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter>
- Wexler, E. (2015). What are emotional and behavioral disorders? Retrieved from: <http://school-psychology.org/emotional-and-behavioral-disorders>
- Wiley, A. L., Siperstein, G. N., Bountress, K. E., Forness, S. R., & Brigham, F. J. (2008). School context and the academic achievement of students with emotional disturbance. *Behavioral Disorders, 33*(4), 198-210.
- Wright, P. and Faer, L. (2015) Recent legislation on discipline: AB 420 Joint Publication of CSSBA and Public Council. *California Schools*.
- Yeunjoo, L., Patterson, P. P., & Vega, L.A. (2011). Perils to self-efficacy perceptions and teacher-preparation quality among special education intern teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 38*(2), 61-76.

Appendix A – Letter

Sample Letter Invitation
Participants for Interview
Lisa Dachs-Ornelas

Dear _____,

I am writing you to invite your participation in a dissertation study on the socio-emotional factors that shape school leaders' practices in response to teachers who have students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 classrooms. In addition, this study will examine the extent to which a social emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors. I am conducting this research as a doctoral candidate as a student at California State University Northridge as part of the requirements to earn an Ed.D. degree.

In this study, I will be conducting confidential interviews with teachers and administrators to obtain their perspective on administrative support. Additionally, I will ask to conduct one classroom observation during a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lesson. Responses used in my dissertation will be anonymous, thus your name and school will not appear in the study. Interviews will be conducted for approximately 40- 60 minutes in length.

If you would like to participate, please contact me via email at lisa.dachs-ornelas.72@my.csun.edu or call (661) 618-0553. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. You will receive a \$10 gift card to a local coffee shop for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Lisa Dachs-Ornelas

Appendix B – Informed Consent Form

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

Factors Shaping Leadership Practices

Dear participant,

You are being asked to take part in a research study conducted by Lisa Dachs-Ornelas, a student from the CSUN Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, as part of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership. 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. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM

Researcher:

Lisa Dachs-Ornelas
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265
(661) 618-0553
Lisa.dachs-ornelas.72@my.csun.edu

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Jody Dunlap
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265
(818)677-3078
jody.dunlap@csun.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the socio-emotional factors that shape school leader's practices in response to teachers who have students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 classrooms. In addition, this study will examine the extent to which a social emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors.

SUBJECTS

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

- An elementary school teacher who has a student with challenging behaviors in your classroom and you are currently teaching in any grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade or,

- The elementary school principal from the same school site where there is a K-2nd grade teacher with a student with challenging behaviors in his/her classroom.

TIME COMMITMENT

This study will involve approximately two hours of your time over the course of one week.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures will occur. You will be asked to participate in a 45-minute interview with the possibility of a shorter follow-up interview. The interviews will be audio-recorded. After the interview, I will provide you with a critical incident report with a stamped return envelope in hopes that you will return it within a week. Additionally, with your permission I will conduct a classroom observation during a Restorative Justice Circle and/or during a time where the disruption of the child with the challenging behavior occurs most frequently. I would also like to collect copies of any documents such as office referrals, behavior support plans, behavior journals, etc. in order to provide insight on the response to students with challenging behaviors from a teacher and an administrator's perspective.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include: fatigue, boredom, mild emotional discomfort, stress, and embarrassment. 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

The possible benefits you may experience from the procedures described in this study include effective professional development and supervision that is more responsive to the needs of teachers and students through the lens of a social-emotional learning.

The possible benefits to society will serve to inform policy and practice for professional development and supervision that is more responsive to the needs of teachers and students. Additionally, it will inform school leaders on effective social-emotional leadership practices from both administrators' and teachers' point of view that support K-2 teachers dealing students' challenging behaviors. The findings of this study will contribute to our understanding of preventative and intervention strategies through the lens of a social-emotional learning, as well as professional development in strategies to build teacher resilience and a trusting and caring school climate. This is significant, as it will lead to a more thorough grounding for elementary school principals to support teachers' effectiveness and resilience, as they educate all young children in K-2, including those with significant challenging behaviors.

COMPENSATION

You will receive a \$10 gift card to a local coffee shop.

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 research team 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

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 laptop computer that is password protected, then transcribed and erased at the end of the study. The identifiable information will be stored on a separate computer that is password protected. The storage of identifiable and de-identifiable data will be separated. The identifiable information is only your first initial and last name, email address, school site at which you are employed, and whether or not you implement Restorative Justice in your classroom or school. The use of pseudonyms will replace your names in the final written analysis of the research.

Data Access

The researcher and faculty advisor 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 until the conclusion of the study, and then it will be destroyed.

Mandated Reporting

Under California law, the researchers are required to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information, he or she may be required to report it to the authorities.

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.

Please sign your initials next to the signature line for consent to be audio recorded.

- 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

Research Questions:

1. What factors shape school leader practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?
 - a. What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging student behaviors in the classroom?
 - b. What specific characteristics of administrative support do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with student's challenging behaviors in the classroom?
 - c. How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with student's challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. To what extent does a social emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

Administrator Interview Questions

Introduction: Grand Tour

1. Tell me, what or who inspired you to become a principal?
 - a. What is your experience in education?
 - b. How long have you been an administrator?
2. What would you describe your administrator style to be?
 - a. What factors have shaped your leadership practices?
3. How do you feel about the students in your school?
 - a. Do you have a particular student that you are concerned about in regards to behavioral issues?
 - b. Tell me about him/her.
 - c. Describe an experience or incident with him/her.
 - d. How does the teacher respond to these challenges?
 - e. Does the teacher come to you for support? If so, please describe.

RQ1: What factors shape school leader practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?

1. How do you support the teacher who is struggling with students with challenging behaviors?
2. Do you think it is enough support? How do you know?
3. Do you believe the teacher perceives your support as sufficient? Why do you believe that?
Is there any evidence?

RQ1a: What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging student behaviors in the classroom?

1. Do you feel you are equipped to support teachers who are challenged with disruptive students in their classroom?
2. What supports do you need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging student behaviors in the classroom?

RQ1b: What specific characteristics of administrative support do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with student's challenging behaviors in the classroom?

1. What do you think are specific characteristics of administrative support that positively affect teachers' willingness to work with student's with challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. What do you think are specific characteristics of administrative support that positively affects teachers' self-efficacy, especially those working with challenging students.

RQ1c: How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with student's challenging behaviors in the classroom?

1. What is your relationship like with your teachers?
2. How aware are you of their emotional state? How do you know?
3. What do you do to build resiliency amongst your teachers who are struggling with students' challenging behaviors?
4. What do you do to help teacher's willingness to work with these challenging students?

RQ2: To what extent does a social emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

1. Do your teachers implement a social emotional learning program in their classrooms?

2. To what extent does the social emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?
3. To what extent does the social emotional program affect the student with challenging behavior.

Teacher Interview Questions

Introduction: Grand Tour

1. Tell me, what or who inspired you to become a teacher?
 - a. What is your experience in education?
 - b. How long have you been a teacher?
2. What would you describe your teaching style to be?
 - a. What factors have shaped your teaching style?
3. How do you feel about the students in your class?
 - a. Do you have a particular student that you are concerned about in regards to behavioral issues? Tell me about him/her.
 - b. Describe an experience or incident with him/her.
 - c. How do you respond to these challenges?

RQ1: What factors shape school leader practices to support teacher responses to students with challenging behaviors in general education K-2 grade classrooms?

1. How does your administrator support you when you are struggling with students with challenging behaviors?
2. Do you think it is enough support? If so, why? What makes it enough? If not, what supports do you expect to receive?

RQ1a: What supports do principals need to respond effectively to teachers' needs regarding challenging student behaviors in the classroom?

1. Do you feel you are equipped to respond effectively to challenging student behaviors in your classroom?
2. Do you feel that your administrator is equipped to support you with challenging students?

3. What supports do you need from your principal to respond effectively to challenging student behaviors in the classroom?

RQ1b: What specific characteristics of administrative support do teachers believe positively affect their efficacy and willingness to work with student's challenging behaviors in the classroom?

1. What specific characteristics of administrative support have positively affected your willingness to work with student's challenging behaviors in the classroom?
2. What specific characteristics of administrative support have positively affected your self-efficacy, especially while working with challenging students.

RQ1c: How do characteristics of a social-emotional leader affect teachers' resilience and their willingness to work with student's challenging behaviors in the classroom?

1. What is your relationship like with your principal?
2. How aware is your principal of your emotional state? How do you know?
3. What does your principal do to build resiliency amongst you and the other teachers who are working with students' challenging behaviors?
4. What does your principal do to help teacher's willingness to work with these challenging students?

RQ2: To what extent does a social emotional learning program affect classroom climate when there are students with challenging behaviors?

1. Do you implement a social emotional learning program in your classroom? If so, tell me about the program.
2. To what extent does the social emotional learning program affect classroom climate?
3. To what extent does it affect the students with challenging behaviors?

Appendix D – Critical Incident Form

Critical Incident Form *Teachers*

Dear Participant,

In reflecting on the time you had a critical incident with a student with challenging behaviors in your classroom, please recall one particular event that you felt frustrated, ill prepared, supported or not supported by your school administration. Please do write anything that identifies a student.

- Please describe what occurred before, during and after that critical incident.

- What were you trying to achieve?

- What were you thinking you should/could do to move forward?

- How, if at all, did you overcome this impasse in your work?

- What supports did you receive from your school administration?

- What supports would you have wanted or expected to receive from school administration?

Thank you very much! Your perceptions are very helpful in trying to understand the challenges in a classroom with severe student behaviors.

Critical Incident Form

School principals

Dear Participant,

In reflecting on the time you had a critical incident with a student with challenging behaviors at your school, please recall one particular event that you felt frustrated, ill prepared, and provided support or could not provide support to the teacher of the student. Please do write anything that identifies a student.

- Please describe what occurred before, during and after that critical incident.

- What were you trying to achieve?

- What were you thinking you should/could do to move forward?

- How, if at all, did you overcome this impasse in your work?

- What supports did you provide to the teacher?

- What supports would you have wanted or expected to receive from the school district?

Thank you very much! Your perceptions are very helpful in trying to understand the challenges in a classroom with severe student behaviors.

Appendix E – Classroom Observation Template

Classroom Observation

Field notes by _____ Date written _____

Event, activity, class, situation observed _____

Date, time observed _____ Place _____

BACKGROUND:

SETTING:

PEOPLE:

TALK & ACTIVITY:

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE ON RQ, SUB-Qs, or THEMES OF INTEREST:

AFTER THE EVENT (if relevant):

REFLECTION: