

THE INTERSECTION OF ADMINISTRATORS' LEARNING, LEADERSHIP PRACTICES,
AND TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

by

EMILY LOUGH

(Under the Direction of Jamon Flowers)

ABSTRACT

This action research study examined how professional development for school-based administrators influences leadership practices, and, in turn, impacts teachers' perceptions and job satisfaction. Using iterative action research cycles, the study engaged a principal, eight assistant principals, and teachers at a large suburban high school. Data collection methods included questionnaires, focus groups, and reflections, providing a well-rounded understanding of the connections between leadership development and teacher job satisfaction.

Within this study, data analysis revealed eight findings and three themes: (1) Intentionality Matters, (2) Adaptability Requires Action, and (3) Teachers' Job Satisfaction is Multifaceted. Findings indicated an administrative desire to engage in professional development, even if additional learning warranted adjustments to current practices. Additionally, findings showed that teachers believe improved communication and support are critical for administrative leadership practices to impact teachers' job satisfaction. The study emphasizes the importance of leadership practices in promoting teacher retention and nurturing a positive school culture.

INDEX WORDS: Teacher job satisfaction, Administrative professional development, School-building administrators' leadership practices, Teachers' perceptions of leadership practices

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DEDICATION

To Daniel:

You are an amazing husband, father, and man; your love and support over the years have turned my dreams into a beautiful reality. Our life is imperfectly perfect, and I am grateful for every day we have together. You have given me immeasurably more than I could have ever asked for; every day with you is a reminder of how blessed I am to have you in my life.

To Hannah, Addison, Charlotte, and Maddox:

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To Mom and Dad:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The demands on teachers have evolved beyond simply teaching students the subject matter and standards. For example, in addition to being content gurus, teachers are expected to have an in-depth understanding of a variety of learning styles, recognize and adapt to specific learner needs, innovatively incorporate technology, identify and respond to the social and emotional needs of students, and analyze and apply data to inform their instruction, to name a few (Farmer, 2020; Harris et al., 2019; Kelchtermans, 2017). These daily expectations are extensive, and over time, they take a mental and emotional toll on teachers, impacting their morale, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy (Hebert, 2019). In addition to affecting teachers, low teacher morale can negatively impact student learning, school culture, and the overall continuity of the school vision (Kelchtermans, 2017).

The “intensification” of the all-inclusive job duties placed on teachers is described as “the increased professional demands added to teachers’ workloads without concomitant time provided to incorporate new expectations or any reduction in previous duties” (Santoro, 2018, p. 28). When a teacher’s proverbial plate is full of one priority after another, it can be difficult to find time to truly address the various needs of students and adequately carry out responsibilities within the classroom. This intensification creates a vicious cycle in which teachers do not have the time or capacity to feel consistently successful as professionals and, consequently, face low morale and decreased job satisfaction (Dunn, 2020).

Dissatisfaction, low morale, burnout... This spectrum of social-emotional terminology and its various connotations demonstrate how negativity can grow over time and impact teachers' perspectives and performance. The many facets of the job make teachers susceptible to negativity from a variety of angles; therefore, school administrators should work to build and sustain leadership practices that teachers perceive as positively impacting teacher job satisfaction (Castaneda & Varela, 2022). For example, school leaders can positively impact teachers' job satisfaction by "valuing employees and showing them interest, strengthening justice and confidence in interactions throughout school processes, and creating a strong vision around common goals and a sincere school atmosphere" (Cansoy, 2019, p. 44). School administrators should get to know their staff as individuals and create a school culture focused on supporting students and teachers. Leadership has the potential to impact a variety of school elements, including employee motivation, job satisfaction, school culture, and student performance (Baptiste, 2019; Cansoy, 2019).

It is essential for school-building leaders to work to understand teachers' perceptions of their work and the school culture to better address teachers' needs and goals. The interconnectedness of actions, words, and feelings of individuals makes schools a conglomeration of different perspectives. Teachers are "on the front lines" daily, so to speak, and their unique and collective perceptions are imbued within their interactions with students, parents, curriculum, school culture, administrators, and so on. Teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction can be "conceived as a multi-dimensional concept that includes a set of satisfying and dissatisfying feelings in which employees perceive their work" (Karabina, 2016, p. 87). Not surprisingly, individuals are affected differently by a variety of factors. There is no single resolution to the question of how to positively impact teachers' job satisfaction. Instead, school-

building leaders must work to understand how teachers define their job satisfaction and how teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction (Ahn et al., 2023). As administrators grow in their understanding of teachers' perceptions, school-building leaders can also grow in their supportive leadership practices.

Teachers' job satisfaction impacts school culture in a variety of areas, including motivation, curriculum development, organizational commitment, and students' academic performance. Teacher job satisfaction is defined as the "pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values... the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering or entailing" (Locke, 1969, p. 316). Job satisfaction (and dissatisfaction, accordingly) is derived from a teacher's met or unmet expectations. When teachers experience positive job satisfaction, their self-efficacy improves, even in challenging circumstances (Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020). Education is full of challenging moments; school leaders must consider ways to positively impact teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and teachers' job satisfaction.

Research indicates that support for teacher retention and job satisfaction includes administrative support, realistic expectations, protecting instructional planning and time, teacher voice and professional growth, and mental health and wellness (Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Department of Education, 2022; Dunn, 2020). Broadening out from these specific ideas, leadership practices are an overarching area of influence. Through positive leadership practices, school administrators have the potential to influence the specific needs of teachers and improve teachers' perception of leadership practices and job satisfaction (Cansoy, 2019; Castaneda & Varela, 2022).

School leadership practices can be far-reaching and influence both teachers and students. In many cases, administrative leadership generates direct and indirect impacts on both teachers and students, respectively: “principals’ effects on students come largely through their effects on teachers, including how principals hire, retain, develop, and encourage teachers and create appropriate conditions for teaching and learning” (Grissom et al., 2021, p. xiv). Principals have the capacity to impact “school conditions, classroom conditions, and teacher performance”, which are all indirectly linked to positive student outcomes (Grissom & Harrington, 2010, p. 584). Research suggests four categories of positive principal behaviors: “1) Engaging in instructionally focused interactions with teachers; 2) Building a productive school climate; 3) Facilitating productive collaboration and professional learning communities; and 4) Managing personnel and resources strategically” (Grissom et al., 2021, p. xv). From instruction, to school climate, to stakeholders, school leadership practices exert influence across an entire educational institution.

Leadership practices impact most aspects of a school, from building relationships, to curriculum decisions, and so much more. When considering teacher morale, “teachers specifically highlight their relationship with the principal, perceptions of the principal’s leadership and support, and the principal’s ability to create a positive climate and work culture as important” (Hebert, 2019, p. 306). There is no single leadership style designed to impact all aspects of a school; rather, school leaders should learn about and work to integrate leadership theories to meet the needs within the sociocultural context of the school (Daniels et al., 2019). To grow in their knowledge and application of leadership practices, building leaders need opportunities for professional development that is job-embedded, and tailored to the needs of the principal as well as the sociocultural context of the school (Zepeda et al., 2014). By developing

positive leadership practices, school administrators have the potential to grow as leaders and impact teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and job satisfaction, which can have far-reaching influence on school culture and student performance.

Statement of the Problem

The challenges and needs of teachers that are emerging in the classroom are combined with the expectations and demands of a multi-faceted profession, leading to an increase in teacher burnout, low motivation, and low self-efficacy (Farmer, 2020). Ultimately, this can lead to negative impacts on student achievement, school culture, and overall teacher job satisfaction (Hebert, 2019). Nationwide surveys and state data indicate low levels of teacher job satisfaction and, conversely, high numbers of teacher attrition (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Because teaching and education are such complex fields, school leaders should continue to evaluate components of influence that have far-reaching impacts, such as leadership practices (Baptiste, 2019; Gomez-Leal et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2015). Research indicates that administrative leadership behaviors are linked to teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance, which impact overall school performance (Baptiste, 2019; Cansoy, 2019; Kingsley et al., 2022).

Overview of the Research Site Context

North Ridge High School (NRHS) is a large, suburban public high school located in a growing urban county; in the context of this study, a pseudonym is being used for the site. Located approximately 35 miles north of the state's capital, this county boasts a population of over 980,000 residents; over one-quarter of the county's population is school-aged or younger (United States Census Bureau, 2024). With such a growing population, NRHS is one of the county's 27 high schools, situated along the northern border of the county. In the 2022-23 school

year, NRHS had a 59% minority population (30% Asian, 14% Black, 9% Hispanic, and 5% Multicultural); 6% of the student population was English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); and 8.6% of the students received Special Education services (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2024). NRHS is considered to be a high-performing school, boasting a high graduation rate and consistently performing well on both state and national assessments (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2024).

Although the student performance data for this school is strong, there has been a noticeable decline in staff job satisfaction since 2017. This school district annually administers a Staff Perception Survey. On this survey, staff respond to questions focusing on a range of topics from training and safety to support and technology. In the 2016-17 school year, staff "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to many positive aspects of the school, leading to an overall survey total of 3.68 out of 4, well above the county's high school rate of 3.42. By the 2021-22 school year, staff response to these same questions had declined; there were fewer "Strongly Agree" responses, and the number of "Disagree" responses had increased. In the 2021-22 survey data, the school's overall survey total dropped to 3.44 out of 4, significantly closer to the overall high school rate of 3.38. Additionally, teacher attrition increased from 2018 to 2022; the number of teachers who left the school for reasons other than retirement doubled in the 2020-21 school year and remained high in the 2021-22 school year as well. Most of the teachers who left for reasons other than retirement cited burnout or overwhelming expectations as their reason for leaving in their informal exit interviews.

If teachers perceive their job duties as undesirably expansive and overwhelming, school administrators must evaluate the demands on teachers and look for ways to build leadership practices to positively impact teacher job satisfaction. Research indicates that "administrators'

behaviors [sic] in which they synthesize servant, ethical and distributive leadership characteristics at the center [sic] of transformational leadership would highly contribute to teachers' job satisfaction" (Cansoy, 2019, p. 44). To understand specific leadership characteristics, school administrators must devote time and energy to learning about and implementing a variety of research-based practices.

This study used the action research process to design and implement administrative professional development. In conjunction with an already established professional learning community structure for administrators, this model incorporated professional development training informed by data gathered from teachers and administrators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perceptions of the influence of said leadership practices on their job satisfaction. The study focused on the actions of the Principal and Assistant Principals in a large, suburban high school. The action research team wanted to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on job satisfaction and the role that administrators' leadership practices played in influencing teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, the action research team sought to understand the perspective of school leaders on professional development and their influence on teachers' perception of job satisfaction.

Research Questions

To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?

2. In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following key terms are defined:

- “Administrative team,” “administrators,” and “school-building leaders” in the context of North Ridge High School is the school leadership staff. Additionally, the terms “administrative team, school-building leaders, and principal” are used interchangeably throughout this study. The administrative team consists of one Principal and ten Assistant Principals (APs). One of the Assistant Principals also serves as the Athletic Director, and another AP is the school’s Community School Director. The remaining eight APs serve during the school day in the areas of curriculum, student services, testing, and instructional support.
- “Job satisfaction” and “morale” in the context of this study are interchangeable terms. While there is some discussion on the true definition for each term, both “morale and job satisfaction are attitudes of work-life well-being” (Hebert, 2019, p. 305). While each term may invoke certain nuances, both job satisfaction and morale are focused on an individual’s perception of their workplace, including their peers, leaders, working conditions, and organizational structure.
- “Perception” is defined as a way of understanding or interpreting a concept. In this context, teacher perception refers to how teachers discern, interpret, and feel about their job satisfaction and administrators’ leadership practices.
- “Professional development,” “professional learning,” and “administrative professional development” (APD) are defined as “all learning activities that aim to contribute to one’s

professional development” (Daniels et al., 2019, p. 119). In the context of North Ridge High School, professional learning is a time when teachers and administrators identify areas of need and organize/develop learning opportunities to address these needs.

Professional development (PD) is designed to be relevant, job-embedded, and ongoing (Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Zepeda et al., 2014).

- “Professional Learning Community (PLC)” or “Course Team” in the context of North Ridge High School is a group of staff members who work together towards a shared goal. For teachers, a PLC is typically comprised of those who teach the same course within a certain subject; for administrators, the PLC consists of the entire administrative team. The PLC meets at least once a week during a common planning period or designated meeting time with an agenda focused on curriculum and instructional practices, assessments, data, and any other pressing issues or concerns (Olsson, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

This action research study focused on teachers’ perceptions of the actions of school leaders and their perceived impact on teachers’ job satisfaction. School leaders must value the unique human element that each teacher brings to the school culture (Gomez-Leal et al., 2022). Education is not mechanical nor rigid; rather, it is personal and adaptive. In addition to understanding the tasks involved in leading a school, administrators must find ways to connect with and motivate those who are directly doing the work within the classroom (Gomez-Leal et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2015). The action research cycles in this study are based on administrative professional learning and teachers’ perceptions of how leadership practices influence their job satisfaction. The theoretical frameworks of andragogy, also known as adult learning theory, and

Leithwood et al.'s (2010) Four Paths leadership model lay the foundation for this action research study.

Andragogy

Andragogy, a lens of adult learning, recognizes the differences between teaching adults and teaching children. Pedagogy, or how children learn, is tailored to the needs of children, who are “dependent on the teacher to direct and control the learning” (Zepeda, 2019, p. 37).

Andragogy, on the other hand, embraces the notion that “learners are independent, direct, and control the learning themselves, with guidance from the teacher” (Zepeda, 2019, p. 37). Malcolm Knowles first introduced the term “andragogy” in the United States in the early 1970s and highlighted its six core principles: “(1) the learner’s need to know; (2) self-concept of the learner; (3) prior experience of the learner; (4) readiness to learn; (5) orientation to learning; and (6) motivation to learn” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 17). Andragogy acknowledges that adult learners are invested in the learning process.

An initial component of andragogy is that adults “need to know” or understand the “why” behind the learning. The “need to know” element of andragogy asks the question, “How does the learner benefit from the learning?” Understanding how the learning connects provides the learner with a sense of agency and autonomy by “being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 47). Adults’ self-concept allows them to be self-determined learners and involved in the design of the learning (Purwati et al., 2022). An additional principle of andragogy is that adults have variations in both quantity and quality of experiences that impact their learning (Knowles et al., 2015; Purwati et al., 2022). The wide range of experiences that adults bring into a learning situation necessitates more individualized learning experiences. Adults’ “readiness to learn” and “orientation to learning” center on adults being focused on real-

life situations and being problem- or task-centered (Knowles et al., 2015; Marquardt & Waddill, 2004). The “motivation to learn” principle of adult learning relates to the external and internal pressures that drive adult learning (Knowles et al., 2015; Marquardt & Waddill, 2004).

Four Paths Model

Andragogy highlights the personal factors adults bring into their learning situations. As new learning takes place, the Four Paths model (Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2017) provides a theory of action for school administrators to apply their learning to work with teachers and influence student learning. At its foundation, the Four Paths model indicates that “leaders’ influence ‘flows’ along four ‘paths’ to reach students – Rational, Emotional, Organizational and Family paths...populated by key conditions or variables which (a) can be influenced by those exercising leadership and (b) have relatively direct effects on students” (Leithwood et al., 2017, pp. 2-3). As school leaders identify needs and act to improve those conditions, their leadership practices will flow along the Four Paths, with the paths often interacting to create a school-wide impact within classrooms and/or individually.

In the Four Paths model (Leithwood et al., 2017), there are four pathways through which leaders can impact student learning: Rational, Emotional, Organizational, and Family. The Rational Path is focused on instruction and is “rooted in the knowledge and skills of school staff members about curriculum, teaching, and learning (Leithwood et al., 2017, p. 3). The Emotional Path centers on the individual as well as collective feelings and dispositions, such as efficacy and trust (Leithwood et al., 2010). The Organizational Path encompasses the “structures, cultures, policies, and standard operating procedures” that define the working conditions and infrastructure of the school (Leithwood et al., 2010). The Organizational Path can be influential at the classroom level as well as school-wide, such as through classroom instructional time and

school-wide professional learning communities (Leithwood et al., 2010). The Family Path reflects the family and community expectations and support for students as well as the overall family culture (Leithwood et al., 2017).

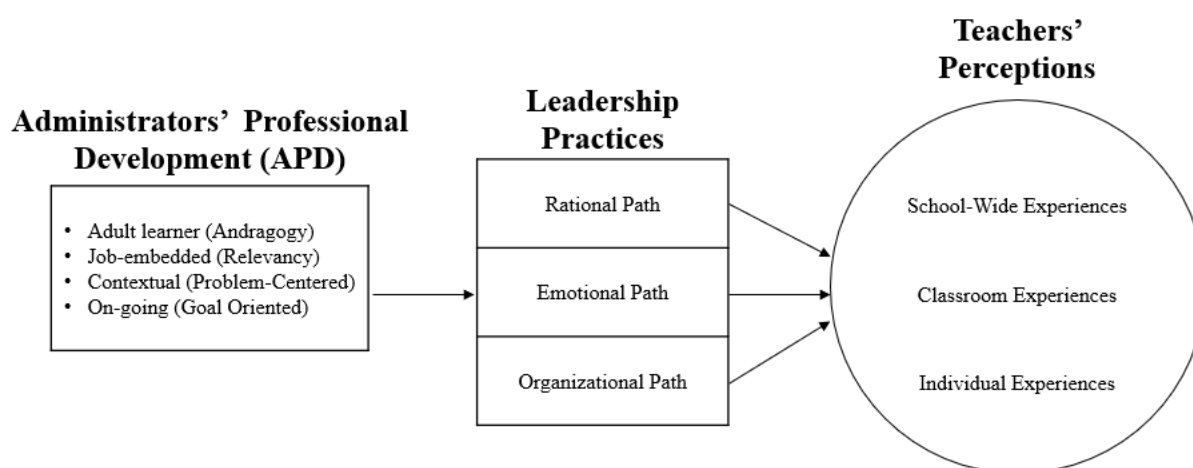
The Four Paths model is a framework for school improvement aimed at enhancing student learning through indirect leadership practices. Leithwood et al. (2017) explain that to improve student learning, leaders must work to identify areas of need based on their school's data and context. As areas of need are identified, leaders can pinpoint conditions or variables along each Path to influence. As leaders plan and act to improve conditions, "the quality of students' school and classroom experiences is enriched, resulting in greater payoffs for students" (Leithwood et al., 2017, p. 3). School leaders must be strategic in their leadership practices along the Four Paths. Leaders must understand the needs of their school and make evidence-based decisions, including the intended variables for areas of growth for students as well as how leaders can influence those variables along the Four Paths (Leithwood et al., 2017). Oftentimes, school improvement efforts will reach across multiple Paths. Since pathways may interact with leadership practices, school leaders need to have ongoing professional development to enhance the effectiveness of leadership practices (Leithwood et al., 2017).

This action research focused on how administrator professional learning, which is influenced by andragogy and the Four Paths model, impacted teachers' perceptions of how leadership practices influence their job satisfaction. The theoretical framework allowed school administrators to meld their intrinsic adult learning attributes with the application of the Four Paths leadership model as they participated in professional learning opportunities, as shown in Figure 1.1. By focusing on administrative professional learning for leadership practices, school

leaders can apply their learning to working with teachers to enact a positive influence on teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction.

Figure 1.1

Theoretical Framework of Andragogy and Four Paths Model



Note. Adjusted Four Paths model (Leithwood et al., 2017) and Knowles et al. (2015).

The theoretical framework in this study adjusted the original frameworks from Leithwood et al. (2017) and Knowles et al. (2015). In Figure 1.1, the principles of andragogy were aligned with elements of effective professional development (Zepeda et al., 2014). Additionally, the Family Path was removed from Leithwood et al.'s (2017) original Four Paths model. The scope of the current study was limited to leadership practices as they related to interactions with teachers, not families or community members.

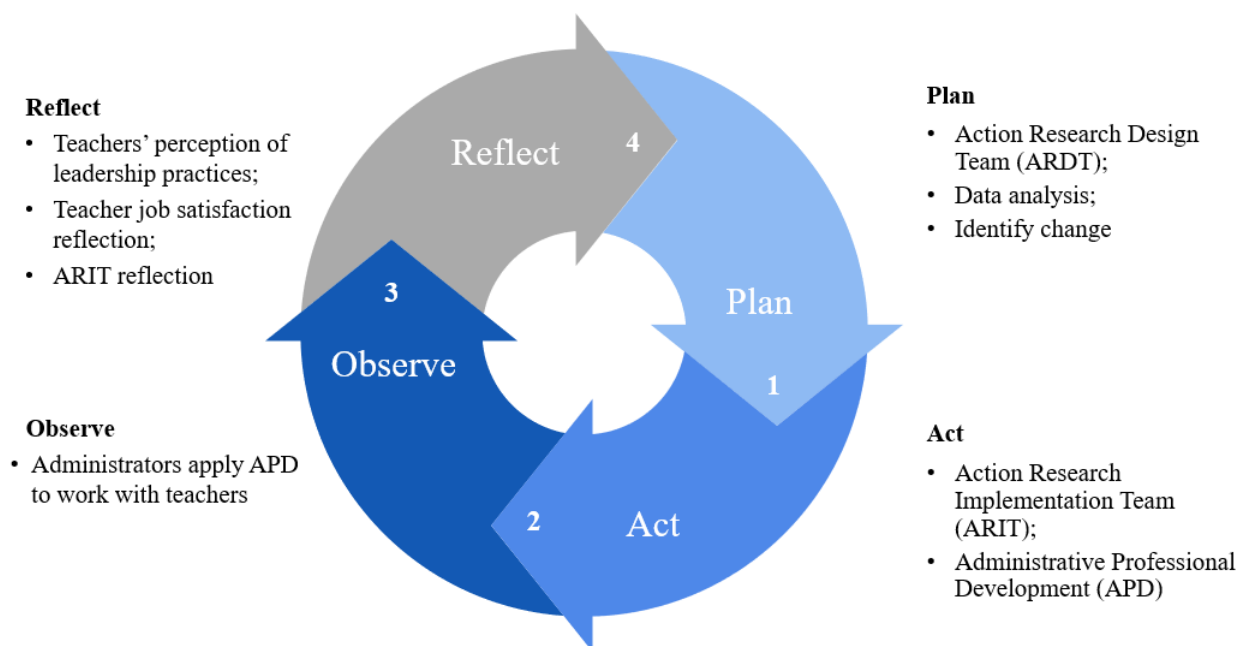
Logic Model

The focus of this action research study was to examine how teachers' perceptions of leadership practices impacted teachers' job satisfaction. Figure 1.2 illustrates the logic model that guided the professional development of school leaders and the process of applying new leadership behaviors to administrators' work with teachers. The logic model serves as a roadmap

for how administrative professional development (APD) was created, implemented, and perceived by teachers. This model was adapted from Bryk et al.'s (2015) model of Plan-Do-Study-Act; since the data and feedback from each cycle informed the next cycle, observation and reflection were included as purposeful steps.

Figure 1.2

Logic Model for Action Research Study



Note. Adapted from Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 122).

This action research study is based on the notion that teachers perceive school leaders' behaviors in a variety of ways which can impact teachers' job satisfaction. Professional development that was focused on a variety of leadership behaviors provided administrators with a toolbox of positive practices. Through professional learning, school leaders were able to grow in their awareness and application of leadership behaviors and their impact on teacher job satisfaction.

The action research cycles consisted of the Action Research Design Team (ARDT) taking preliminary data and resources and developing relevant professional development opportunities for school leaders. During the research cycle, the plan-act-observe-reflect logic model was used to allow for the application and reflection of learning. As administrators learned about leadership practices, the cycle prompted leaders to apply their learning to real-time interactions and then reflect on their influence.

Overview of the Methodology

Action research is a people-centered, change-oriented, constructivist approach to influencing the world (Baum et al., 2006; Karagiorgi et al., 2018; Messikh, 2020). Action research values experience, collaboration, and reflective inquiry; “it affirms that experience can be a basis of knowing and that experiential learning can lead to a legitimate form of knowledge that influences practice” (Baum et al., 2006, p. 854). Education is a field that is constantly evolving, responding and adjusting to each person’s unique and changing needs as well as the fluctuating landscape of expectations and standards; this requires that administrators and teachers be adaptable and responsive. Action research encourages those who are directly involved in the work to engage in real-life inquiry so that they can improve their practices (Corey, 1954). There are many definitions and derivatives of action research, but in this study, it is identified as a collective, self reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. The reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in social relationships. (Baum et al., 2006, p. 854)

Simply put, action research works from within to identify, address, and improve or resolve issues in education with a focus on practical transformation.

Action research focuses on “involving participants in a cyclical process of fact finding, exploratory action and evaluation” (Morales, 2016, p. 158). It is within this field of inquiry that expertise and experience come together to inform and influence; as Lewin (1946) expounds, it is not enough to identify an issue; rather, “the diagnosis has to be complemented by experimental comparative studies of the effectiveness of various techniques of change” (p. 37). Lewin (1946) goes on to use the metaphor of a physician who must interact with a patient and use both skills to diagnose and ingenuity to treat; theory and practice must go hand in hand. It is no different for educators; identifying areas of inquiry is pointless without purposeful action, and action without thoughtful research and reasoning is futile.

As action research has evolved over the years, four basic themes have remained constant: “empowerment of participants; collaboration through participation; acquisition of knowledge; and social change” (Masters, 1995, p. 2). To approach these themes, there are four primary steps in the spiral cycles of action research: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Lewin, 1946; Masters, 1995). As participants engage with the research and become partners in the inquiry, they collaboratively learn, grow, and impact their own lives and the larger social context (Baum et al., 2006; Corey, 1954; Vaughan & Burnaford, 2016). These premises guided the action research team in this study as they sought to design a system of structures through professional development to support leadership practices and evaluate its links to teachers’ perceptions of leadership practices as well as their influence on teachers’ job satisfaction. The implementation team that was established for the purpose of this study consisted of eight Assistant Principals and one Principal.

Action Research

Action research was an appropriate methodology for this study because it allowed for active participant engagement and empowerment. Teacher job satisfaction and leadership practices are both highly personal, subjective topics. It is only natural to directly include the participants in the inquiry; as Lewin (1946) suggests: “It will be necessary to install fact-finding procedures, social eyes and ears, right into social action bodies” (p. 38). Influencing teacher job satisfaction requires teacher and administrator input. The uniqueness of the human element dictates that teacher job satisfaction is by nature subjective and multifaceted. It cannot be mechanically nor rigidly regulated; rather, it must be cultivated and influenced. By directly including teachers and administrators as participants in the action research design team, the collective voices of the implementation team members enhanced the entire process, providing a more comprehensive and detailed perspective (Baum et al., 2006; Corey, 1954).

By bringing participants directly into the inquiry process, teachers and administrators were inherently granted power for action and influence (Masters, 1995). By giving participants a voice throughout the research process, there was relevancy and applicability; having a voice is strongly tied to increased teacher morale (Mitchell, 2021). The art of teaching is grounded in an educator’s ability to observe, reflect, and adapt; this mirrors the action research spiral cycle outlined by Lewin (1946). The professional development supports developed by the action research team empowered the school leader participants to employ theories and strategies in their daily practices, thus, creating “educational environments responsive to teachers’ needs, concerns, responsibilities, and expertise...and thereby improv[ing] teachers’ efficacy, morale and motivation” (Bosso, 2017, p. 20). Administrators’ actions have far-reaching impacts on teachers.

Since education is a field founded on growth and change, educators are, by their very nature, inclined towards inquiry and action. The action research process focused on enacting change through increased awareness and empowerment. These elements have a positive impact on teacher morale and efficacy (Goddard & Kim, 2018). If school leaders work to support teachers so they feel more equipped to respond to challenging situations and be effective in those responses, their self-efficacy increases (Dunn, 2020). This creates a cycle where supportive leadership practices positively impact morale, and this boost in morale improves overall effectiveness.

Teacher morale was a key component of the study; morale is subjective and easily influenced. These characteristics can make for a volatile combination if not given proper attention. However, the “cycles of action and reflection” in action research allowed school leaders to “inquire into the uniqueness of the present situation and seek insights into the concrete, particular here and now situation” (Coghlan, 2019, p. 57). Giving school leaders an opportunity for “reflection-in-action” opens the door for “thoughtful consideration and retrospective analysis of their performance to gain knowledge from experience” (Morales, 2016, p. 159). As a qualitative method, intentional reflection prompted administrators to pause and consider their motivations, actions, and reactions, giving them greater insight into their mindsets and perspectives.

The Action Research Design Team (ARDT) worked with the Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT), one Principal and eight Assistant Principals (APs), to identify areas of need and develop a system of structures to support teacher job satisfaction. Data was collected using a variety of qualitative methods. Initially, administrators and teachers were asked to partake in questionnaires. Additionally, administrators and teacher volunteers were

interviewed throughout the various stages of the action research cycles. As this data was collected and analyzed, the ARDT developed appropriate professional development opportunities and interventions. As the cycle progressed, administrators were asked to reflect and journal, sharing their thoughts and experiences at weekly meetings.

Data Collection

In this study, data collection consisted of a variety of qualitative methods, including:

1. At the beginning and end of the research process, teachers participated in a questionnaire to gauge their perspectives on teachers' job satisfaction and building-leaders' leadership skills and behaviors;
2. At the beginning and end of the research process, participating administrators completed a questionnaire to self-assess administrators' leadership practices as well as ascertain administrators' view of teachers' job satisfaction and the leadership team;
3. Focus group interviews with teacher volunteers at the beginning, middle, and end of the research process;
4. Focus group interviews with administrators at the beginning and middle of the research process, and individual administrator interviews at the end of the research process;
5. Reflection/journal notes from administrators, teacher volunteers, and the primary researcher on the administrative professional development (APD) supports and links to teachers' job satisfaction;
6. Observations by the researcher.

Interventions

The primary intervention of this study took place through professional development opportunities for administrators through the structure of a pre-existing professional learning

community (PLC). The PLC included the Principal, eight Assistant Principals, and the researcher. The interventions were created and implemented by the action research design team, which included an assistant principal, one counselor, two teacher leaders, a district-level Leadership Coach from the Office of Leadership and Staff Development, and the researcher. The interventions were initially created after school leaders and teachers took part in a school-wide questionnaire about job satisfaction and leadership practices.

The professional development supports were designed based on feedback from the teachers' and administrators' questionnaires. The guiding ideas were discussed both conceptually and practically. Each day in education is unpredictable and challenging, so it was important to focus on key ideas that could be applied to a variety of situations. As Kouzes and Posner (2023) explain, the context of leadership may change, but the content thereof does not change.

The intervention cycles were designed within the structure of the administrator's weekly PLC meeting schedule. Overall, the intervention cycles followed the logic model of plan-act-observe-reflect. Although school leaders may have different areas of focus, the first meeting of the cycle focused on the purpose and significance of the topic based on data from the questionnaires. The second meeting of the cycle continued with the same practice from the week before and provided professional development activities to deepen administrators' understanding, awareness, and applicability. The third meeting of the cycle allowed administrators an opportunity to discuss the real-time application of the designated leadership practice. The fourth part of the cycle prompted administrators to reflect on the leadership practice and receive feedback.

Significance of the Study

Teacher job satisfaction is a critical component to the success of students and a school. Low morale can contribute to low teacher motivation and decreased self-efficacy, which can ultimately impact instruction as well as student success (Baluyos et al., 2019; Madigan & Kim, 2021). Teacher job satisfaction also has a direct effect on school culture and teacher attrition (Kasalak & Dagyar, 2020; Sanchez et al., 2022). Because teacher job satisfaction has a far-reaching influence on students and a school, it is imperative that school leaders evaluate influencing factors and examine how teacher morale can be positively impacted.

This action research study focused on the impact school leadership behaviors have on teacher job satisfaction in a large, suburban high school. This study adds to the research on teacher job satisfaction by focusing on leaders' behaviors, elements that are within the locus of control for school administrators, and which are applicable to a variety of circumstances.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the focus of this study, including the purpose of the study, research questions, definition of terms, and an overview of methodology. Chapter 2 provides a review of current literature on the topics of teacher job satisfaction, professional development, and leadership practices. Chapter 3 explains the research design and methodology. Chapter 4 analyzes the findings from the research study. Chapter 5 presents the themes that emerged from the action research cycles. Chapter 6 offers a summary of the findings, as well as implications and recommendations for educational administrators, future research, and policy.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Teacher job satisfaction has a major influence on student performance and school success (Hebert, 2019; Madigan & Kim, 2021). Although there are many potential influences, supportive leadership practices from school administrators impact many facets of school culture and can promote positive teacher job satisfaction (Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perceptions of leaders' practices and their influence on their job satisfaction. The following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?
2. In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?

Chapter 2 reviews the key concepts related to this study.

Throughout Chapter 2, foundational topics pertaining to school leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction connect the background and purpose of this research study. The initial overview of the chapter examines teacher job satisfaction, including research on difficulties in maintaining teacher job satisfaction and areas of improvement that could enhance job satisfaction

for teachers, such as school leadership practices. Next, research explores school administrators' leadership practices and how teachers' perceptions of leadership practices can influence teacher job satisfaction. The final portions of Chapter 2 focus on connecting school administrators' leadership practices through professional development and andragogy.

Search Process

This action research study was shaped by literature from a variety of sources, including empirical research, peer-reviewed journal articles, literature reviews, and seminal texts. The search process incorporated the following topics: teacher job satisfaction, school leadership, professional development, and andragogy. These topics aligned with the contextual needs of North Ridge High School (NRHS) and the designated research purpose and questions in the study.

Specific phrases and keywords related to the key topics were used to hone in on relevant literature. Keyword searches included: "improving teacher job satisfaction," "teacher job satisfaction and morale," "Principal leadership and teacher job satisfaction," "teacher perception of Principal's leadership," "administrative professional development," and "adult learning." Initially, in the pursuit of current literature, searches were limited to research from 2019 to 2023 and restricted to peer-reviewed sources. Through the research process, though, sources outside the date and peer-reviewed criteria were sought out to validate or expand foundational knowledge of the topics.

Problem Framing in the Literature

Teacher attrition is high. In fall 2022, the U.S. Department of Education reported a teacher shortage in many states across all elementary grades as well as in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Special Education for all middle and high school grades (U.S.

Department of Education, 2022). Teachers leaving the field of education is often the result of dissatisfaction (Barnum, 2023; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The decline in teacher job satisfaction is rarely based on a single isolated event; rather, it is a slow trickle where difficult working conditions wear down teacher morale over time. Hebert (2019) defines job satisfaction to be the “employees’ perceptions about their workplace, peers, and leaders; their organization’s tasks and goals; and the extent to which the organization meets their needs and goals” (p. 305). It is all-encompassing. Low teacher job satisfaction and high turnover create many issues for schools and students, including negative impacts on school culture and student achievement (Harris et al., 2019). Over time, “teachers overwhelmingly reported that low morale impacted their view of their own pedagogy, contributing to a ‘vicious cycle’ of low morale, disempowerment, and less effective pedagogy” (Dunn, 2020, p. 18). With student learning and school culture at stake, it is pivotal for school leaders to understand the needs of teachers to build and sustain support structures to improve teacher job satisfaction.

To put it simply, when teachers are happy...everyone’s happy. While that phrase might seem overly simplistic, the reality is that high teacher morale impacts multiple layers of education, from school climate and culture, to retention, to student achievement; “Job satisfaction and morale influence faculty behavior and performance, which affect program quality, student learning, and research productivity” (Hebert, 2019, p. 305). Low morale and burnout negatively impact teachers, students, and the school (Madigan & Kim, 2021). High teacher morale does not happen by accident, though.

It takes intentional effort to address the multi-faceted needs of teachers’ ever-expansive job descriptions. There are “many factors’ including school administrators’ leadership style, demographic characteristics and workplace environment can affect employees’ job satisfaction”

(Cansoy, 2019, p. 39). More specific research suggests that “among the factors linked to teacher morale in schools are workplace conditions (e.g., buildings, facilities, equipment), relationships with colleagues, participation in school decision making, student characteristics and behavior, salary, and recognition” (Hebert, 2019, p. 306). School leadership and relationships with school administrators continue to be leading factors for most elements impacting teacher job satisfaction (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Erichsen & Reynolds, 2019; Hebert, 2019). School leaders who purposefully work to address the needs of teachers reap benefits across many areas of the school.

Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a broad term. At its most basic level, it can be defined as “the positive emotional state of individuals about their job and job experience” (Kasalak & Dagyar, 2020, p. 17). Additional research expounds upon the definition of job satisfaction and highlights terms such as contentment, fulfillment, and commitment (Baluyos et al., 2019; Cansoy, 2019). Job satisfaction is based on employees’ perceptions of their workplace (Cansoy, 2019). Although there is some debate about the relationship between job satisfaction and morale, the terms are used interchangeably for the purpose of this study.

In the ongoing conversation on teacher job satisfaction, everyone’s unique perspective matters, especially as teachers consider their job satisfaction. Teachers’ perceptions about their work, students, school culture, administration, and so much more are shaped by their backgrounds, experiences, education/training, and expectations (Ahn et al., 2023). Teachers’ perspectives on their work shape their point of view, attitude, and motivation.

Research on job satisfaction began in the 1930s during the economic crisis of the Great Depression (Weiss & Merlo, 2015). Over time, research evolved to include questionnaires about

work experiences and attitudes, providing a more detailed definition of job satisfaction and highlighting its far-reaching influences (Weiss & Merlo, 2015; Zhu, 2013). In the 1990s, job satisfaction was broken down into a cognitive perspective, such as an evaluation of working conditions, and an affection-based perspective, “whether the job stimulates employees’ pleasant emotions and positive feelings” (Zhu, 2013, p. 294). During the 1990s, researchers also began focusing more in-depth on teacher job satisfaction, specifically in three areas: community factors, school factors, and teacher characteristics (Ouyang & Paprock, 2006). The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, conducted from 1984-2012, shows the percentage of K-12 teachers who said they were “very satisfied” with their jobs ranged from 33% to 62%, with an average of 48% (Will, 2022). In 2022, a similar study, the Merrimack College Teacher Survey, showed that only 12% of K-12 teachers were “very satisfied” with their jobs (Will, 2022). Although the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated conditions, research supports the start of a decline in teacher job satisfaction that began around 2010 and continued at the time of this study (Kraft & Lyon, 2022).

Overall, teachers identify three main difficult working conditions that impact their job satisfaction, specifically cited: “(a) unreasonable expectations, (b) lack of trust and support from administrators, (c) teachers’ inability to participate in decisions affecting their job” (Harris et al., 2019, p. 7). Teachers’ job duties have multiplied and expanded over the years. Daily, teachers are charged with not only teaching the content but also increasing documentation, data analysis, and awareness of students’ social and emotional well-being:

Daily, teachers ensure the health and safety of students, engage multiple students toward

mastery of standards, collaborate with colleagues to create lessons or assessments, submit documentation about student progress, communicate with parents, and attend informational meetings set forth by school administrators. (Farmer, 2020, p. 47)

Teachers are being asked to do more without any additional time to enact said tasks, so they actually have less time to devote to the ever-expanding job duties and expectations placed upon them (Farmer, 2020, p. 45). A 2019 study evaluating various perceptions of schoolwork conditions found that “only 20% of teachers in this study felt that expectations of teachers are reasonable, and 91% considered this particular working condition to be important or very important” (Harris et al., 2019, p. 6). Klaijnsen et al. (2018) outline the increased demands on teachers as they prepare students to enter a “knowledge society,” with all its many expectations, and the pressures that teachers face to adapt and respond to challenges as they arise. With so many expectations placed upon teachers, it is no wonder that teacher job satisfaction is at stake.

Education, by nature, is based on the premise that through knowledge and experience, people can grow. For a teacher to be a catalyst for such change requires that they hold a belief in their abilities to enable learning; “for teachers, self-efficacy is an important feature of their professional identities and correspondingly, their morale and motivation” (Bosso, 2017, p. 19). School leaders must work to improve teachers’ job satisfaction since it impacts motivation and effectiveness, which can ultimately impact student and school success (Baluyos et al., 2019; Castaneda & Varela, 2022).

The high demands and expectations put on teachers impact teacher morale and efficacy. These stressors lead to burnout among teachers; Maslach et al. (2001) focus on three components of burnout: “overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment” (p. 399). Burnout creates a physical,

emotional, and cognitive response, ultimately affecting teachers' morale and sense of efficacy (Dunn, 2020). This bleeds into the vicious cycle that Dunn (2020) highlights: "low morale makes them feel like less effective teachers, and their belief that they are less effective lowers their morale" (p. 18). When teachers feel ineffective or unsupported for challenges in the classroom, teachers are inevitably disconnected from the drive and purpose of their work (Cansoy, 2019). On the other hand, when teachers are supported and encouraged, there is a direct, positive impact on student outcomes (Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Neto et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction has a reciprocal effect in that it serves as a motivation to work, resulting in positive feelings of happiness and contentment with their work, which, in turn, "enhances job involvement resulting in loyalty and commitment which leads to better performance by employees" (Shikalepo, 2020, p. 71). The cyclical impact of job satisfaction benefits both the individual and the organization.

Improving Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Teacher job satisfaction has far-reaching implications including instructional quality, student performance, teacher well-being, job commitment, and school culture (Cansoy, 2019; Toropova et al., 2021). For the well-being of students, teachers, and the school, school administrators should seek to understand and address teacher job satisfaction. Historically, teachers' "prestige, interest, preparation, and satisfaction declined rapidly in the 1970s, rose swiftly in the early to mid-1980s, remained somewhat steady for the next 20 years, and then began declining precipitously around 2010" (Kraft & Lyon, 2022, p. 4). Since the late 1990s, and especially since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, teacher job satisfaction has been an area of focus for the sake of students, teachers, and schools (Evans, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001; Sims, 2017; Toropova et al., 2021; Zhu, 2013).

A teacher's job is deep and wide; it is important to acknowledge the interrelation between different job components and teacher morale, ranging from organizational structure, to relationships with colleagues, to administrative support (Bosso, 2017). Teachers' needs can be identified by four areas of support: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical (Hughes et al., 2015). Emotional support includes encouragement and recognition; environmental support reinforces the school's culture (Hughes et al., 2015). Additionally, instructional and technical support focus on opportunities for professional development and growth as well as instructional resources (Hughes et al., 2015). When considering areas of support, school leaders should recognize that teachers "need a high level of professional autonomy, an intellectual challenge and a feeling that they are benefiting the society" (Shikalepo, 2020, p. 73). When leaders recognize teachers' needs, they are better equipped to respond to and support teachers.

Supportive leadership practices can be perceived positively by teachers and impact teachers' job satisfaction. Schools with more support structures in place have higher job satisfaction; conversely, schools with low teacher satisfaction tend to have fewer support structures in place leading to overburdened job expectations and teacher burnout (Baluyos et al., 2019; Castaneda & Varela, 2022). A plethora of research since 2001 reiterates the impact administrative support and leadership have on teacher job satisfaction (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Sims, 2017; Toropova et al., 2021). Leadership practices can extend to instructional support, school culture, teacher efficacy, and a variety of other elements.

Creating a professional culture is key; "seeking out and valuing teacher input, building teacher capacity and supporting teacher growth require trust in teachers' expertise and perspectives" (Bosso, 2017, p. 25). Teachers are in a dichotomous position; they are uniquely

placed in classrooms as content experts but are often not included in critical decision-making conversations. Teaching

is characterized by *structural vulnerability*: teachers have no or very little control over crucial working conditions, that deeply affect their practices (as well as themselves in that practice), and yet, they still have to enact their job through engaging in practice, for which they are (being held) responsible. (Kelchtermans, 2017, p. 970)

In one aspect, teachers are given deference when they are entrusted with students in their classroom; however, teachers are rarely consulted or brought in on decisions at the local, county, or even state level. School leadership must draw upon the teachers' voices to improve morale; being user-centered "means respecting the people who actually do the work by seeking to understand the problems they confront" (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 32).

School leadership that makes space for teachers' voices promotes "top-down support enabling bottom-up driven change" (Olsson, 2019, p. 31). Schools that want to encourage teacher morale need to lean into strong support structures;

Educational cultures in which teachers are trusted and their perspectives are valued, a shared vision and a shared leadership style are present, and effective communication is the norm are quite often positive, supportive and productive educational environments with higher levels of intrinsic motivation among teacher and students. (Bosso, 2017, p. 26)

This list may seem far-reaching, but such is the nature of a teacher's job. To improve working conditions for teachers and, consequently, improve teacher job satisfaction, school systems and leaders must seek to understand every aspect of the expectations placed upon teachers and engage them by involving them in the creation of solutions. Mitchell (2021) further reiterates this

idea that “environments with high expectations, clear administrative goals, meaningful participation of teachers in decision-making, and collaboration among teachers all influenced teacher resilience and retention” (p. 5). Purposeful leadership behaviors have a positive impact on teachers’ perspectives.

School leaders are an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to supporting teacher morale (Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020). It is up to school leaders to create “a strong professional culture that imparts a shared, consistent vision and nurtures collegiality” (Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020, p. 2). There is a positive influence on teacher morale and motivation when teachers feel supported and when trust and collaboration are key components of the school culture (Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020).

School Leadership

School administrators have a significant influence on a school; “school administrators’ leadership is related to guiding teachers, implementing plans and motivating teachers” (Cansoy, 2019, p. 39). They are both a leader and a manager. As a leader, administrators set the vision and mission of a school, and they work to guide and motivate others. As a manager, school leaders facilitate the day-to-day processes and procedures moving toward the school’s goals. Within all aspects of a school leader’s position, there are factors that impact teacher morale. Teachers consistently highlight their perceptions of school leadership as important (Cansoy, 2019; Hebert, 2019). Research identifies “lack of administrative support as the key factor contributing to difficulties in teaching practice whereby instructors fail to achieve the relevant support required to execute certain practices or duties” (Castaneda & Varela, 2022, p. 3). Teachers are directly serving students; it is important for school leaders to support and develop teachers in turn.

At a basic level, teachers' needs fall within four domains of support: emotional, environmental, instructional, and/or technical (Hughes et al., 2015). Leadership behaviors that “feature participative approaches at school and sharing the authority and responsibilities were reported to predict teachers' job satisfaction” (Cansoy, 2019, pp. 42-43). When school leaders seek out teachers' voices and collaboration, their actions value the teachers and strengthen their interactions. Research suggests that teachers value “a participative, flexible and facilitative structure of administration, strong administrator support, open communication channels, mutual understanding and a school atmosphere where participation is encouraged” (Cansoy, 2019, p. 44). Teachers are a vital part of students' learning; leadership behaviors must value and respond to the needs of teachers.

Every student is a unique learner; understanding and reaching each student is at the heart of teaching and exalts this particular profession as a form of art. With multiple learning styles and needs within their classrooms, teachers work diligently to adapt to and support their students. The same should be true for school leaders with their teachers. Each teacher is unique; administrators must take time to build professional relationships with each teacher accordingly. Research suggests that through “leadership characteristics such as mutual trust, respect, inspiration and communication,” teachers grow in their motivation, effectiveness, and self-efficacy (Cansoy, 2019, p. 44). With strong communication and support, school leaders can exhibit behaviors based on “justice, equality and honesty, create a strong vision around common objectives, share school-related tasks with employees, and improve their skills” (Cansoy, 2019, p. 45). Strong leadership behaviors based on humanistic and social values are demonstrably both individual- and organization-oriented.

In addition to focusing on communication and support, leadership practices are shaped by leadership schools of thought. To meet the needs of the leader, teachers, and the school, it is important to integrate leadership theories. Considering the depth of focus for school leaders – instruction, curricula, communication, and relationships – administrative professional development (APD) should encompass a comprehensive view of leadership theories, practices, and applications (Daniels et al., 2019; Grissom & Harrington, 2010). Although there are many leadership theories, research highlights key components of instructional, distributed, and transformational theories for guiding APD (Daniels et al., 2019; Garcia Torres, 2019; Grissom et al., 2021; White, 2022).

Instructional leadership, for example, identifies three dimensions of principal influence: “defining the school’s mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate” (Hallinger, 2003, p. 332). Within instructional leadership, the focus is on goals for student achievement, coordination and control of instructional programs, and a culture of continuous improvement (Daniels et al., 2019; Hallinger, 2003). Instructional leadership practices can cause direct and indirect impacts on multiple facets of a school, including student learning, school culture and climate, and teacher job satisfaction (Alanoglu, 2022).

Transformational leadership theory differs from instructional leadership in that it is focused on “developing a shared vision and shared commitment to school change” (Hallinger, 2003, p. 331). With transformational leadership, principals focus on “individualized support, shared goals, vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, high expectations and modelling” (Daniels et al., 2019, p. 114) to motivate and encourage innovation (Baptiste, 2019). Transformational leadership suggests that “transformational leaders inspire and motivate

followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and develop leadership skills by responding to individual follower needs” (Lawrason et al., 2023, p. 1).

Distributed leadership introduces the notion that leadership is “the interaction of leaders, followers, and their situation in the execution of particular leadership tasks” (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 10). Through the lens of distributed leadership, the focus is not on the traits or behaviors of an individual but rather “conceived of as a collective social process emerging through the interactions of multiple actors” (Bolden, 2011, p. 251). Distributed leadership recognizes that many can influence and take part in leadership, not only those who are in traditional, formally designated leadership roles (Bolden, 2011). Characteristically, distributed leadership integrates collaboration, shared decision-making and goal-setting, and interdependent interactions (Bolden, 2011; Harris, 2012; Spillane et al., 2004).

No single leadership theory is sufficient to meet the needs of school stakeholders or to truly address the needs of all students or teachers. Rather, a comprehensive view of leadership theories and practices holds promise for improved student and school success:

It is the visionary and inspirational aspects of transformational leadership, where leaders build structures and cultures, develop people, plan the curriculum and evaluate teaching and teachers to impact positively on student learning when combined with the instructional leadership elements of raising teaching performance expectations of self and students, improving conditions for teaching and learning and using data and research that has the greatest potential for transformation and impact on student learning.

(Day et al., 2016, as cited by MacLeod, 2020, p. 172)

To support students and teachers, school leaders need learning opportunities to explore and implement leadership theories and practices. Purposeful professional development allows principals to grow and develop as leaders.

Professional Development

American schools started experiencing a rapid shift in the 1960s and into the 1970s as society experienced many changes including desegregation, the Civil Rights movement, and an overall “rebellion against all social ‘standards’ and traditions” (Garte, 2017, p. 10). These social shifts, along with the economic struggles of the 1980s, prompted Secretary of Education Terral Bell, serving under President Reagan, to establish the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) (Park, 2004). The NCEE panel produced the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* in 1983 (Park, 2004). While leading with a sense of urgency and a need for improvement, the report made recommendations impacting four major topics: content, expectations, time, and teaching (NCEE, 1983). Additionally, *A Nation at Risk* recommended a need “to improve the preparation of teachers” and to improve the quality of teaching, including allowing time for professional development and more resources (NCEE, 1983, p. 30). The NCEE report propelled education into various reforms continuing from the 1980s into the 2000s.

Since *A Nation at Risk*’s release in 1983, organizations and federal reform programs have continually sought to address pre-service and in-service professional development of educators. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 “have attempted to influence teacher quality, teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluation systems, and professional learning” (Zepeda, 2019, p. 7). Over the years, the focus has continually been on teacher professional development; while research supports the impact teachers have on student success,

there has been less emphasis placed upon administrators' professional development, although principal leadership has been shown to also impact student and school performance (Daniels et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2020; Foster, 2021; Grissom & Harrington, 2010).

Principals need opportunities to grow and develop their leadership practices. The increasing responsibilities and ever-changing landscape of school needs warrant continual learning and growth opportunities for school leaders (Zepeda et al., 2014). School leaders' roles are multifaceted (Baptiste, 2019; Cansoy, 2019; Grissom et al., 2021). Matthews and Crow (2010), as cited in Zepeda et al. (2014), acknowledge the depth and breadth of school administrators' roles as "a learner, a culture builder, an advocate, a leader, a mentor, supervisor, a manager, and a politician" (p. 297). Most of the research on professional development (PD) focuses on PD designed for teachers; principal and assistant principal PD research is limited and/or typically focuses on formal training or specific techniques (Daniels et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2020; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Oleszewski et al., 2012). Formal administrative professional development (APD) is often designed to equip leaders for the tasks associated with building-level leadership, rather than fostering leadership development rooted in influencing teaching, learning, and student achievement (Daniels et al., 2019; Rowland, 2017).

Professional development (PD) for school leaders should be job-embedded, ongoing, and contextual (Daniels et al., 2019; Zepeda et al., 2014). Job-embedded PD is influenced by the needs of the individual and interwoven with their day-to-day work and the context of the school (Zepeda, 2019). Identifying professional learning needs is an initial step in the PD design process, which can include a variety of informal and formal measures such as discussions, surveys, or observations (Zepeda, 2019). When needs-based assessment data is collected and analyzed, PD can be designed to better fit the individual and support "the transfer from knowing

to acting, from professional development activities to day-to-day practice; as a consequence, the impact and sustainability of professional development are increased” (Huber & Schneider, 2022, p. 3). Purposeful PD planning aligns the learning activity with the needs of the individual and the context of the school.

Although there is limited research on administrative professional development, there are similar research-based recommendations that surface across the available literature (Daniels et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2020; Grissom & Harrington, 2010). Effective principal PD is:

- required, individualized, and based on data,
- job-embedded, ongoing, and sustained,
- a collaborative process providing a safe setting for consultation and problem-solving,
- reflective, and supported through on-going coaching and/or mentoring.

(Davis et al., 2020, p. 3-9)

Each principal and school are different, so a “one-size-fits-all” model or random, sporadic training for APD is not effective (Daniels et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2020).

APD that is individualized caters to the prior experiences, career stage, and current context surrounding the school leader (Davis et al., 2020; Zepeda et al., 2014). When designing APD, data and research-based recommendations should be used to identify strengths and weaknesses and prioritize goals (Davis et al., 2020; Huber & Schneider, 2022). A critical component of APD is that the learning is job-embedded and ongoing; a coherent focus on day-to-day practices and needs allows school leaders to personally connect with their work and apply learning (Davis et al., 2020; Zepeda, 2019). Although it is recommended that APD be tailored to individual principal needs, collaboration among colleagues allows space to process ideas, have critical conversations, receive feedback, and reflect (Davis et al., 2020; Rowland, 2017). APD

allows school leaders to better understand and respond to the needs of their students, teachers, and schools.

Andragogy

Andragogy, a term used to describe adult learning, was first coined in 1833 by Alexander Kapp to differentiate adult learning from child learning (Mews, 2020; Purwati et al., 2022).

Research into adult learning took form after the end of World War I. Through the 1920s and 1930s, evidence abounded that “adults could learn and that they possessed interests and abilities that were different from those of children and youth” (Knowles, 1978, p.10). Work from the late 1920s highlighted that “in adult education the curriculum is built around the student’s needs and interests” and emphasized the significance of experience as a means of learning (Knowles, 1978, p.10). Malcolm Knowles is credited with popularizing the term in the U.S. in the 1960s (Knowles, 1978; Mews, 2020). Over time, andragogy has evolved to include six elements or assumptions about adult learners: the learner’s need to know, self-concept of the learner, prior experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 2015; Marquardt & Waddill, 2004; Mews, 2020; Purwati et al., 2022).

The first component of andragogy is that “adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 47). Adult learners need to establish purpose in their learning; “correlating short-term objectives with long-term goals is likely to yield higher sustained interest in learning and progress” (Mews, 2020, p. 66). Before adults buy into new learning, they tend to consider both benefits and consequences (Purwati et al., 2022).

Adults’ enhanced self-concept is the critical second element of andragogy (Knowles et al., 2015). An individual’s self-perception is rooted in beliefs, actions, and abilities. Through

maturation, adults take on the perspective of being responsible for their decisions and become increasingly self-directed (Knowles et al., 2015; Mews, 2020). Recognizing adults as more responsible learners means allowing adult learners to have “some personal control over either or both the planning (goals) and the management (support) of the learning experience” (Loeng, 2020, p. 2). Self-directed learning does not imply that the learner is completely independent but rather a contributor to the learning process through context and collaboration.

A large part of a learner’s self-concept and self-directedness stems from the learners’ experiences, the third piece of andragogy (Loeng, 2020). Adult learners, by way of increased years of life, have a greater quantity and varied quality of life experiences (Knowles et al., 2015). A learner’s self-identity is shaped by experiences and, over time, causes habits and biases to develop (Knowles et al., 2015; Mews, 2020). Andragogy supports the acknowledgement and valuing of adult learners’ experiences, while also encouraging problem-solving activities, open-mindedness, collaboration, and reflection (Knowles et al., 2015; Loeng, 2020; Mews, 2020).

Adult learners’ readiness to learn is an additional factor of andragogy (Knowles et al., 2015; Mews, 2020; Purwati et al., 2022). In self-directed learning, readiness is the intersection of “feeling and action, activity with reflectivity” (Adenuga, 1989, p. 156, as cited in Loeng, 2020, p. 8). A readiness to learn is when “adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 48). Readiness can also be impacted by developmental stages and/or social roles; as changes or challenges arise, adults are prompted to embrace new learning (Knowles et al., 2015; Purwati et al., 2022).

Andragogy highlights that “adults are life-centered (or task- or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 49). Adult learners experience an “immediacy

of application” that is centered on performance and real-life application (Knowles et al., 2015; Loeng, 2018, p. 4; Mews, 2020, p. 66). As issues and topics come up in life, adults are prompted to learn and solve problems. By being life-centered and focusing on problem-solving, learning is more individualistic as it embraces multiple facets of andragogy, including the learner’s purpose, self-concept, and experiences.

Being life-centered connects adult learners’ purpose and motivation. While adults are motivated by some extrinsic factors, such as a promotion or salary, “the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like)” (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 50; Mews, 2020). An adult’s desire for self-improvement propels motivation for learning. Mews (2020) states that “adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs, interests, and benefits that are satisfied through learning” (p. 66). Personal responsibility and internal motivation guide adult learning to meet the needs of the individual learner.

Conclusion

Teaching is no longer just about disseminating content; it is far more expansive. Teaching is an art that brings together content knowledge, pedagogical know-how, and social and emotional intelligence, and also incorporates the elements of test development and data analysis. The overwhelming priorities placed on teachers’ shoulders have created a culture of low teacher morale and burnout (Farmer, 2020). School leaders must seek to understand the needs of teachers to build and sustain leadership practices that are supportive and perceived positively by teachers to impact teacher job satisfaction. To develop effective leadership practices, school administrators must engage in job-embedded professional development, honing in on areas of improvement. Schools with support structures in place, such as strong leadership behaviors,

create a school culture focused on building teachers up as professionals who can then pour into their students (Bosso, 2017; Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Olsson, 2019).

CHAPTER 3

ACTION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Teacher job satisfaction is an influential factor in student learning (Hebert, 2019; Madigan & Kim, 2021). While many details can impact teacher job satisfaction, administrative leadership practices have an extensive reach and effect on multiple elements of teacher job satisfaction (Baptiste, 2019; Cansoy, 2019; Grissom & Harrington, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perceptions of leaders' practices and their influence on job satisfaction. The study focused on the actions of the Principal and Assistant Principals in a large, suburban high school. The action research team wanted to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on job satisfaction and the role that teachers' perceptions of administrators' leadership practices influence teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, the action research team sought to understand the perspective of school leaders on administrative professional development.

To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?
2. In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of administrators' leadership practices on their job satisfaction?

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research considers “participants’ experiences, perceptions, and behaviors” in a specific context at a specific time (Tenny et al., 2023, p. 1). Instead of looking at ‘how many’ or ‘how much,’ qualitative research considers the “‘how’ (process) and the ‘why’ (questions)” (Glanz, 2014, p. 80). Foundationally, qualitative research considers how knowledge is created and understood, specifically from the perspective of the participants (Glanz, 2014). The open-ended nature of qualitative research allows participants to investigate social phenomena and experiences that are typically difficult to quantify, focusing on finding “effective solutions to practice-based problems” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 4). Qualitative research is a heterogeneous field with a broad definition. There is a consensus that qualitative research often includes studying the ‘real’ world through observations and thick, detailed descriptions and being context-sensitive (Hammersley, 2013).

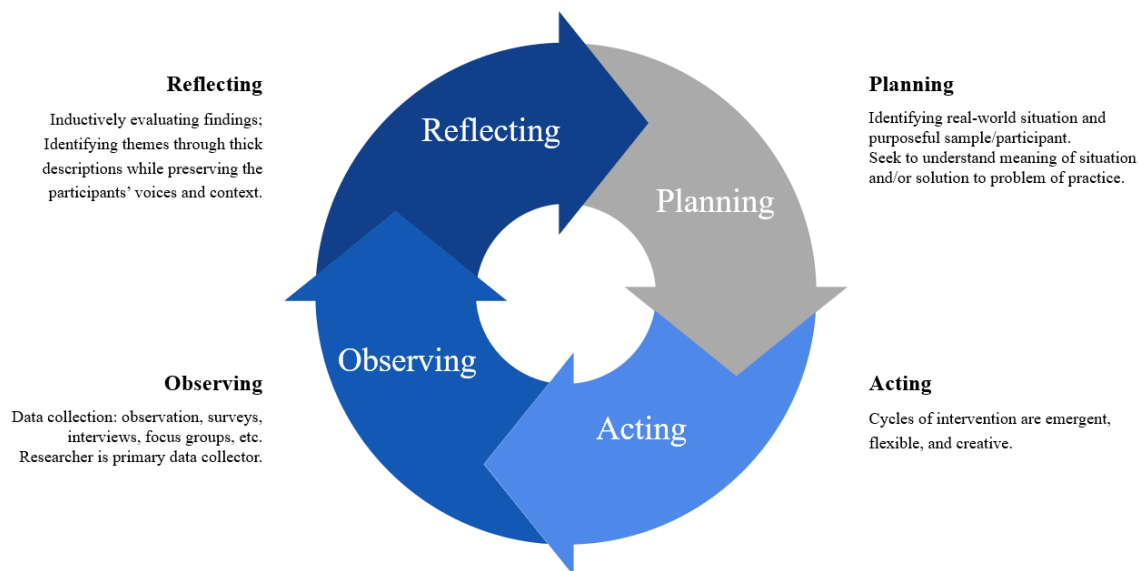
This current action research study aimed to examine the intersection of school-based administrators’ professional learning of leadership practices and teachers’ perceptions of leadership practices and their influence on teacher job satisfaction. A component of qualitative research focuses on the participants within the context of the study; this was a critical piece of the present study. Rich descriptions and responses from teachers on their perceptions of leadership practices and their influence on their job satisfaction created a sense of urgency in areas of growth for the administrative team. The administrators were directly involved in professional development designed for school-based administrators and, in turn, were involved in the application of their learning to work more effectively with teachers and staff.

In contrast to quantitative research, which is characterized as structured, objective, and detached, qualitative research is described as inductive, emergent, and collaborative (Bloomberg,

2023; Glanz, 2014). Within the natural setting, qualitative researchers “analyze their outcomes from the inside out” beginning with observations and interpretations as the data is gathered inductively, building toward theory (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 70). This emergent nature extends into the qualitative research process, as well. Although there is a proposed research design, qualitative research is responsive to the data that is collected and allows space for flexibility and creativity through a cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Figure 3.1 illustrates the qualitative research cycle. Additionally, the researcher and participants collaborated within the research process. Since qualitative research aims to improve practice, it is essential to engage the participants as co-investigators working towards organizational change (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Figure 3.1

Qualitative Research Cycle



Note. Adapted from Bloomberg (2023) and Merriam & Tisdell (2016).

Qualitative research is iterative in nature; using multiple observations allows researchers to thoroughly gather data and make authentic meaning and “improved understanding”

(Lichterman, 2021, p. 586). In the present study, qualitative research was selected because of the ongoing nature of professional development for the administrators as well as the inductive design of the research cycles. Daniels et al. (2019) and Davis et al. (2020) highlight the need for more purposeful administrative professional development (APD) since the current research suggests that APD is often limited and/or not context-specific. For the current study, responses from both teachers and administrators, as well as the specific context of the study, informed the design process in this study.

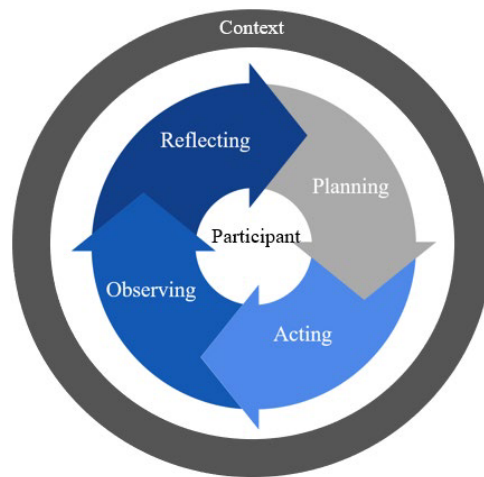
The aim of this present study was to evaluate teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and their influence on teacher job satisfaction as well as leaders' perceptions of administrators' professional development. Action research methods were most appropriate for this study as there was a focus on having an in-depth understanding of the context of the situation and the perspectives of the participants. Data collection methods in this study included observations, questionnaires, focus group interviews, and reflective journals. Additionally, feedback from teachers was attained through questionnaires at the beginning of the study to inform administrators' professional development and establish a baseline for teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction. Similarly, teacher questionnaires were administered at the end of the study to gauge administrators' implementation of learning from professional development and teachers' perceptions of the impact of leadership practices on their job satisfaction.

Overview of Action Research Methods

Action research is a type of applied research meaning that its goal is to "improve practice by solving a specific problem" (Glanz, 2014, p. 7). Action research engages participants in the research process to create knowledge and take action within the context of the problem (Bloomberg, 2023). The participative nature of action research methodology attempts to bridge

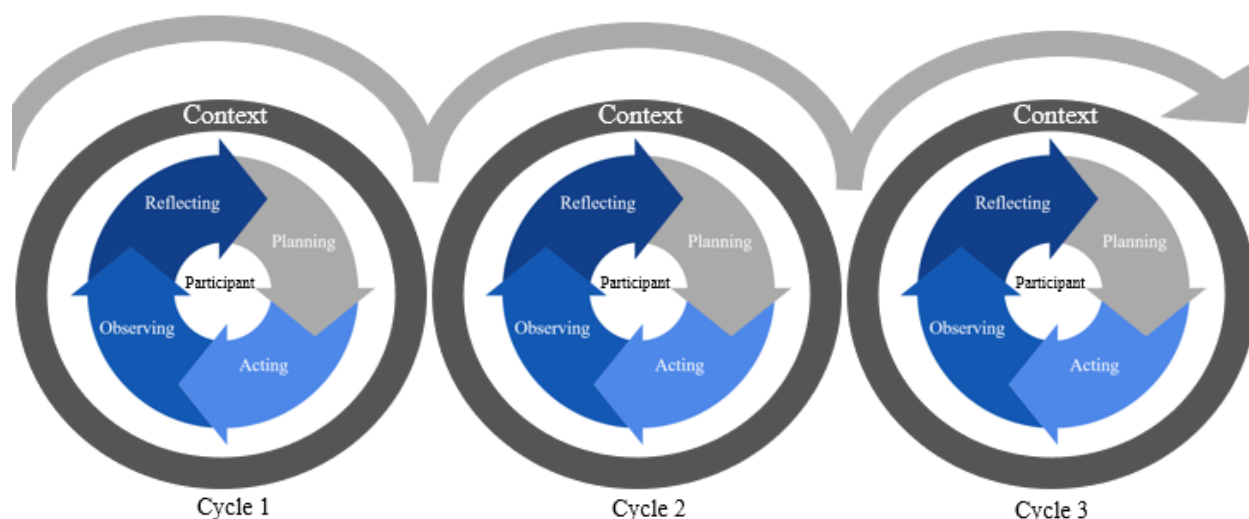
the “theory-practice gap” by directly involving those engaged with the work (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 101). By pulling the participants into the action research process, this methodology empowers participants to collaborate and be actively engaged in the research interventions as well as fostering a sense of ownership and motivation to invest in the knowledge acquisition and work towards improvement (Bloomberg, 2023; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Action research is fitting due to the nature of the present study and is complemented by adult learning theory which supports participants, in this case, the school-based administrators, being motivated, ready, and engaged with professional learning.

The action research process is iterative and cyclical (Bloomberg, 2023). These components embrace interventions focused on context-specific issues and solutions, collaboration, and cycles of “research, reflection, and action” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 157). Investing in the action research cycle sets the stage for the researcher and participants to identify the problem, collect/organize/interpret data, take action based on the data, and reflect (Bloomberg, 2023). This action research cycle supports the constructivist paradigm, embracing the notion that knowledge and meaning are constructed through individual experiences (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014). Figure 3.2 illustrates the constructivist paradigm in relation to the action research cycle in which the participant is engaged with the action research process as it relates to the specific context and problem.

Figure 3.2*Action Research Cycle and Constructivism*

Note. Adjusted figure from Bloomberg (2023), Glanz (2014), and Merriam & Tisdell (2016).

The participant is directly involved with the problem in day-to-day work as well as the research design and interventions; this allows the participant to create knowledge and construct meaning within the research cycle. Although reflection is shown as a step after observation, it runs informally throughout the research cycle, guiding the next steps and allowing for flexibility and creativity in planning additional interventions and cycles. The knowledge and experiences of each intervention cycle inform the next cycle and allow opportunities for learning and continuous improvement over time, as shown in Figure 3.3. In this visual, each cycle leads to the next with the context weaving throughout. This ongoing, cyclical feature of action research aligns with the characteristics of effective professional development, including being ongoing and job-embedded, which aligns with the administrators' professional development in this study (Zepeda, 2019).

Figure 3.3*Action Research Cycles*

Note. Adjusted figure from Bloomberg (2023), Glanz (2014), and Merriam & Tisdell (2016).

Action research is an appropriate methodology for this study as the aim is to “promote actual change by informing and impacting practice thereby leading to the improvement of life for a desired targeted group or individuals” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 158). With limited current professional development for administrators, this study seeks to provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development regarding leadership practices for school-based administrators (change in practice) which can, in turn, impact teachers’ perceptions of leadership practices and influence their job satisfaction (improvement). The Action Research Design Team (ARDT) will play a critical role in evaluating data, as well as identifying topics for and creating administrators’ professional development.

Action Research Design

The action research design aims to improve problems of practice through action and reflection (Bryk et al., 2015; Glanz, 2014). Through enhanced decision-making and a commitment to continuous improvement, action research empowers participants to better

understand and address issues in their daily work (Glanz, 2014). Qualitative action research is characterized as “inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher’s experience in collecting and analyzing the data” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 21). The research process evolves in response to data collection and intervention cycle actions and reflections.

Action research, in the current study, allowed the action research design team (ARDT) and the action research implementation team (ARIT) to cycle through the plan-act-observe-reflect cycles (Bryk et al., 2015). The current study focused on administrator professional development (APD), application of concepts learned from professional development in work with teachers, and teachers’ perceptions of leaders’ practices.

The Spiraling and Iterative Nature of Action Research

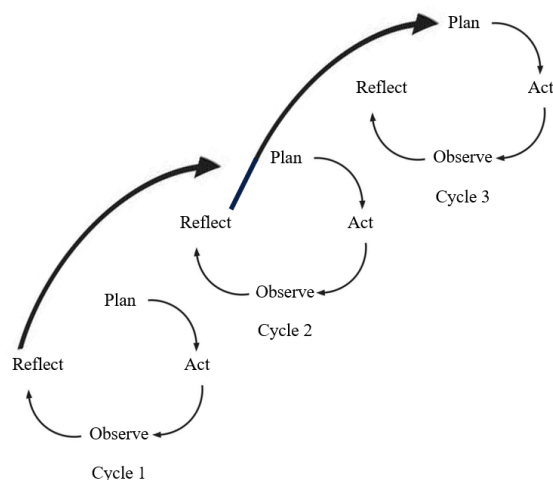
As a form of qualitative inquiry, action research is interested in understanding “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). By nature, therefore, action research embraces the context, participants, and experiences in a study (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014). Action research aims to facilitate change or address problems by involving people in the work with interventions (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Stated differently, the action research process must be designed in a way that focuses on understanding, collaboration, and empowerment for participants.

Action research embraces a spiraling, iterative nature that builds on data and feedback from previous cycles (Bryk et al., 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Figure 3.1 illustrates how one cycle can feed into another, allowing participants to adjust or expand the scale based on data (Bryk et al., 2015). As the researcher and participants work through each cycle, the process generates new data that shapes the evidence and influences the next steps of this emergent

research process (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Throughout each cycle, the premise of action research is to introduce new concepts or interventions so that new meaning can be made for participants as shown in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4

Spiraling, Iterative Cycles in Action Research



Note. Adapted from Bryk et al. (2015).

As Figure 3.4 shows, in this study, each cycle consisted of the following steps: Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect. This model was adapted from Bryk et al.'s (2015) model of Plan-Do-Study-Act. The data and feedback from each cycle informed the next intervention cycle. Each cycle included the steps of observation and reflection. These elements allowed the researcher and participants to consider the links between administrative professional development (APD), the application of APD in working with teachers, and teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and how those perceptions influence teacher job satisfaction.

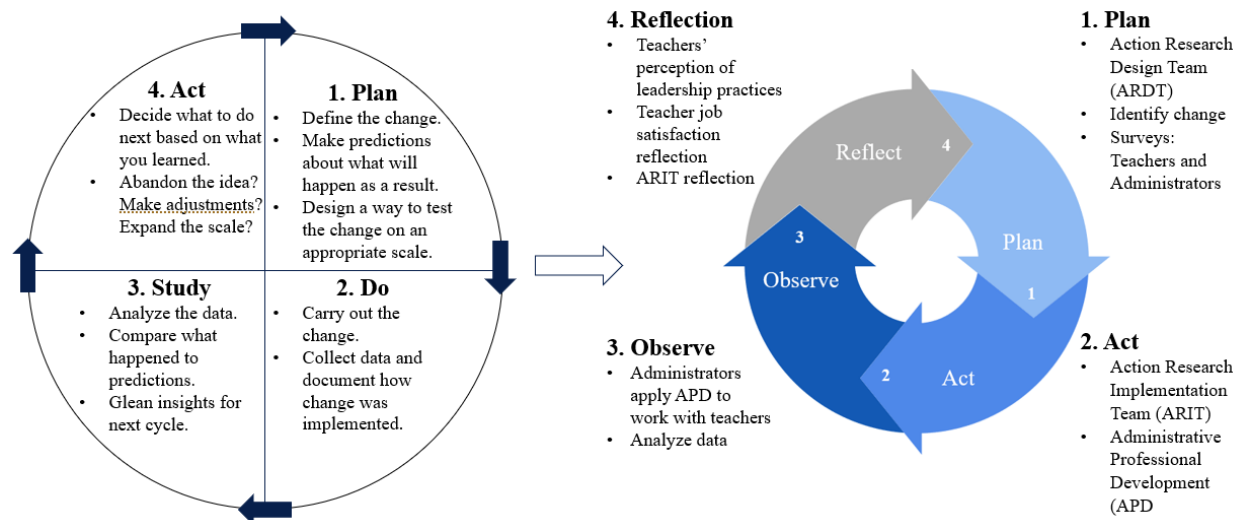
Logic Model

The spiraling and iterative nature of action research is characteristic of improvement research, which aims to identify an issue, propose a change, act on the change, collect data,

analyze data, and decide the next steps (Bryk et al., 2015; Glanz, 2014). The logic model serves as a guide for how the administrative professional development (APD) was created, implemented, and perceived by teachers and administrators. In this study, the Plan-Do-Study-Act inquiry cycle from Bryk et al. (2015) was adapted as shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5

Adaptation of Plan-Do-Study-Act to Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect



Note. Adapted from Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 122).

The logic model in this study adapted Bryk et al.'s (2015) original terminology; the term "Observe" was used in place of "Study" and "Reflect" was used in place of "Act." This research study included the implementation of APD in the "Act" step, so "Observe" seemed more appropriate for the next step of application of APD learning to work with teachers and the consequential data. Additionally, the step of "Reflection" gave space for both teachers and administrators to consider the intervention cycle, its impact, and the next steps.

Theory of Change

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the link between administrative professional development (APD) and teachers' perceptions of leadership practices, as well as how those

perceptions influence teacher job satisfaction. At the core, this study is based on the notion that when administrators receive ongoing, context-specific professional learning, they are developed in ways that allow them to better interact with and respond to the needs of teachers (Davis et al., 2020). In the process of supporting APD, it was essential for the Action Research Design Team (ARDT) to embrace the concepts of andragogy and key elements of APD creation (Knowles et al., 2015). The ARDT worked diligently to identify topics and related resources for APD; then, the ARDT designed job-embedded APD to support the development of administrators' leadership practices (Daniels et al., 2019; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Zepeda, 2019).

The theory of change in this study was rooted in developing administrators' leadership practices by providing context-specific learning opportunities tailored to the needs of adult learners (Knowles et al., 2015; Zepeda, 2019). Said differently, by taking into consideration the participants' content and learning needs, constructivism allows the participants to seek understanding and make meaning of their experiences (Bloomberg, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the current study, administrators applied concepts learned to enhance their knowledge and understanding in their work with teachers.

The Case

The context of this current study was a large, suburban high school. Through qualitative action research, the study aimed to evaluate the link between teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and the impact of those perceptions on teacher job satisfaction. Through cycles of intervention, the ARIT had opportunities to experience administrator professional development (APD) and apply the learning to work with teachers. Throughout this case, it was essential for the ARDT to understand and apply the theory of andragogy as well as professional development creation to each intervention cycle (Knowles et al., 2015). When working with professionals

through adult learning opportunities, it was important to evaluate data for professional learning needs as well as understand the complexity of creating ongoing, job-embedded APD (Zepeda, 2019).

The purpose of a case study is to “generate understanding and deep insights to inform professional practice” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 83). Case studies are characterized by detailed descriptions, often guided by a series of questions investigating a specific individual, group, or phenomenon (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014). The current study is an intrinsic case study as it is focused on developing a greater understanding of a specific case: how APD influences administrators’ leadership practices and how teachers perceive their administrators’ leadership practices in relation to their job satisfaction (Bloomberg, 2023).

Action Research Design Team

Action research serves to “improve practice by solving a specific problem” (Glanz, 2014, p. 7). By connecting theory, practice, and context, action research fosters continuous improvement, enhances decision-making, and empowers participants in their daily work (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014). The guiding principles of action research influenced the selection of the Action Research Design Team (ARDT) members in this current study. The ARDT was comprised of members of the North Ridge High School (NRHS) staff and a district-level Leadership Coach who are experienced educators with knowledge and perspectives that shaped the development of the research design and interventions. ARDT members were selected for their experiences, knowledge, and leadership, as well as their overall investment in the well-being of teacher job satisfaction at NRHS.

The primary researcher served as an Assistant Principal at NRHS whose primary duties included: Testing Coordinator, Student Support team (10th grade students), and evaluation (22

teachers across the math, science, and language arts departments and 2 clerical positions). As the primary researcher worked directly with teachers across the school in various capacities, there was a vested interest in understanding the link between teachers' perception of administrators' leadership practices and their influence on teacher job satisfaction. Mr. James Long was another NRHS Assistant Principal to serve on the ARDT. Mr. Long's role as Community School Director required that he work primarily non-school hours from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. daily, working to support after-hours events and facility needs. Mr. Long's work hours limited his direct interaction with teachers; he did not serve as a teacher evaluator, participate in course team instructional meetings, or support Student Services. Nevertheless, as a member of the administrative team, Mr. Long still cared deeply about the school culture and climate and had a vested interest in the link between teachers' perceptions of administrative leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction. Although Mr. Long had limited direct interaction with teachers at the time, Mr. Long's experiences helped him serve as a thought partner within the ARDT in creating administrator professional development (APD).

Ms. Maggie Griffin provided experience from 15 years in education as a school Counselor, 5 years of which have been completed at NRHS. At the time of this study, Ms. Griffin served as Chair of the NRHS Morale Committee. Ms. Griffin's experience and focus on teacher/staff job satisfaction supported the study's overall focus.

Dr. Davis Smith served as a Leadership Coach in the Office of Leadership and Staff Development for Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS). With over 32 years of education experience, Dr. Smith has served in multiple roles in CCPS, including roles as a former Paraprofessional, Teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal. As a CCPS district leader, Dr.

Smith provided a non-NRHS perspective as well as a broad view of leadership practices and APD across CCPS. Dr. Smith worked closely with the primary researcher to design APD.

Initially, Mr. Henry Moore and Ms. Elizabeth Wood were positioned as teacher leaders on the ARDT. At the time of this study, Mr. Moore had been a teacher at NRHS for over 6 years, and Ms. Wood was a long-time teacher at NRHS, with 17 of her 21 years in education at NRHS. Ms. Wood had served in various teaching roles at NRHS, including being a math teacher, special education math teacher, special education case manager, special education Department Chair, and an engineering teacher. Although Mr. Moore and Ms. Wood initially consented to participate in the study, both had to recuse themselves during the first intervention cycle.

Since this study was centered on teachers' job satisfaction, the primary researcher wanted to include teacher leaders on the ARDT. Once Mr. Moore and Ms. Wood left the study, the primary researcher gathered consent and included two additional teacher leaders in the ARDT: Mr. Dane Miller and Ms. Laura Dawson. Mr. Miller had 8 years of teaching performing arts, 4 of which were at NRHS; Ms. Dawson had been a Language Arts teacher at NRHS for 17 years. Both Mr. Miller and Ms. Dawson served as leaders within their departments. Mr. Miller's and Ms. Dawson's experiences assisted the ARDT with understanding teacher feedback, with each being a thought partner in creating APD with teacher job satisfaction in mind. Table 3.1 lists the members of the ARDT and their roles.

Table 3.1*Action Research Design Team Members*

Team Member	Primary Role at North Ridge High School	Action Research Role
Primary Researcher	Assistant Principal, NRHS	Leads and conducts all research with the ARDT for data analysis. Brings 18 years of education experience, all of which have been served at NRHS, including 12 years of administrative experience.
Ms. Laura Dawson	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience as a language arts teacher with over 17 years at NRHS. Currently serves as a department chair (8 years) and has served in a variety of roles on campus, including club sponsor, coach, and teacher leadership.
Ms. Maggie Griffin	Counselor, NRHS	Provides experience from 15 years in education as a school Counselor, 5 years of which have been completed at NRHS. Serves as Chair of the NRHS Morale Committee.
Mr. James Long	Assistant Principal, Community School Director, NRHS	Provides experience from 20 years of being an administrator, 10 of which have been served at NRHS, and 25 overall years in education.
Mr. Dane Miller	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience from 8 years of teaching performing arts, 4 years of which have been at NRHS. Works diligently to support his field as an adjunct teacher at other schools as well.
Dr. Davis Smith	Leader Coach, CCPS	Provides experience from over 32 years in education, including roles as a former Paraprofessional, Teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal. Currently serves as a Leader Coach in the CCPS district Office of Leadership and Staff Development.

Action Research Implementation Team

The administrative team at North Ridge High School (NRHS) was asked via email in July 2024 to participate in this study during the 2024-2025 school year. Those who elected to

participate made up this study's action research implementation team (ARIT); as participants, they were actively involved in the interventions and process to search for "effective solutions to practice-based problems" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 4). The ARIT was comprised of 9 out of the 11 members of the administrative team, excluding the primary researcher and Mr. James Long who served on the ARDT.

Prior to this study, the administrative team at NRHS had limited ongoing professional development at the local or district level. At the local level, professional development efforts often focused on teachers; occasionally, the administrative team would read articles or books, but these were often in support of teacher initiatives. Since Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS) was a large district, the county-led administrator professional development (APD) was often implemented in a train-the-trainer fashion where each school could send one representative who was expected to share the learning with their local administrative team. This approach often resulted in key ideas being shared but without strong elements of how to implement ongoing, context-specific administrative professional development. Table 3.2 lists the action research implementation team members with their roles at NRHS, years of experience in education, years of administrative experience, and their years of experience at NRHS.

Table 3.2*Action Research Implementation Team Members*

Team Member	Role at NRHS	# of Years in Education	# of Years in Administration	# of Years at NRHS
Mr. James Andrews	Assistant Principal	28	10	10
Dr. Neil Ballard	Assistant Principal	25	11	8
Mr. Duncan Brooks	Assistant Principal	28	11	2
Ms. Kelly Burke	Assistant Principal	26	18	11
Mr. Miles Carlson	Principal	25	20	11
Ms. Julia Cook	Assistant Principal	26	16	16
Dr. Kate Harris	Assistant Principal	28	18	24
Mr. Charles Lewis	Assistant Principal	15	4	4
Mr. Logan Scott	Assistant Principal	23	8	5

The Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT) worked within different settings throughout this current study. ARIT had opportunities for administrator professional development (APD) in the context of the administration's weekly course team meetings. Additionally, the ARIT could apply learning from the APD to their work with teachers individually and through teacher course team meetings.

Action Research Plan and Timeline

The research plan and timeline for the current study embraced the spiraling, iterative nature of action research and focused on reflection and observation to inform the next intervention cycle (Bryk et al., 2015). Since this action research was centered on the link between teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction, each intervention cycle was twofold with a focus on administrators' professional development (APD) and the application of administrators' learning to work with teachers. Table 3.3 outlines the current study's timeline for iterative reflection and action in each cycle in this study.

Table 3.3*Action Research Timeline*

Action Research Activity		
Date	Action Research Design Team (ARDT)	Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT)
July 2024	- Secured consent to participate in the study - Conducted the “Teacher Perception Questionnaire” (pre) and “Administrator Perception Questionnaire” (pre)	- Secured consent to participate in the study - Completed “Administrator Perception Questionnaire” (pre)
August 2024	- Conduct teachers’ focus group interview #1.1-1.4 - ARDT monthly meeting #1 - Data review from the “Teacher Perception Questionnaire” (pre) (July) and “Administrator Perception Questionnaire” (pre) (July) - Data review from teachers’ focus group interviews - Goal: Identify APD focus/content for cycles #1-3 - Collect artifacts - Researcher’s journal: record data/reflections	- Conduct ARIT focus group interviews #1.1-1.4 - Data review from teachers’ and administrators’ questionnaires and introduction to APD focus/content - Observation of administration’s course team meeting(s)
September 2024	- ARDT monthly meeting #2 - Collect artifacts - Researcher’s journal: record data/reflections	- APD cycle #1 - Observation of administration’s course team meeting(s) - Participant’s journal: reflections - Researcher’s journal: record data/reflections

Table 3.3 Continued*Action Research Timeline*

Date	Action Research Design Team (ARDT)	Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT)
September-October 2024	• Conduct teachers' focus group interviews #2.1-2.4 • ARDT monthly meeting #3 • Collect artifacts • Researcher's journal: record data/reflections	• APD cycle #2 • Observation of administration's course team meeting(s) • ARIT Focus group interview #2.1-2.4 • Participant's journal: reflections • Researcher's journal: record data/reflections
October-November 2024	• ARDT monthly meeting #4 • Conduct teachers' focus group interviews #3.1-3.4 • Conduct and review data from the "Teacher Perception Questionnaire" (post) and "Administrator Perception Questionnaire" (post) • Collect artifacts • Researcher's journal: record data/reflections • ARDT reflections • Appropriate follow-up activities	• APD cycle #3 • Observation of administration's course team meeting(s) • ARIT Individual interviews • Complete the "Administrator Perception Questionnaire" (post) • Participant's journal: reflections • Researcher's journal: record data/reflections • Appropriate follow-up activities

The action research plan and timeline allowed for opportunities of ongoing observation with the administration's course team meetings. Additional data was collected after each cycle through focus group interviews and reflective journals from both the participants and researcher.

Context of the Study

North Ridge High School (NRHS) is located approximately 35 miles north of the state's capital, and this county has a population of over 980,000 residents; over one-quarter of the

county's population is school-aged or younger (United States Census Bureau, 2024). With such a growing population, NRHS is one of the county's 27 high schools with a student population of around 3,000; it is situated along the northern border of the county. The city surrounding NRHS is considered a low-poverty area; the estimated poverty rate of the area surrounding the school is 9.5%, well below the state rate of 14% (United States Census Bureau, 2024). Additionally, the median home value in the area surrounding NRHS is over \$100,000 higher than the state average; some local neighborhoods have homes that are over a million dollars. The NRHS cluster includes students from some of the most affluent neighborhoods in the county.

District Characteristics

NRHS is in a large, metropolitan county. The Campbell County Public School (CCPS) district supports over 178,000 students. This school district is diverse, as shown in Table 3.4. A quarter of the district's students have limited English proficiency, and over half of the student population (63%) is eligible for free/reduced meals (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2023). Additionally, the district's student population is one-third Black and one-third Hispanic, followed by 17% White and 12% Asian (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2023).

Table 3.4*District Percentage of Students by Race/Other Subgroups*

		District Percentage of Students		
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Other Demographics	Limited English Proficient	22.0%	24.0%	25.0%
	Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals	50.0%	45.0%	55.0%
	Students With Disability	12.8%	12.7%	12.8%
	Migrant	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Female	49.0%	49.0%	49.0%
	Male	51.0%	51.0%	51.0%
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	11.0%	11.0%	12.0%
	Black	32.0%	33.0%	33.0%
	Hispanic	33.0%	33.0%	34.0%
	White	19.0%	18.0%	17.0%
	Multiracial	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%

Note. Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2023).

The district’s student population is more diverse than the district’s staff demographics. In the 2022-2023 school year, CCPS employed approximately 14,170 school-based employees: 26.9% were Black, 60.0% were White, 6.7% were Hispanic, 4.1% were Asian, 0.2% were Native American, and 2.1% were Multiracial (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2023).

According to The Governor’s Office of Student Achievement’s *School Grades Reports* (2023), the state’s 2019-2020 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) was 75.9%, but the district where NRHS is located was higher at 79.7%. The CCRPI is the state’s “annual tool for measuring how well its schools, districts, and the state itself are preparing students for the next educational level” (State Department of Education, 2023a). There are five main components to CCRPI, including Content Mastery, Progress, Closing Gaps, Readiness, and Graduation Rate (high school only) (State Department of Education, 2023a). The 2019-2020 NRHS overall CCRPI score was 93.6%, significantly higher than both the state and district.

Overall CCRPI scores for subsequent years have not been released since 2019-2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic-related issues.

The graduation rate for this school district has ranged between 82-83%, which is close to the state graduation rate of 83-84% for the 2020-2022 school years (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2023). NRHS had a graduation rate of 95-97% for the 2020-2022 school years; this is significantly higher than both the district and state (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2023). The district's demographics give context to the demographics of NRHS, showing that NRHS is a high-achieving school. Historically, NRHS has outperformed state and district student achievement data. As a school, NRHS deviates from the district's overall student data.

Student Body Characteristics

North Ridge High School's (NRHS's) student population has become increasingly diverse over the years as the surrounding county has experienced a population growth. From the Governor's Office of Student Achievement's *K12ReportCard* (2023), Table 3.5 shows the NRHS student percentage of enrollment by race and other subgroups over the course of a three-year span: 2020 through 2023.

Table 3.5*North Ridge High School Percentage of Students by Race/Other Subgroups*

		NRHS Percentage of Students		
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Other Demographics	Overall Enrollment	3,183	3,071	3,089
	Limited English Proficient	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%
	Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals	11.0%	9.0%	12.0%
	Students With Disability	8.2%	8.6%	8.6%
	Migrant	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Female	49.0%	49.0%	48.0%
	Male	51.0%	51.0%	52.0%
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	27.0%	29.0%	30.0%
	Black	12.0%	13.0%	14.0%
	Hispanic	9.0%	9.0%	9.0%
	White	47.0%	43.0%	41.0%
	Multiracial	5.0%	6.0%	5.0%

Note. Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2023).

In comparison to the district’s data in Table 3.4, NRHS has a much smaller percentage of students who have limited English proficiency, who are eligible for free/reduced meals, and who are identified with a disability. NRHS has a smaller minority population than the district’s student population. Additionally, 34.1% of the student population at NRHS is identified as part of the gifted program, compared to 16% for the district (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2023).

NRHS has an active campus; the school’s website boasts 99 different clubs, sports, and co-curricular student organizations. The campus is often buzzing with activity and hosting various student and community events. Additionally, there is a strong push for student organizations to give back to the community through service projects. Through the school’s advisement program, students are encouraged to explore and join at least one student

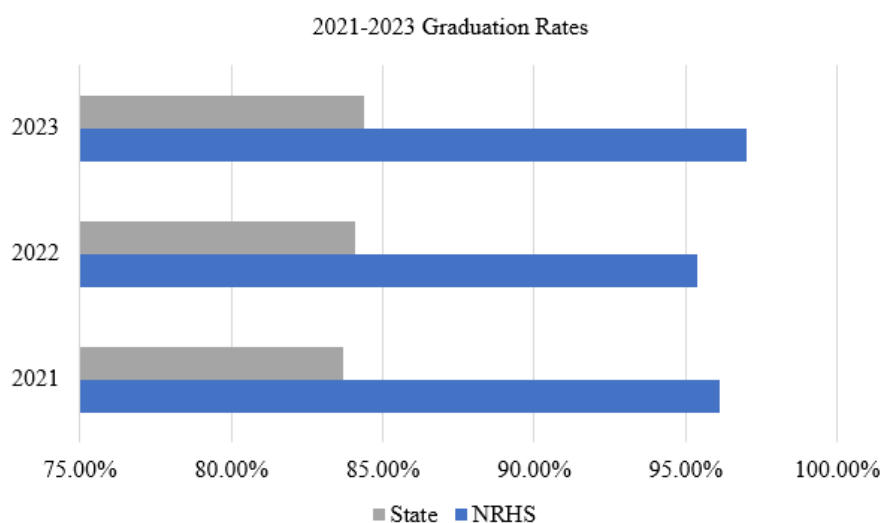
organization that aligns with their interests. NRHS has an involved and engaged student population.

Academic Achievement

North Ridge High School (NRHS) is considered a high-performing school, with a high graduation rate, and doing well on both state and national assessments (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2024). For the 2020-2022 school years, NRHS had an average graduation rate of 96.2%. Student subgroups also have high graduation rates; in 2022, the graduation rate for students with limited English proficiency was 87.2%, and the graduation rate for students with a disability was 88.1%. Figure 3.6 compares NRHS and state graduation rates for the 2021-2023 school years.

Figure 3.6

State vs. NRHS Graduation Rates 2021-2023



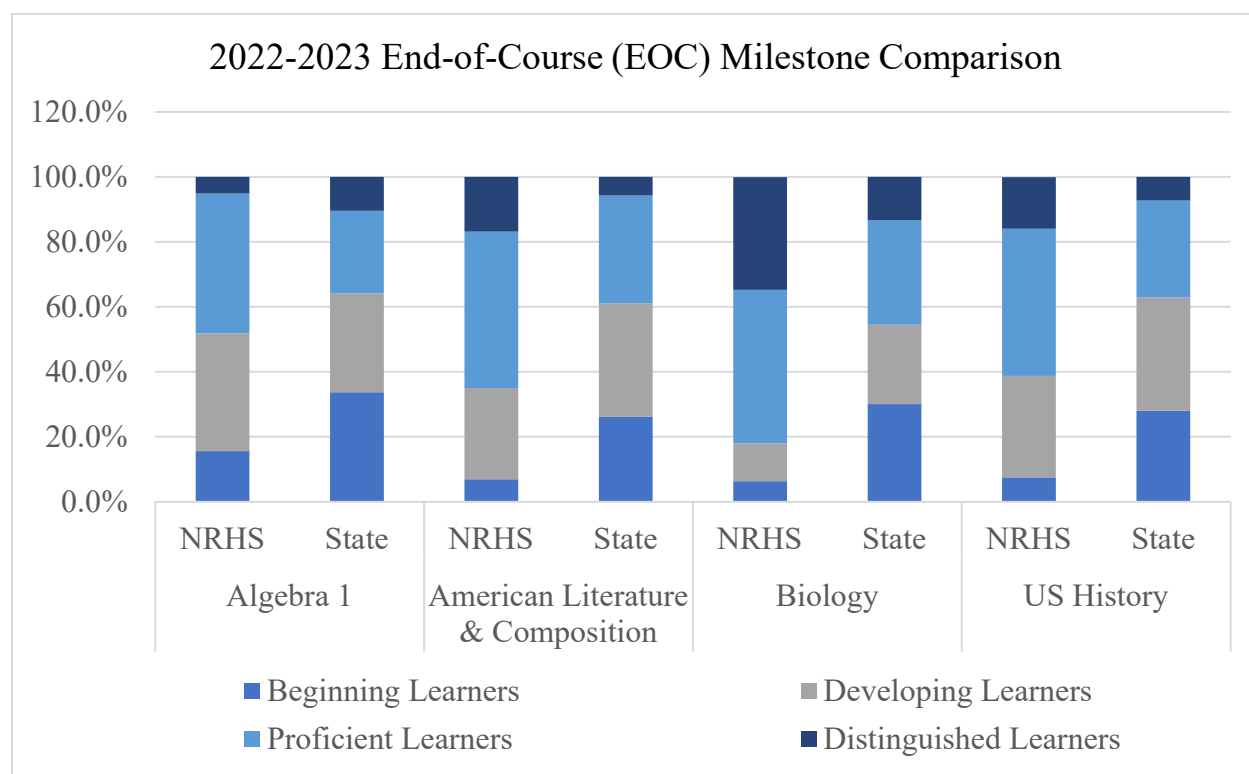
Note. State Department of Education (2023c); Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2023).

On state assessments, across various subjects, NRHS students consistently score in the distinguished, proficient, or developing learner categories. At the high school level, state testing

includes Milestone End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in Algebra I, Biology, American Literature and Composition, and U.S. History. Figure 3.7 compares the 2022-2023 EOC data from the state and NRHS.

Figure 3.7

2022-2023 NRHS vs. State Milestone EOC Scores



Note. State Department of Education (2023b).

Between 6-15% of NRHS students scored within the beginning learner category across subjects in the 2022-2023 EOC administrations, whereas data from the state showed more than 26-33% of students scored in the beginning learner category across all subjects (State Department of Education, 2023b). Additionally, across EOC subjects between 5-34% of NRHS students score as distinguished learners compared to only 5-13% of learners across the state. Overall, NRHS has a reputation for having high expectations for teaching and learning. Student achievement is a key focus for students, teachers, and administrators.

Teacher Characteristics

The teaching staff at NRHS can be characterized as stable and experienced. Table 3.6 provides teacher data across a variety of demographics from the 2020-2023 school years. The racial/ethnic breakdown of the NRHS teaching staff in Table 3.6 is not nearly as diverse as the NRHS student population shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.6

North Ridge High School Percentage of Teachers by Race/Other Demographics

		NRHS Percentage of Teachers		
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Certificate Level	4 Yr Bachelor's	27.5%	27.6%	26.5%
	5 Yr Master's	43.1%	43.6%	47.0%
	6 Yr Specialist's	26.3%	25.8%	22.9%
	7 Yr Doctoral	3.1%	3.1%	3.6%
Gender	Female	56.9%	52.8%	54.8%
	Male	43.1%	47.2%	45.2%
Race/Ethnicity	Asian	5.6%	6.1%	8.4%
	Black	6.3%	7.4%	6.0%
	Hispanic	6.9%	7.4%	8.4%
	White	80%	78%	74.7%
	Multiracial	1.3%	1.2%	2.4%
Years Experience	< 1	2.5%	4.3%	5.4%
	1-10	3.1%	28.8%	30.1%
	11-20	34.4%	34.4%	31.9%
	21-30	25.6%	25.8%	27.1%
	> 30	6.3%	6.7%	5.4%
	Average years	16	16	15

Note. Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2023).

The majority of the teachers at NRHS hold advanced degrees beyond a Bachelor's and have more than 10 years of experience. Overall, teachers' experience and educational levels help set a strong foundation of curriculum, pedagogical, and leadership skills.

Leadership Characteristics

In 2024, the administrative team at NRHS consisted of a Principal, Athletic Director, Community School Director, and eight other Assistant Principals (APs). Historically, since 2016, NRHS has had 6-8 Assistant Principals, depending on the year. The Athletic Director and Community School Director are APs, but their roles encompass some non-traditional AP job duties, including working with businesses and organizations in our community. Since 2019, the only reasons for mobility in the administrative team were retirement or promotion. At the time of the study, the administration had been at NRHS for multiple years, ranging from 2-24 years, with an average of over nine years as an administrator at NRHS.

The administrative team at NRHS oversees a wide range of duties and responsibilities. All APs, except the Community School Director, serve as instructional leaders and evaluators for teachers and their corresponding professional learning communities (PLCs) on campus. APs attend PLC meetings weekly and meet with teachers throughout the year for pre- and post-conferences related to classroom observations and evaluations for the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System. Additionally, AP duties extend into multiple other arenas within the school, including curriculum, student services, testing, supervision, and more.

The demographics of the leadership team is provided in Table 3.7; the NRHS administrative team is less diverse than both the NRHS student population from Table 3.5 and the NRHS teacher demographics from Table 3.6.

Table 3.7*North Ridge High School Percentage of Administrators by Race/Other Demographics*

		NRHS Percentage of Administrators		
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Certificate Level	5 Yr Master's	25%	27.3%	20.0%
	6 Yr Specialist's	58.3%	54.6%	60.0%
	7 Yr Doctoral	16.7%	18.2%	20.0%
Gender	Female	50%	45.4%	40.0%
	Male	50%	54.6%	60.0%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Black	16.7%	9.1%	10.0%
	Hispanic	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	White	83.3%	90.0%	90.0%
	Multiracial	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Years	1-10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Experience	11-20	33.3%	27.3%	30.0%
	21-30	66.7%	72.7%	70.0%
	> 30	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Average years	21	22	23

Note. Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2023).

The majority of the administrative team holds a Specialist or Doctoral degree and has an average of more than 20 years of experience in education overall. The stability of the administrative team provides NRHS with consistent support and school vision from year to year.

Staff Perception Data

Although the student data for this school is strong, there has been a noticeable decline in staff morale data since 2017. This school district annually administers the Staff Perception Survey. On this survey, staff respond to questions focusing on a range of topics from training and safety to support and technology. In the 2016-2017 school year, staff "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to many positive aspects of the school, such as school culture and instructional support, leading to an overall survey total of 3.68 out of 4, well above the district's high school rate of 3.42 out of 4.

By the 2021-2022 school year, staff response to these same questions had declined; there were fewer “Strongly Agree” responses, and the number of “Disagree” responses had increased. In the 2021-2022 survey data, the school’s overall survey total dropped to 3.44 out of 4, significantly closer to the overall high school rate of 3.38. Additionally, teacher attrition increased from 2018 to 2022; the number of teachers who left the school for reasons other than retirement doubled in the 2020-2021 school year and remained high in the 2021-2022 school year as well. Most of the teachers who left for reasons other than retirement cited burnout or overwhelming expectations as their reason for leaving in an informal exit interview.

NRHS is a high-achieving school, and strong classroom instruction is linked to student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2017). With an increased number of teachers indicating lower staff morale and/or choosing to leave NRHS since 2017, it is imperative that NRHS school leaders work to identify and address teacher job satisfaction.

Leadership Professional Development

Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS) is a large district. With 140 schools in CCPS, district-led administrator professional learning opportunities are often fashioned in a “train-the-trainer” model. CCPS holds monthly Assistant Principal Leadership Opportunities (APLO) meetings where one AP attends the training and is expected to share the APLO learning with the other APs at their school upon return. Sometimes the APLO topics are geared towards APs in the curriculum offices, focusing on training for upcoming scheduling, while other times the APLO topics are broad and applicable across AP job duties. Additionally, the CCPS Office of Leadership and Staff Development hosts leadership seminars and symposiums geared toward providing elective training opportunities for administrators and teacher leaders.

In addition to APLO meetings, APs have opportunities to attend role-specific, operational meetings, such as those for the Athletic Director or Testing Coordinator. Often, these meetings are focused on equipping APs to complete tasks or prepare for major events at their school. For example, the Testing Coordinator meetings focus on specific test administrations throughout the year to prepare and train staff for standardized testing. In these role-specific meetings, the goal of the meetings is often on training and compliance instead of developing leadership skills.

Data Sources

The purpose of the study was to examine the link between teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and how those perceptions influence teacher job satisfaction. Since "leadership is second only to classroom instruction" (Leithwood et al., 2017, p. 1) regarding its impact on student achievement, and in consideration of how leadership practices influence teacher job satisfaction, intervention cycles in this study focused on administrative professional development (APD) and administrators' application of concepts learned from APD in their work with teachers. A variety of data sources were used, including primary and secondary sources, to evaluate the links between APD and leadership practices, as well as teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and teachers' job satisfaction.

Participants

Throughout the study, there were two primary groups of participants: the Action Research Design Team (ARDT) and the Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT). Each team was selected based on their involvement and roles at NRHS as well as their connection to teachers' job satisfaction.

The ARDT consisted of the primary researcher, the school's Community School Director, two teacher leaders, a school counselor, and a district Leadership Coach from the

Office of Leadership and Staff Development. Outside of the district Coach, the ARDT members had a direct connection with teachers' job satisfaction, leadership practices, and student achievement at NRHS. Table 3.8 lists the ARDT team members and their roles within the research study.

Table 3.8

Action Research Design Team Members

Team Member	Primary Role at North Ridge High School	Action Research Role
Primary Researcher	Assistant Principal, NRHS	Leads and conducts all research with the ARDT for data analysis. Brings 18 years of education experience, all of which have been served at NRHS, including 12 years of administrative experience.
Ms. Laura Dawson	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience as a language arts teacher with over 17 years at NRHS. Currently serves as a department chair (8 years) and has served in a variety of roles on campus, including club sponsor, coach, and teacher leadership.
Ms. Maggie Griffin	Counselor, NRHS	Provides experience from 15 years in education as a school Counselor, 5 years of which have been completed at NRHS. Serves as Chair of the NRHS Morale Committee.
Mr. James Long	Assistant Principal, Community School Director, NRHS	Provides experience from 20 years of being an administrator, 10 of which have been served at NRHS, and 25 overall years in education.
Mr. Dane Miller	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience from 8 years of teaching performing arts, 4 years of which have been at NRHS. Works diligently to support his field as an adjunct teacher at other schools as well.
Dr. Davis Smith	Leader Coach, CCPS	Provides experience from over 32 years in education, including roles as a former Paraprofessional, Teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal. Currently serves as a Leader Coach in the CCPS district Office of Leadership and Staff Development.

The ARIT participants were all members of the NRHS administrative team, including the Principal and eight out of the ten Assistant Principals (APs) who chose to participate in the study. The ARIT members were directly involved with teacher professional learning communities and supported teachers in the day-to-day work of teaching and learning. Additionally, the ARIT members were directly involved with the intervention cycles of administrative professional development (APD). Table 3.9 describes the ARIT participants.

Table 3.9

Action Research Implementation Team Members

Team Member	Role at NRHS	# of Years in Education	# of Years in Administration	# of Years at NRHS
Mr. James Andrews	Assistant Principal	28	10	10
Dr. Neil Ballard	Assistant Principal	25	11	8
Mr. Duncan Brooks	Assistant Principal	28	11	2
Ms. Kelly Burke	Assistant Principal	26	18	11
Mr. Miles Carlson	Principal	25	20	11
Ms. Julia Cook	Assistant Principal	26	16	16
Dr. Kate Harris	Assistant Principal	28	18	24
Mr. Charles Lewis	Assistant Principal	15	4	4
Mr. Logan Scott	Assistant Principal	23	8	5

The ARIT was selected with purpose using specific criteria supporting the research questions and purpose of the current study.

Selection Criteria

In this qualitative research study, nonprobability, purposeful sampling was used when selecting ARIT participants to gain the most information-rich, in-depth understanding concerning the research focus (Bloomberg, 2023; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The current study used criterion sampling since the participants met a “certain set of criteria as predetermined by the researcher” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 266). In criterion-based sampling, the participants’ characteristics align with the purpose of the study; the perspectives of the chosen participants are

significant to both the context and the problem of practice being addressed through the intervention cycles (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

ARIT participants were selected based on their roles as school-building administrators at NRHS and their direct work with teachers and teachers' professional learning communities (PLCs). The sample size was dependent on the number of administrators who met the criteria; for example, the Community School Director/AP works hours outside of the normal school day and has limited interaction with teachers, so he was asked to be a member of the ARDT instead of the ARIT. Additionally, the sample size was limited by the number of administrators who chose to participate in the study; the remaining ten administrators were invited to participate, but only nine chose to be members of the ARIT.

Data Collection Methods

Action research, a form of applied, qualitative research, aims to address a specific problem or facilitate change in a real-world setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A significant part of qualitative research is understanding how people interpret and give meaning to their experiences to better understand the process of facilitating change (Bloomberg, 2023). The inductive nature of qualitative research necessitates the use of multiple emergent and flexible data collection methods (Bloomberg, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, qualitative data collection methods were derived from the study's purpose, theoretical framework, and research questions.

Data collection for this study employed a variety of qualitative methods, including:

1. Questionnaires for teachers and administrators at the beginning and end of the research period;

2. Semi-structured, focus group interviews with teacher volunteers before, during, and after the intervention cycles;
3. Semi-structured, focus group interviews with administrator participants at the beginning and middle of the research cycles, and semi-structured individual interviews with administrators at the end of the research process;
4. Photo elicitation interview questions at the beginning, middle, and end of the research period;
5. Observations from the administrators' team meetings;
6. Document review of questionnaires and journal reflections from participants and the researcher.

The researcher analyzed data collected from the questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The researcher and Action Research Design Team (ARDT) also examined the reflective journal entries and data collected to inform upcoming research cycles. Using multiple data collection methods allowed the researcher to use a coding scheme to look for overall patterns and generate themes.

Questionnaires

In this study, questionnaires provided demographic, contextual, and perceptual information (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014). Teachers and administrators completed online questionnaires at the beginning and end of the research process. Teachers had the option of replying anonymously or choosing to include their names if they wanted to be considered for future interviews. The online, anonymous administration option allowed for candor and authentic responses (Bloomberg, 2023). Administrators included their names in their responses so that the

researcher and ARDT could more deeply analyze the data collected and more specifically inform the intervention cycles.

Questionnaires were administered to teachers at the beginning and end of the research process to gauge teachers' job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions of leadership practices. The questionnaires included a mix of Likert scale and open-ended items. Although teachers were not direct participants in this study, their questionnaire responses provided crucial insight into teachers' perspectives and gave direction to the ARDT.

Administrator participants took a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the research process. The initial questionnaire evaluated administrators' perceptions of their individual leadership, as well as their overall view of the administrative team's leadership behaviors and style. The final questionnaire for administrators also included reflection on the administrative professional development (APD) and the administrators' application of learning from the APD. Responses from both the teachers' and administrators' questionnaires were compared and contrasted by the researcher and ARDT to identify patterns, themes, and areas of need.

Interviews

Interviews give the researcher insight into participants' feelings, behaviors, and intentions that may not be directly observable (Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through interviews, the researcher can gain "in-depth, context-rich personal accounts, perceptions, and perspectives" (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 279). In this study, semi-structured, focus group interviews were conducted throughout the research cycles with teachers and administrators. Semi-structured, individual interviews were also conducted with administrators at the end of the research process. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the researcher to use guiding questions and the dynamics of the interview to collect data.

The teachers' interviews allowed the researcher insight into teachers' job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions of administrators' leadership practices. The interviews with teachers asked broad questions about teachers' job satisfaction, but also more specific questions evaluating the link between administrators' job duties, leadership styles, and behaviors with teachers' job satisfaction. Table 3.10 includes a sample of teachers' interview questions.

Table 3.10

Teachers' Interview Question Sample

Research Question	Teacher Interview Questions
Q2: In what ways do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	How do you define teachers' job satisfaction? a. What factor is most impactful to your job satisfaction? Why? Thinking about your school's administration: a. How do you see their job duties impacting teachers' job satisfaction? b. How do you see their leadership styles impacting teachers' job satisfaction?

Semi-structured, focus group interviews were also conducted with participating administrators from the Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT). Both the teachers' and administrators' interviews influenced the research intervention cycles. The interactive nature of the administrators' interviews allowed for conversations between the researcher and participants focused on administrators' perceptions of teacher job satisfaction, professional development, and the impact administrator's leadership behaviors have on teachers' job satisfaction. Table 3.11 illustrates a sample of ARIT interview questions.

Table 3.11*Administrators' (ARIT) Interview Question Sample*

Research Question	Administrator Interview Questions
Q2: In what ways do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	How do you define teachers' job satisfaction? a. What factors do you think impact teachers' job satisfaction? How? Why? b. How do you gauge teachers' job satisfaction? Thinking about yourself as an administrator: a. What role(s) do you play in teacher job satisfaction? b. How do you see your leadership style impacting teachers' job satisfaction?

Photo Elicitation

In this study, photo-elicitation involved using photographs in the teachers' and administrators' interviews to generate discussion (Glaw et al., 2017). The interviewees used their interpretation of the photos provided by the researcher to respond to interview questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The brain uses different parts to process visual images than verbal information; in turn, photo-elicitation evokes feelings, memories, and a different kind of information than traditional verbal interviews (Glaw et al., 2017). Table 3.12 shows the photo-elicitation interview questions for both administrators and teachers.

Table 3.12*Photo Elicitation Interview Question Sample*

Photo elicitation directions: For our next few questions, I've provided you with 6 images/pictures. I'd like for you to view the images, reflect on each question being asked, and provide a detailed explanation aligning your response with the images provided.

Research Question	Administrator Photo Elicitation Interview Questions	Teacher Photo Elicitation Interview Questions
Q2: In what ways do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	- Looking at these pictures, select the image that best represents your leadership style and be prepared to tell why. - Does this view of yourself as a leader correlate with your job responsibilities? How/Why? - Looking at these images, which one do you think best represents teachers' job satisfaction? Why?	- Looking at these images, which one represents how you feel about your job? Why? - Looking at these images, which one represents the degree of your job satisfaction? Why? - Looking at these images, which one represents your administration's leadership style? Why?

Appendix A shows the photo array used throughout the pre-, mid-, and post-cycle photo-elicitation interview questions.

Observation Notes

In this study, the researcher observed administrators in their weekly administrative team meetings where administrative professional development and reflection occurred. Observations allowed the researcher to gather firsthand data, this is because observations can take place in the natural setting as the behavior is happening (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher was able to observe elements of the complex interaction between teachers' job satisfaction and administrators' leadership behaviors at varying levels. Initial observation notes focused on broad areas of interest, but over time, the researcher was able to identify recurring patterns, which led

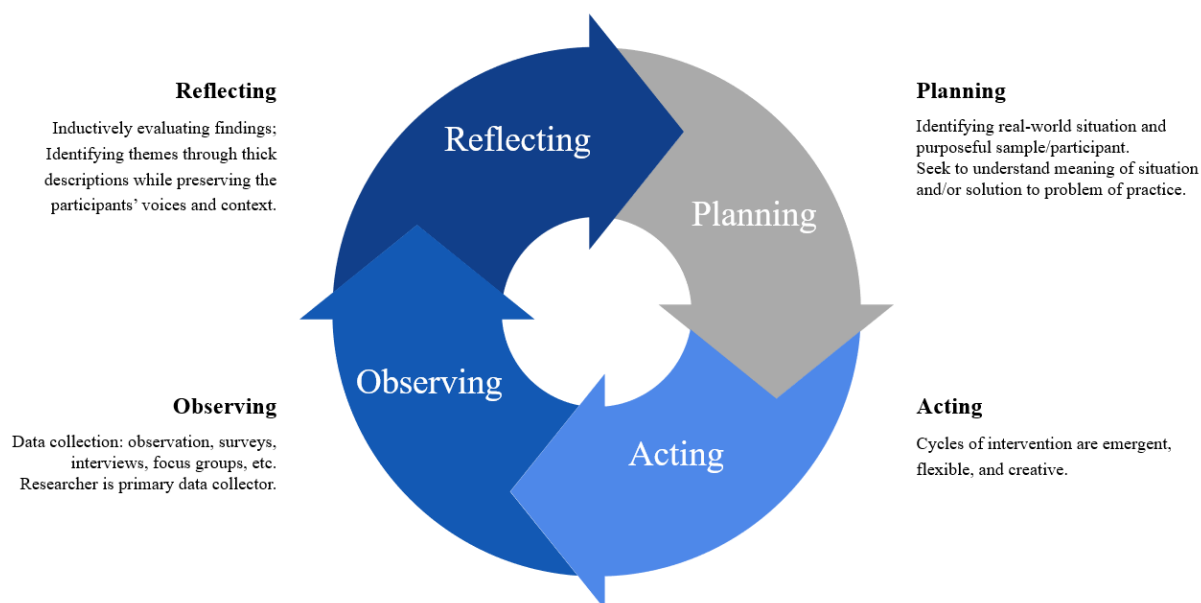
to more focused observation notes (Bloomberg, 2023). The researcher used a two-column note-taking strategy to provide space for both observations and initial interpretations (Mertler, 2017).

Document Review

Document reviews allowed the researcher and ARDT to analyze the teachers' and administrators' questionnaire responses as well as the ARIT's and researcher's reflective journals. Reviewing the researcher's journal promoted reflexivity, which is "the active, ongoing process of examining oneself as a researcher and remaining aware of how one's assumptions, biases, and preconceptions affect" research decisions (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 116). Additionally, document reviews painted a broader picture of the data collected since participants had time to reflect and respond at their own pace, going back as needed to elaborate on their responses. This prompted rich, detailed descriptions from the participants' perspectives and connected information across data collection methods.

Interventions

Action research strives to generate knowledge and seek solutions for participants trying to facilitate change in their practices (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The action research process directly impacts practice, enhances decision-making, promotes reflection, and seeks continuous improvement (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014). Action research is both inductive and emergent, responding to the evolving research process and data (Bloomberg, 2023; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Within action research, interventions emerge through the spiraling, iterative nature of action research's inquiry and reflection. Figure 3.8 illustrates these characteristics of the qualitative research cycle.

Figure 3.8*Qualitative Research Cycle*

Note. Adapted from Bloomberg (2023) and Merriam & Tisdell (2016).

Interventions fall into the “Acting” stage of the cycle. Glanz (2014) defines intervention as “any specific instructional practice, program, or procedure that is implemented by a researcher to investigate its effect on behavior or achievement” (p. 316). Action research is propelled forward through the implementation of interventions and reflection.

The purpose of the study was to examine the link between teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ leadership practices and how those perceptions influence teacher job satisfaction. Specific interventions were developed for administrative professional development (APD) to impact leadership practices for school-based administrators as they work with teachers. Interventions were implemented and analyzed to evaluate the influence and perception of leadership practices on teacher job satisfaction.

School leadership matters: studies suggest that leadership is second only to instruction in impacting student learning (Grissom et al., 2021; Levin et al., 2020). School leaders have an extensive reach from setting a school's vision, creating the school climate, empowering others, making instructional decisions, guiding change and improvement, and managing resources (Levin et al., 2020; Zepeda et al., 2014). Such influence leads to great responsibility and affects students, teachers, and the organization (Baptiste, 2019). School leadership reaches beyond direct interactions and impacts broader arenas such as teacher job satisfaction and, consequently, student achievement, among other things (Grissom et al., 2021; Levin et al., 2020).

The role of school-based administrators has become increasingly complex over time (Levin et al., 2020; Zepeda et al., 2014). Part of supporting impactful leadership practices involves constantly growing and learning through purposeful professional development. Effective APD blends elements of andragogy, or adult learning theory, with skills and expertise specific to the needs of the participants and the school (Grissom et al., 2021; Levin et al., 2020; Zepeda et al., 2014). Andragogy acknowledges the role and uniqueness of the learner while adapting to fit the learning situation as well (Knowles et al., 2015). Characteristics of andragogy can address the *how* of APD. When considering the *what* of APD, Grissom et al. (2021) suggest “three overlapping realms of skills and expertise that school leaders need to be successful: *instruction, people, and the organization*,” including human development and relationship skills, instructional-focused interactions with teachers, building a productive climate, facilitating collaboration, and managing personnel and resources strategically (p. xv). In this study, Grissom et al.'s (2021) three domains translated into a focus on Leithwood et al.'s (2017) rational/instructional, emotional, and organizational pathways.

The primary interventions in this study were based on elements of Knowles et al.'s (2015) adult learning theory, Leithwood et al.'s (2017) Four Paths model, and characteristics from Grissom et al.'s (2021) leadership realms of skills and expertise to improve school outcomes. Although Knowles et al. (2015) outline six characteristics of andragogy, this study focused on three components: being relevancy-oriented, problem-centered, and goal-oriented (Zepeda et al., 2014). APD practices connect elements of andragogy with skills and expertise for improvement through providing job-embedded, ongoing, context-centered learning tailored to the needs of the participant and the organization (Grissom et al., 2021; Zepeda et al., 2014).

Relevancy-Oriented: Tailored to Needs

When APD is job-embedded, it is “a highly personal form of learning responsive to the unique needs of adults” (Zepeda, 2019, p. 20). One struggle with previous APD attempts at North Ridge High School (NRHS) was that while administrators share some similar duties and responsibilities, they each have specific roles unique to them. The district-level APD in Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS) tends to be broad, not designed with specific needs in mind, and shared in a “sit-and-get” model with limited active learning. In this study, one of the first goals was to gather data from the administrators and teachers specific to the NRHS administrative team. Initial questionnaires and interviews provided data that allowed the ARDT to tailor interventions to the specific needs of the administrative team at NRHS.

Based on the identified areas of need, the ARDT designated specific APD in three-week cycles with ARIT journal reflection prompts and focus group discussion questions. Tailoring to the needs of the ARIT members helped to keep the APD goal-oriented and focused for each participant while also creating collaborative focus groups for participants to share ideas.

Goal-Oriented: Job-Embedded

Job-embedded APD connects participants with experiential learning that is relevant to their day-to-day work (Knowles et al., 2015; Zepeda, 2019; Zepeda et al., 2014). Professional learning should be ongoing and woven into the culture of the school (Zepeda, 2019). To instill APD into the fabric of NRHS's culture, the administrative team restructured their weekly meeting agenda with feedback from the ARDT. Previously, the weekly agenda was a list of talking points with items ranging from day-to-day school procedures, review of teaching and learning (observations), upcoming events, and brief check-ins with each administrator. To attempt to ingrain APD into the culture of the NRHS administrative team, the weekly agenda was redesigned to include the following headers:

- Course Team Conversations and Admin To-Dos
- Instruction: observations, vision and goals, data analysis
- Current Happenings: application of APD to work with teachers/reflection, student and staff accountability, current implementation of initiatives
- Looking Ahead: staff professional development pre-planning, department chair meetings, vision alignment
- Calendar and Logistics: day-to-day procedures, resource management, upcoming events

The ARDT chose these topics for the weekly agenda with influence from the works of Grissom et al. (2021) and Levin et al. (2020).

Part of the agenda, Current Happenings, focuses on calling attention to administrators' APD work, application to working with teachers, and reflection. Ingraining this into the weekly meetings created a sense of accountability, prompting ARIT participants to consider their

learning from the APD, the application to work with teachers, and how to continually improve from week to week.

Problem-Centered: Contextual

Job-embedded APD tailored to the needs of the participants and the organization aligned this study to be problem-centered with active learning (Levin et al., 2020; Zepeda et al., 2014). The initial data gathered from administrators and teachers created three potential topics for APD: instructional, emotional, and organizational, aligning with three pathways from Leithwood et al.'s (2017) Four Paths model. Each cycle included pertinent reading, discussion questions, and reflection. The work did not stop, though, with the APD; instead, the next step involved applying the APD learning to work with teachers and real-world problems of practice (Zepeda, 2019). Each administrator supported different teachers in a variety of ways, including observations, evaluations, grade-level student support, instruction, and more. ARIT participants were able to discuss and collaborate in their APD focus group, apply their learning to work with teachers, self-reflect, and further discuss and reflect in the weekly administrators' meetings. The interventions for the study are provided in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13*Interventions for the Study*

Intervention Activities	Andragogy Characteristic	Intervention Cycle	Intervention Time Frame
Initial questionnaires and interviews	Relevancy-oriented	Pre-Cycle	July-August
APD reading, discussion	Relevancy-oriented Goal-oriented	Cycles 1-3	September-November
ARIT journal reflections	Relevancy-oriented Problem-centered Goal-oriented	Cycles 1-3	August-November
Collaborative focus group	Relevancy-oriented Problem-centered Goal-oriented	Cycles 1-3	September-November
Restructured weekly agenda	Relevancy-oriented Goal-oriented	Cycles 1-3	October-November

The intervention cycles included a variety of APD activities that informed subsequent cycles. The ARDT monitored the implementation of APD learning and application to work with teachers using qualitative data methods.

Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative data analysis is “concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognizing, coding, mapping, exploring and describing patterns, trends, themes, and categories in the raw data, in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meanings” (Mezmir, 2020, p. 15). In qualitative action research, data is collected from a variety of methods, including interviews, questionnaires, reflections, and observations, to name a few. Such data often includes rich, thick descriptions specific to the research context; it can initially be considered unstructured and open-ended. Through data analysis, the researcher can bring

structure, coherence, and meaning to the raw data (Glanz, 2014; Mezmir, 2020). The use of detailed descriptions in qualitative data helps to establish credibility and create the possibility of transferability where readers can draw similarities between the study and their context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Nowell et al., 2017). Data analysis strives to make new distinctions and improve understanding through the iterative research process (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In qualitative research, data can be simultaneously collected and analyzed to aid in the development of patterns, categories, or themes (Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Throughout the study, the researcher collected and analyzed data using coding and thematic analysis. Coding, using designated words and phrases to organize and manage data, allowed the researcher to identify emerging themes (Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher analyzed data from semi-structured focus group interviews, questionnaires, observations, and reflective journal entries. The study followed three steps for data analysis: organizing, disassembling, and reassembling (Glanz, 2014; Yin, 2016). The process for data analysis focused on organization, coding, and thematic analysis or interpretation. Using a variety of data collection methods allowed the researcher to establish triangulation, trustworthiness, and credibility within the research process.

Coding

Organizing and interpreting data is at the heart of qualitative data analysis. Coding is a method of organizing data; it is an interpretive activity “linking data to an idea” (Mezmir, 2020, p. 18). Repeated codes can indicate emerging patterns or themes (Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through coding, the researcher designs a “descriptive construct...to capture the

primary content or essence of the data” (Mezmir, 2020, p. 18). Coding is a cyclical process, evolving as data is collected and analyzed through each step of the research process.

As with the research process, coding in qualitative data analysis is emergent and flexible. The researcher initially used deductive coding through which data was fit with predetermined codes. The researcher used codes from the literature to identify elements of two categories: teacher job satisfaction and teacher perception of leadership practices. Table 3.14 outlines the researcher’s initial sample of codes. Over time, inductive coding was used by the researcher based on data additional codes were introduced to refine the data analysis.

Table 3.14

Initial Code Sampling for Data Analysis

Code	Meaning	Data Sample
I	Instructional pathway	Vision and mission, PD, curriculum
E	Emotional pathway	Relationships, support
O	Organizational pathway	Climate, culture, workplace conditions
P	Positive Teacher Job Satisfaction	Teacher perception
N	Negative Teacher Job Satisfaction	Teacher perception

Thematic Analysis

Coding allows the researcher to organize data so that patterns may emerge; thematic analysis takes “numerous pieces of related code to show a bigger picture of what is being portrayed” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, p. 809). With thick descriptions and insightful interpretation, qualitative data analysis paints the picture of the research within the specific context of the study but also establishes credibility and creates the possibility of transferability for the reader. A significant component of thematic analysis involves establishing trustworthiness. In this study, the researcher sought to generate trustworthiness using reflexive journaling, audit trails, and the phases of thematic analysis as outlined in Table 3.15 (Nowell et al., 2017).

Table 3.15*Phases of Thematic Analysis and Establishing Trustworthiness*

Phase of Thematic Analysis	Means of Establishing Trustworthiness
Phase 1: Familiarizing Yourself with Your Data	• Prolong engagement with data • Triangulate different data collection modes • Document theoretical and reflective thoughts • Document thoughts about potential codes/themes • Store raw data in well-organized archives • Keep records of all data field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals
Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes	• Peer debriefing • Researcher triangulation • Reflexive journaling • Use of a coding framework • Audit trail of code generation • Documentation of all team meeting and peer debriefings
Phase 3: Searching for Themes	• Researcher triangulation • Diagramming to make sense of theme connections • Keep detailed notes about development and hierarchies of concepts and themes
Phase 4: Reviewing Themes	• Researcher triangulation • Themes and subthemes vetted by team members • Test for referential adequacy by returning to raw data
Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes	• Researcher triangulation • Peer debriefing • Team consensus on themes • Documentation of team meetings regarding themes • Documentation of theme naming
Phase 6: Producing the Report	• Member checking • Peer debriefing • Describing process of coding and analysis in sufficient details • Thick descriptions of context • Description of the audit trail • Report on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study

Note. Adapted from Nowell et al. (2017).

Data analysis involves the researcher interpreting the codes and themes that have emerged to develop insights within and across a variety of data sources (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The use of coding and thematic analysis processes helped the researcher reduce bias, create an audit trail, establish trustworthiness, and ensure the possibility of transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Nowell et al., 2017).

Reliability, Validity, and Generalizability

In qualitative research, reality is constructed from participants' perceptions and interpretations (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014), showing that qualitative action research is context-specific and emergent. As such, the research must establish trustworthiness, or confidence, within the “procedures used in the data gathering, the data collected, its analysis and interpretation, and the related findings and conclusions” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 115). Four criteria used in evaluating trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is established through “sharing, respecting, and most importantly *authentically and ethically representing diverse voices*” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 116, emphasis in original). This study sought to create trustworthiness with rigorous and ethical research practices. Credibility speaks to the believability of the research study; it gives confidence to the findings of the study (Bloomberg, 2023; Stahl & King, 2020). Transferability, on the other hand, centers on applicability or understanding findings from one context to another (Bloomberg, 2023; Stahl & King, 2020). Dependability focuses on consistency, and confirmability strives to present as “objective a reality as possible” in qualitative research (Bloomberg, 2023; Stahl & King, 2020, p. 28). The researcher used a variety of strategies to

build trustworthiness, including thick descriptions, data and methodological triangulation, reflexive journals, member checking, and peer debriefing.

Triangulation uses “multiple indicators throughout a research project to convey the dependability, credibility, and the likely transferability of a study” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 120). In this study, methodological triangulation was achieved using a variety of data collection methods. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with participants from the Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT) and teacher volunteers. Additionally, the researcher conducted observations, documenting and reflecting in two-column notes. The ARIT and researcher kept ongoing reflexive journals. The researcher and Action Research Design Team (ARDT) also conducted document reviews of questionnaires and journal responses. Table 3.16 illustrates the approach for methodological triangulation.

Table 3.16*Alignment of Research Questions and Data Collection Methods*

Research Question	Data Collection Method	Method of Analysis	Timeline
Q1: To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?	Questionnaires: (pre and post) Administrators	Coding/Analysis of themes	July, August 2024
	Semi-structured interview protocols: Administrators	Coding/Analysis of themes	August, October, November 2024
	ARIT reflexive journals	Coding/Analysis of themes	August-November 2024
	Observations	Coding/Analysis of themes	August-November 2024
	Document review	Coding/Analysis of themes	August-November 2024
Q2: In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	Researcher journal/notes	Researcher reflection	July-November 2024
	Questionnaires: (pre and post) Teachers and Administrators	Coding/Analysis of themes	July and November 2024
	Semi-structured interview protocols: Teacher volunteers	Coding/Analysis of themes	July, October, November 2024
	Researcher journal/notes	Researcher reflection	July-November 2024

This study also sought data triangulation, using multiple sources of data from the same event to capture various perspectives. For example, when focusing on administrators interacting with teachers in their course teams, the researcher had her firsthand observations and field notes,

administrators' journal reflections, and teachers' and administrators' semi-structured interviews to triangulate the data.

Subjectivity Statement

At the time of the study, the researcher was an Assistant Principal at North Ridge High School (NRHS). The researcher has a variety of connections with NRHS as an alumni, teacher, administrator, and parent. The researcher's background includes being a language arts teacher for 4 years and an Assistant Principal for 14 years, all at NRHS. The researcher is a mother to four children who have grown up attending the high school's feeder elementary and middle schools. At the time of this study, the researcher's oldest child attended NRHS. The researcher's extensive personal and professional relationships with NRHS reveal her dedication to the school as well as her commitment to continually improving NRHS for all students and staff.

Action research promotes real-world, relevant research centered on inquiry and change within a field (Glanz, 2014; Holian & Coghlan, 2013). At the time of this study, the researcher was an Assistant Principal at NRHS with over 18 years of experience at NRHS; this gave the researcher an observer insider role (Holian & Coghlan, 2013). The longevity of employment and a vast array of experiences at NRHS gave the researcher an in-depth perspective on the inner workings, strengths, and weaknesses of NRHS. The researcher's extensive history at NRHS also made space for the researcher to develop subjectivity and bias over time. Holian and Coghlan (2013) identify this trait as preunderstanding: "people's prior knowledge, insights and experience...being able to distinguish what we know, what we think we know and what we don't know that we don't know" (p. 401). To limit preunderstanding, subjectivity, and bias, the researcher used a first-person, reflexive journal to document and reflect throughout the research process. Additionally, the researcher worked with the Action Research Design Team (ARDT) to

check for biases; this created a second-person voice for the researcher with “joint decision making, action, reflection and review of outcomes” with the ARDT (Holian & Coghlan, 2013, p. 402).

In this study, the researcher took on the researcher role in addition to the regular role of assistant principal. This created a sense of role duality for the researcher in that “the researcher holds an ongoing work role and power relationships associated with this as well as the action research role” (Holian & Coghlan, 2013, p. 399). Augmenting the role of assistant principal to include researcher in this study created a new dynamic when working with the ARIT, ARDT, and teacher volunteers. For the researcher, the role of assistant principal holds positional authority with teachers, colleagues with the other assistant principals, and subordinate with the principal. Navigating these roles with the role of the researcher created a unique position of duality. To balance role duality throughout the study, the researcher openly acknowledged each participant’s voluntary involvement and the opportunity to decline participation at any point in the research process. Additionally, the researcher actively collaborated with the ARDT to develop objective, practical intervention cycles.

Throughout this study, the researcher understood that positionality influenced the study. Before the onset of this study, in the role of assistant principal, the researcher worked directly with the principal and other assistant principals at NRHS for multiple years. Once the principal and assistant principals became members of the Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT), it was important to acknowledge how positionality and established relationships between the researcher and ARIT created a sense of familiarity and also came with background history. The familiarity between participants and the researcher created a certain level of ease in relating to one another and a shared understanding of the context of NRHS. The established relationships

between the ARIT and researcher also came with prior background experiences which may have impacted the researcher's perspective on the ARIT members and their responses. To limit positional bias, the researcher documented and reflected on notes in a journal and participated in peer debriefing with the ARDT.

Limitations

Limitations are an authentic component of qualitative research that should be openly recognized since limitations are “external conditions that restrict or constrain the study's scope or may affect its outcome” (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 14). In this research study, the researcher served in an observer insider role (Holian & Coghlan, 2013). The researcher's role as an assistant principal held a position of power and influence which may have limited the findings as participants may have not felt completely comfortable sharing their responses. To counter this, participation in the study was completely voluntary; participants could opt out of answering specific interview questions, and it was optional for teachers to include their names on their questionnaires. The researcher also reiterated the value of participants' responses in developing purposeful administrative professional development to benefit NRHS students, staff, and overall culture.

Since the researcher's role of assistant principal overlapped with interactions with researcher participants in their respective NRHS teacher roles, the researcher attempted to limit discussions about the research to pre-established times set aside for the research study, such as ARDT meetings or interview appointments. Clearly delineating time for the research study and time for assistant principal work helped the researcher to set boundaries and expectations for the two roles and reduce any pressure on participants. Additionally, during the pre-established times set aside for the research study, the researcher sought to create a safe environment with open,

uninterrupted space for participants to respond to interview questions or contribute to ARDT planning meetings. The researcher attempted to limit her input during interviews and ARDT planning meetings.

The researcher's history with participants and NRHS required her to participate in processes such as peer debriefing and member checking to increase trustworthiness and limit bias throughout the study. In peer debriefing, "a researcher and an impartial peer preplan and conduct extensive discussions about the findings and progress of an investigation" (Spall, 1998, p. 280). Through peer debriefing, the researcher's perspective and biases are recognized. Additionally, peer debriefing allows the researcher a safe space to discuss emerging themes and the next steps in the research process (Spall, 1998). Member checking, or participant validation, also served to increase trustworthiness in the study. After the semi-structured interviews, participants had the opportunity to review the transcripts to ensure "accuracy and resonance with their experiences" (Birt et al., 2016, p. 1802).

Other limitations in the study included the school context and participant sample size. The specific responses from teachers and administrators at NRHS guided the data analysis and development of administrative professional development. Although the same data could emerge in other schools' contexts, the local school's conditions may have influenced the findings. Additionally, the small participant sample size from NRHS was another limitation, considering the large number of principals and assistant principals who serve across Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS). The ARIT included eight high school assistant principals and one high school principal from NRHS. Within CCPS, there are 27 high schools and 140 schools overall.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the data collection methods and analysis for this study. Qualitative research focuses on studying the ‘real’ world through observations and rich, thick, detailed descriptions while being context-sensitive and problem-centered (Hammersley, 2013). The cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting allows interventions to adapt as data is collected in qualitative research (Bloomberg, 2023; Glanz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, action research aims to improve problems of practice through action, interventions, and reflection (Bryk et al., 2015; Glanz, 2014).

In this study, participants took part in administrative professional development which was to be applied to their work with teachers. Questionnaires, participant focus group interviews, researcher observations, and participant and researcher reflections were all data sources in this study to evaluate the implementation of administrative professional development and the participants’ application of learning to daily work with teachers. Additionally, focus group interviews with teacher volunteers were also utilized as a data source to gain insight into teacher job satisfaction and teachers’ perceptions of leadership practices. Coding and thematic analysis were applied to all data collected.

The next chapter of this dissertation presents findings from the study at North Ridge High School. The details of the study, including the implementation of administrative professional development, administrative application of learning, and teachers’ perceptions of leadership practices, are described in detail. Also, a comprehensive overview of the interventions and cycles of action research are included.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS FROM THE ACTION RESEARCH CASE

School administrators' leadership practices are diverse and far-reaching; such practices directly and indirectly impact teacher job satisfaction on a variety of levels (Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020). Administrative professional development is an opportunity for schools to support building-level administrators as they work to support teachers. As school leaders seek to positively impact teacher job satisfaction, it is important for administrative professional development to be context-specific, relevant, and ongoing (Knowles et al., 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perceptions of leaders' practices and its influence on their job satisfaction. The study focused on the actions of the Principal and Assistant Principals in a large, suburban high school. The action research team wanted to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on job satisfaction and the role that teachers' perceptions of administrators' leadership practices influences teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, the action research team sought to understand the perspective of school leaders on administrative professional development. To address the purpose of this action research, the following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?

2. In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?

Chapter 4 describes the context as well as the findings from this case study. The context includes an overview of the school, as well as brief descriptions of the Action Research Design Team and the Action Research Implementation Team members who participated in the administrative professional development at North Ridge High School (NRHS). This chapter details the action research study and its findings through each of the research cycles, including the timeline for data collection methods.

Context of the Study

District and State Characteristics

North Ridge High School (NRHS, a pseudonym) is a large, suburban high school in a large, growing county with over 980,000 residents (United States Census Bureau, 2024). At the time of the study, NRHS was one of 27 high schools in Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS, a pseudonym). Overall, CCPS served over 182,000 students. This school district was diverse; a quarter of the district's students had limited English proficiency, and over half of the student population (63%) was eligible for free/reduced meals (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2023). Additionally, the district's student population was one-third Black and one-third Hispanic, followed by 17% White and 12% Asian (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2023). The district's student population was more diverse than the district's staff demographics. In the 2022-2023 school year, CCPS employed approximately 14,170 school-based employees: 26.9% were Black, 60.0% were White, 6.7% were Hispanic, 4.1% were Asian, 0.2% were Native American, and 2.1% were Multiracial (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2023).

The state in which NRHS is located uses the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) to measure school achievement (State Department of Education, 2024). The CCRPI is the state’s “annual tool for measuring how well its schools, districts, and the state itself are preparing students for the next educational level” (State Department of Education, 2023a). There are five main components to CCRPI, including Content Mastery, Progress, Closing Gaps, Readiness, and Graduation Rate (high school only) (State Department of Education, 2023a). Table 4.1 outlines the state, district, and school CCRPI data.

Table 4.1

2023 College and Career Readiness Performance Index

CCRPI Category	Definition	State	District (CCPS)	School (NRHS)
Content Mastery	Measures student achievement, including performance on state assessments	65.0	74.3	97.0
Progress	Measures student growth in English language arts, math, and English learners’ language proficiency	79.2	81.2	77.0
Closing Gaps	Measures student performance growth across subgroups	67.5	43.8	86.1
Readiness	Measures student readiness for the next level, college, or career	71.4	70.8	89.4
Graduation Rate	Measures whether students are graduating from high school with a regular diploma in four or five years	84.9	83.3	97.1

Note. State Department of Education (2024).

Student achievement for NRHS exceeds both the state and district data in all CCRPI categories, except Progress, which is slightly below the state data. For Progress, two-thirds of NRHS students showed positive movement in growth levels for English language proficiency and

mathematics according to exam data from the state Milestone Assessment System; no data was available for consideration regarding the English language arts state Milestone exam (State Department of Education, 2024). NRHS is a high-achieving school, outperforming most state and district achievement data.

North Ridge High School Characteristics

NRHS is an increasingly diverse school with steady enrollment. In the 2022-23 school year, NRHS had a 59% minority population; 6% of the student population was English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); and 8.6% of the students received Special Education services (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2024). Table 4.2 shows the NRHS student percentage of enrollment by race and other subgroups from 2020 through 2023.

Table 4.2

North Ridge High School Percentage of Students by Race/Other Subgroups

		NRHS Percentage of Students		
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Other Demographics	Overall Enrollment	3,183	3,071	3,089
	Limited English Proficient	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%
	Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals	11.0%	9.0%	12.0%
	Students With Disability	8.2%	8.6%	8.6%
	Migrant	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Female	49.0%	49.0%	48.0%
Race/Ethnicity	Male	51.0%	51.0%	52.0%
	Asian	27.0%	29.0%	30.0%
	Black	12.0%	13.0%	14.0%
	Hispanic	9.0%	9.0%	9.0%
	White	47.0%	43.0%	41.0%
	Multiracial	5.0%	6.0%	5.0%

Note. Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2023).

In comparison to the district’s data, NRHS has a much smaller percentage of students who had limited English proficiency, eligible for free/reduced meals, and/or identified with a disability. NRHS has a smaller minority population as compared to the rest of the district. Additionally,

34.1% of the student population at NRHS is identified as part of the gifted program, compared to 16% for the district (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2023).

At NRHS, the teaching staff can be characterized as consistent and experienced. Table 4.3 provides teacher data across a variety of demographics from the 2020-2023 school years. The racial/ethnic breakdown of the NRHS teaching staff in Table 4.3 is not nearly as diverse as the NRHS student population shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.3

North Ridge High School Percentage of Teachers by Race/Other Demographics

		NRHS Percentage of Teachers		
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Certificate Level	4 Yr Bachelor’s	27.5%	27.6%	26.5%
	5 Yr Master’s	43.1%	43.6%	47.0%
	6 Yr Specialist’s	26.3%	25.8%	22.9%
	7 Yr Doctoral	3.1%	3.1%	3.6%
Gender	Female	56.9%	52.8%	54.8%
	Male	43.1%	47.2%	45.2%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	5.6%	6.1%	8.4%
	Black	6.3%	7.4%	6.0%
	Hispanic	6.9%	7.4%	8.4%
	White	80%	78%	74.7%
	Multiracial	1.3%	1.2%	2.4%
Years	< 1	2.5%	4.3%	5.4%
Experience	1-10	3.1%	28.8%	30.1%
	11-20	34.4%	34.4%	31.9%
	21-30	25.6%	25.8%	27.1%
	> 30	6.3%	6.7%	5.4%
	Average years	16	16	15

Note. Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2023).

The majority of the teachers at NRHS have advanced degrees and more than 10 years of experience. Overall, NRHS teachers’ experience and educational levels help set a strong foundation of curriculum, pedagogical, and leadership skills.

The NRHS administrative team consists of a Principal, Athletic Director, Community School Director, and eight additional Assistant Principals (APs). At the time of this study, members of the administrative team had been at NRHS for multiple years, ranging from 2-24 years with an average of over nine years as an administrator at NRHS. The demographics of the leadership team is provided in Table 4.4; the NRHS administrative team is less diverse than both the NRHS student population from Table 4.2 and the NRHS teacher demographics from Table 4.3.

Table 4.4

North Ridge High School Percentage of Administrators by Race/Other Demographics

		NRHS Percentage of Administrators		
		2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Certificate Level	5 Yr Master's	25%	27.3%	20.0%
	6 Yr Specialist's	58.3%	54.6%	60.0%
	7 Yr Doctoral	16.7%	18.2%	20.0%
Gender	Female	50%	45.4%	40.0%
	Male	50%	54.6%	60.0%
Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Black	16.7%	9.1%	10.0%
	Hispanic	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	White	83.3%	90.0%	90.0%
	Multiracial	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Years	1-10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Experience	11-20	33.3%	27.3%	30.0%
	21-30	66.7%	72.7%	70.0%
	> 30	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Average years		21	22	23

Note. Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2023).

The NRHS administrative team has extensive experience and educational background. These components create an atmosphere of stability and provide NRHS with consistent support as well as enhance the school vision from year to year.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

Although NRHS has strong student achievement data and experienced staff, staff responses to the district Staff Perception Survey began to decline after 2017. In the 2016-2017 school year, staff “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” to many positive aspects of the school, which led to an overall average survey rating of 3.68 out of 4.0, well above the entire district’s high school average rating of 3.42. By the 2021-2022 school year, staff response to these same questions had declined with fewer “Strongly Agree” responses and an increase of “Disagree” responses. In the 2021-2022 survey data, the school’s overall survey average rating dropped to 3.44 out of 4.0, significantly closer to the overall high school rate of 3.38. Additionally, informal exit interviews and evaluation conferences since 2017 indicated a decrease in overall teacher job satisfaction and morale. This is critical as teachers’ job satisfaction influences many areas of a school, including instruction, culture, and student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2017).

Part of the role of school-building leaders is to work to understand and support teachers’ diverse needs related to job satisfaction and morale. This action research study focused on gaining an understanding of teachers’ perspectives on job satisfaction and the role that administrators’ leadership practices play in influencing teachers’ job satisfaction. The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators’ leadership practices and teachers’ perceptions of the influence of administrators’ leadership practices on their job satisfaction.

For this action research study, the researcher attained CCPS approval in March 2024 and university IRB approval in May 2024. The researcher shared initial details of the study with potential participants in May 2024 and followed up in July 2024 to secure participant consent. The study began in July 2024 and concluded in November 2024. Participants on the Action

Research Design Team and Action Research Implementation Team were sought out based on their roles at NRHS and within CCPS to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on job satisfaction and the role that administrators' leadership practices play in influencing teachers' job satisfaction.

Action Research Implementation Team

For this research study, the NRHS Principal, seven Assistant Principals, and the Athletic Director/Assistant Principal were invited to participate on the Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT). As school-building leaders at NRHS, these professionals directly work with teachers daily through professional learning community (PLC) support, evaluations, student support, and additional duties. Table 4.5 describes the ARIT participants.

Table 4.5

Action Research Implementation Team Members

Team Member	Role at NRHS	# of Years in Education	# of Years in Administration	# of Years at NRHS
Mr. James Andrews	Assistant Principal	28	10	10
Dr. Neil Ballard	Assistant Principal	25	11	8
Mr. Duncan Brooks	Assistant Principal	28	11	2
Ms. Kelly Burke	Assistant Principal	26	18	11
Mr. Miles Carlson	Principal	25	20	11
Ms. Julia Cook	Assistant Principal	26	16	16
Dr. Kate Harris	Assistant Principal	28	18	24
Mr. Charles Lewis	Assistant Principal	15	4	4
Mr. Logan Scott	Assistant Principal	23	8	5

The ARIT participants have an average of over 24 years of experience in education, almost 13 years of experience in administration, and 10 years of experience at NRHS.

As school-building leaders, the ARIT members have specific duties and responsibilities on campus. Of the eight ARIT members who are Assistant Principals (APs), six serve in Student Services, sometimes referred to as Discipline APs. One of the APs, Dr. Kate Harris, does not

serve a specific grade level in Student Services; rather, she directly supports students in the fields of Special Education and 504 Plans. All Assistant Principals in the ARIT serve as PLC supports and teacher evaluators; each AP supports an overall department as well as additional PLCs specifically connected to their grade level for Student Supports. Each AP is responsible for approximately 18 individual teacher evaluations across their PLCs. The principal oversees evaluations for the APs as well as the Media Specialist and Technology Coach. Table 4.6 outlines each ARIT members' additional duties and responsibilities.

Table 4.6

Action Research Implementation Team Members' Roles and Responsibilities

Team Member	Primary Role at North Ridge High School	Additional Duties and Responsibilities	Department and PLC Support
Mr. James Andrews	Assistant Principal	• Discipline Coordinator • 11th/12th Student Supports • Title IX Investigator	• Math Department • PLCs: Calculus, Oceanography, Precalculus
Dr. Neil Ballard	Assistant Principal	• Athletic Director • Safety Security Plans • Emergency Drills and Plans	• CTAE and Health/PE Departments and PLCs
Mr. Duncan Brooks	Assistant Principal	• 11th/12th Student Supports • Transportation • Advanced Placement Coordinator	• Social Studies Department • PLCs: Psychology, Advanced Placement Environmental Science, CP US History, 12th LA
Ms. Kelly Burke	Assistant Principal	• Curriculum • 9th Student Supports • Registration	• Science Department • PLCs: 9th LA, Biology, Accelerated Geometry, Algebra, Advanced Placement Human Geography

Table 4.6 Continued*Action Research Implementation Team Members' Roles and Responsibilities*

Team Member	Primary Role at North Ridge High School	Additional Duties and Responsibilities	Department and PLC Support
Mr. Miles Carlson	Principal	• Personnel • Budget • School Vision and Improvement • Leadership Development	• Administrators • Media Specialist • Technology Coach
Ms. Julia Cook	Assistant Principal	• Student Leadership • 11th/12th Student Supports • Advisement • Graduation • Title IX Coordinator	• Science Department • PLCs: Advanced Placement Biology, Economics/Government, Physics, Advanced Placement Language, Advanced Placement Literature, Statistics
Dr. Kate Harris	Assistant Principal	• Curriculum • Special Education, 504s • Student Support Team Coordinator • Hospital and Homebound	• Language Arts Department • PLCs: STEM program, Special Education, Counseling
Mr. Charles Lewis	Assistant Principal	• 9th Student Supports • Professional Development • New Teacher Team	• Math Department • PLCs: 9th LA, Biology, Accelerated Geometry, Algebra, Advanced Placement Human Geography, World Languages
Mr. Logan Scott	Assistant Principal	• 10th Student Supports • Attendance • Parking	• Social Studies Department • PLCs: World History, Geometry, Visual and Performing Arts, Advanced Placement Precalculus

The ARIT members have a variety of roles and responsibilities at NRHS. Each member of the ARIT serves as an instructional leader within their department and PLCs. The ARIT's additional roles contribute to the day-to-day functioning of NRHS as well as supporting the overall vision and mission of the school.

All ARIT members worked with and supported teachers daily. Because the researcher's overarching focus was on teacher job satisfaction, it was important to include as many members as possible of the NRHS administrative team on the ARIT since the ARIT members' scope of influence encompassed all teachers at NRHS. ARIT members worked closely with the teachers in their PLCs, but their additional roles and responsibilities granted them access to interact with a wide range of teachers from across the school.

The ARIT met weekly at the start of each school week beginning in September 2024. The NRHS administrative team had previously set aside two-hour time slots on Monday and Friday mornings for administrative meetings. The ARIT agreed to use the first 20-30 minutes of Monday meetings for ARIT intervention cycles; meeting days fluctuated based on school holidays and emergent situations that arose on campus. The ARIT members attended meetings weekly if they were available and on campus. The ARIT interventions were designed to be implemented across three, three-week cycles; this created a total of nine weeks of content. The ARIT administrative professional development sessions were designed by the Action Research Design Team.

Action Research Design Team

The Action Research Design Team (ARDT) developed the administrative professional development (APD) for the ARIT. The ARDT consisted of the primary researcher, an NRHS Assistant Principal/Community School Director, two teacher leaders, a school counselor, and a

CCPS Leader Coach from the Office of Leadership and Staff Development. Outside of the Leader Coach, the ARDT members had a direct connection with teachers' job satisfaction, leadership practices, and student achievement at NRHS. Table 4.7 lists the initial ARDT team members and their role within the research study.

Table 4.7

Initial Action Research Design Team Members

Team Member	Primary Role	Action Research Role
Primary Researcher	Assistant Principal, NRHS	Leads and conducts all research with the ARDT for data analysis. Brings 18 years of education experience, all of which have been served at NRHS, including 12 years of administrative experience.
Ms. Maggie Griffin	Counselor, NRHS	Provides experience from 15 years in education as a school Counselor, 5 years of which have been completed at NRHS. Serves as Chair of the NRHS Morale Committee.
Mr. James Long	Assistant Principal, Community School Director, NRHS	Provides experience from 20 years of being an administrator, 10 of which have been served at NRHS, and 25 overall years in education.
Mr. Henry Moore	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience from 11 years of classroom instruction, 4 of those years at NRHS.
Dr. Davis Smith	Leader Coach, CCPS	Provides experience from over 32 years in education, including roles as a former Paraprofessional, Teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal. Currently serves as a Leader Coach in the CCPS district Office of Leadership and Staff Development.
Ms. Elizabeth Wood	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience from over 17 years of teaching experience across subject areas, all of which have been served at NRHS. Additionally, has worked in teacher leader roles, including department chair and new teacher mentorship.

The ARDT members were selected based on their roles at NRHS and with CCPS and their experience with teacher job satisfaction and leadership development.

Mr. James Long worked at NRHS as an Assistant Principal/Community School Director. In his role as Community School Director, Mr. Long worked to facilitate after-school activities throughout the NRHS cluster; this position involved him working from 1:00-9:00 pm daily, with most of his work time spent outside of the traditional school day. Mr. Long's previous experiences as a traditional assistant principal helped guide the focus and APD development. Dr. Davis Smith brought experience and knowledge to the ARDT as a former CCPS Principal and a current district Leader Coach. Ms. Maggie Griffin, an NRHS Counselor, served as the NRHS Morale Committee Chair; her experience and focus on teacher/staff job satisfaction supported the researcher's overall focus. Mr. Long, Dr. Smith, and Ms. Griffin participated in all ARDT meetings.

Two members of the original ARDT, Ms. Elizabeth Wood and Mr. Henry Moore, were not able to attend the initial ARDT meeting. Both Ms. Wood and Mr. Moore acknowledged the researcher's meeting invitation reminder, but they were absent from the meeting. The primary researcher met with Ms. Wood and Mr. Moore the day after the initial ARDT meeting. Both expressed regret at missing the initial meeting. Mr. Henry Moore explained that he had another commitment and would need to withdraw from the ARDT. Ms. Elizabeth Wood was apologetic about missing the initial ARDT and asked to reschedule the meeting with the researcher to catch up on missed material. The primary researcher and Ms. Wood set a date for the following week to go over the content of the first ARDT meeting. Before the makeup meeting could be held, Ms. Wood experienced a family medical emergency and had to withdraw from the ARDT.

The ARDT met three times during the action research process; each meeting was held prior to the start of the next intervention cycle. In early September 2024, the researcher recognized that the ARDT no longer included any teachers; this was problematic since the overall research focus was on teacher job satisfaction. The researcher then approached two additional teacher leaders, Ms. Laura Dawson and Mr. Dane Miller, to join the ARDT. After obtaining consent, the researcher met with Ms. Dawson and Mr. Miller to review the initial ARDT meeting agenda and information. Table 4.8 lists the additional ARDT members and their role within the research study.

Table 4.8

Additional Action Research Design Team Members

Team Member	Primary Role at North Ridge High School	Action Research Role
Ms. Laura Dawson	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience as a language arts teacher with over 17 years at NRHS. Currently serves as a department chair (8 years) and has served in a variety of roles on campus, including club sponsor, coach, and teacher leadership.
Mr. Dane Miller	Teacher, NRHS	Provides experience from 8 years of teaching performing arts, 4 years of which have been at NRHS. Works diligently to support his field as an adjunct teacher at other schools as well.

Both Ms. Dawson and Mr. Miller served in teacher leader roles at NRHS in their respective subject matters. They were actively involved in the school campus and culture. Both have served as previous Teachers of the Year at NRHS.

The ARDT worked to evaluate data collected prior to and during intervention cycles as well as create APD sessions for the ARIT. During the initial ARDT meeting, data was used to identify a problem of practice related to teacher job satisfaction, identify a topic of focus for the

APD, and create cycle 1 interventions. The second and third ARDT meetings used data from teacher focus group interviews, ARIT meetings, ARIT journal reflections, and the researcher's observations and notes to inform intervention cycles 2 and 3. The ARDT sought to gain a deeper understanding of teacher job satisfaction and create and implement APD to develop administrative leadership practices.

Findings from the Case

The ARDT created iterative intervention cycles for the ARIT; the school-building administrators were directly involved in the administrative professional development (APD) and, in turn, were able to apply their learning to work with teachers and staff.

Each action research cycle consisted of the following stages: plan, act, observe, and reflect. This process allowed the ARDT to evaluate the data collected and inform future action research interventions. In this study, the following findings emerged:

1. School administrators indicated that they wanted to participate in APD and experience continued growth.
2. Participants expressed that APD needed to be relevant and context-specific.
3. Building leaders shared that APD needed to be a priority within the work of school administrators.
4. School administrators indicated that APD needed to be built into their workload.
5. Teachers shared that job satisfaction is an investment of time and energy.
6. Teachers indicated that administrators' leadership practices must be relevant and context-specific to the needs of teachers and the school.
7. Teachers believed that to better understand teacher job satisfaction there must be ongoing and open communication between teachers and administrators.

8. Teachers shared that job satisfaction is multifaceted; to make an impact, administrators must function within a variety of domains.

Each intervention cycle gave insight, to varying degrees, into the study's overall research purpose.

Action Research Pre-Cycle

ARDT and ARIT Consent Gathering

The initial step in this action research involved the primary researcher contacting ARDT and ARIT participants and gathering consent. Each participant was given a detailed letter outlining the research questions and information about the study. Additionally, the primary researcher shared information about the purpose of the study and the expected time commitments. All team members were offered time to consider their participation and follow up with any additional questions.

Questionnaires

During the fall 2024 pre-cycle stage, the primary researcher shared an electronic questionnaire with teachers for the purpose of collecting data on teachers' job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions of administrators' leadership practices. The questionnaire included a variety of question styles, including multiple-choice, Likert scale, and free-response questions. Teachers were able to submit their responses anonymously. Teachers were also given the option to be included in face-to-face focus group interviews; this step did require teachers to submit their names. At the time of the research cycles, NRHS had 181 teachers on staff; 41 teachers (22.7%) participated in the pre-cycle questionnaire.

Additionally, during pre-planning, the primary researcher asked ARIT members to complete an electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire included items promoting self-reflection

as well as consideration of the administrative team's practices. Like the teacher questionnaire, the ARIT form included a variety of question styles, including multiple-choice, Likert scale, and free-response questions. ARIT members were asked to include their names with their responses so that the primary researcher could gauge the ARIT's perspectives and needs individually, as well as holistically. All ARIT members completed the pre-cycle questionnaire.

Focus Group Interviews

Semi-structured focused group interviews were conducted with the ARIT members and teacher volunteers. For each group, four interview time slots were available. The first two ARIT interview time slots had to be canceled due to student situations on campus that required the immediate attention of ARIT members. The affected administrators rescheduled into a later interview time slot. For the pre-cycle ARIT focus group interviews, all ARIT members participated except for Dr. Neil Ballard who was unable to reschedule due to a personal vacation. Each administrator who participated in the pre-cycle focus group interviews answered questions about their own leadership and communication style, their perception of teacher job satisfaction at NRHS, and their experiences with previous professional development (Appendix B). The primary researcher included open-ended and photo-elicitation questions in the interviews (Appendix A). All ARIT members described their unique perspectives on leadership and communication, especially as it related to their previous experiences and roles at NRHS. Specifically on communication, ARIT members acknowledged that communication in a large high school can be extensive and overwhelming, and, at times, decisions and messaging could be lost or miscommunicated. Additionally, the administrators provided examples of factors that they believe influence teacher job satisfaction, such as workload, as well as measures they use to gauge teacher job satisfaction. The ARIT also discussed previous experiences with successful

professional development (PD), such as relevancy and intentionality, as well as components of faulty PD, such as being too broad or not applicable to daily work.

For the semi-structured teacher focus group interviews, 13 teachers volunteered to participate. Four interview time slots were available, and all teacher volunteers engaged in the pre-cycle focus group interviews. The primary researcher used similar questions and styles of questions to the ARIT interview, trying to evaluate similar topics but from the perspectives of the teachers. The teacher focus group interviews included questions related to job satisfaction as well as their perspective on the NRHS administrative team's leadership practices and communication styles.

Action Research Design Team Meeting #1

The ARDT met after data was collected from the teachers' and administrators' questionnaires and the teachers' and administrators' focus group interviews. For the first ARDT meeting, Mr. Long, Ms. Griffin, and Dr. Smith were present. The primary researcher provided ARDT members with a detailed agenda at the start of the meeting (Appendix C). To help ARDT members better understand the study, the agenda included: purpose of the study, research questions, and how this study may benefit participants. Additionally, the agenda gave an overview of guiding theories, specifically Andragogy and the study's theoretical framework.

The primary researcher then presented data collected from the questionnaires, district surveys, and focus group interviews. After this discussion, the team focused on potential professional development topics and activities for the ARIT. The ARDT chose to focus on the theme of communication for the APD content. The ARDT decided that a book study with corresponding activities and discussion would best suit the research focus. ARDT members were

free to ask questions in the meeting, and they were also given an electronic form to submit any ideas or questions that may arise after the meeting.

The ARDT evaluated the pre-cycle data and perused an assortment of texts based on recommendations from the district's leadership library. For the book study, the ARDT chose to use *5 Voices: How to Communicate Effectively with Everyone You Lead* by Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram (2016) (*5 Voices*). In considering the needs of APD for the ARIT, the ARDT felt that *5 Voices* (Kubicek and Cockram, 2016) had a strong balance between relevant content and applicability across the ARIT; the ARDT also felt that the text was not overly complex and would be easily accessible for participants. Within the text, Kubicek and Cockram (2016) organize the chapters into three sections: The Voices of a Team, How to Interact with Each Voice, and Building Powerful and Effective Teams. For this study, the ARDT modeled the action research cycles to similar themes from the text:

- Cycle #1 – Know Your Voice
- Cycle #2 – Know the Power of Your Voice
- Cycle #3 – Know How to Use Your Voice

Each APD meeting was designed to include a short mini-lesson, activity, discussion, and reflection. Each intervention cycle consisted of three 30-minute sessions of APD. APD meetings were designated by cycle and session; for example, APD 1.1 indicates that it is in cycle 1 and session 1. The intention was for APD to be built into the start of the administrative team's weekly Monday meeting. Most meetings occurred on this schedule; however, school holidays and emergent situations on campus did impact the original schedule slightly.

Action Research Cycle 1

Action research cycle #1 began at the end of August 2024, allowing for pre-cycle data collection and for ARIT participants to adjust to the start of a new school year. All ARIT members were present for all three meetings within intervention cycle 1. The theme for cycle 1 was “Know Yourself;” it focused on introducing the study’s purpose, exploring key concepts from the book study, and having ARIT members grow in awareness of their communication style or “voice.”

APD 1.1 Session

The APD 1.1 meeting began with an overview of the study’s focus, including teacher job satisfaction and the role that teachers’ perception of administrators’ leadership practices influences teachers’ job satisfaction. Table 4.9 outlines the first APD meeting in cycle 1.

Table 4.9

Intervention Cycle APD 1.1 Goals and Activities

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
APD 1.1: August 30 All ARIT members present	• Introduce pre-cycle data • Understand teacher job satisfaction and adult learner needs • Set practical goals for APD	• Introduction and overview of pre-cycle data collection (PowerPoint) (5-8 min) (ARIT journals) • “Tic Tac Toe” (8 min) (Appendix D) (ARIT journals) • Admin will group into two teams • Each team will take turns constructing a response to a box. The goal is to get “3 in a row” • Discussion (10 min) • Weekly reflection form (5 min) (Appendix E)

The primary researcher highlighted that the study’s goals were to better comprehend teachers’ job satisfaction and to enhance understanding of school leaders’ perspectives on administrative

professional development. After sharing a summary from the pre-cycle data collection, the primary researcher highlighted that most teachers' responses to the questionnaire and focus group interviews indicated administrative communication was an area of need. Next, the primary researcher introduced the ARIT members to their electronic journals. The primary researcher and each participant had access to the individual journals, which would be used throughout the research cycles. Each week, the primary researcher would add links, activities, or reflection questions to each participant's journal. Although the content was the same across all journals, the privacy of the journal allowed participants an opportunity to openly reflect and respond with the primary researcher.

After the introduction to the study, the ARIT participated in a "Tic Tac Toe" activity (Appendix D). On a shared Google document, there was a 3x3 grid with a question in each box; this was projected onto a screen in the meeting room. Within the Tic Tac Toe board, there were multiple questions across three topics: teacher job satisfaction, communication, and administrative professional development. In the spirit of friendly competition, the ARIT opted to split into two teams: male and female. This created an atmosphere of fun and competition for the activity. Each team took turns responding to questions while trying to get "three in a row." Throughout the activity, there was friendly banter across the teams.

The male team was the first to reach "three in a row;" all questions were answered during the activity. The ARIT then discussed the responses to each question. On the topic of teacher job satisfaction, Ms. Cook summed up the discussion when she acknowledged that gauging teacher job satisfaction is especially difficult; she remarked that some people are always going to think "the grass is greener elsewhere...but we have plenty of folks who've left and come back,"

indicating that NRHS is a great place to work. Ms. Cook did go on to say, though, that “listening to feedback” and validating teachers, even if their requests cannot be met, is important.

On the topic of communication, Mr. Brooks noted the fact that each administrator communicates in different ways, which can be perceived by teachers as “being on different pages” and leading to inconsistencies and miscommunication. Both Principal Carlson and Mr. Andrews highlighted the importance of having a consistent vision and supporting research to guide the work at NRHS; sharing a united and purposeful vision with staff gives credibility, relevancy, and purpose to the work going on at NRHS. With respect to APD, Mr. Scott emphasized the importance of relevancy and recognized that the learning needs to connect to the administrator’s daily work: “Being relevant is like being able to openly see that everyone’s experiences matter and have a goal. Like being able to see what you’ve done in the past, and how it’s impacted, and look ahead.”

The ARIT’s discussion on communication birthed two practical tools that the ARIT put into practice school-wide: *The Lion’s Main* and the Student Accountability form. While focusing on clear messaging, the ARIT decided to create a weekly electronic newsletter to consolidate school-wide emails and provide clear communication with staff; the newsletter was dubbed *The Lion’s Main*. The title of the newsletter was coined to coordinate with the school’s mascot while also serving as the “main” source of weekly communication for the school, a one-stop-shop for information. Principal Carlson agreed to work with his Administrative Assistant to create *The Lion’s Main*; he asked the ARIT members to submit content each Thursday, and the newsletter would be shared each Friday. The ARIT also decided to create an electronic form, the Student Accountability form, where teachers could submit student names for attendance, academic, or discipline issues. All ARIT members had access to the form and could respond accordingly. If a

discipline situation was submitted, the corresponding Student Services AP would take responsibility; Mr. Scott, the attendance AP, would take attendance issues; and Dr. Harris would address all academic or counseling concerns. If an AP was unavailable to address an issue, other APs could step in to support the situation. Mr. Andrews volunteered to create the Student Accountability form and share with the ARIT at the next meeting.

After the discussion, all ARIT members were asked to complete an electronic reflection form for the APD 1.1 meeting (Appendix E). The same reflection form was used throughout all intervention cycles. ARIT participants were asked to evaluate the APD session's content, structure, and application to their work as school administrators. Dr. Harris's reflection stressed the purpose of the study, connecting teacher job satisfaction and student learning: "We need to pay attention to the health of our teachers and culture of our campus - that affects how they then work with our students." Reflections from other ARIT members appreciated the structure of and collaboration within the APD activities.

APD 1.2 Session

The primary goal of the APD 1.2 meeting was to introduce the text for the book study: *5 Voices: How to Communicate Effectively with Everyone You Lead* by Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram (2016) (*5 Voices*). The premise of the book is that there are five voices: Pioneer, Connector, Guardian, Creative, and Nurturer; each person has access to all voices, but some are foundational while others are more learned behaviors. Table 4.10 outlines the different voices and tendencies.

Table 4.10*Characteristics of the 5 Voices (Kubicek and Cockram, 2016)*

	Pioneer	Connector	Guardian	Creative	Nurturer
Champion of...	Results and progress Aligning people with resources to achieve objective	Relationships Strategic partnerships, collaboration, Efficient communication	Responsibility Due diligence, resources, and stewardship	Innovation Organizational integrity	People Works to take care of others
% of Population	7%	11%	30%	9%	43%
Focus	Future-oriented Strategic vision, results-focused, problem-solving Big picture visions Tenacious	Future-oriented Connecting people, aspirations, ideas, and resources Charismatic & Persuasive	Present-oriented Efficient systems and processes Detailed & Analytical Protective	Future-oriented Think outside the box Fits the “puzzle pieces” together	Present-oriented Relational health and harmony Protective of values and principles
Scale (Loudness of voice in situations)	    	   	  	 	
Application/ Role	[Completed during APD 1.2]				

Note. Adapted from 5 Voices: How to Communicate Effectively with Everyone You Lead

(Kubicek & Cockram, 2016).

When people understand their own communication styles, they can communicate with others more effectively. Table 4.11 outlines the goals and activities for the APD 1.2 meeting.

Table 4.11

Intervention Cycle APD 1.2 Goals and Activities

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
APD 1.2: September 3	• Introduce the text and the 5 Voices • Identify foundational voice • Consider tendencies, patterns, actions, consequences, and influence	• Overview of <i>5 Voices</i> (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) (8 min) (ARIT journals) • The 5 Voices Body Bio activity (5 min) • Using the overview chart [table 4.10], ARIT members place a voice on the body outline with a brief explanation • Complete the last row of chart [table 4.10] through discussion about the application/role of each voice in our work. • Identify Foundational Voice (9 minutes) • Take online assessment at 5voices.com • Complete ARIT journal questions, share with a partner • Weekly Reflection form (Appendix E) (5 min)
All ARIT members present		Action Item: • Before the next APD, read the chapter on your foundational voice • Complete ARIT journal reflection questions

The APD 1.2 session began with an overview of the five voices, including: strengths, focus, percent of population, and presence. From the chart, each ARIT member worked in their journal on a Body Bio activity where they were given an outline of a body and asked to move each voice to a corresponding place on the body. Through discussion of voice placement on the Body Bio activity, the ARIT completed the final row of the Table 4.10 chart (“Application/ Role”) and applied the five voices to the NRHS administrators’ work.

After the reflection questions and discussion, participants were asked to complete the weekly reflection form (Appendix E). ARIT members then completed an online assessment to identify their foundational voice. For homework, the ARIT members were asked to read the chapter in *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) that correlated to their foundational voice and complete three reflection questions in their ARIT journal. The reflection questions asked participants to think about what it feels like to be on the other side of their communication or voice. Although there are different voices within the ARIT, there were similar responses related to the difficulty of communication. Ms. Cook, a Connector, acknowledged, “I’m loud, mostly cheery; I want everyone to feel involved and engaged - for an introvert, I’m sure it’s hard.” In his reflection, Mr. Andrews, a Pioneer, acknowledged that others may feel uncomfortable communicating with him since he “tend[s] to force the conversation because I find value in ‘debate’ which helps me hone my ideas.” Additionally, participants were asked to reflect on influences that have shaped their leadership voice. Both Dr. Harris and Ms. Burke have the foundational voice of Nurturer; each of their reflections focused on how mentorship and previous leaders had influenced their leadership voice.

At the end of the APD 1.2 session, Mr. Andrews shared the Student Accountability Form with the rest of the ARIT team. The form was designed to guide teachers through the process of identifying students who need administrative attention. Initially, the form asks for the student’s name and ID and the nature of the need: Discipline, Academic, and Attendance. The form then continues by asking pertinent questions related to the nature of the need. For example, for Discipline, the teacher is prompted to describe the incident, list any witnesses, and if they would like a referral to be issued. For Academic and Attendance needs, the form asks for an explanation of the concern and if parents have been contacted. After discussing all parts of the form, the

ARIT discussed how they would respond to the form. For example, Dr. Harris would work with all Academic concerns and coordinate with the student's counselor. Mr. Scott, the Attendance AP, would address all Attendance submissions. The remaining Discipline situations would be dealt with by the grade level Student Services AP. All ARIT members were granted access to the spreadsheet of responses, and a column was added to the spreadsheet for APs to type the result of the situation. The ARIT also decided that the AP addressing the issue would follow up with the teacher who completed the request to ensure that communication was clear and thorough.

APD 1.3 Session

The theme for cycle 1 focused on ARIT participants knowing and understanding their own voice, including improved self-awareness about characteristics of their own voice, what it may feel like to be on the other side of their voice, and understanding voices different than their own. The third APD session in cycle 1 gave participants a chance to share their reflections from the previous week and make connections across the administrative team. Table 4.12 outlines the goals and activities of the APD 1.3 meeting.

Table 4.12*Intervention Cycle APD 1.3 Goals and Activities*

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
APD 1.3: September 9 All ARIT members present	• Exploring your voice • Rank 5 voices to identify paired and nemesis voices	• Distribute name cards with each participant's foundational voice (Appendix F) • Discussion (10 min): • What do you notice about our team? • One takeaway/connection from last week's reading • Reflection on APD 1.2 ARIT journal questions • Agree/Disagree Discussion (10 min) • Weekly Reflection form (Appendix E) (5 min) Action Item: • Before the next APD, read pages 28-44, rank all 5 voices (ARIT journal) • Read the chapter on your "second preferred voice"

In APD 1.3, the primary researcher began by distributing tabletop name cards for each ARIT member (Appendix F). In APD 1.3, each card included the foundational voice and a color-coded symbol in the upper-right corner of the card connected to each voice; the Nurturers had a purple heart, Guardians had an orange shield, Connectors had a blue connection symbol, and the Pioneer had a green flag. This allowed participants to clearly see others' foundational voices and make connections with the learning thus far.

Discussion began with ARIT members making observations about the team's voices and sharing their thoughts from the reading homework and reflection questions. Table 4.13 shows the breakdown of ARIT members' foundational voices.

Table 4.13*ARIT Foundational Voices*

Pioneer	Connector	Guardian	Creative	Nurturer
Mr. Andrews	Mr. Brooks Ms. Cook Mr. Lewis Mr. Scott	Dr. Ballard	*No ARIT members	Ms. Burke Mr. Carlson Dr. Harris

Discussion with the ARIT noted that no team member had a foundational voice of Creative.

Connector and Nurturer were the two primary voices on the ARIT. Discussion continued with ARIT members sharing their personal influences on their voices, including family dynamics, cultural experiences, and mentors encouraging them to step into leadership.

After the discussion, the ARIT participated in an Agree/Disagree activity. Participants were given a series of statements, and they were asked to raise their hand if they agreed with the statement. Then, they were asked to share their thoughts explaining why they agreed or disagreed. Table 4.14 lists the statements and responses.

Table 4.14*APD 1.3 Agree/Disagree Activity and Responses*

Statements:	Agree	Disagree	Notes
My voice/opinion is valued.	7	2	Primary researcher note: Of those who agreed, many felt that their voice is valued when there's open conversation or follow-up actions/conversations
Sometimes I feel like I am competing to be heard.	6	3	Mr. Scott, a Connector who agreed, shared, "It's not even as much competing as it is actually listening and valuing what a person says"; many people nodded their heads in agreement to his statement (primary researcher note).
I often contribute in meetings.	3	6	Mr. Andrews, a Pioneer, overly exaggerated raising hand, acknowledging his tendency to view conversations as "competitions" that he readily jumps into. In response to Mr. Andrews, Ms. Burke, a Nurture, explained that she disagreed with this statement since she feels like she often needs time to process. If the conversation feels like a "competition," she will often choose not to participate.
I feel like I am often misunderstood.	0	9	Primary researcher's note: No one raised their hand, and no one offered a comment.
I feel like my voice is sought out on a variety of topics.	4	5	Dr. Ballard, a Guardian who agreed, stated: "Everybody has their lanes and their expertise so people know who to go to for what." Ms. Cook, a Connector who agreed, shared: "I'm relationships-driven, so I seek to work with people. So I think that opens me up for others to work with me."

Conversation during the Agree/Disagree activity was open, but not all ARIT members responded verbally. All ARIT members were purposeful in raising their hands or not, but Dr. Ballard and Mr. Brooks provided only one verbal comment throughout the discussion while others

contributed more readily. This discussion was more personal in nature and invited ARIT members to be more vulnerable than usual since many of the questions were focused on personal feelings. After the discussion, participants were asked to complete the weekly reflection form (Appendix E). In the electronic weekly reflection form, Ms. Burke acknowledged an awkwardness she felt, stating: “Interesting to see how people responded to the questions, especially the one about do you think your voice is respected in the room...[I] wonder if they were just agreeing with the whole group to keep [the] status quo.” Having previous experiences and conversations with different ARIT members, Ms. Burke brought attention to a barrier to open communication within the ARIT.

ARDT Meeting #2

When Mr. Wood and Ms. Moore decided to not participate in the ARDT during cycle 1, the primary researcher realized that there were no teachers participating in the ARDT. Since one of the research questions of study centers on teachers’ job satisfaction, the primary researcher decided to invite two additional teacher representatives to participate in the ARDT. Before the second ARDT meeting, the primary researcher acquired consent from Ms. Dawson and Mr. Miller to participate in the ARDT. The primary researcher met with Ms. Dawson and Mr. Miller prior to the second ARDT meeting to go over the information from the first ARDT meeting. When the Action Research Design Team met for a second time between APD 1.3 and APD 2.1, the following participants were present: Mr. Long, Ms. Griffin, Dr. Smith, and Ms. Dawson. Mr. Miller was unable to attend due to a previous engagement, but he met with the primary researcher individually to give feedback. At the second ARDT meeting, the primary researcher and present ARDT members reviewed artifacts, including the ARIT weekly reflection form and

ARIT journal responses. Additionally, the ARDT collaborated to develop the APD content for cycle 2.

Action Research Cycle 2

Cycle 1 interventions centered on the theme “Know Your Voice.” The focus was to bring awareness to the key concepts in *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) and allow ARIT members to reflect on their voice. For intervention cycle 2, the theme broadened out to “Know the Power of Your Voice.” The intent was to go beyond self-reflection and expand participants’ understanding of how their voice impacts their interactions with others.

APD 2.1 Session

Kubicek and Cockram (2016) reiterate throughout *5 Voices* that no person has just one voice, but rather that people have access to all of the voices, though some are accessible more naturally than others. Voice order is a key concept in *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016), and the APD 2.1 session explored this concept. Table 4.15 outlines the APD 2.1 agenda.

Table 4.15

Intervention Cycle APD 2.1 Goals and Activities

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
Session 2.1: September 16	Goals: How do you use your voice(s) in your day-to-day?	- Understanding voice order (PowerPoint) (10 min) - Graphic with voice order and learning competency model (ARIT journal) (5 min)
All ARIT members present	- Understanding voice order - How to acknowledge strengths and areas of growth in our voice order - How do we apply our voice(s)?	- Applying your voice order activity and discussion (ARIT Journal) (10 min) (Appendix G) Action Item: - Weekly Reflection form (Appendix E) (5 min) - Pick 2 insights to work on - 1 from foundational voice chapter and 1 from the chapter of your 2nd voice (ARIT Journal)

The homework action item from APD 1.3 asked participants to read a portion from 5 *Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) that helped them to rank the different voices into a voice order. The primary researcher began APD 2.1 session by handing out each participants' tabletop voice card (Appendix F); from the previous APD 1.3 session, the primary researcher added each ARIT members' voice order ranking from their ARIT journals to the upper-left corner of the name card. The voices were color-coded dark green (foundational) to red (nemesis). Also, the voice's symbol color was included to help participants easily associate with different voices around the room.

After distributing name cards and giving a brief overview of the addition of the voice order chart to the name cards, the primary researcher began with a presentation incorporating voice order and the four stages of competency, also known as the "conscious competency" learning model (Das & Biswas, 2018). After the mini-lesson presentation, ARIT members were asked to open their journals and complete an activity where they moved each voice onto a graphic with four quadrants aligning with the four levels of learning competence (Garcia, 2023).

Using this graphic organizer, participants were prompted to fill out a chart evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, and optimization of their voice in four areas: daily work, instructional leadership, relationships, and conflict. These four areas encompass elements of the study's theoretical framework, specifically elements of Andragogy (relevancy, context-specific, and goal-centered) and the three pathways: rational (instructional), emotional, and organizational. Appendix G provides two examples of ARIT participant responses. Some participants were more specific and thorough with their reflection. Although the researcher acknowledged the vulnerability associated with this activity, only three ARIT members opted to share their responses verbally.

Due to time constraints and needing to address additional non-APD topics, ARIT participants were asked to complete the electronic weekly reflection form (Appendix E) as part of their homework action items. An additional action item asked the ARIT to identify two insights or areas of growth that they wanted to work on and steps they would take to improve their practices; each of the voice chapters (chapters 4-8) in *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) provided a guiding list of insights to aid participants in this assignment.

APD 2.2 Session

The APD 2.2 session schedule was directly impacted by multiple situations, including a student investigation, a CCPS tribunal, and a school holiday. These factors created a gap in the intended flow for APD sessions. Initially, APD 2.2 was scheduled for September 23, 2024; Table 4.16 includes a detailed account of the conflicting situations and the actual APD 2.2 agenda.

Table 4.16*Intervention Cycle APD 2.2 Goals and Activities*

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
Session 2.2a: September 23	APD session 2.2 was postponed on September 23, 2024. Prior to the ARIT meeting time, a discipline situation involving multiple students occurred and required the immediate attention of five of the Student Services APs. This situation bled into the ARIT meeting time; the meeting was not rescheduled, so the original APD date was shifted to October 7, 2024.	
Mid-point Check-in: September 30	The primary researcher, Mr. James Andrews, and Mr. Logan Scott were off campus on September 30, 2024, presenting at a student tribunal. As the date and time were set by CCPS, there was not an opportunity to attend the APD session. The remaining members of the ARIT did meet and independently completed the electronic mid-point check-in form.	
Session 2.2b: October 7	Goals: Our voice(s) and culture Identify barriers to effective communication and how to overcome them	- Revisit: Applying your voice order (APD 2.1) (10 min) - Discuss and receive feedback from a partner - Immature vs. mature versions of each voice (Ch. 9) - ARIT Voice Order Chart Discussion (Appendix H): - What do you see? - What does this suggest? - What assumptions can we make about our communication? - What strategies/approaches might be most effective? - APD 2.1 weekly task check in: - What insights are you working on? - How's it going? - How have you applied these insights to your daily work (tasks)? - How have these insights impacted your work with staff (relationships)?
All ARIT members present		Action Item: - Weekly Reflection form (Appendix E) (5 min) - Continue working on 2 insights from 2.1
October 14	CCPS Schools were closed for Fall Break; no APD session was held	

The primary researcher and two ARIT members were required to attend a CCPS student tribunal on September 30, 2024. With this conflict, the primary researcher created an electronic mid-point check-in form. The form asked the ARIT about their motivation for and level of participation in the study, challenges they were experiencing with APD, feedback on the APD content and structure, and reflection on communication. Dr. Ballard was the only member of the ARIT who did not complete the form. Of the remaining eight participants, seven ARIT members acknowledged that they felt the APD content was an area of need. Dr. Harris reflected, “It is good for me to dive into this work to help me see my own strengths and weaknesses and to learn not to self-isolate and find the benefit of others’ strengths to help me be a better leader.” Principal Carlson recognized, “It is important to take time to learn about non-school specific info--however, how we interact with each other determines how effective we are as a team.” Seven ARIT members acknowledged that other duties and responsibilities had made it difficult to complete the weekly action items.

The mid-point check-in gave ARIT members an opportunity to also reflect on the APD structure and application to their work. Multiple participants’ comments expressed appreciation for the built-in opportunity for self-reflection and the weekly discussions in the ARIT meetings. Respondents also noted common threads of growth, including reducing distractions, committing to being fully present during APD, and a stronger push from the principal to prioritize APD. ARIT members also reflected on the team’s communication; common responses included feelings of disconnectedness, impatience, and inconsistency across the team. At the same time, many ARIT members pointed out that the APD was a step in the right direction and that most people’s intentions were in the right place while their methods had room for growth.

The APD 2.2 session was able to move forward when the ARIT was able to reconvene on October 7, 2024. The session began with the primary researcher distributing the ARIT members' tabletop name cards (Appendix F). Participants reviewed their responses to the chart "Applying your voice order" from APD 2.1, except this time they shared their responses with a partner (someone with a different voice order) and received feedback from the partner. Additionally, the team discussed immature versus mature communication responses. In the discussion, Mr. Andrews, a Pioneer, shared that he and his partner had discussed his immature tendency to try and "win" conversations; his partner suggested some alternative responses, and Mr. Andrews seemed open to trying new approaches.

Next, the team reviewed a color-coded chart compiling all team members' voice orders (Appendix H). The darkest green row indicated each person's foundational voice, followed by their 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and nemesis voices (red). The different voices were also color-coded to help participants see trends and gaps. The team noticed that the Creative voice (yellow) was low for most, while the Nurturer (purple), Connector (blue), and Guardian (orange) voices were consistently high for most. Participants attributed the more common voices to the nature of being educators and what it means to be an administrator who works to support students and teachers.

In the discussion on ARIT voice order, Dr. Harris noted that the Pioneer voice (green) was a lower voice for most people. She pointed out, "We are the leaders of the school, so we have to have that vision," and without that vision, the school can lose sight of its intentionality. The team brainstormed potential strategies to improve communication, including improved accountability moving forward, making decisions in a timely manner, and playing to individual ARIT members' strengths with regards to roles and responsibilities.

APD 2.2 concluded with participants pairing up and checking in on their progress with their identified insights from APD 2.1. The overall feeling was that team members were aware of their insights but needed more time to truly see big changes. Dr. Harris shared that she had recently chosen to work on a project with a peer who would not typically have been her “go-to” person in past; her increased understanding of her foundational voice and seeing strengths in others’ voices led her to work with someone new. Due to time constraints, participants were asked to complete the electronic weekly reflection (Appendix E) as part of their homework action items.

Midpoint Focus Group Interviews

In October 2024, the primary researcher conducted midpoint focus group interviews with the ARIT members and teacher volunteers. Three ARIT members did not participate in the midpoint interviews: Dr. Neil Ballard, Mr. Duncan Brooks, and Mr. Logan Scott. Initially, four ARIT time slots were offered, but the first two interview times were cancelled due to emergent situations on campus. Six of the ARIT members rescheduled into the remaining interview time slots. In the ARIT midpoint interviews, the primary researcher used the same photo-elicitation images from the pre-cycle interviews and asked participants to provide feedback on the APD sessions, to discuss application of the APD learning in their work, and to gauge teacher job satisfaction.

The primary researcher used a similar structure for the midpoint teacher volunteer focus group interviews. There were four time slots available, and all 13 teacher volunteers from the pre-cycle interviews also participated in the midpoint interviews. Using the same photo-elicitation images, the primary researcher asked for input on teacher job satisfaction and how it compared to the beginning of the year, teacher perception of administrators’ leadership practices

throughout the semester thus far, and any noticeable changes to the administrators' communication styles or practices.

APD 2.3 Session

Since the theme for intervention cycle 2 was “Know the Power of Your Voice” and focused on enhancing participants' understanding of how their voice impacts their interactions with others, the APD 2.3 session delved into Kubicek and Cockram's (2016) chapter entitled “Understanding Your Weapons Systems.” The premise of this chapter underscores the need for a person to “understand the impact of their weapons system and become intentional in how they deploy it” (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016, p. 108). Table 4.17 provides the agenda for the APD 2.3 session.

Table 4.17

Intervention Cycle APD 2.3 Goals and Activities

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
Session 2.3: October 21	Goals: How our voices interact Identify barriers to effective communication and how to overcome them	- Weapons system (PowerPoint) (15 min) - In foundational voice groups, complete the ARIT Weapons Systems chart (ARIT journals) - Discussion - Weekly reflection form (Appendix E) (5 min)
Absent: Mr. Scott and Mr. Brooks		Action Item: - Read Chapter 10: Knowing Your Rules of Engagement - Complete the immature vs. mature behaviors/tendencies chart in your journal

At the start of the APD 2.3 session, the primary researcher distributed the ARIT members' tabletop name cards to serve as a visual reminder of key concepts throughout the session (Appendix F). APD session 2.3 began with a “mini-lesson” to provide an overview of the

different voices' weapons systems, as described by Kubicek and Cockram (2016). For each voice, the presentation identified a superpower and a contrasting weapons system, liberation statements, and triggers. In foundational voice groups, ARIT participants were asked to each identify a liberation statement and a trigger that related to them, as well as practical suggestions for how the ARIT can be more supportive. After discussing in foundational voice groups, participants discussed in the large group. There were common themes that emerged, including the need to value others' strengths and respect triggers. Interestingly, the Nurturer group lobbied for time to process ideas and conversations, while the Pioneer voice requested clear and concise decision-making and timelines. Through discussion, the team compromised on trying to move forward with bringing topics up for discussion earlier to allow time for processing as well as determining a later date to revisit the topic and decide on a course of action. In this same conversation, Mr. Andrews (Pioneer) shared his liberation statement: "Invite me to help solve your problems. I love doing that!" In response, Dr. Harris immediately invited Mr. Andrews to join her in troubleshooting an upcoming event on campus that would require new technology components, which Dr. Harris felt was not a strength of hers.

Through continued dialogue, the ARIT discussed additional ways to overcome common communication challenges. One such idea was incorporating a new agenda format with more structure, giving space to highlight next steps and accountability. Additionally, the team brainstormed meeting norms, which had not been a topic of conversation in many years. Participants highlighted a need to be physically present in the meetings and being fully, mentally present during the administrative meetings, specifically not working on other things, as well as avoiding scheduling other meetings at the same time whenever possible. Furthermore, ARIT

members advocated for the team to center their attention on topics that were relevant and vision-oriented instead of going into tangential topics.

After the discussion on people's weapons systems, the ARIT was given an opportunity to complete the electronic weekly reflection form (Appendix E). Many of the responses were appreciative and had a hopeful tone on how this content could help in future communication; as Ms. Cook stated, "I actually like the vulnerability piece [of this APD lesson]... it requires us to trust one another which doesn't always happen." Likewise, Ms. Burke responded, "Hopefully, this helps us to be more efficient in our meeting time and pay attention to how we are addressing each other and participating in our meetings." The ARIT responses showed that most participants were eager to work towards a greater understanding of their own voices and how to communicate with others most effectively.

ARDT Meeting #3

The third ARDT meeting occurred in two parts between APD 2.3 and APD 3.1 sessions. Due to scheduling conflicts, Ms. Dawson and Mr. Miller met with the primary researcher at one meeting time, while Ms. Griffin, Mr. Long, and Dr. Smith met at a separate time. In both meetings, the primary researcher shared a detailed agenda which focused on artifact review and collaborative planning. The primary researcher shared common threads from the midpoint focus group interviews with the ARIT and teacher volunteers, as well as overall observations from the APD sessions in cycles 1 and 2. Additionally, the ARDT reviewed the ARIT weekly reflection form responses and journal entries. The ARDT worked to create the APD goals and activities for the sessions in cycle 3.

Action Research Cycle 3

Intervention cycle 1 focused on participants understanding their own voices and tendencies; cycle 2 centered on the ARIT growing in awareness of the power of their voices, especially in relation to the positives and the negatives. Intervention cycle 3 sought to expand ARIT members' application of the learning as they worked within the administrative team and with staff.

APD 3.1 Session

As the primary researcher distributed the name cards at the start of the APD 3.1 session, she explained that she had added a number to the center of each card, above the foundational voice (Appendix F). She explained that this number represented their voice order in the Rules of Engagement, which they would discuss later in the APD. The primary researcher then began the first session in cycle 3 with defining team norms and exploring how ARIT members can use their voices. Table 4.18 outlines the goals and activities for the APD 3.1 meeting.

Table 4.18*Intervention Cycle APD 3.1 Goals and Activities*

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
Session 3.1a: October 28 Absent: Dr. Ballard	Goals: Next Steps • Moving forward as an admin team • Applying this work inside our team	APD: • Meeting norms: Revisit chart from APD 2.3 (5 min) • Mini-lesson (PowerPoint) on <i>5 Voices</i> (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) Rules of Engagement (RoE) (5 min) • With foundational voice group, complete the RoE chart (5 min) (ARIT journals) • Follow the RoE for remainder of meeting • Weekly reflection form (Appendix E) (5 min) Action Item: • Read Ch. 11: “Voice Control-Mastering Your Tendencies”
Session 3.1b: November 1 Absent: Dr. Ballard	Goal: Application in ARIT • Introduce reformatted admin agenda • Use Rules of Engagement	• Introduce new agenda format (5 min) (Appendix I) Apply RoE for remainder of admin meeting

APD session 2.3 included a discussion designed to focus on areas of growth and team expectations; this chart was used to develop four principles or norms to guide future ARIT meetings:

1. Intentionality: We are imperfect but intentional
2. Seek not to be offended – Believe in the good
3. Be present: physically and mentally present in meetings (not multitasking)
4. Effective communication: decision-making focus, clear purpose, vision-driven

As the team discussed meeting norms, they brainstormed ideas that aligned to the norms, such as having a talking stick to focus on the speaker or reformatting the agenda to prioritize intentionality and having a decision-making focus.

In *5 Voices*, Kubicek and Cockram (2016) propose the “Rules of Engagement,” a guiding principle that aims to value and support each voice by providing a structured order for discussions within a meeting. The “Rules of Engagement” (RoE) state that Nurturers should speak first, followed by Creatives, Guardians, Connectors, and then Pioneers. Although this order may seem unnatural based on characteristics of the voices, it promotes an order that allows all voices a chance to listen as well as be heard, without overwhelming or undervaluing any voices (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016). After the primary researcher presented a mini-lesson on the RoE, the ARIT was asked to work in their foundational voice groups to answer two key questions:

1. What is needed for you to bring your best?
2. What cautions/boundaries do you want to share?

As the team discussed the responses from each foundational voice group, one theme emerged from all voices: a desire to be respected, even if their approach or needs were different than another’s. Additionally, each voice shared their unique needs. For example, the Nurturers asked for “wait time” to process ideas, while the Guardians asked the ARIT team members not to “take it personally” when they asked clarifying or challenging questions.

After the discussion, the ARIT was challenged to follow the RoE for the remainder of the administrative meeting. The primary researcher referred to the ARIT members’ name tags; the researcher had added each voice’s order number according to the RoE to help participants easily identify the order. The ARIT agreed to follow the RoE voice order for the meeting, but the ARIT

quickly fell back into normal conversation and meeting habits. For example, in a discussion on how to confirm staff completion of a required district training, Principal Carlson (Nurturer) began the conversation, but Ms. Cook (Connector) and Mr. Andrews (Pioneer) quickly stepped in and dominated the discussion. Later in the meeting, though, when talking about teacher accountability, Principal Carlson did attempt to get feedback from all ARIT members in the RoE voice order. Overall, all voices were heard on this topic, but there were interjections out of order at times. At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to complete the weekly reflection form (Appendix E).

The APD 3.1 lesson was broken down over two separate days. Based on feedback from the APD sessions, the primary researcher and ARDT used ARIT feedback to develop a reformatted agenda, focused on prioritizing meeting topics, valuing different voice's needs, and clearly communicating next steps and responsibilities. Appendix I shows a template for the reformatted administrative meeting agenda. The agenda begins with two sections, primarily focused on communication: "Course Team Conversations" and "Admin To-Dos." These two sections were designed to help provide clear messaging and actions from all administrators for all teachers and course teams. The next section, "Instruction," centers on topics such as evidence of teaching and learning, grading, or curriculum. The portion entitled "Current Happenings" gives space for staff and student accountability as well as topics such as ongoing trainings or projects. The "Looking Ahead" and "Calendar" elements are designed to help the ARIT be forward-thinking and map out necessary plans and deadlines. The final two parts, "Logistics" and "Admin Out of the Building," are for practical, day-to-day workings at the school.

For the 3.1b APD session, the primary researcher had taken the original ARIT agenda and applied it to the reformatted agenda template (Appendix I). After introducing the new

format, the ARIT proceeded through the meeting tasked with following the RoE and focused on clear communication. In the 3.1b APD meeting, the ARIT was able to follow the reformatted agenda, providing clear notes and details for next steps. The ARIT members, however, struggled to follow the RoE voice order on topics that were open for input or decision-making. Beginning, November 1, 2024, the ARIT used the reformatted agenda for all its meetings and worked to follow the RoE during discussions.

APD 3.2 Session

At the start of the APD 3.2 session, the primary researcher handed out the ARIT members' tabletop name cards (Appendix F). The primary researcher opted to begin the APD 3.2 session with a reflection on the use of the *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) RoE from the previous two ARIT meetings. After the reflection, the ARIT was challenged to consider their personal voice order in relation to their work tasks, which Kubicek and Cockram (2016) identified as the 70/30 Principle. Table 4.19 outlines the goals and activities for the APD 3.2 meeting.

Table 4.19*Intervention Cycle APD 3.2 Goals and Activities*

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
Session 3.2: November 4 All ARIT members present	Goals: Next Steps Applying this work inside and outside our team	- Complete electronic reflection on RoE (5 min) 70/30 Principle mini-lesson (5 min) 70/30 reflection activity (ARIT Journal) (8 min) - Discussion (8 min) - Weekly reflection form (Appendix E) (5 min) Action Item: - Read Ch. 12: Leading Effective Change and Ch. 13: 100X Team Challenge

When considering work tasks, *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) encourages people to use their top three natural voices for seventy percent of their activities, giving them the energy to do thirty percent of the activities which require use of their fourth and fifth voices. After a brief overview of the 70/30 Principle, ARIT members were asked to complete an activity in their journal where they listed out job responsibilities and marked them as “Natural Strengths (Good at or enjoy)” (70%) or “Learned Behaviors (Not enjoyable or easy)” (30%). Next, the ARIT was asked to identify what percentage of their time they spend on each of the job duties listed, creating a total percentage for the “Natural Strengths” and the “Learned Behaviors.”

The primary researcher used the 70/30 Principle activity as the starting point for the ARIT discussion. All ARIT members were asked to share an example of a natural strength in their work; for example, Ms. Cook shared that her voice as a Connector directly relates to her work with student leadership. After a roundtable sharing of natural strengths, the primary researcher asked the ARIT to evaluate the overall percentage breakdown between natural

strengths and learned behaviors. Overall, no one felt that they had a true 70/30 breakdown; most leaned more towards 50/50.

The final step in the 70/30 Principle activity asked ARIT members to think about job duties that they wanted to hold onto, change, or add based on the previous step. This conversation opened the door for dialogue about future responsibilities and current organizational structures. For example, Mr. Andrews mentioned wanting to have more of a role in problem solving issues on campus; in response, Dr. Harris reminded Mr. Andrews that he had agreed to help with troubleshooting an upcoming online assessment administration. After the discussion, participants were asked to complete the weekly reflection form (Appendix E).

APD 3.3 Session

The APD 3.3 session was initially postponed due to a variety of circumstances that pulled half of the ARIT members out of the meeting. When the APD 3.3 session was held on November 18, 2024, all ARIT members were present. Table 4.20 outlines the goals and activities for the APD 3.3 meeting.

Table 4.20*Intervention Cycle APD 3.3 Goals and Activities*

APD Session Details	APD Session Topic/Goals	APD Activities and Descriptions
Session 3.3a: November 11	APD session 3.3 was postponed on November 11, 2024. Dr. Harris was absent due to illness, Mr. Lewis and Ms. Burke were called into a pressing student situation, and Dr. Ballard was initially called away from the meeting for a phone call. Additionally, Mr. Scott was late to the ARIT meeting due to a parent phone call. The ARIT APD 3.3 session was rescheduled for November 18, 2024.	
Session 3.3b: November 18	Goals: Organization Communication • Communication across NRHS • Putting it all together	• Organizational Communication chart (8 min) (ARIT journals) • Purpose, Examples, Audience, Opportunity for Feedback?, Tools • Unmasking a Problem of Practice (8 min) • Weekly reflection (Appendix E) (5 min) • Final reflection (5 min)
All ARIT members present		

As the final intervention in research cycle 3, APD 3.3 focused on evaluating organizational communication and applying learning from the previous APD sessions. Before the session began, the primary researcher distributed the ARIT members' tabletop name cards (Appendix F). In pairs, the ARIT completed a chart evaluating NRHS's organizational communication: internal vs. external, formal vs. informal, upward, downward, horizontal, and written vs. verbal. For each type of communication, participants were asked to evaluate the purpose, give examples, identify the audience, evaluate opportunities for feedback, and identify tools used in the communication. As each pair shared their evaluation, the ARIT chimed in with additional ideas and gauged their effectiveness with the various types of communication.

After the discussion evaluating organizational communication at NRHS, ARIT members were re-paired and given an activity entitled, "Unmasking a Problem of Practice." Each pair received a direct quote from the primary researcher's focus group interviews with teachers; the

primary researcher selected quotes based on topics that were mentioned most often. Topics included downward communication, inconsistency across the administrative team, and communication/focus within course team meetings. The ARIT pairs were then tasked with providing a succinct summary of the concern, phrasing it into a question, and brainstorming possible solutions. Each pair then shared their work with the larger ARIT. This prompted discussion amongst participants on ways the ARIT could address the issues. After the discussion, participants were asked to complete the weekly reflection form (Appendix E) and a final reflection form over the entirety of APD in cycles 1-3.

Action Research Post-Cycle

ARDT Meeting #4

The final ARDT meeting was intended to be in person; however, in the days leading up to the meeting, three team members informed the primary researcher that they would be unable to attend for a variety of reasons. Due to limited attendance, the primary researcher opted to create an electronic form to receive feedback from the participants in place of the face-to-face meeting. The day before the intended meeting, the primary researcher emailed all ARDT members and thanked them for their participation. The email also included a brief explanation of the electronic form in place of the meeting, as well as a link to the form. While all ARDT members acknowledged receipt of the email, only two ARDT members completed the electronic reflection form.

ARIT Individual Interviews

The primary researcher conducted individual, semi-structured interviews with all ARIT members at the conclusion of cycle 3. In the interview, participants were asked to share their thoughts on the APD from August through November, future APD offerings, positive and

negative experiences with the APD, and the impact they perceived the APD had on their work and teacher job satisfaction. The ARIT members all expressed appreciation for the APD; most acknowledged that their self-awareness grew through the journal work and group discussions. Principal Carlson said, “It’s the most comprehensive and well thought out and executed PD as a team we’ve ever done... it validates why our team is so good, but also why sometimes our results don’t mirror the journey we took to get there.” Also, Mr. Lewis commented,

I think I enjoyed the journal, it’s been a little self-reflective... the reality is, it always kind of is going to come back to how it affects our team, but the success of the professional development is it being directly connected to the work of or the engagement of others.

Additionally, participants expressed a desire to continue APD beyond the timeline of the research study. Individuals also expressed personal areas of growth and challenges that they experienced while participating in the APD sessions. Dr. Harris recognized a weakness in her own voice: “Maybe [I am] not holding people quite accountable as I should because I don’t want to hurt their feelings. So, I have been trying to be a little more direct with that.” All ARIT members felt that they had used components of the APD content in their work with teachers and that they were more aware of their communication styles and how they communicate with others. As Mr. Lewis shared, “It’s intentional... you are making actions that align to the work.” He went on to explain that if the ARIT understands their own voice, “That work I think matters across the school when we talk about relationships and with people, knowing how people respond, knowing, you know generally where people fit, as far as their communication style.”

Teacher Focus Group Interviews

The post-cycle, semi-structured teacher focus group interviews mirrored the structure of the previous teacher focus group interviews; there were four time slots, and teachers were able to

choose their interview time. Only eight of the thirteen teacher volunteers were able to participate in the final focus group interviews. In the interviews, teachers were asked to share examples of any administrative leadership practices or behaviors from that semester that had a positive or negative impact on them. Many teachers had positive examples of administrative support, including course team meetings or student needs; one teacher commented on having two new administrators as evaluators, saying, “I feel like having two has given us much more flexibility...if we need somebody, or that they are always able to have one or the other, you know, attend a meeting, or, you know, that kind of thing.” Another teacher mentioned the positive impact of an administrator in a discipline situation saying that “the admin were supportive and actually circled back around to me to follow up.” Additionally, teachers were asked to share any changes they had noticed in the administration’s leadership practices or communication behaviors compared to previous years. Finally, teachers were asked to gauge their job satisfaction using the photo-elicitation images from the previous interviews. Overall, the teacher volunteers shared examples of leadership practices that had a positive impact on them. Teachers noted the positive impact of *The Lion’s Main* newsletter and the Student Accountability form in communication as well as a general sense of improved communication with school administrators. One teacher shared how she liked how *The Lion’s Main* provided clear communication: “I like that I can see what I really need to zone in on and make sure that I’m ready for what I need to have.” Although the teacher volunteers chose different photos to represent their job satisfaction, they all ranked their job satisfaction high. Many of the teachers acknowledged the ebb and flow with workload and student needs, but all teacher volunteers expressed appreciation for being at NRHS.

Questionnaire

A post-cycle electronic questionnaire was shared with all NRHS teachers at the end of cycle 3. Teacher participation in the post-cycle questionnaire was used to gauge teacher job satisfaction from the beginning of the study to the conclusion as well as to evaluate administrators' leadership practices during the semester and the impact on teachers' job satisfaction. The primary researcher emailed teachers, reminding them of participation in the pre-cycle questionnaire and the overall focus of the research study; 45 out of 181 teachers (25%) participated. The questions on the post-cycle teacher questionnaire included:

- How would you rank your job satisfaction? (Likert scale)
- What is contributing to your job satisfaction level?
- Thinking about your school's administrative team this semester, can you think of any leadership practices or behaviors that have had a positive impact on you?
- Thinking about your school's administrative team this semester, can you think of any leadership practices or behaviors that have had a negative impact on you?
- Have you noticed any changes to the administrative team's communication practices or behaviors this semester? If so, what?
- How do you feel about *The Lion's Main*? (Likert scale)
- Please provide feedback on your ranking of *The Lion's Main*.
- How do you feel about the Student Accountability form? (Likert scale)
- Please provide feedback on your ranking of the Student Accountability form.
- Please feel free to share any other thoughts on teacher job satisfaction, administrative communication, or administrative leadership practices.

Teachers were able to answer questions at their discretion and provide as much or as little feedback with which they were comfortable.

Chapter Summary

Table 4.21 aligns the study's findings with the research questions and cycles.

Table 4.21

Summary of Research Questions Linked to Findings and Cycles

Research Questions	Findings	Research Cycle
RQ1: To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?	- School administrators indicated that they wanted to participate in APD and experience continued growth. - Participants expressed that APD needs be relevant and context-specific. - Building leaders shared that APD needs to be a priority within the work of school administrators. - School administrators indicated that APD needs to be built into their workload.	- Cycles 1-3 - Cycles 1-3 - Cycles 2-3 - Cycles 2-3
RQ2: In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	- Teachers shared that job satisfaction is an investment of time and energy. - Teachers indicated that administrators' leadership practices must be relevant and context-specific to the needs of teachers and the school. - Teachers believe that to better understand teacher job satisfaction there must be ongoing and open communication between teachers and administrators. - Teachers shared that job satisfaction is multifaceted; to make an impact, administrators must function within a variety of domains.	- Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Cycle - Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Cycle - Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Cycle - Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Cycle

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perception of leaders' practices and its influence on their job satisfaction.

Through questionnaires, observations, and semi-structured focus group interviews, the perspectives of teachers, ARIT members, and ARDT participants were gathered. The findings from three action research cycles were provided to tell the story of this action research study. The findings in this chapter informed the themes presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS FROM THE ACTION RESEARCH CASE

Data collection in qualitative action research comes from a variety of methods, including interviews, questionnaires, reflections, observations, and more. Oftentimes, initial data in action research studies is unstructured and full of rich, thick descriptions specific to the research context and participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through coding and thematic analysis, the researcher can look for the development of patterns or themes to bring meaning to the raw data (Glanz, 2014; Mezmir, 2020).

For this action research study, the researcher followed Nowell et al.'s (2017) phases for thematic analysis, including: becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and defining themes, and generating a final report. By digging into the data, the researcher in this action research study was able to thoroughly discover findings and themes related to the study's research questions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perceptions of leaders' practices and their influence on their job satisfaction. The study focused on the actions of the Principal and Assistant Principals in a large, suburban high school. The action research team wanted to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on job satisfaction and the role that teachers' perceptions of administrators' leadership practices influences teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, the action research team

sought to understand the perspective of school leaders on administrative professional development (APD). To address the purpose of this action research, the following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?
2. In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?

Chapter 5 presents the findings and the themes that emerged throughout the action research cycles. This chapter will provide an overview of the action research cycles as they relate to the research questions, the researcher's coding and analysis, as well as the alignment of themes with the research questions, logic model, and theoretical framework.

Introduction to Analysis

Andragogy, also known as adult learning theory, and Leithwood et al.'s (2010) Four Paths leadership model served as the theoretical foundation for this action research study. In this study's theoretical framework, the principles of andragogy were aligned with elements of administrative professional development (Zepeda et al., 2014). The Four Paths model (Leithwood et al., 2017), the second component of the theoretical framework, focused on indirect leadership practices affecting the rational (instructional), emotional, and organizational pathways which influence teacher job satisfaction. Intervention cycles were used to design and implement administrative professional development, which school administrators were able to apply to their work with teachers.

In late July and early August 2024, pre-cycle work began with gathering consent for the action research design team (ARDT) and the action research implementation team (ARIT).

Additionally, a pre-cycle questionnaire was shared with teachers at North Ridge High School (NRHS, a pseudonym) and the ARIT members. Semi-structured focus group interviews were held with the ARIT and teacher volunteers from the pre-questionnaire. From these various data collection methods, the ARDT met to evaluate data and design APD for cycle one which was comprised of three sessions.

From late August to mid-September 2024, the primary researcher and the ARIT implemented the first intervention cycle. APD sessions incorporated a variety of activities, including mini-lessons, opportunities for application, small and large group discussions, and reflection. Prior to the end of cycle one, the ARDT met to evaluate ongoing data and design the second cycle's three sessions of APD. Implementation of cycle two met with some scheduling conflicts, so it spanned mid-September to late-October. In mid-October, the primary researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the ARIT and teacher volunteers to gain their perspectives on teacher job satisfaction and perceptions of leadership practices. Before cycle two concluded, the ARDT met to evaluate data and design the three sessions of the third APD cycle. From late October to mid-November, the primary researcher and ARIT implemented the APD sessions for cycle three. The research culminated in post-cycle semi-structured teacher focus group interviews, individual ARIT interviews, a final reflection form for the ARDT, and a post-cycle questionnaire for teachers and the ARIT.

The primary researcher used data collected from the research cycles to identify the findings as outlined in Chapter 4. Through a deductive coding system, data was analyzed from interviews, ARDT meetings, questionnaires, ARIT intervention cycle meetings, and journal reflections. Furthermore, the researcher's notes and observations helped inform the findings and confirm the themes. As a result of the data analysis, eight findings were identified, and three

themes emerged. Table 5.1 shows a summary of the findings and themes as they relate to the study's research questions.

Table 5.1

Summary of Research Questions Linked to Findings and Themes

Research Questions	Findings	Theme
RQ1: To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?	• School administrators indicated that they wanted to participate in APD and experience continued growth. • Participants expressed that APD needed to be relevant and context-specific. • Building leaders shared that APD needed to be a priority within the work of school administrators. • School administrators indicated that APD needed to be built into their workload.	Theme 1: Intentionality Matters Theme 2: Adaptability Requires Action
RQ2: In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	• Teachers shared that job satisfaction was an investment of time and energy. • Teachers indicated that administrators' leadership practices must be relevant and context-specific to the needs of teachers and the school. • Teachers believed that to better understand teacher job satisfaction there must be ongoing and open communication between teachers and administrators. • Teachers shared that job satisfaction was multifaceted; to make an impact, administrators must function within a variety of domains.	Theme 1: Intentionality Matters Theme 3: Teachers' Job Satisfaction is Multifaceted

The findings and themes align with the study's theoretical framework and research questions. The findings for the first research question point to school administrators needing and wanting APD to have purpose and weight in their work; the emerging themes support characteristics of andragogy for adult learners. For administrators, the theme "Intentionality Matters" highlighted the need for purposeful, context-specific APD and deliberate participation from administrators. The second theme for the first research question, "Adaptability Requires Action," showed that administrators needed to actively engage with the APD learning to be able to apply it to their work with teachers; growing and adapting as communicators and leaders required real-time changes to behavior.

Findings from teachers recognized that their job satisfaction was influenced by a variety of factors, and leaders' practices must be purposeful and far-reaching to be impactful. For teachers, the theme "Intentionality Matters" linked their job satisfaction with intentional, administrative support across the rational, emotional, and organizational pathways. Intentional support included teachers' desire for purposeful, administrative communication. The third theme, "Teachers' Job Satisfaction is Multifaceted," accentuated the complexities of teachers' work and the necessity for administrators to participate in learning opportunities, like APD, so that they could continually grow as leaders and have a comprehensive "toolkit" of administrative practices and approaches to respond to the extensive needs of teachers.

The study's themes aligned with Leithwood et al.'s (2017) Four Paths model which indicates that as school leaders identify needs and act to improve those conditions, their leadership practices flow along multiple pathways to impact individuals, classrooms, and the overall school. Table 5.2 summarizes the themes connected to the research questions and theoretical framework.

Table 5.2

Summary of Themes Connected to Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

Research Questions	Alignment to Theoretical Framework	Major Themes
RQ1: To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?	APD: Andragogy, Job-Embedded, Contextual, Ongoing	Theme 1: Intentionality Matters
	Leadership Practices: Rational, Emotional, Organizational	Theme 2: Adaptability Requires Action
RQ2: In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	Leadership Practices: Rational, Emotional, Organizational	Theme 1: Intentionality Matters
	Teachers' Perceptions: School-wide, Classroom, and Individual Experiences	Theme 3: Teachers' Job Satisfaction is Multifaceted

The data analysis process began with the primary researcher using the Otter.ai website to transcribe all recorded interviews, meetings, and ARIT intervention cycle sessions. Next, the primary researcher uploaded all transcripts to a coding website, Delve, to analyze the data. The primary researcher initially used deductive coding, a process that involved using predetermined codes from the literature and theoretical framework to identify elements of teacher job satisfaction and teachers' perceptions of leadership practices. Through further analysis, additional codes were inductively developed to refine the coding and determine the findings. The primary researcher also applied the codes to the electronic questionnaires and journal reflections completed throughout the study. Table 5.3 displays the major and minor codes that surfaced during the coding process.

Table 5.3*Major and Minor Codes by Research Question*

Codes	RQ1	RQ 2
Major Codes	Andragogy/Adult Learner APD Job-Embedded/Relevant APD Contextual/Problem-Centered APD Ongoing/Goal-Oriented	Positive TJS (Teacher Job Satisfaction) Negative TJS Instructional Admin Behaviors Emotional Admin Behaviors Organizational Admin Behaviors
Minor Codes	Difficulties/Distractions with APD Admin: Instructional application Admin: Emotional application Admin: Organizational application	Communication improvement needed Lack of Consistency TJS, Ebb and flow TJS: Instructional TJS: Emotional TJS: Organizational

The primary researcher also used data triangulation to confirm themes across a variety of data sources. Table 5.4 presents the data sources used in triangulation.

Table 5.4*Triangulation Matrix*

Research Questions	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3
RQ1: To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?	ARIT Questionnaire (pre-cycle)	ARIT focus group interviews (pre- and mid-cycles) ARIT individual interviews (post-cycle) Teacher focus group interviews (pre-, mid-, and post-cycles)	Reflection: ARIT Journals Researcher's Observation Notes
RQ2: In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?	Teacher Perception Questionnaire (pre- and post-cycle)	Teacher focus group interviews (pre-, mid-, and post-cycles)	ARDT Reflections (pre-, mid-, and post-cycles)

Research Question 1

The first research question endeavored to gain the perspective of school-based administrators as it related to participating in APD and applying the learning to their daily work. The primary researcher used a coding process to evaluate data from questionnaires, interviews, reflections, and observations. Findings for the first research question included:

1. School administrators indicated that they wanted to participate in APD and experience continued growth.
2. Participants expressed that APD needed to be relevant and context-specific.
3. Building leaders shared that APD needed to be a priority within the work of school administrators.
4. School administrators indicated that APD needed to be built into their workload.

Theme 1: Intentionality Matters

This study sought to evaluate how one Principal and eight Assistant Principals participated in APD and applied the learning to their daily work with teachers. The first two findings for the first research question support the first theme in this study: Intentionality Matters. With respect to the first theme, this study highlighted the significance of intentional APD planning and participation.

Intentional Planning

The primary researcher and ARDT used the pre-cycle focus group interviews, questionnaires, and observations to initially identify and develop the APD. In a pre-cycle focus group interview, Ms. Burke explained that in previous years the administrators' professional development had "been on you to do what you want to do." There was no common APD focus, curriculum, or set of activities for the NRHS administrative team. Ms. Burke did acknowledge

that Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS) provided district-led APD opportunities during the year, but it “may or may not be what we need here locally.” Mr. Lewis echoed Ms. Burke’s sentiment, saying that his learning had been more through hands-on job experiences and self-reflection, rather than any defined APD for the administrative team. Based on the pre-cycle responses from the ARIT, the ARDT discussed andragogy and the impact that adult learners’ motivation and orientation could have on their investment in learning situations; therefore, intentional planning was a key component for consideration during their ARDT development of APD. The ARDT sought to identify a relevant area of need, pertinent resources, and useful activities for ARIT members during the APD.

Although there was a lack of structured APD at NRHS over the years, the ARIT participants expressed a common desire to institute APD for the administrative team. Throughout the intervention cycles, Ms. Cook reiterated how the APD gave the administrative team a common language and ideas to enhance their work. Likewise, in the mid-cycle ARIT focus group interviews, Ms. Burke, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Andrews shared a common appreciation for APD as they felt it supported their growth as professionals and lifelong learners. This supported the relevancy component of andragogy in the study’s theoretical framework. In the mid-point check-in survey (APD cycle 2), 7 out of 9 ARIT respondents indicated that they were motivated to participate in the APD sessions because they “enjoy opportunities to learn and want to grow.” In the post-cycle, individual ARIT interviews, all participants indicated a desire to continue APD even after the study concluded.

In addition to identifying the ARIT’s desire for APD, the primary researcher found that APD needed to include intentional planning so that the content and activities were relevant and context-specific, aligning with multiple elements of andragogy from the theoretical framework.

To identify an area of need, in the ARIT pre-cycle focus group interviews, the primary researcher used photo-elicitation (Appendix A) to gauge participants' perception of their leadership, teachers' job satisfaction, the NRHS administrative team's leadership overall, and APD. When discussing their own leadership and teachers' job satisfaction, the ARIT members chose images and provided explanations that relayed strong, positive perceptions. On the other hand, volunteer teacher participants were a bit more critical when discussing the administrative team's overall leadership and APD. Table 5.5 provides examples of ARIT responses for each topic.

Table 5.5

ARIT Sample Interview Responses

ARIT Interview Topic	Sample ARIT Responses
Personal leadership	Dr. Harris chose image five, saying that she tries to be like the "consistent, straight road for our staff." Mr. Andrews chose image six, recognizing all the twists and turns in the road but saying, "I feel like to drive a road like that, you got to be a little bold. So, I feel like I've got some bold leadership, I'm not afraid of driving off the cliff every now and then."
Teachers' Job Satisfaction	Ms. Cook shared, "I'm going to go two because I think there's a lot to juggle, and we always keep kind of giving them [teachers] more... There's a lot of great things here, but there's a lot on their plates."
Administrative Team's Leadership	Ms. Burke shared, "I think six because we can be all over the place, like twists and turns, trying to navigate the day together, but definitely sometimes taking the long way instead of the most direct route to get to a decision." Principal Carlson selected image four since the administrative team often has "a lot of distractions and is complicated."
APD	Ms. Burke chose image four and shared her desire for APD specifically focused on improved communication, especially "in terms of shared statements...if not, it looks like we were not on the same page with our communication."

In addition to the ARIT pre-cycle focus group interviews, the primary researcher used the pre-cycle teacher questionnaire, teacher focus group interviews, and additional data, to identify an area of focus for the APD. On the pre-cycle teacher questionnaire, teachers were given the open-ended prompt, “I would like to see my school’s administrative team grow in these ways.” The most prevalent response pointed towards improved communication as an area of need. Additionally, teachers brought up communication in their pre-cycle focus group interviews. Part of intentional planning for APD included identifying a specific area of need. In this research study evaluating teachers’ job satisfaction, it was important to consider teachers’ perspectives from the data sources when designing APD.

Teachers specifically brought up the need for clear and consistent communication from the administration. In the discussion, one teacher referenced the photo-elicitation images and said an image was missing for the administrative team: “A roundabout because they’re never going to give it to you directly. They’re just going to keep skirting around it.” Additional teachers shared that when trying to get support or information, “it depends which admin you’re working with” and “it seems like there’s a divide in the admin team when it comes to who’s able to help.” Improved communication was an identified area of need based on the ARIT and teacher data. Seeking input from multiple stakeholders allowed the primary researcher and ARDT to be intentional in choosing the APD topic, selecting the text for the book study, and designing the APD activities and reflections. The ARDT worked to create activities centered on clear and consistent communication, as identified from the teachers’ pre-cycle data. For example, the revised agenda format for the administrative meetings included a section for “Course Team Conversations” and “Teacher To-Dos” to help streamline communication from each administrator to the respective teachers they support.

The intervention cycles were designed to apply to all ARIT members. The topic of communication is wide, so the ARDT and primary researcher chose to do a book study using *5 Voices: How to Communicate Effectively with Everyone You Lead* by Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram (2016) (*5 Voices*). For this study, the ARDT developed the action research cycles to coincide with similar themes from the text:

- Cycle 1 – Know Your Voice
- Cycle 2 – Know the Power of Your Voice
- Cycle 3 – Know How to Use Your Voice

The APD content was designed to present key concepts from the text and offer the ARIT opportunities for application and reflection within their specific work and roles. Andragogy highlights the need for individuals to see value in the learning; the intervention cycle themes were designed to be open-ended and applicable to the variety of roles administrators play within the school, inviting individuals to connect with the APD no matter their position or work. The ARDT aimed to have a wide impact with the APD activities and reflections by intentionally planning the APD to be applicable across roles. When discussing the connection between teacher job satisfaction and APD during the first APD session, Ms. Cook commented on the heart of this study, saying that “we need to pay attention to the health of our teachers and culture of our campus - that affects how they then work with our students.”

Intentional Participation

In addition to intentional planning, this study found that it was important for the ARIT members to intentionally participate in the APD. In this study, participant engagement included completing assigned reading, activities, and reflections; participation also involved ARIT members being present and engaged with activities and discussion during the APD sessions, not

multitasking or attending to other non-APD work. Throughout the study, participation fluctuated during APD. At the beginning of the research study, the ARIT members were participatory and engaged during the APD sessions. For example, in the APD 1.1 session, the ARIT joined in a Tic-Tac-Toe activity; the participants worked in teams and friendly banter was pervasive throughout the activity. This same energy continued throughout the APD sessions when participants were asked to work in pairs or teams. Six of the ARIT members consistently joined in discussions, activities, and openly shared during all three intervention cycles. The primary researcher noted that ARIT members who were more frequently absent or had not participated in the learning activities were less likely to engage in discussion during APD sessions.

Entering APD cycle 2, the primary researcher observed increased absences, lack of participation, and distractions during APD sessions, primarily from three ARIT members. The less engaged participants struggled to complete the outside reading and journal activities each week. The primary researcher noted less involvement in the weekly APD session when the participants did not complete the “homework” from the previous session. In the ARIT mid-point check-in survey, two participants acknowledged that they were “not as involved as I would like to be” and “hearing from others has helped, but with other plates spinning I have prioritized other things.” During the individual, post-cycle ARIT interviews, many ARIT members pointed out that not all members of the ARIT appeared to participate fully. Ms. Cook said, “I don’t know that everyone has done it authentically and with fidelity like we could have. So, I don’t know that as a team, we will honestly reap the benefits.” One of the less engaged participants acknowledged that with his lower level of engagement, he struggled to apply the learning to his daily work: “I haven’t really specifically introduced any of it to [my work with] the teachers.” In further reflection, he felt that with more learning he could apply the concepts to better understand

others' voices, tendencies, and their responses. Similarly, Principal Carlson acknowledged that not all ARIT members fully participated in the APD sessions; he felt that making APD a routine part of weekly administrative meetings and communicating his increased commitment and expectations for APD would help to ensure more intentional participation from all ARIT members moving forward. Three other ARIT members also pointed out that increased "buy-in" from the principal and setting clear expectations would help improve participation.

Theme 2: Adaptability Requires Action

As the first research question focuses on how administrators apply APD learning to their work, for ARIT members to be able to apply learning from APD, there must first be the implementation of APD. This points to the need to re-evaluate the expectations of administrators' focus and practical approaches to their work. The second theme for the first research question, Adaptability Requires Action, highlights the need for practical changes to accommodate the addition of APD to the administrators' workload.

Adaptability and Focus

Throughout the study, it became evident that the day-to-day realities of school-based administrators were demanding and oftentimes unpredictable. During the three intervention cycles, which included nine APD sessions, there were two instances when circumstances warranted a complete postponement of APD; one time was due to a student fight that required the immediate attention of four ARIT members and the primary researcher. The other postponement came when five ARIT members were absent from the APD meeting due to various circumstances, including a pressing student situation and multiple parent or work-related phone calls. Additionally, various ARIT members temporarily left the APD sessions 17 times throughout the nine APD sessions; in each instance, the time away from the APD session, ranged

from 2-15 minutes, depending on the situation. Of the 17 exits from APD sessions, the primary researcher noted that only four of the situations warranted immediate attention; the remaining 13 instances were noted to be circumstances that could have waited until a later time, such as minor questions from staff, non-emergent student situations, and updates on facility conditions. Minor questions or facility updates from staff lasted only a few minutes, whereas a student dropping by to speak to an administrator lasted a bit longer. Considering the number of times APD was postponed, or ARIT members were temporarily pulled away from the APD sessions, it became clear that the administrative team needed to set clear expectations for attendance and discuss prioritizing administrative meeting time over non-critical situations. The human element of working with students, staff, and parents in education does mean that, at times, situations may arise that require immediate attention or a shift in behavior; administrators must have discernment to know when and how to adapt their practices to meet the needs of the situation. Likewise, discernment could lead administrators to value APD learning sessions and address other non-critical situations at a later time.

In a mid-cycle focus group interview, Mr. Andrews noted that in his first two years at NRHS, the administrator's meeting time was considered a high priority; since then, Mr. Andrews had observed a decreased significance placed on meeting attendance, saying, "It's faded more and more... until we limit distractions...our meetings are just not productive." Setting norms for APD meeting time with staff was not an intervention in this research study. Though, during the post-cycle, individual interviews, Mr. Andrews, Ms. Burke, Ms. Cook, and Mr. Lewis pointed to Principal Carlson as having the ultimate influence on setting meeting norms, such as attendance and communicating with staff about limiting disruptions in the future.

Prior to this study, APD was not a norm for the North Ridge High School (NRHS) administrative team. The administrative team met weekly on Mondays and Fridays; the Monday meeting was slightly shorter and focused primarily on smaller, current topics, while the Friday meeting was slightly longer and typically included current topics as well as long-term planning and “big ticket items.” For the NRHS administrative team, Friday meetings typically included topics such as Principal updates from the district office, planning for upcoming teacher professional development sessions, data evaluations, and student and staff accountability issues, among other topics. For this research study, Principal Carlson decided to add APD to the administrator’s Monday meeting time citing that Fridays tended to feel “busier and more unpredictable.” When the APD sessions began, there was no discussion about expectations for participation. All ARIT members had given informed consent to participate in the study, but neither the principal nor the primary researcher set norms for attendance or participation, though this could have been addressed through the initial consent letter or norm-setting at the beginning of the study.

A lack of clear expectations led to a divided focus amongst the ARIT members, pulling participants in and out of APD sessions and creating gaps in the discussions and content. During the nine APD sessions, the primary researcher noted eight instances of various ARIT members working on non-APD tasks on their computers, such as answering emails or working on a spreadsheet. When asked about being off task, one ARIT member humbly explained that, “I’ve got a lot on my plate, so I needed to work [multitask].” This ARIT member’s honest response came from a reality of having more work to do than time allows, which is often true for school administrators. Knowing that school administrators have a full load of tasks, it is critical for the administrative team to consider expectations and ways to practically engage participants in the

APD to maximize impact for the administrators themselves and the students and staff they work with.

In noting participants' varied levels of engagement, Principal Carlson pointed out that as principal he needs to set the tone for APD expectations; "I think with the commitment from me and the team that we are going to do this, I think we need to combine that with us just getting into the routine of it." In their individual, post-cycle interviews, ARIT members, Mr. Andrews, Ms. Burke, Ms. Cook, and Mr. Lewis, shared a similar point of view that the principal was responsible for leading the administrative team in setting expectations and norms to encourage focus and engagement in APD.

Adaptability and Practical Work

Implementing APD required ARIT members to redesign how they approached the practical, day-to-day execution of their work. In cycle one, the ARIT decided to implement two, new electronic communication tools: *The Lion's Main*, a newsletter, and the Student Accountability form. As the tools were put in place, the administrators were asked to introduce them to their teacher teams and ask for feedback on layout, usability, and content. Initially, the Student Accountability form was well-received. Multiple teachers shared with their administrators that they appreciated the ease of using the form as well as how quickly situations were addressed. In a post-cycle teacher questionnaire, 63.7% of respondents were "Satisfied" to "Strongly Satisfied" with the Student Accountability form; 29.5% of respondents were "Neutral" and indicated that they had not used the form. The newsletter, *The Lion's Main*, received mixed reviews. Initially, teachers shared that the content was "overwhelming" and felt "scattered;" based on such feedback, the administrative team worked to include a section at the beginning for "Action Items," which included items such as upcoming deadlines, evaluation procedures, and

upcoming trainings. The ARIT also developed headings to organize the content, including Advisement, Curriculum, Testing, and Technology Tidbits, to name a few. In a post-cycle teacher questionnaire, 74.5% of respondents replied that they were “Satisfied” to “Strongly Satisfied” with *The Lion’s Main* as a communication tool. Examples of teachers’ comments included: “I love that I don’t have to search through my inbox to find multiple emails with the information I need” and “I like it a lot! I don’t have to navigate to different places for answers about daily life at NRHS.” Overall, teachers’ feedback supported a source for centralized and consistent communication.

In his pre-cycle focus group interview, Mr. Lewis mentioned that he anticipated the implementation of APD would require ARIT members to adapt: “We have a lot on our plates and a lot of things going on. But if this is something we need to be more into, then how are we blocking our time?...How do you make that function within our workday?” The idea of adaptation applied to the administrative meeting time as well as ARIT participants’ time outside of the APD sessions when they were faced with reading from *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) or reflection activities.

During the mid- and post-cycle focus group interviews, ARIT participants consistently acknowledged how the addition of APD had altered their approach to their workload. Mr. Lewis pointed out that he initially struggled with keeping up with the outside reading and reflections; he adjusted his calendar to make space for the APD work and increased his engagement by using Ms. Burke as an accountability partner. Mr. Scott shared that he struggled to complete the outside reading for APD, so he opted to use the audiobook version which he listened to on his drive to and from work. Throughout the APD sessions, the primary researcher noted that some ARIT participants had not completed the weekly “homework” in their journal prior to the next

week's APD, indicating that some team members were struggling to incorporate the addition of APD tasks into their daily schedules. In the mid-point check-in survey, two ARIT participants acknowledged they had been struggling to keep up with the APD work; during the post-cycle individual interviews, all ARIT members admitted that adding APD, especially the outside reading and activities, required them to change some part of their daily work to allow time for the APD tasks.

The implementation of APD pressed the NRHS administrative team to adapt their meeting time and their approach to their workload to incorporate APD tasks. Ultimately, though, the content of the APD sessions urged the ARIT to expand and adapt their communication and leadership practices as well. As the APD integrated content from *5 Voices: How to Communicate Effectively with Everyone You Lead* by Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram (2016) (*5 Voices*), each APD session included reflection prompts or activities that encouraged participants to consider the application of the *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) to their daily work, leadership practices, and teacher job satisfaction. Administrators had to first adapt their day-to-day behaviors to incorporate the APD learning into their mindsets, but they also had to adapt their behaviors to apply the learning to their work with others.

The first intervention cycle followed the theme "Know Your Voice." In *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016), it is asserted that leaders must "commit to knowing our own voice and ourselves first" (p. 9). In learning about her foundational voice in cycle one, Dr. Harris noted, "I think it helps remind me of my strengths and weaknesses as a leader so that I can adjust as I encounter people and problems that arise." Two weeks later, Dr. Harris shared how her awareness of her foundational voice and a better understanding of the five leadership voices, prompted her to reach out to an unlikely colleague, with a distinctly different voice, who was

able to offer support. Although the staff at NRHS did not participate in the *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) book study, Ms. Burke pointed out that by understanding the different voices and her own voice rankings, she was able to see tendencies and behaviors in teachers she worked with and was able to “give more grace and look at situations from other points of view [voices].” The overall feedback from the ARIT in cycle one indicated that participants were able to apply learning from the APD, but much of the application came through a shift in their mindset and reflection rather than tangible interactions with staff.

Intervention cycle two’s theme was “Know the Power of Your Voice.” Kubicek and Cockram (2016) argue that “words, used as weapons through our voice...can help or harm depending on the situation” (p. 108). The text goes on to describe how immature voices act and how triggers may prompt negative reactions. Mr. Brooks commented that cycle two gave him a “more clear understanding of the how and why of my co-workers responses during discussions.” He mentioned struggling with a specific colleague, and how cycle two helped him to not personalize certain actions from the other person. Additionally, Dr. Harris and Ms. Burke observed the impact of identifying their voices’ triggers and how that reflection helped increase their awareness and responses to difficult situations. Throughout the second cycle reflections and mid-cycle focus group interviews, ARIT members shared that they felt they were able to apply the APD learning to their daily work through increased self-awareness and, consequently, adapting their words or behaviors based on certain situations. The ARIT participants felt their application of the APD learning was more introspective than outwardly visible in their actions.

The theme for the third intervention cycle was “Know How to Use Your Voice.” In *5 Voices* (Kubicek and Cockram, 2016), the authors state that the

best leaders have the ability to communicate vision clearly and effectively, while leading people through the necessary changes in a way that allows as many people as possible to feel supported in the process and does not squander resources along the way. (pp. 163-164)

Intervention cycle three challenged the ARIT to consider their daily work, how they valued different voices, and how different leadership voices can work together to address problems of practice at NRHS. While the ARIT members appreciated the APD learning, most participants felt that much of the application was limited to internal awareness, paradigm shifts, and team dynamics within the administrative team. In a weekly reflection, Ms. Cook shared, “I’m trying to think about how I show up in rooms for meetings, etc. Relationships and communication are priorities for me.” As someone with the Connector foundational voice, Ms. Cook recognized that her tendency to share personal stories, thinking it would strengthen the relationship’s connection, could actually take the focus away from the other person; when entering meetings or conversations, Ms. Cook said she was trying to consciously avoid oversharing and to actively listen to the other person. Since the NRHS administrative team had all read *5 Voices* (Kubicek and Cockram, 2016), ARIT members felt that they could easily reference common language or ideas from the text and apply the learning within the ARIT meeting time.

In the final APD session, the ARIT was asked to evaluate communication at NRHS in different directions. For example, upward communication would consider teacher to administrator communication whereas horizontal communication would be teacher to teacher or administrator to administrator. In this discussion, Mr. Lewis shared that “going through pros and cons helps build awareness to communication gaps,” but he was not inclined to think that teachers would notice immediate shifts in communication from the APD learning. When asked

about changes in communication impacting teacher job satisfaction, Mr. Andrews shared a similar sentiment, saying that “actually getting results is a long way off... there’s effective, little things that can be used daily with ourselves, even with some of our teachers, but it just seems far off.” In their post-cycle, individual interviews, all ARIT expressed appreciation for the APD learning and how it shifted their mindset on communication. When asked to consider its impact on teacher job satisfaction, most responses were uncertain. Ms. Cook felt that the APD helped to improve communication within the administrative team which would trickle down to improve teachers’ job satisfaction: “Once we are aligned and we are communicating better, we serve each other better, then we will serve our teachers better, and they will see us as more aligned.” Likewise, Mr. Lewis, Dr. Harris, Principal Carlson, and Mr. Andrews shared that to truly make the greatest impact on teachers’ job satisfaction, APD needed to continue beyond this study, since communication was a broad topic with many levels of application.

ARIT members felt that they needed to adapt their work on multiple levels. First, administrators noted the need to change their mindset and behaviors to actively engage with the APD sessions and outside reading and reflections. For some, adaptations were simple, for example, when Mr. Scott chose to listen to an audiobook instead of reading the text. Likewise, the ARIT members who were identified as Connectors and Nurturers, showed a greater tendency to make conscientious choices to complete APD reading and activities on time, even going so far as to hold each other accountable or check in on each other’s progress throughout the study. The ARIT members who were able to adapt their practices and consistently engage with the APD were able to eagerly participate in discussions and share stories of applying the learning to their work. At times, though, adaptations to participate in APD were harder and required professional discernment; at one point, Mr. Brooks faced a critical deadline with an aspect of his work

unrelated to the APD, so he made the difficult decision to forego the APD reading and reflection and prioritize his attention elsewhere. He openly acknowledged that his inability to adapt his work habits prohibited his participation in the next APD session and limited his ability to apply the learning to his work with teachers.

Research Question 2

The second research question sought to gauge teachers' perception of administrators' leadership practices and its influence on their job satisfaction. Findings for the second research question included:

1. Teachers indicated that administrators' leadership practices must be relevant and context-specific to the needs of teachers and the school.
2. Teachers shared that job satisfaction was an investment of time and energy.
3. Teachers believed that to better understand teacher job satisfaction there must be ongoing and open communication between teachers and administrators.
4. Teachers shared that job satisfaction was multifaceted; to make an impact, administrators must function within a variety of domains.

Theme 1: Intentionality Matters

The first theme, Intentionality Matters, applied to both research questions in this study but with a differentiated perspective. For the first research question, the focus was on ARIT members and the intentional planning and participation needed for APD. For the second research question, the application of theme 1 shifted to teachers' perceptions of leadership practices and their influence on their job satisfaction. Findings for research question 2 suggested that teachers wanted intentional support and communication from administrators.

Intentional Support

Throughout the pre-, mid-, and post-cycle teacher focus group interviews, teachers consistently described their job satisfaction as being impacted by a variety of factors that were constantly changing, depending on the time of year, student situations, and personal factors. When asked to describe the most influential factor on their job satisfaction, all 13 teacher interview participants shared a different response, but when asked how administrators could aid their specific job satisfaction, most participants came to the same conclusion: they wanted to feel supported. One teacher responded by referencing image #2 from the photo-elicitation collection (Appendix A) and said, “We’re on a winding road, that’s just education. That is our daily job. We’re trying to navigate all the different things. It’s nice to know our admin understands that.” On the post-cycle teacher questionnaire, 47 teachers responded and indicated an average job satisfaction level of 4.3 out of 5. When broken down by years of experience, newer teachers, those with 0-5 years, indicated the lowest average job satisfaction ranking of 4 out of 5; their responses focused on organizational pathway needs, such as autonomy in the classroom and administrative support. On the other hand, teachers with 11-15 years of experience indicated the highest job satisfaction with an average of 4.8 out of 5. Their responses were broader, spreading across the rational, emotional, and organizational pathways; teachers with 11-15 years of experience expressed more appreciation for the course(s) they were teaching, the impact of relationships, and the school’s culture focused on collaboration and support.

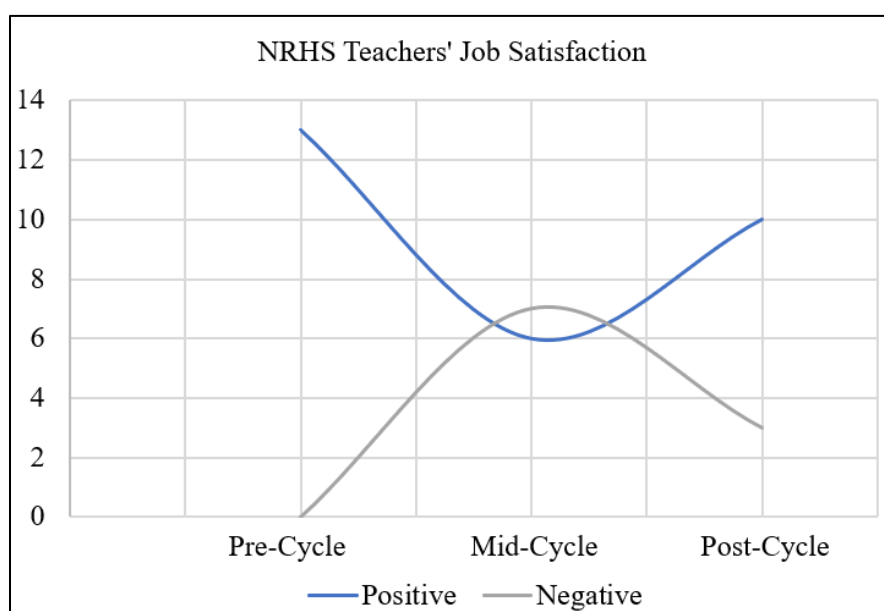
Thirteen teachers participated in the teacher focus group interviews; among the 13 participants, there were eight different departments represented, including math, science, social studies, language arts, world languages, special education, STEM, and technology. Across the eight departments, 20 different courses were represented in the teacher focus group since many

of the 13 teachers taught multiple courses throughout their day. With so many subjects represented, and even more present throughout the school, teachers shared that they felt supported when administrators intentionally recognized their autonomy and needs based on their courses and students. As one teacher mentioned, “There cannot be a ‘one-stop shop’ kind of approach; administrators need to know their people. What works for math may not work in language arts and such.” Another teacher reiterated that autonomy was appreciated when it came to the specifics of the course content but suggested a consistent structure was needed for school-wide initiatives and vision casting to ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page.

During the research study, the teacher focus group participated in interviews in mid-August, early October, and mid-November; interviews were about six weeks apart. At each of the interview sessions, the primary researcher began by asking teachers to use the photo-elicitation images (Appendix A) to describe their job satisfaction; Figure 5.1 summarizes the teachers’ responses, which were characterized as positive or negative.

Figure 5.1

NRHS Teacher Focus Group Job Satisfaction Rankings



As Figure 5.1 shows, NRHS teachers began the semester in August with positive job satisfaction. Many teachers shared how they were optimistic about the start of the school year, saying, “I feel like we have a pretty good vision of where we’re trying to go” and “I really love what I get to do.” By October, many teachers’ sentiments had shifted and were characterized as “less positive.” Teachers pointed towards increased issues with student discipline and heavy workloads as the most prominent factors negatively impacting their job satisfaction. One teacher explained that she felt like she was going “back and forth, and I feel like I have this thing to do, and I have this thing to do, and I’ll have to go do this. Just discombobulated.” Most teachers shared that their job satisfaction was not negative, they were happy being at NRHS, but they felt that the mid-point of the semester was difficult. By the post-cycle interviews in November, teachers reported improved job satisfaction from October, though many teachers still expressed feeling overwhelmed by the workload. In the post-cycle interviews in November, teachers cited administrative support across the three pathways of the theoretical framework: rational, emotional, and organizational. On the post-cycle teacher questionnaire, teachers were asked if they could recall/share any leadership practices or behaviors from the fall 2024 semester that had a positive impact on them; 43 out of 47 respondents had positive comments to share. Responses ranged across all three pathways, though most included gratitude for feeling that they were supported overall. Comments in the rational pathway supported teachers’ autonomy and freedom to be creative with their teaching. On the emotional pathway, responses highlighted teachers’ appreciation for being respected as individuals: “I like that my administrators don’t just see me as a worker.” Responses along the organizational pathway harped on the school’s culture of collaboration, open communication, and the administration’s ability to give teachers a voice. Throughout the study, even when they reported a decrease in job satisfaction, teachers reiterated

that they were happy being at NRHS, and they insisted it was the “ebb and flow” of being a teacher and just “part of the job” that caused the dip in their job satisfaction.

When asked during the teachers’ focus group interviews about administrators’ influence on their job satisfaction, teachers shared examples across all three pathways included in the study’s theoretical framework: rational, emotional, and organizational. Instructionally (rationally), teachers appreciated administrators participating in the weekly course team meetings, allowing them autonomy in their work, and supporting their expectations for student learning. Along the emotional pathway, teachers shared how they appreciated that administrators stopped by their classrooms to talk, celebrated their birthdays, and asked about aspects of their personal lives, such as their children’s well-being or an ongoing hobby. In the organizational pathway, teachers said they felt that the administration protected their time, treated them as professionals, and created a culture of respect. During the post-cycle teacher interviews in November, teachers were asked if they had noticed any specific changes to administrators’ communication practices over the semester. Teachers had overall positive comments about administrators’ communication throughout the semester, but they did not have any specific practices or behaviors where they noted a change. Teachers’ perceptions were positive but not necessarily tied to specific instances or noticeable shifts in behavior.

Intentional Communication

During the pre-cycle teacher focus groups, 7 out of 13 teachers brought up communication as an area of growth for the NRHS administrative team; communication was the single most prevalent topic mentioned by teachers. In the discussion, teachers highlighted a need for consistent communication. Multiple teachers commented that inconsistencies were common since “it depends on which admin you’re working with.” A teacher explained that, in the past,

messaging had been different, and answers to questions were contradictory at times. The teacher went on to explain that inconsistent communication and variability in the responses received made it seem that some administrators were more knowledgeable or informed than others; this conflicting communication damaged the teacher's perspective of the administrative team, especially along the instructional and organizational pathways. In four different instances, teachers brought up the feeling of a "divide" among administrators, based on communication differences; as one teacher commented, "There are times where I get the feeling that there is not a united message among administrators regarding academic priorities or campus logistics." Additional teachers shared how administrators communicated differently; for example, one teacher shared that previously when he had missed duty coverage, one administrator sent him a firm but kind email reminder about expectations, while another time, a different administrator had stopped by his classroom to "interrogate" him about why he had missed a meeting. This created an inconsistency for the teacher on the emotional pathway, feeling that one administrator was less professional and more unkind than another.

Throughout the research study's interviews and questionnaires, teachers highlighted the need for clear communication from school administrators. As one teacher explained, "I don't always feel that all of the admin understands new things as well as they let on," while another teacher commented, "Protocols/information were not communicated the same way through each department/course team. This caused great confusion." When teachers discussed clear communication, they mentioned wanting to understand the "why" behind decisions and getting a clear understanding of key initiatives before implementation. As one teacher commented on the post-cycle teacher questionnaire, "This year is an improvement from the past." Another teacher

noted, “Communication has improved – *The Lion’s Main* is much more effective, and conversations in teams have changed.”

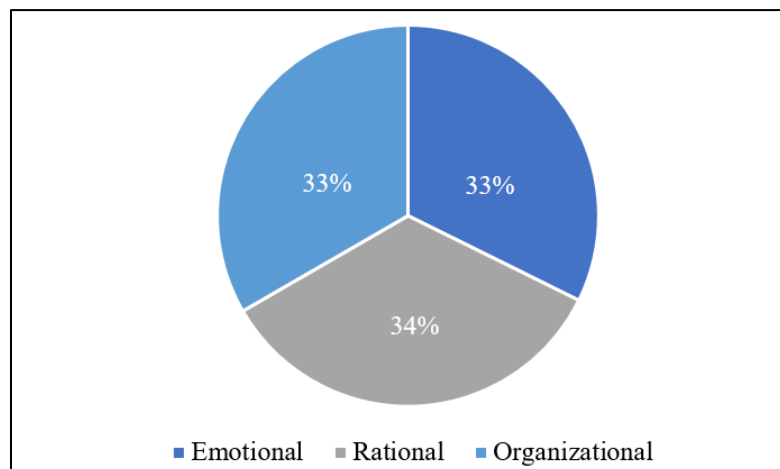
Theme 3: Teachers’ Job Satisfaction is Multifaceted

Throughout this research study, teachers reiterated that their job satisfaction is complex, branching across the three pathways of the theoretical framework. Depending on the time of year, workload, and situations they are facing, teachers wanted to feel supported instructionally, emotionally, and organizationally. Teachers’ job satisfaction is like a kaleidoscope; there are many pieces that come together to create a picture, but depending on the twists and turns, it can change and evolve over time.

In a post-cycle teacher questionnaire, teachers were asked to identify factors that contributed to their job satisfaction. The primary researcher categorized all responses based on the three pathways in the theoretical framework: rational, emotional, or organizational. Most teachers identified components from at least two of the pathways; 43% of respondents listed examples from all three pathways. Figure 5.2 illustrates the breakdown of factors contributing to teachers’ job satisfaction.

Figure 5.2

Factors Influencing NRHS Teachers’ Job Satisfaction



As Figure 5.2 shows, NRHS teachers had a nearly identical representation of influential factors among the three pathways. As one teacher noted, “My administrators check in on me beyond observations. They listen to my concerns and offer support in a variety of ways.” Another teacher shared that, “Everyone [administrators] is willing to help and support me with anything I need (behaviors, curriculum, teaching strategies, etc.).” When asked for examples of administrative behaviors that had a positive impact on their job satisfaction, responses included improved communication about expectations, personalized notes, “consistent ethos – both verbally and in terms of observations and evaluations,” autonomy, suggestions for improved classroom instruction, and much more. The responses included all three pathways from the theoretical framework.

Chapter Summary

There were three overall themes that emerged from this study; though one theme applied to both research questions, it manifested differently based on the perspective of the research question. Research question 1 investigated how school-based administrators interacted with APD and applied the learning to their daily work. Two themes emerged for the first research question centering on intentionality and adaptability. While there was evidence that the administrators learned from the APD, much of the application was internal and reflective. The administrators highlighted increased awareness of their communication style and deeper consideration of how they communicated with others. Additionally, the participants shared that actively participating in the APD helped them better understand how others communicate and common triggers to avoid negative communication behaviors.

Research question 2 focused on teachers’ perceptions of administrators’ leadership practices and how such practices influence teachers’ job satisfaction. Two themes were prevalent

for the second research question. The first theme highlighted the importance of intentional support and communication for teachers' job satisfaction. The second theme emphasized the many and varied aspects which impact teachers' job satisfaction.

Chapter 6 summarizes the research study, offers implications and recommendations for practitioners and further research, and makes connections to leadership practices.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONNECTIONS TO LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Teachers' workloads are extensive and complex; increased expectations and demands on teachers impact their job satisfaction. Research supports a link between improved administrative support and improved teacher job satisfaction across four domains of need: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical (Hughes et al., 2015). Teachers' positive perceptions of administrative leadership practices can directly and indirectly impact teacher job satisfaction on a variety of levels (Castaneda & Varela, 2022; Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020). Administrative professional development should be context-specific, relevant, and ongoing to maximize the learning for administrators and the impact on teachers' job satisfaction (Knowles et al., 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this action research study was to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perceptions of leaders' practices and their influence on their job satisfaction. The study focused on the actions of the Principal and Assistant Principals in a large, suburban high school. The action research team wanted to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on job satisfaction and the role that teachers' perceptions of administrators' leadership practices influences teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, the action research team sought to understand the perspective of school leaders on administrative professional

development (APD). To address the purpose of this action research, the following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning?
2. In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?

Chapter 6 begins with a summary of the research design, followed by a summary and discussion of the findings. This chapter details the study's limitations as well as implications for practitioners, future research, and policy. The chapter concludes with personal reflection from the primary researcher.

Summary of the Research Design

This action research study took place in the fall of 2024 at North Ridge High School (NRHS, a pseudonym), a large, suburban public high school, located in a growing, urban school district, Campbell County Public Schools (CCPS, a pseudonym). The study sought to gain an understanding of how school administrators applied professional learning to their work with teachers and how teachers' perceptions of administrative leadership practices influenced their job satisfaction. The administrative professional development (APD) was led by the primary researcher; the APD consisted of nine, 30-minute sessions incorporated into the administrators' weekly meetings. The APD topic focused on communication and included a book study, 5 *Voices: How to Communicate Effectively with Everyone You Lead* by Jeremie Kubicek and Steve Cockram (2016) (5 *Voices*), with activities and reflections. The primary researcher and Action Research Design Team (ARDT), used notes, participants' reflections, and activities to inform interventions. This study was designed as a qualitative action research approach to investigate

how school administrators applied APD learning to their work with teachers and how teachers perceived administrators' leadership practices in connection to their job satisfaction.

Action Research

Education is a field that is in constant flux, propelled by increasing knowledge, understanding, and application to an ever-changing world; the design of action research motivates those who are directly involved in the work to engage in real-life inquiry so that they can enhance their practices (Corey, 1954). Action research focuses on practical transformation within a specific context (Baum et al., 2006). This research study implemented research-based APD in response to NRHS teachers' data concerning their job satisfaction and building-level administrators' leadership practices. Throughout the APD, administrators were prompted to engage in collaboration across the Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT), self-reflection, and application to their work with teachers.

Three iterative cycles were completed for this action research study. The ARDT met before each cycle to review data and finalize interventions implemented by the ARIT. The first intervention cycle introduced ARIT members to the pre-cycle data and purpose for the research study. The theme for cycle 1 was "Know Your Voice;" the first intervention cycle incorporated portions of *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) with self-awareness and self-reflection for participants. The theme for the second cycle was "Know the Power of Your Voice." The reading and APD activities encouraged ARIT participants to go beyond self-reflection and expand their understanding of how their voice impacted their interactions with others. In the third cycle, the theme was "Know How to Use Your Voice," and the APD sessions cultivated opportunities for ARIT members to apply the learning as they worked within the administrative team and with staff.

Theoretical Framework

The study's intervention cycles were designed for the implementation of APD for the ARIT and teachers' perception of how leadership practices influenced their job satisfaction. The theoretical framework for this action research study incorporated andragogy, also known as adult learning theory, and Leithwood et al.'s (2010) Four Paths leadership model. Andragogy highlights six core principles: "(1) the learner's need to know, (2) self-concept of the learner, (3) prior experience of the learner, (4) readiness to learn, (5) orientation to learning, and (6) motivation to learn" (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 17). Within the theoretical framework, the primary researcher melded together the elements of andragogy, as outlined in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Theoretical Framework Alignment with Andragogy

Theoretical Framework	Andragogy
Adult learner (Andragogy)	Self-concept of the learner Prior experience of the learner
Job-embedded (Relevancy)	The learner's need to know
Contextual (Problem-Centered)	Readiness to learn Orientation to learning
On-Going (Goal Oriented)	Motivation to learn

Note. Adjusted Four Paths model (Leithwood et al., 2017) and Knowles et al. (2015).

Andragogy corresponds to the study's first research question on administrators' professional learning; Leithwood et al.'s (2017) Four Paths model guided school administrators' application of their APD learning to their work with teachers to influence teachers' job satisfaction and, indirectly, impact student learning. This study focused on three of Leithwood et al.'s (2017) pathways: rational, emotional, and organizational. The rational path focused on

administrators' instructional leadership; the emotional path centered on building relationships, and the organizational path concentrated on working conditions and school culture (Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2017). As school leaders work to improve conditions along one or more pathways, teachers experience enriched experiences, ultimately "resulting in greater payoffs for students" (Leithwood et al., 2017, p. 3).

Logic Model

This action research study sought to examine how teachers' perception of leadership practices impacted teachers' job satisfaction; a large part of the intervention cycles focused on administrators' learning from APD and how they applied the learning to their daily work. The logic model for this study was adapted from Bryk et al.'s (2015) model of Plan-Do-Study-Act; since the data and feedback from each cycle informed the next cycle, observation and reflection were included as purposeful steps. The logic model was cyclical to emphasize continuous improvement (Bryk et al., 2015; Glanz, 2014).

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

The research study was guided by two research questions. The first research question focused on how school-based administrators applied APD learning to their daily work. The second research question considered how teachers described the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction. Qualitative data was gathered throughout the study from questionnaires, interviews, participants' reflections, notes from the primary researcher, and transcriptions. Through the coding and analysis process, each research question aligned with specific findings and affirmed thematic patterns within the study.

Throughout the research process, this study evaluated two components: 1) teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction and the impact of their administrators' leadership practices

on their job satisfaction, and 2) school-building leaders' perceptions and application of APD learning to their daily work. The findings support the notion that administrators' leadership practices can impact teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, the research findings suggest an administrative desire and need for APD, though the addition of APD may require a change to current administrative practices or meeting norms.

Discussion of Findings from Research Question 1

The first research question investigated to what extent school-based administrators applied leadership practices garnered from APD. Findings from research question one revealed that administrators' wanted to participate in purposeful APD. Additionally, findings showed that administrators desired opportunities for continued growth, and they wanted APD to be relevant and context-specific. Administrators shared that APD should be a priority and that making APD a part of administrators' daily work may require a change in their actions or behaviors.

The first theme, "Intentionality Matters," emphasized intentionality within APD planning and participation. As adult learners, the ARIT members expressed a desire for APD to be a recurring part of their meeting time. Before this study, no common APD had been established for the NRHS administrative team. The findings in this study showed that many of the participants self-identified as "lifelong learners" who had a desire to continually improve their practices for the sake of their effectiveness as leaders. The findings for this theme aligned with the research on APD development that indicated it needed to be centered on elements of andragogy and consider participants' "readiness to learn," "orientation to learning," and "motivation to learn" (Knowles et al., 2015; Marquardt & Waddill, 2004).

Intentional planning extended into the study's finding that administrators wanted APD that had a pertinent and pressing topic and activities relevant to the context of the administrators'

school and daily work. In this study, the primary researcher and ARDT reviewed pre-cycle data from teachers and administrators, and they decided to focus on the topic of communication. Within the data, teachers specifically highlighted a need for clear and consistent communication from the administration. The ARDT intentionally chose *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) for the book study and designed APD activities to encourage collaboration, self-awareness, application, and self-reflection. This aligned with the research that suggests that professional development for school leaders should be job-embedded, ongoing, and contextual (Daniels et al., 2019; Zepeda et al., 2014). The APD activities were designed to present key concepts from *5 Voices* (Kubicek & Cockram, 2016) and offer the ARIT opportunities for application and reflection within their specific work and roles.

Additionally, this study found that it was important for ARIT members to intentionally participate in APD. The research participants accepted the pre-cycle data and acknowledged communication as an area of improvement for the administrative team. However, not all ARIT members participated in the reading and activities at the same level throughout the study. Though andragogy acknowledges that an adult's desire for self-improvement propels their motivation for learning (Knowles et al., 2015), some ARIT participants recognized that they had not prioritized APD due to other responsibilities. The ARIT's responses aligned with the research highlighting the need for individuals to have personal motivation since "adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs, interests, and benefits that are satisfied through learning" (Mews, 2020, p. 66). It is essential for adult learners to establish purpose in their learning for increased commitment and sustainability.

The second theme for the first research question was "Adaptability Requires Action." The second theme highlighted the need for practical changes to accommodate the addition of

APD into administrators' workload. Like "intentional participation" under theme one for the first research question, the findings for theme two showed that making APD a norm for school administrators required a change to administrators' participation and focus during their meeting time. Continual learning and growth opportunities are necessary for school leaders due to the ever-changing landscape of education (Zepeda et al., 2014); therefore, school leaders need to adapt their current practices to prioritize and value APD. By being consistently present during APD, administrators were able to collaborate, process ideas, hold important dialogue about crucial topics, receive feedback, and reflect, all of which being critical components in the research for administrative professional learning (Davis et al., 2020; Rowland, 2017).

Administrative adaptability required change and action within the school leaders' practical, day-to-day workload. To implement and utilize APD, school-building administrators needed to make conscientious choices to prioritize the APD learning time and apply the learning to their work with staff. School leaders' roles and responsibilities are multi-faceted (Baptiste, 2019; Cansoy, 2019; Grissom et al., 2021); often, there is no "empty" time available for additional tasks. Adding APD into the structure of administrators' work required shifts in their day-to-day responsibilities and expectations. Aligning with the research, building APD into the daily work of administrators allowed the learning to be job-embedded and ongoing, helping school leaders to better connect with their work and apply the learning (Davis et al., 2020; Zepeda, 2019).

Discussion of Findings from Research Question 2

The second research question evaluated how teachers described the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction. Findings for the second research question

highlighted teachers' desire for intentional support and communication, as well as the complexity of teachers' job satisfaction.

The theme "Intentionality Matters" applied to the second research question as well but considered the teachers' perspectives within the study. This theme pointed out that teachers in this study wanted intentional support and communication from school leaders. The findings showed the impact of recognizing teacher autonomy and needs, as well as the positive influence when administrators worked on building relationships with teachers. The findings for this theme aligned with the research that shows that when teachers feel supported and when trust and collaboration are key components of the school culture, there is a positive influence on teacher morale and motivation (Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020). Supportive and productive teaching environments value teachers' voices, recognize teachers' needs, encourage effective communication, and build trust (Bosso, 2017).

In this study, NRHS teachers highlighted a need for clear and consistent communication from the administrative team. Findings indicated that teachers valued consistent and intentional messaging and language, as well as intentional tact and respect with communication. The findings showed an alignment with research that suggests that teachers value "a participative, flexible and facilitative structure of administration, strong administrator support, open communication channels, mutual understanding and a school atmosphere where participation is encouraged" (Cansoy, 2019, p. 44). Further alignment encourages school leaders to be user-centered which means instilling open communication and "respecting the people who actually do the work by seeking to understand the problems they confront" (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 32).

The third theme, "Teachers' Job Satisfaction is Multifaceted," revealed the complex and increasing demands placed on teachers, highlighting the individualized and multifaceted nature

of teacher job satisfaction. This research study used questionnaires, focus group interviews, and observations to gauge and describe the multifaceted nature of teachers' job satisfaction. The study's findings showed that for administrators' practices to positively impact teacher job satisfaction, administrators needed to have a variety of leadership practices across various domains of influence. In this study, the theoretical framework aligned leaders' practices to the rational (instructional), emotional, and organizational areas of teacher support. This aligned with the research that shows teachers' job satisfaction falls into four areas of support: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical (Hughes et al., 2015). Additional research hones in specifically on administrators' leadership style, workplace conditions, relationships with colleagues, teacher voice, and more, as factors that impact teachers' job satisfaction (Cansoy, 2019; Hebert, 2019).

Limitations of the Current Study

This research study was designed and implemented by the primary researcher and ARDT, using research-based strategies and approaches; nevertheless, there were some limitations within the study. By its nature, action research considers the specific context rather than generalizing the circumstances. In this study, there were nine ARIT participants, all from the same school. The study examined the perspectives of high school teachers and high school administrators; to include more perspectives, future studies might consider incorporating district-led training for administrators on elements of andragogy and APD creation.

The timeline of the study also impacted the findings. ARIT members participated in nine 30-minute APD sessions over the course of eleven weeks. The shortened, weekly nature of the APD sessions means that administrators received only 4.5 hours of professional learning over the bulk of a semester. Many participants expressed a desire for deeper conversations, but the

meeting structure and expectations for APD limited the activities and discussion. Additionally, the multifaceted nature of teachers' job satisfaction implies that a longer research study is needed to truly gauge the extent to which leadership practices are perceived by teachers and the depth of impact leadership practices have on teachers' job satisfaction.

The primary researcher was employed as an Assistant Principal at NRHS during the research study. As such, the researcher was familiar with the ARIT participants and the prior dynamics of the administrative team and school culture. Although the primary researcher was not in a position of professional power over the ARIT participants, she acknowledged that some participants may have participated out of a sense of friendly obligation or a personal relationship with the primary researcher, even though they may not have been intrinsically motivated to participate. Andragogy highlights the adult learners' need for agency and autonomy in the learning process. Additionally, adult learners benefit from being involved in the design of the learning. Throughout this study, the ARIT members participated in the APD learning, but they were not part of the planning nor were the activities individualized; these characteristics may have impacted the level of participation and investment from the administrators.

As an Assistant Principal, the primary researcher was in a position of power over the teacher focus group volunteers in the study, which may have potentially impacted participant responses and overall participation. In acknowledgement of this dynamic, the primary researcher reiterated to participants prior to gaining consent and during interviews that there would be no repercussions for opting out and that their responses would be protected by pseudonyms, if referenced directly. The primary researcher tried to reduce bias and create an open space for discussion by offering participants opportunities to review their responses and transcriptions and revise them as desired.

The primary researcher acknowledged the limitations mentioned in this section, as well as the possibility of additional limitations and biases not considered. As with most qualitative research studies, the limitations of this study curb the generalizability of the findings to other schools' contexts and educational levels.

Implications and Recommendations for Educational Administrators

Practitioners can strengthen their leadership practices to have a positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction. School leaders should seek ways to understand teachers' job satisfaction, being intentional in their support and open in their communication with teachers. To address the multifaceted nature of teachers' job satisfaction, administrators should actively pursue administrative professional development (APD) to create a comprehensive toolbox of leadership practices and concepts they can apply to their daily work.

Administrators should work to establish norms of communication that welcome teachers' voices and actively seek feedback from staff; communication should be open in multiple directions, including top-down, bottom-up, and horizontally. In seeking to better understand teachers' job satisfaction, administrators are better able to discern needs across varying levels and domains. Teachers' needs reach across the rational, emotional, and organizational paths; administrators should work to create a trusting and open environment that allows teachers to share concerns, frustrations, and areas of growth. School leaders can foster positive environments by valuing teachers' voices, sharing leadership responsibilities, and offering strong administrative support (Cansoy, 2019). Understanding teachers' job satisfaction requires honest insight from teachers.

To improve their leadership practices, school leaders should work to have a comprehensive toolbox of leadership practices, extending across the rational, emotional, and

organizational paths. Administrators must embrace opportunities for purposeful APD to continually grow and learn as leaders. The first step in implementing APD is identifying an area of need. School leaders should continually work to gather and evaluate various means of data when identifying a focus for APD. Once a need is identified, school leaders can begin to consider approaches to APD and next steps in its implementation. Establishing APD as a norm for the school's administrative team is a shared responsibility, but it does fall heavily on the school's Principal, as the primary leader for the school. It is important for school leadership teams to set norms for APD planning, attendance, participation, and engagement. School leaders should discuss norms prior to beginning APD – and also during APD – to serve as a reminder and provide checks-and-balances.

The process of understanding and positively impacting teachers' job satisfaction is complex; it involves open communication, intentional support, gathering data, identifying an area of need, and developing and implementing APD with fidelity. The involvement of the process and the complexity of reaching and impacting teachers' job satisfaction, warrants that such endeavors are long-term investments, filled with intentionality and purpose. School leaders should know that impacting teachers' job satisfaction is not a "quick fix;" it is more like a marathon that requires attention to detail, vision, practice, and reflection.

Implications and Recommendations for Researchers

This study pulled data from teachers and administrators at a single, public high school. Considering that all data in this study came from a single school and educational level, future research could extend to additional schools, in different districts as well as across elementary, middle, and high school levels, to better understand teachers' job satisfaction and the impact of leaders' practices on teachers' job satisfaction. Additionally, future research could be replicated

to see if the size or makeup of administrative teams plays a role in leadership practices and teachers' job satisfaction.

A critical component of this research is understanding teachers' job satisfaction. More research is needed to identify how school leaders can gauge teachers' job satisfaction. Most educators are not trained in conducting research or being a psychometrician. More research delving into how school leaders can learn and incorporate research strategies into their daily work would be beneficial; school leaders need accessible strategies that will not be overburdensome or detract too much time from the work of students, teachers, and learning. Additionally, more development is needed to enhance school leaders' capacity for gathering and evaluating data, including the creation of practical tools, such as questionnaires or surveys, and easily accessible means for deciphering and understanding the data from research tools. Additional research could extend to evaluating resources and tools available at the district level for school leaders to use at the local level.

Once a needs assessment is complete and an area of growth has been identified, school-building leaders should work to create and implement APD to enhance leaders' practices. From this study, the NRHS Principal and administrators shared that they had received little to no prior training on andragogy or how to develop pertinent APD. Researchers should explore how school districts can train and prepare school leaders, especially principals, to implement APD within their leadership teams.

Implications and Recommendations for Policy Makers

Policymakers have a unique opportunity to strengthen professional development for school-based administrators by investing in targeted training opportunities and allocating funding to support these programs and initiatives. To ensure programs effectively address schools' local

needs, each school could designate a school-based APD coordinator. The APD coordinator role could be the Principal or an Assistant Principal who is trained and tasked with evaluating school APD needs, as well as designing, implementing, and evaluating APD learning. The schools' APD Coordinators could work with the district's Professional Development office for training and accountability. Additionally, districts or states could create an electronic database where schools can upload and share APD resources or reflections. Given the opportunity to learn from other schools' perspectives, APD coordinators have a starting point for planning and have help and guidance in adapting APD to their school's specific context and needs.

Personal Reflection

This action research study has highlighted the complexities involved with gauging teachers' job satisfaction as well as the challenges of creating and implementing administrative professional development (APD) to positively impact leaders' practices and teachers' job satisfaction. This study underscores the need for school administrators to continually learn and improve their practices along the rational, emotional, and organizational paths since teachers' job satisfaction is multifaceted. Below, the primary researcher provided her personal reflections from the research study.

One insight from this research study is the importance of self-awareness and reflection for school administrators in their communication and leadership. Throughout the study's intervention cycles, APD activities continually prompted participants to consider their voices, their behaviors and triggers, and how their voices interact with and impact others. Oftentimes, as leaders, our responsibilities and tasks can drown out opportunities for learning and reflection. It is critical that we prioritize learning, such as APD, and reflection as a part of our workload. Administrative teams that hold themselves accountable for learning and growth can use APD for

collaboration and critical conversations that can benefit not only their individual work but their collective work for their students, staff, and school.

This study highlighted the difficulty of creating and establishing APD for school leaders. As educators, most collegiate instruction and preparation is focused on pedagogy for working with students and supporting their learning. In my experience, I received minimal instruction on andragogy; this made creating meaningful APD, which is crafted for adult learners, a challenge. In this research study, I utilized the ARDT to help develop the APD sessions. In the future, I would hope to include the ARIT in the planning, which may allow for more autonomy and investment from the ARIT members. Ultimately, the school's Principal is responsible for establishing and perpetuating learning within the administrative team. I am hopeful that the NRHS Principal saw value in the administrators' learning and will work to prioritize APD learning beyond the scope of this study.

In addition to limited training, there are limited resources and guidance for content for APD. In this study, I contacted district-level leaders to request book study suggestions and/or suggested resources. I was met with encouragement for the study, but I received no concrete suggestions or guidance. This was disappointing, especially considering the size and scope of the CCPS system. The truth is that leaders need to be poured into and developed as well, so that we can adapt to the ever-changing needs of our students, staff, and school.

Teachers' job satisfaction is complex; there is an ebb and flow to their needs, responsibilities, and feelings. In this study, the NRHS teachers who participated in the questionnaires and focus group interviews openly discussed frustrations and challenges in their work as well as their interactions with the administrative team. Through it all, teachers reiterated their gratitude for being at NRHS, even in the hard times. Time and time again, the teachers

emphasized their enjoyment of working with the students, their love for their content, and the impact of relationships and support. At the start of this research study, my perception was that “success” in teachers’ job satisfaction would be measured solely by positive feelings and comments. However, this study opened my eyes to see that when given voice and acknowledgement, discontent can lead to positive changes as well. As a school leader, it is important to have open communication with teachers, a humbleness that is willing to recognize areas of need, and a determination to continually improve. Working to address teachers’ job satisfaction is a long-term, intentional investment.

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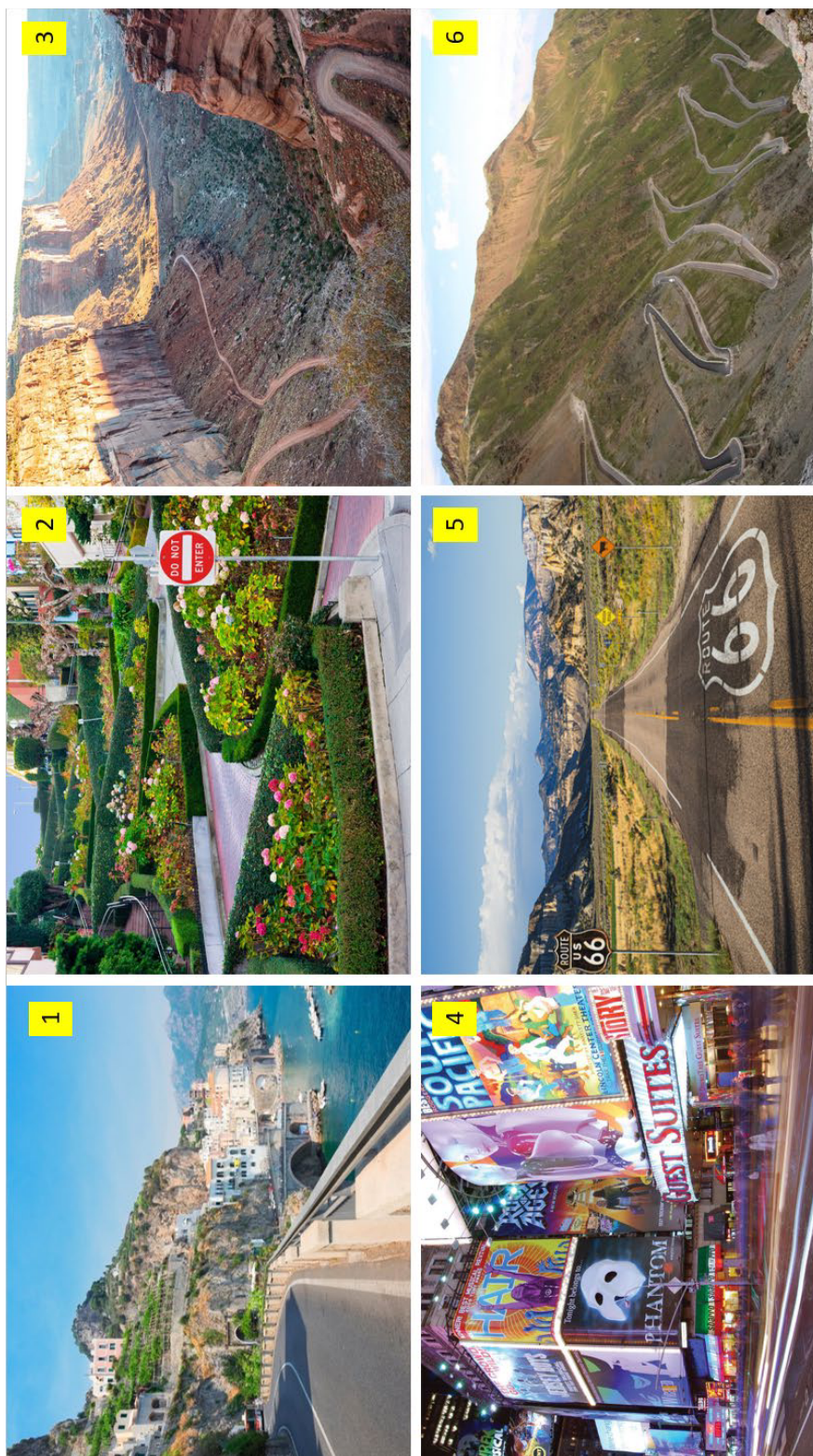
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APPENDIX A

Photo Elicitation Interview Images



APPENDIX B

Semi-Structured Pre-Cycle ARIT Interview Questions

Before interview: Thank you for agreeing to participate in today's interview. We are recording the interview, with your permission, and you'll have an opportunity to look over the transcript, if you wish. As we discuss the questions, please feel free to decline to answer, if you are uncomfortable. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary.

Focus Group Administrator Interview #1 (August)
1. Please tell me a little about yourself. a. Please describe your journey into administration. What led you to school administration? b. Please state your title/position and tell your primary job responsibilities as an administrator at NRHS? c. What attracted you to your current position/school?
Photo elicitation: Throughout our next few questions, I'll provide you with 6 images/pictures. I'd like for you to view the images, reflect on each question being asked, and provide a detailed explanation aligning your response with the images provided. 2. (Photo elicitation) Which image reflects your leadership style...why? 3. Communication impacts all areas of leadership; how would you describe your communication style? What about the effectiveness of your communication?

Teacher Job Satisfaction Questions	Research Question
4. (Photo elicitation) Which image captures teacher job satisfaction at your school...why?	RQ2
5. What factors do you think impact teachers' job satisfaction?	RQ2
6. How do you gauge teacher job satisfaction?	RQ2
7. How do you (leadership style, actions, etc.) impact teacher job satisfaction?	RQ2

Administrative Professional Development Questions	Research Question
8. (Photo elicitation) Which image reflects your previous experiences with administrative PD...why?	RQ1
9. Describe the professional development you've experienced as an administrator. a. Consider local-level administrator professional development (APD) and district-level APD. b. Did it meet your expectations? c. How did it impact your work with teachers?	RQ1
10. What, if anything, would you change about APD?	RQ1

APPENDIX C

Action Research Design Team (ARDT) Meeting Agenda

Date: Aug 22, 2024	
Topic	1st meeting to discuss information about the study, review the responsibilities of the ARDT, and discuss next steps
Welcome	Team member introductions and demographic information ● Action Item: https://tinyurl.com/ARDTinfo
Information about the Study	
Title	The Intersection of Administrators' Learning, Leadership Practices, and Teacher Job Satisfaction
Purpose of the Study	The purpose of this action research study is to examine the links between the design and implementation of professional development for school-building administrators' leadership practices and teachers' perceptions of the influence of administrators' leadership practices on their job satisfaction.
Research Questions	1. To what extent do school-based administrators apply leadership practices gleaned from professional learning? 2. In what ways, if any, do teachers describe the influence of leadership practices on their job satisfaction?
How might this research benefit the participants in the study?	Action research encourages those who are directly involved in the work to engage in real-life inquiry so that they can improve their practices (Corey, 1954). Simply put, action research works from within to identify, address, and improve issues in education with a focus on practical transformation (Bryk et al., 2015; Glanz, 2014). This action research study proposes the use of research-based administrative professional development (APD) to enhance administrators' leadership practices to impact teacher job satisfaction.
How might this research benefit the schools, the district, or education in general?	Action research allows practitioners to be problem-centered and context specific (Glanz, 2014). In education, teacher retention is a relevant concern, and teacher job satisfaction is directly linked to retention. Additionally, teacher job satisfaction is influential to student success, which is a primary focus of education. Through positive leadership practices, school administrators have the potential to influence the specific needs of teachers and improve teachers' perception of leadership practices and job satisfaction (Cansoy, 2019; Castaneda & Varela, 2022).

APPENDIX C Continued

Guiding theories

There are several theories and concepts that have shaped this study, specifically Andragogy (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 2015) and the Four Paths Model (Leithwood et al., 2017). The principles of andragogy (adult learning theory) impact the planning and design of the research interventions while the Four Paths Model influences the application of APD to work with teachers.

Andragogy (Adult Learning Theory)

Self-Concept	Experience	Readiness	Orientation	Motivation
Adults are self-directed; they want to be part of the decision making and learning	Adults have diverse experiences, ingrained ideas, and critical thinking skills.	Adults want learning that is relevant in a real-to-life context; they are goal-focused.	Adults are engaged in learning that is problem-centered and practical.	Adults have a variety of motivations: job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, personal growth, etc.

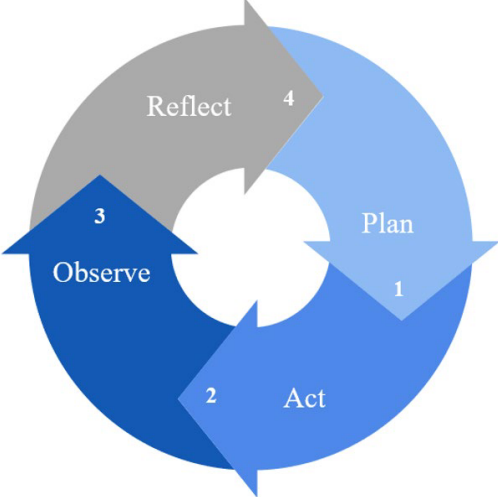
Note. Adapted from (2024) *Andragogy: Adult Learning Theory*.
<https://instructionaldesign.com.au/andragogy-adult-learning-theory/>

Theoretical Framework of Andragogy and Four Paths Model

```
graph LR
    subgraph APD [Administrators' Professional Development (APD)]
        direction TB
        A1[• Adult learner (Andragogy)]
        A2[• Job-embedded (Relevancy)]
        A3[• Contextual (Problem-Centered)]
        A4[• On-going (Goal Oriented)]
    end
    subgraph LP [Leadership Practices]
        direction TB
        L1[Rational Path]
        L2[Emotional Path]
        L3[Organizational Path]
    end
    subgraph TP ((Teachers' Perceptions))
        direction TB
        T1[School-Wide Experiences]
        T2[Classroom Experiences]
        T3[Individual Experiences]
    end
    APD --> LP
    LP --> TP
```

Note. Adjusted Four Paths model (Leithwood et al., 2017) and Knowles et al. (2015).

APPENDIX C Continued

Action Research	
Role of Action Research Design Team	Using the logic model below, the ARDT will: ● Design interventions ● Review data from the interventions ● Adjust interventions as needed ● Review data  1. Plan: Identifying real-world situations and purposeful samples/participants. Seek to understand the meaning of the situation and/or solution to the problem of practice. 2. Act: Cycles of intervention are emergent, flexible, and creative. 3. Observe: Data collection: observation, surveys, interviews, etc. Researcher is the primary data collector. 4. Reflect: Inductively evaluating findings; identifying themes through thick descriptions while preserving the participants' voices and context. <i>Note.</i> Adapted from Bloomberg (2023) and Merriam & Tisdell (2016).
Role of Researcher	● Provide context for the study ● Facilitate ARDT meetings to develop and review interventions ● Provide administrative professional development to the Action Research Implementation Team ● Observe the implementation of the interventions ● Review and adjust interventions as necessary ● Conduct data collection ● Data analysis

APPENDIX C Continued

Action Items	
Action Research Timeline	See below
Pre-Cycle Data	Pre-Cycle Data • What do you notice? • What does the data suggest? • What steps could be taken next? • APD topic?
APD	APD Book study • Research, suggestions APD Overview • Cycle 1
Questions	ARDT feedback form

Action Research Timeline			
Date	Action Research Design Team (ARDT)		Action Research Implementation Team (ARIT)
July 2024	 • Secured consent to participate in study • Conducted the “Teacher Perception Questionnaire” (pre) and “Administrator Perception Questionnaire” (pre) 	• Secured consent to participate in study • Completed “Administrator Perception Questionnaire” (pre)	 

APPENDIX C Continued

August 2024	✓ Conduct teachers' focus group interview #1 ✓ Data review from the "Teacher Perception Questionnaire" (pre) (July) and "Administrator Perception Questionnaire" (pre) (July) ✓ Data review from teachers' focus group interview → ARDT monthly meeting #1 - Goal: Identify APD focus/ content for cycles #1-3 - Collected artifacts - Researcher's journal: record data/reflections	- ARIT Focus group interview #1: response to data from "Administrator Perception Questionnaire" (pre) (July) and photo elicitation - Data review from teacher and administrators' questionnaires - Introduction to APD focus/ content - Observation of administration's course team meeting(s)
September 2024	- ARDT monthly meeting #2 - Collected artifacts - Researcher's journal: record data/reflections	- APD cycle #1 - Observation of administration's course team meeting(s) - Participant's journal: reflections - Researcher's journal: record data/reflections
September-October 2024	- Conduct teachers' focus group interview #2 - ARDT monthly meeting #3 - Collected artifacts - Researcher's journal: record data/reflections	- APD cycle #2 - Observation of administration's course team meeting(s) - ARIT Focus group interview #2 - Participant's journal: reflections - Researcher's journal: record data/reflections

APPENDIX C Continued

October- November 2024	● ARDT monthly meeting #4 ● Conduct teachers’ focus group interview #3 ● Conduct and review data from the “Teacher Perception Questionnaire” (post) and “Administrator Perception Questionnaire” (post) ● Collected artifacts ● Researcher’s journal: record data/reflections ● ARDT reflections	● APD cycle #3 ● Observation of administration’s course team meeting(s) ● ARIT Focus group interview #3 ● Complete “Administrator Perception Questionnaire” (post) ● Participant’s journal: reflections ● Researcher’s journal: record data/reflections
	Appropriate follow-up activities	Appropriate follow-up activities

APPENDIX D

APD 1.1 Tic Tac Toe Activity

Image 1

Original Tic Tac Toe board with no responses

APD 1.1 Tic Tac Toe (Original)

How do you define teacher job satisfaction? How do you "see"/gauge teacher job satisfaction?	What is our core business? What is our job as an admin team?	Considering communication, what are some specific areas of growth for our team?
Considering teacher job satisfaction and communication, write a purpose statement for our team: (template is optional)	What happens if we don't pursue/consider teacher job satisfaction?	As an adult learner, rank the following components to learning: 1. Relevancy 2. Problem-Centered 3. Goal Oriented 4. Experience
What norms/expectations do you have for administrative professional development?	List two communication goals for our team this year.	Think of a time of negative teacher job satisfaction. What was the primary issue? What may have led to this?

Image 2

Tic Tac Toe Board with ARIT responses

APD 1.1 Tic Tac Toe (with ARIT responses)

How do you define teacher job satisfaction? How do you "see"/gauge teacher job satisfaction? That even when the work is hard, it is rewarding and worth the good and bad. Gauged by data—retention, leaving.	What is our core business? What is our job as an admin team? Teaching and Learning Supporting teachers so they can do that every day in their classrooms	Considering communication, what are some specific areas of growth for our team? Consistent messaging. This requires that we all understand the work and are able to explain it to different audiences.
Considering teacher job satisfaction and communication, write a purpose statement for our team: (template is optional) Our team will communicate expectations clearly so that the staff knows the direction of our work and can feel supported with the work.	What happens if we don't pursue/consider teacher job satisfaction? They will leave because people leave people not locations	As an adult learner, rank the following components to learning: 1, 2, 3, 4 1. Relevancy 2. Problem-Centered 3. Goal Oriented 4. Experience
What norms/expectations do you have for administrative professional development? That everyone participates fully - is prepared and is open to growth	List two communication goals for our team this year. Have a unified message and talking points Consistently talk about the work as a group so we are able to communicate	Think of a time of negative teacher job satisfaction. What was the primary issue? What may have led to this? When we made them all stay until 3pm for remediation. Massive change in expectation and hours in daily work.

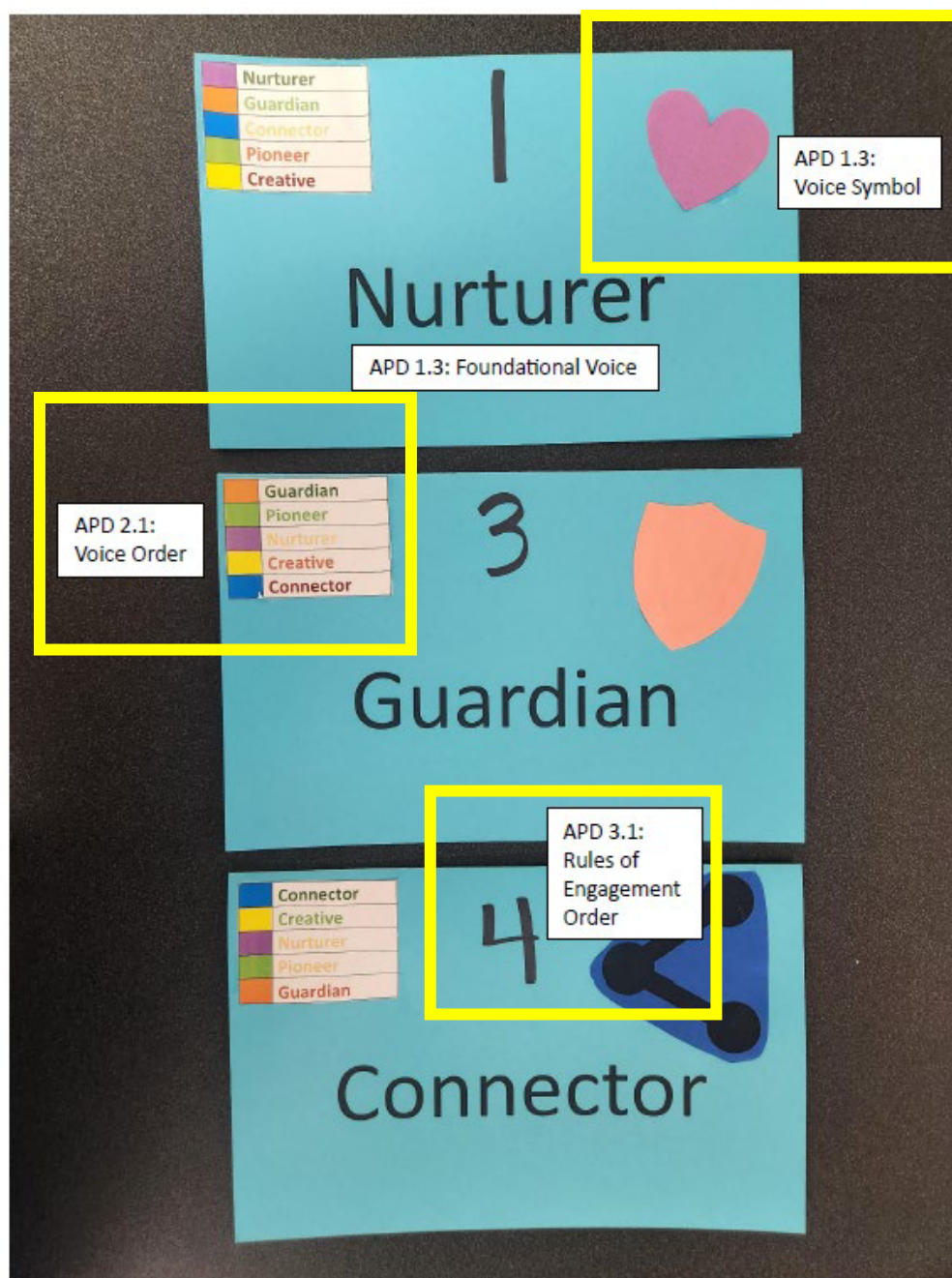
APPENDIX E

Weekly Reflection Form Questions

Name:
Select week: (mark only one oval) ☐ Week 1.1: August 30 ☐ Week 1.2: September 3-8 ☐ Week 1.3: September 9-15 ☐ Week 2.1: September 16-22 ☐ September 23-29 - MISSED ☐ September 30-October 6 - MID-POINT CHECK-IN ☐ Week 2.2: October 7-20 ☐ Week 2.3: October 21-27 ☐ Week 3.1: October 28-November 1 ☐ Week 3.2: November 4-10 ☐ November 11-17 - MISSED ☐ Week 3.3: November 18-22
Please provide feedback on this week's APD content/topic. Was it applicable to your work as an administrator? If so, how? If not, why?
Please provide feedback on this week's APD structure/presentation. What was helpful? What should change?
Please share any other thoughts related to APD, leadership practices, and/or teacher job satisfaction.

APPENDIX F

APD 1.3, 2.1, and 3.1 Example of Participants' Name Tag



APPENDIX G

APD 2.1 Voice Order Application

Ms. Cook's Responses:

	Your daily work?	Being an instructional leader?	Relationships?	Conflict?
Strengths	Working with all the audiences I collaborate with		Working with people in every audience we work with	
Area of Growth	Time management and balance	The paperwork behind the observations		Knowing the voice of a colleague so I can better interact when in conflict
How can you optimize your contribution?		Convincing people to buy-in to the right work we are doing right now.		

Mr. Carlson's responses:

	Your daily work?	Being an instructional leader?	Relationships?	Conflict?
Strengths	Building relationships. Understanding impact decisions have on others	Encouraging others. Sense the feelings around the school.	Listening/supporting. Working to genuine and personal	listening
Area of Growth	Sounds bad but caring a little less.	A little resistant to change.	Not being offended	Understanding why others are in this conflict
How can you optimize your contribution?	Balance relationships with the work	It is ok to hold people accountable.	Use positive relationships to move people's work	Not getting offended.

APPENDIX H

APD 2.2 ARIT Voice Order Chart

Brooks	Cook	Carlson	Andrews	Harris	Ballard	Burke	Scott	Lewis
Connector	Connector	Nurturer	Pioneer	Nurturer	Guardian	Nurturer	Connector	Connector
Pioneer	Nurturer	Guardian	Creative	Guardian		Guardian	Nurturer	Creative
Guardian	Guardian	Connector	Nurturer	Creative		Connector	Creative	Nurturer
Nurturer	Pioneer	Pioneer	Connector	Connector		Pioneer		Pioneer
Creative	Creative	Creative		Pioneer		Creative		Guardian

APPENDIX I

APD 3.1 Reformatted Administrative Meeting Agenda



Date:

Attendance:

Course Team Conversations	
Reminders for teachers	Teacher Action Items:

Admin To-Dos

Instruction	
Topic, Speaker, & Purpose	Notes & Next Steps
Evidence of Teaching & Learning S (Speaker): Purpose: Information Input Decision	

APPENDIX I Continued

Current Happenings			
Topic	Speaker & Purpose	Notes & Resources	Decisions & Next Steps
Student Accountability Update	S: Purpose: Information Input Decision		

Looking Ahead			
Topic	Speaker & Purpose	Notes & Resources	Decisions & Next Steps
	S: Purpose: Information Input Decision		

Calendar				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
November 4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15

APPENDIX I Continued

Logistics			
Topic	Speaker & Purpose	Notes & Resources	Decisions & Next Steps
	S: Purpose: Information Input Decision		•

Admin Out of the Building	
Monday:	
Tuesday:	
Wednesday:	
Thursday:	
Friday:	