

# School and District Leadership and the Job Satisfaction of Novice Teachers: How Central Office Leaders Support Novice Teachers

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BOSTON COLLEGE  
Lynch School of Education

Department of  
Educational Leadership and Higher Education

Professional School Administrator Program (PSAP)

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERSHIP AND THE JOB SATISFACTION OF NOVICE  
TEACHERS: HOW CENTRAL OFFICE LEADERS SUPPORT NOVICE TEACHERS

Dissertation in Practice by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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# SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERSHIP AND THE JOB SATISFACTION OF NOVICE TEACHERS: HOW CENTRAL OFFICE LEADERS SUPPORT NOVICE TEACHERS

By

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative case study examined the perceptions of novice teachers and central office leaders in one Massachusetts school district about the job satisfaction of novice teachers. Data was gathered from interviews with school and district leaders and novice teachers as well as through the analysis of district documents in order to identify central office practices that contributed to novice teachers' job satisfaction. The findings indicated a strong connection to the district's mentoring practices and novice teachers' job satisfaction. However, while central office leaders also cited the positive role of the induction program, novice teachers did not perceive it provided a high level of support. Recommendations are made for central office leaders to establish greater organizational clarity and to differentiate the induction program to better meet the varying needs of novice teachers.

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## Dedication

For my devoted husband Jason who has managed to maintain the running of a household with three very busy children. I am fortunate to have such a loving and strong husband who supports me in all aspects of my life.

Without the support of my mother Donna who has stepped in whenever I have needed her and helped raise my children. After forty years teaching, she exemplifies what excellent teaching is all about.

To my three beautiful children, Madison, Samuel, and Elizabeth who have put up with a very busy mother. My wish for you is to follow your dreams and never be afraid to challenge yourself in life. I love you.

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## CHAPTER 1<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The high rate of novice teacher turnover is a significant problem for educational leaders (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Researchers note that, “after just five years, between 40 and 50 percent of all beginning teachers have left the profession” (p. 2). The attrition rate is substantial because it is expensive for districts to train new teachers (Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007). As teaching experience is a critical factor of student success (Darling-Hammond, 2000a ; Huang & Moon, 2009; Murnane & Phillips, 1981), “high levels of teacher attrition make it difficult for schools to achieve a “critical mass” of faculty who possess the skills and experience necessary to sustain educational reforms called for by policy makers” (Huling, Resta, & Yeargain, 2012, p. 14). Thus, teacher attrition has numerous ramifications for school improvement efforts, pupil achievement, and policy implementation.

### Statement of Problem

Teachers frequently leave the profession as a result of job dissatisfaction and the aspiration to find a better career (Ingersoll, 2001). This combination accounts for 42% of departures from the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2001). A closer look at these statistics reveals the main sources of teacher dissatisfaction are “low salaries, lack of support from the school administration, student discipline problems, and lack of teacher influence over school-wide and classroom decision making” (p. 522). Lam and Yan (2011) define job satisfaction as...

derived from factors related to job nature, that is, what employees actually do....the job is perceived as providing positive satisfaction if it has characteristics that lead to the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Kori Becht, Elizabeth Chamberland, Bridget Gough, Matthew Joseph, Mark McManmon, and Michael Morris

satisfaction of higher-order human needs, such as personal growth and recognition. (p. 336)

For the purposes of this study, job satisfaction is defined as a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job and job experience” (Hulpia, Devos, & Rossell, 2009, p. 294). The Alliance for Excellent Education, in collaboration with the New Teacher Center, found that about “13 percent of the nation’s 3.4 million teachers move schools or leave the profession every year, costing states up to \$2 billion” (Haynes, Maddock, & Goldrick, 2014, p. 1). Further, “researchers estimate that over 1 million teachers move in and out of schools annually, and between 40 and 50 percent quit within five years” (p. 1). School and district leadership may have a strong impact on novice teachers’ job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

The issue of novice teacher performance and attrition is not distributed evenly across all schools and districts, however. For instance, many urban schools have a higher percentage of novice teacher attrition and a higher rate of teacher transience compared to suburban counterparts (Jacob, 2007). Novice teachers are often placed in high poverty, racially diverse classrooms, and work with large numbers of students with learning disabilities (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2001). As a result, this places novice teachers at a disadvantage by a lack of mentoring and preparation for negotiating the political context of the school, district, and community (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

There are many variables that contribute to the composition of school and district culture. For example, in a study conducted in North Carolina, African-American students were significantly more likely to be taught by a novice teacher than their white counterparts (Clofelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2005). The data for this study were gathered from a comparison of racial

segregation of students and the probability of having a novice teacher in 7th grade math classrooms. Similarly, a study in New York found that “nonwhite, poor, and low performing students, particularly those in urban areas, attend schools with less qualified teachers” (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002, p. 54). Peske and Haycock (2006) found that “classes in high-poverty and high minority secondary schools are more likely to be taught by ‘out-of-field teachers’ – those without a major or minor in the subject they teach” (p. 2). While novice teacher attrition affects all schools, these studies indicate that the impact of these factors is likely greater in schools that are already struggling to reach achievement targets than more affluent schools and districts.

Ladd (2011) and Stockard and Lehman (2004) observe that school leaders influence the job satisfaction and retention of teachers. As Ladd (2011) points out, “the higher the perceived quality of school leadership, the less likely teachers are either to plan to leave or actually to leave the school” (p. 256). Research suggests that:

School management policies influence teacher satisfaction and retention, with teachers who are employed in settings where they have greater influence over school policy, greater control over their own classroom, more effective administrators, and a mentoring system that provides support in their initial years of teaching being both more satisfied and more likely to stay in the field. (p.744)

These findings suggest educational leaders impact the job satisfaction and ultimately the retention of teachers in the profession. Given the role school leadership plays in the job satisfaction and retention of teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Ladd, 2011; Stockard & Lehman, 2004), the purpose of this study was to explore the influence of school and district leadership on the job satisfaction of novice teachers. The overarching questions for this research were:

1. How do school and district leaders perceive their role in the development of novice teacher job satisfaction?
2. In what way(s), if any, do novice teachers attribute job satisfaction to school and district leadership?

The literature review that follows grounds our research. Dinham and Scott's Three-Factor Theory and other theories related to job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; Sergiovanni, 1967) provide the conceptual framework. The research presents extrinsic, intrinsic, and school-based factors that may influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers.

### **Literature Review**

The first section of the literature review provides a conceptual overview of Dinham and Scott's Three-Factor Theory and other theories that inform our understanding of the presence or absence of teacher job satisfaction. The second section explores the factors that influence teacher job satisfaction: school conditions, school culture, teachers' self-efficacy, and leadership.

#### **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**

The two-factor theory of job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959) is commonly used to describe how employees across a variety of fields develop attitudes about their work (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Herzberg, 1968) and "has become one of the most used, known, and widely respected theories for explaining motivation and job satisfaction" (DeShields, Kara, & Kaynak, 2005, p. 131). The theory posits that factors influencing work satisfaction are separate and unrelated to factors that may cause dissatisfaction with work. The satisfying factors, or motivators, are job-intrinsic and are internally generated, such as personal achievement, responsibility, and commitment to the work (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005; Stello, 2011). Motivators are highly connected to the characteristics derived from Maslow's theory of personal

growth and self-actualization (as cited in Stello, 2011). The presence of motivators contributes to job satisfaction; the absence of motivators would be neutral and would not cause dissatisfaction because the factors contributing to dissatisfaction are on a different scale (Herzberg et al., 1959).

According to this theory, a separate continuum of factors, called hygiene factors, can cause dissatisfaction with work. These factors are related to the general environment that surround the job, such as working conditions and policies that govern the way work is to be done (Herzberg et al., 1959) and are outside the employee's control (DeShields et al., 2005). For instance, the increasing quantity of non-teaching tasks, especially in the form of paperwork, has been identified as a significant hygiene factor for classroom teachers (Spear, Gould, & Lee, 2000). In a similar way that motivators do not cause dissatisfaction, hygiene factors are not a cause of work satisfaction, but can be the source of dissatisfaction.

### **Two-Factor Theory in Education**

Sergiovanni (1967) applied the two-factor theory to teachers to see if the same trend would apply in this specific job field. His research confirmed the findings of Herzberg et al. (1959) in an educational context and added details on which satisfiers and hygiene factors had the most significant effect on teacher job satisfaction. He found that personal achievement, recognition, and responsibility were the most critical factors influencing teacher satisfaction; other satisfiers in the study, such as career advancement, did not appear to relate to teacher satisfaction (Sergiovanni, 1967). The most significant hygiene factor for teachers was interpersonal relations and this response was consistent regardless of demographic factors such as tenure status, gender, or grade level (Sergiovanni, 1967). The study also found that teachers, much like the employees in the study by Herzberg et al. (1959), were primarily motivated by intrinsic factors. Holdaway (1978) confirmed this finding, stating that:



The highest percentages “Satisfied” were obtained with interpersonal relationships, freedom in making instructional decisions, and the teaching assignment. Highest percentages “Dissatisfied” occurred with the facets of attitudes of society and parents; status of teachers . . . and staffing procedures. (p. 45)

### **School-Based Factors: The Third Domain of Teacher Satisfaction**

Because of growing concern about teacher satisfaction, Dinham & Scott (2000) initiated the Teacher 2000 Project, an international program aimed to measure teacher motivation, satisfaction, and health to inform policy and decision-making (Dinham & Scott, 1997). This research confirmed many aspects of Sergiovanni’s (1967) and Herzberg et al.’s (1959) studies, such as intrinsic factors that proved the most significant aspects in determining teacher satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 1997). Despite this core similarity, Dinham and Scott found altruism and personal growth to be the most influential intrinsic factors, which varies slightly from Sergiovanni’s findings. Other research has found that “teachers in different countries generally derive job satisfaction from factors integral to the teaching job: assisting the growth of children, developing good relationships with students, and experiencing self-growth” (Lam & Yan, 2011, p. 336), which, similar to Dinham and Scott (1997), indicates slight changes over time in the specific intrinsic factors that influence teachers. The literature consistently confirms that intrinsic factors play a central role in determining teacher job satisfaction.

While hygiene factors similar to those identified in Sergiovanni’s research (1967) were found, the negative image of teachers in the media is a new finding that contributes to dissatisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 1997). This change may be due to shifts in the public perception of education as well as increased governmental involvement in schools that have occurred during the thirty years between the two studies. Recent studies found that significant

hygiene factors for teachers include increasing workloads, the low status that teachers hold in our society, and low salaries (Lam & Yan, 2011), as well as the accountability pressures that have come from No Child Left Behind legislation (Byrd-Blake et al., 2010; US Department of Education, 2009) and reduced teacher autonomy (Moore, 2012; Shann, 1998).

While the similarities in these research findings are significant, one major difference emerged. Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) identified a “third factor” of variables that, unlike satisfiers and hygiene factors, may impact either teacher satisfaction or dissatisfaction. They found that:

...there was a third broad band of factors revealed by the study which previous research had not identified, this third or middle band being comprised of largely school-based factors. Falling between the universally perceived intrinsic rewards of teaching such as self-growth and pupil achievement (most satisfying), and the universal extrinsic hindrances to teacher satisfaction and effectiveness such as educational change, the status of teachers and increased administrative workloads (most dissatisfying), are school-based factors such as school leadership, climate and decision-making, school reputation, and school infrastructure, and it was these factors where most variation occurred from school to school and where there is thus greatest potential for change within schools. (1997, p. 16)

These school-based factors differ from satisfiers because they are not intrinsic to the teacher and differ from hygiene factors because they have the capacity to increase job satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 1998).

These school-based factors are of critical importance in this research as this study focused on aspects of these less explored and more recently identified elements of teacher

satisfaction. Embedded in this research is the assumption that educational leaders have the greatest ability and capacity to influence a critical school-based factor that contributes to teacher satisfaction, which is primarily “a product of leadership” (Dinham & Scott, 1997, p. 16), as compared to leaders’ ability to influence intrinsic satisfiers and hygiene factors, which are primarily outside the control of leaders. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) found that supervisory support contributes to teachers’ sense of belonging, which correlates with job satisfaction and a reduced motivation to leave the profession. This study aimed to investigate discrete leadership frameworks within this third factor that contribute to teacher job satisfaction (See Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* A three-domain model of teacher satisfaction. Reprinted from Dinham & Scott (2000, p. 393).

The next section of this chapter outlines the factors, identified through the literature, that have been shown to influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers. The identified factors will be analyzed through the three-domain model of teacher satisfaction to allow for further investigation of school-based factors that influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers.

### **Novice Teachers**

The profile of the novice teacher is no longer exclusively defined as the recent graduate from a formal teacher preparation program. Johnson (2004) describes the new wave of novice

teachers as, “more homogeneous in race and gender than the retiring generation, more diverse in terms of age, prior experience, preparation, expectations regarding the workplace, and conceptions of career” (p. 7). Research conducted for the U.S. Department of Education by Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman (2013) found that 82% of the current teaching force was non-Hispanic White, 7% were non-Hispanic Black, and 8% were Hispanic. While the demographics of the teaching force have not shifted dramatically, there has been a shift in the quality of the teacher preparation programs completed by the current population of teachers. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) “challenged the traditional concept of teaching by emphasizing content mastery and verbal ability, downplaying pedagogy as a less powerful determinant of student achievement,” which led to changes in many teacher preparation programs (Blanton, Sindelar, & Correa, 2006, p. 115). As a result, NCLB policies created an increased demand to replace underperforming teachers, which sparked the creation of non-traditional entry points into the teaching career. Addressing the shift in teacher preparation, Darling-Hammond (2006) states that “teacher education as an enterprise has probably launched more new weak programs that underprepared teachers, especially for urban schools, than it has further developed the stronger models that demonstrate what intense preparation can accomplish” (p. 3).

Nearly 40% of new public school teachers enter the profession through non-traditional routes (Headden, 2014). According to Henke, Chen, and Geis, (2000), 29% of novice teachers without student-teaching experience left teaching within five years compared to 15% of those who participated in a teacher education program that required student teaching.

Johnson (2004) also notes that many novice teachers are mid-career entrants. Johnson describes a novice teacher population where 28% to 47% of the teaching force has worked for a substantial amount of time in another field. Although these novice teachers bring a variety of

experiences, “midcareer entrants often enter their new school expecting a workplace that was better equipped, more flexible, and more committed to their success than the one they found” (p. 25).

Novice teachers, at a unique phase in their profession, between theory and fully developed practice, are entering a profession vastly different from previous generations (Johnson, 2004). While Johnson focused on teachers in year one and two of their careers, she emphasizes the variation in workplace expectations as they enter the profession. For instance, since the 1960s, a wider range of career options has become available to women. Many of these professions provided a substantial improvement in compensation and training. This has elevated the expectations novice teachers have for support as they enter the teaching profession. This is in contrast to the increasing demands placed on new teachers. Johnson posits that novice teachers are “expected to teach all students so that they achieve high standards and to take on new functions beyond the traditional scope of school’s responsibility” (p. 7). Johnson also states “school structures and practices are no longer adequate to support either teachers’ development or students’ learning” (p. 8). Fantilli and McDougall (2009) identify several challenges that novice teachers experience in their first few years. Significant challenges include difficult teaching assignments, limited or no school support, inadequate traditional and non-traditional preparation programs, an emphasis on student preparation to pass high-stakes assessments and limited skills in differentiating instruction for exceptional students. Johnson (2004) presents the challenge to public schools as follows:

An issue of great concern to policymakers, practitioners, and the public is the challenge of ensuring that all students, whoever they are and wherever they live, have good teachers. If schools fail to attract and retain a strong, committed cohort of new teachers in

the coming years, students will be severely penalized, and those in low income communities will be likely to pay the greatest price (p. 269).

Yet, despite the challenges new teachers face, novice teachers directly impact students, their learning, and the culture of the school. While growing a population of experienced teachers is imperative for the teaching profession, this work must be embedded within a system of supports that recognizes and encourages and is equipped to develop teachers with the pedagogical and content skills to meet the needs of all students (Andrews, Gilbert & Martin, 2007; Brock & Grady, 1998; Hallinger, 2011).

### **Factors Influencing Novice Teacher Job Satisfaction**

According to Shann (1998), “Teacher job satisfaction has been shown to be a predictor of teacher retention, a determinant of teacher commitment, and in turn, a contribution to school effectiveness” (p. 67). Yet, there is a range of factors related to teacher job satisfaction, and these factors may vary over time, reflecting organizational and cultural changes (Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004; Shreeve et al., 1998). According to Shreeve et al., “factors of job satisfaction shift with the times and fluctuate with the mores, in effect reflecting facets of the changing culture” (p. 182). The MetLife Survey of American Teachers (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013) examined teacher job satisfaction and how the factors of job satisfaction change over time. Teacher job satisfaction rose from 40% in 1984 to reach a high of 62% in 2009. However, in 2012, teacher satisfaction declined to 39%, the lowest point since 1986 (Markow, Macia, et al, 2013).

Based on the third domain of teacher satisfaction, the next section of the literature identifies factors that influence the job satisfaction of the novice teacher. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are specifically connected to working conditions, teacher pedagogical practice, self-efficacy, and teacher autonomy. School-based factors, school culture, as well as school and

district leadership, informed this study, as it is school leadership that realizes the collective importance of all of these factors. Leadership includes aspects such as "working to procure necessary resources and materials, but even more importantly, fostering teacher participation in decision-making and providing valuable opportunities for professional growth" (Sass, Seal, & Martin, 2011, p. 212).

**Extrinsic factors.** Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (1959) and Sergiovanni (1967) describe the extrinsic teacher dissatisfiers as conditions teachers perceive to be beyond their control. Two factors identified in the literature as contributing to novice teacher job dissatisfaction are working conditions and pedagogical practices related to diverse student populations.

***School working conditions.*** School working conditions can negatively influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers (Dinham & Scott, 1997; Lam & Yan, 2011; Rhodes et al., 2004). Many novice teachers are given more challenging work assignments than their veteran colleagues (Clotfelter et al., 2005; Johnson, 2004). Kardos and Moore Johnson (2007) surveyed a random sample of 486 first- and second-year teachers in four states and found that while 23% of respondents indicated having fewer responsibilities than their more experienced colleagues, 36% indicated that their workload was too heavy, and 52% reported that they did not have enough time available for planning and preparation. The accessibility of resources may also influence job satisfaction as novice teachers often report that they teach classes in multiple rooms and have insufficient supplies or equipment (Johnson, 2004). Collie, Shapka, and Perry (2012) note an association between resource access and job satisfaction. As Lam and Yan (2011) state, "when the school environment allows for teachers to focus on the core business of teaching and allows a reasonable work-life balance, teachers are more likely to become engaged in teaching" (p. 345).

*Pedagogical practices related to diverse student populations.* Research indicates that a large number of novice teachers are placed in high poverty, high minority classrooms, and work with large numbers of students with learning disabilities (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2001). According to Darling-Hammond (2000 b), teachers who were less prepared were less satisfied with their training and had greater difficulties identifying learning needs. She suggests, “They are less able to adapt their instruction to promote student learning and less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming students if their teaching is not effective” (p. 167). Ladson-Billings (2001) furthers this thinking, “New teachers are often placed in the schools serving the poorest students and those who have failed to benefit from schooling, so the students with the greatest educational needs find themselves being taught by the teachers least prepared to teach them” (p. 17). Thus, an explanation as to why novice teachers leave high poverty, high minority schools may be a result of the context in which they work (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Due to novice teachers’ lack of experience in understanding a student’s language or culture, they may be unable to consider the “impact of their pedagogical decisions on student behavior” (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 63) or academic achievement. Bartolomé (2008) stressed the need to increase teachers’ “ideological clarity” in order to “resist deficit views on students and prevent them from hiding behind views to explain why students do not respond to their instruction” (p. xx). Instead of perpetuating a deficit perspective, teachers are able to “better understand if, when, and how their belief systems uncritically reflect those of the dominant society, and thus unknowingly serve to maintain the unequal and unacceptable conditions that so many students experience on a daily basis” (Bartolomé, 2008, p. xix).

For example, in special education, novice teachers may also struggle with students with learning disabilities. Brownell et al. (2009) conducted a study of 34 special educators who were



in their first 3 years of teaching. Twenty-six of these beginning teachers held a license, “8 taught on a temporary certificate” and all participants “taught reading to third, fourth and/or fifth grade students with LD” (p. 395). It is important to note that teachers on temporary licenses have generally not completed an authentic teacher preparation program. Brownell et al. (2009) found that although the beginning special education teachers in this particular study had some knowledge related to teaching reading, they struggled with the pedagogical practice of teaching reading, such as decoding, facilitating discussion around text, and prompting students to use strategies previously taught. The research also indicated that beginning special education teachers relied more on classroom management and general instructional practice to inform student achievement. This study’s findings may not only cause a concern over the adequacy of special education teacher preparation programs, but these findings may also give us pause to think about all teacher preparations programs as they may be “broad in focus, providing effective instruction and classroom management, but unable to provide in depth instruction in content areas such as reading” (p. 408). Teachers, in general, are more satisfied in schools that provide them with tools to enhance both their content knowledge and pedagogical skills (Johnson et al., 2012; Rodriguez, 2007).

**Intrinsic motivators.** Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory (1959) and Sergiovanni (1967) describe intrinsic satisfiers as most influential on the job satisfaction of teachers. Two factors identified in the literature as influencing the job satisfaction of the novice teacher are teacher self-efficacy and autonomy.

**Self-efficacy.** Teachers’ self-efficacy, the belief in the ability to deal with challenges, complete tasks, and impact student outcomes, not only correlates with student achievement, but by increasing early career teachers’ self-efficacy, schools have the potential to retain high quality

teachers who are invested in the profession (Elliot, Isaacs, & Chugani, 2010). Early career teachers who have a significantly low sense of self-efficacy are more likely to leave the profession within their first few years often as the result of feeling overwhelmed, ineffective, and unsupported (Elliot et al., 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Professional experiences such as a positive school culture, support from school leadership, and opportunities for collegial collaboration contribute to novice teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their desire to remain in the profession.

Teachers' self-efficacy is a critical component in both teacher retention and job satisfaction. According to Fry (2009), "self-efficacy has been meaningfully used in educational research as a means of examining teacher success" as it "influences people's expectations of success, how much effort they expend, and the extent to which they persist in activities" (p. 96). Teachers with high self-efficacy believe their actions contribute to student achievement while those with low self-efficacy are driven by extrinsic rewards (Yee, 1990). Those teachers who lack the confidence in their ability to teach students of different backgrounds and abilities may "blame behavior on students and parents" instead of considering "the impact of their pedagogical decisions on the student's behavior" (Rodriguez, 2007, p. 63). Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2012) note that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy may experience success and satisfaction in working with a diverse group of learners because of their commitment to social justice or to the common good "while others avoid working with the same students because they lack the confidence or doubt that they can be successful in teaching them" (p. 27).

***Autonomy.*** Professional autonomy is a significant factor related to teacher job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Lam & Yan, 2011; Moore, 2012; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). A study by Strong and Yoshida (2014) indicated that despite the changing educational

climate, such as federal accountability policies and state mandates, “teachers still perceived their classroom as the highest area of autonomy regardless of level” (p. 139). Dinham and Scott (1997) found that a key element in the third-factor theory was the variable of control. First year teachers were more satisfied in schools where they felt they had a sense of control over their classrooms and influence over their work environment (Moore, 2012; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Moore (2012) defines teacher control as “control over teaching practices, control over grading, control over discipline, and control over homework” (p. 10). Additionally, Stockard and Lehman (2004) reported low rates of teacher job satisfaction for teachers who felt they had less influence over school policy. We move now to the school-based factors determined to also influence the job satisfaction of the novice and considered to be within the influence of school and district leadership.

**School-based factors.** Dinham and Scott (2000) describe the third domain of teacher satisfaction as comprised of school-based factors that are neither highly satisfying nor dissatisfying. Four factors identified as influencing the job satisfaction of the novice teacher included in this domain are collaborative school culture, mentoring, school leadership, and district leadership. These factors were of significant interest to this research because school and district leaders influence them.

***Collaborative school culture.*** The term school culture describes the environment that affects the behavior of teachers, school leaders, and students (Angelle, 2006; Barresi & Olson, 1994; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Deal & Peterson, 1999). Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996) and Hoy and Miskel (2005) define shared beliefs in a school culture as the values, visions, norms, individual beliefs, and the everyday experiences of the school community members. School culture has the ability to affect and inspire all members of the school

community. A presence of professional learning communities and collaborative instructional and collegial practices (i.e., grade level team meetings, common teacher planning time, data meetings) are evident in a collaborative school culture (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; DuFour, 2002; DuFour, 2003; DuFour, 2004; Hoaglund, Birkenfeld, & Box, 2014). Therefore, in this study, beliefs and collaborative practice were examined as two components of school culture.

Several researchers have found administrators to be particularly vital to the development and sustainability of culture in schools. Tantillo (2001) found that the role of the school leaders is essential in shaping school culture and that school culture and the environment in which teachers work have a significant impact on job satisfaction. Novice teachers indicated collegial support, the construct of which is impacted by the school culture, is one of the most important influences on job satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 1997; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Johnson et al. (2012) found that it was not the working conditions “such as well-maintained facilities or access to modern technology” (p. 2), but rather the positive social conditions such as collegial collaboration that was a predictive factor in influencing teacher job satisfaction. Beginning teachers revealed, “collaboration without competition and the need for collective learning both tempered with a sense of mutual respect, were important for professional growth” (Brown & Wynn, 2007, p. 675).

Socialization of novice teachers into a collaborative school culture is also essential in increasing teacher retention (Angelle, 2006; Saphier, Freedman, & Aschheim, 2002). Flores (2004) states:

Schools are places where teaching occurs, but they are also places for teachers to learn and develop. Despite the widespread recognition of the importance of working conditions

in fostering school and teacher development, most structural reform efforts have failed to address this issue adequately. (p. 299)

Flores (2004) further identifies that school workplace conditions have a direct impact on overall teacher development and learning. Collaboration is seen as a mitigating condition for teachers to grow in the profession and to accept and implement change effectively. Collaborative workplace relationships and cultures are associated with a supportive environment and better development opportunities for new teachers (Williams, Prestage & Bedward, 2001); thus, improving teacher morale leads to stronger commitment and better retention (Weiss, 1999).

Coleman (1988) and Lin (2002) describe the resources that are developed through professional relationships and collaboration as “social capital.” Social capital has been found to contribute to successful school reform efforts and build trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Spillane, Kim, and Frank (2012) found that formal, organizational structure has a greater influence on social capital than the individual characteristics of staff members. This research indicates that the decisions made by school administrators affect the social capital development of teachers by allowing them to make strong connections with colleagues in teams such as grade levels pairings. The development of “social resources accessed through ties and critical for developing new knowledge” (Spillane, Kim, & Frank, 2012, p. 1135), essential for novice teachers given their relative lack of experience, are deeply influenced by how school leaders structure the collaborative teams in their school. A collaborative school culture is enhanced through the presence of professional learning communities and collaborative practices (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; DuFour, 2002; DuFour, 2003; Hoaglund et al., 2014). This type of school culture is characterized by the presence of opportunities for shared leadership, educator ownership of school policies, the sharing of instructional and pedagogical ideas, all embedded in

a climate of acceptance and support. Novice teachers benefit when feedback is received from an experienced group of educators who are able to model the positive constructs of an established collaborative environment (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Angelle (2006) introduced the concept of professional socialization as the “process whereby the novice learns about and becomes a part of the organization” as linked directly to teacher quality and longevity. Leadership is essential in matching novice teachers with supportive veteran role models to ensure that positive expectations for performance are communicated even if the school is underperforming or lacks in support (Tantillo, 2001). Formally socializing novice teachers into the school culture allows them to learn school expectations and approaches, skills and knowledge, stay current with the practices of colleagues, and seek to become a member of the larger school population (Angelle, 2006). Additionally, socialization supports teacher longevity, enhances teacher experience, and decreases teacher attrition (Angelle, 2006).

***Mentoring.*** Novice teachers indicated mentoring programs were a significant influence on job satisfaction (Huisman, Singer, & Catapano, 2010; Johnson et al., 2012; Liu & Ramsey, 2008; Rodriguez, 2007; Scherff, 2008; Yee, 1990). A recent report from the American Institutes of Research indicates that novice teachers place significant value on the support received from a mentor (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014). The same study also indicates the mentoring received must be in a similar content area or grade level and must be high quality.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) qualify the presence of mentoring indicating that it is most effective when conducted on-site by trained mentors, with similar certification. They further state that teachers who receive such mentoring typically demonstrate greater skill in creating a positive classroom atmosphere, demonstrating solid instructional methods, and maintaining

effective classroom management. As a result, the quality of mentoring is a key element in overall mentoring effectiveness. The quality of mentoring programs varies greatly from district to district. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) observe that districts “vary as how they select, prepare, assign and compensate the mentors themselves” (p. 204). For this study, the mentoring process was examined through the viewpoints of the novice teacher.

Littrell, Billingsley, and Cross assert that, “one of the most important acts schools can take is to provide support to beginning teachers” (1994, p. 36). Quality mentoring programs provide support to novice teachers as they adjust to the working environment and provide access to professional development opportunities (Huisman et al., 2010). Rodriguez (2007) revealed that novice teachers experienced increased job satisfaction when they had mentors who took time to answer questions, consistently visited their classrooms, provided sustained support, gave constructive criticism, and developed trusting relationships. Thus, having an experienced mentor helps novice teachers acquire “contextualized knowledge and skills” (p. 65) and develop the self-confidence needed for success. While the mentor serves as a collegial support system for the novice teacher, building and district leadership are also school-based factors that influence novice teacher job satisfaction.

***School leadership.*** Teachers identify leadership as a critical factor in the job satisfaction and retention of novice teachers (Blase & Blase, 2000; Hallinger, 2011; Stockard & Lehman, 2004). Deal and Peterson (1999) suggest that the lack of novice teacher job satisfaction can be attributed to the absence of support from school site leadership. Wynn et al. (2007) found clear indications that novice teachers who are satisfied with the principal leadership in their schools are more likely to stay in the profession. In two recent studies, dissatisfaction with school leadership was identified as a significant factor in teachers’ decision-making about whether to

stay or leave their position (Boyd et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011). Boyd et al. (2011) surveyed first year teachers to understand factors that influence first year teacher turnover: “the dominance of dissatisfaction with administrative support is striking...Hardly any teachers cited dissatisfaction with colleagues...respect from students and/or parents...or district policies as a primary reason for leaving” (p. 327). Ladd (2011) discovered that positive perceptions of school leadership correlated with a reduced likelihood that teachers would plan to or actually leave the school. Ladd theorizes that, “the concept of leadership itself that emerges from the factor analysis...includes not only support for teachers, but also a shared vision, (and) trusting environment...” (p. 256).

Flores (2004) suggests that leadership constitutes one of the overarching influences in fostering a sense of professional community among teachers who work in collaborative ways to create shared goals, visions, and standards for their schools. She argues that developing a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth among teachers is a common trait in school leaders who support and promote the building of professional communities within schools. This contrasts with the theory that self-efficacy is an internal characteristic of the novice teacher. Job satisfaction is identified as an outcome directly connected to self-efficacy (Dinham & Scott, 2000). Brock and Grady (1998) found:

The expectations of beginning teachers illustrate that principals are central to the successful socialization and first year induction of beginning teachers. Although most of the literature on teacher induction has focused on the importance of mentors, principals are clearly key figures in the induction process. (p. 180)



While the impact of the school leader is critical in influencing the practice of all teachers, emphasis must be placed on the influence the leader specifically has on novice teachers to positively impact the attrition rate. Roberson and Roberson (2009) observe:

The principal is accountable for the success or failure of teachers to meet school and district goals and of students to reach performance goals. The principal has the power to set in motion the connections and activities that novice teachers need to be successful. (p. 118)

The influence of school leadership on novice teachers takes shape with the development of a clear mission and the creation of a trusting environment, clear school-wide standards, and shared goals (Andrews et al...2007; Hallinger 2011; Hallinger, Wang & Chen, 2013).

Additionally, embedded within the environment of a school is a unique school culture that directly influences the novice teacher. A principal's ability to develop and maintain a school culture that promotes collaboration and growth is vital to the success of novice teachers (Barth, 2001). Blase & Blase (2000) found, "in effective principal-teacher interaction about instruction, processes such as inquiry, reflection, exploration, and experimentation result; teachers build repertoires of flexible alternatives rather than collecting rigid teaching procedures and methods" (p. 132).

**Central office.** While school level leadership is important to novice teachers, district leadership is as well. According to Grossman and Thompson (2004), "little attention has been focused on the contexts in which beginning teachers function and how these contexts shape their beliefs, concerns, practice, and opportunities for learning" (p. 282). Their findings indicate that critical contexts such as state, district, school and departmental contexts, influence job satisfaction. It is in the quality of the interaction among these contexts for the novice teacher that

contributes to reinforcing policies; likewise job satisfaction can be compromised when the novice teacher is presented with conflicting policies. Grossman and Thompson address the relationship between novice teachers and district level leadership:

New teachers and experienced teachers relate differently to district policies. The problem for policymakers is not how to change teacher practice but rather how to provide the kinds of supports beginning teachers need as they construct their practice. Because beginning teachers are still in the process of learning to teach, districts may have more opportunity to influence their developing practice through a variety of policies and structures. (p. 282).

Districts can construct powerful learning opportunities and supports for novice teachers.

Grossman and Thompson note:

The tasks [districts] assign to new teachers, the resources they provide, the learning environments they create, the assessments they design, and the conversations they provoke have consequences for what first-year teachers come to learn about teaching. (p. 298)

Honig (2008) further develops the role of central office leadership as a learning organization. The research on learning organizations is grounded in organizational learning theory and concepts related to communities of practice. Honig suggests that, when functioning as a learning organization, central office administration becomes proficient in mining for evidence to inform teaching practices, discriminates to identify the priorities that will impact teaching and learning and serves as a “boundary spanner” to link new priorities to new action through collaboration and relationship building. Honig describes a central office as a learning organization that serves as a critical influence on student learning. The influence on student

learning is realized through cohesive contextual policies implemented by central office leadership. When the central office functions as a learning organization policies will serve to illuminate and reinforce the contexts in which novice teachers work. Schools participating in assistance relationships by relying on central office to support their mission have the additional function of informing central office practices based on the high degree of two-way interactions. Engaging in these relationships transforms central office into a learning organization by informing central office practices (Honig, 2008). Furthermore:

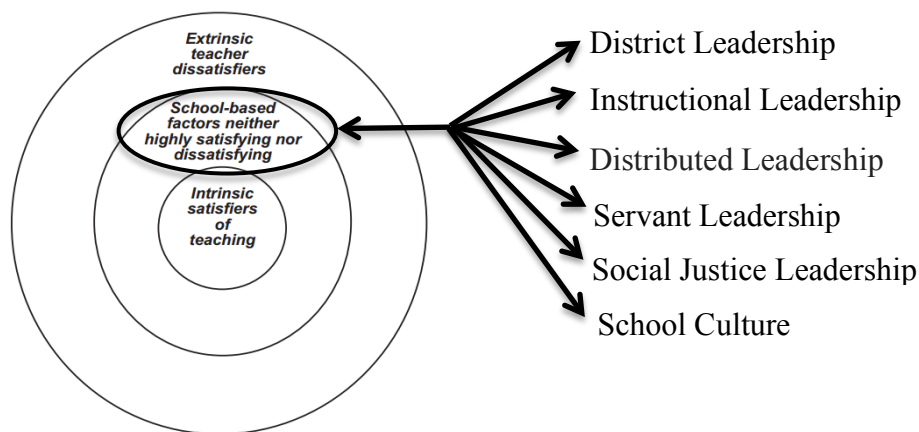
policy initiatives demand that central office administrators work closely with each of their schools to build school-level capacity for high-quality teaching and learning and use their experience as school assistance providers and other evidence to guide central office decisions in ways that promise to seed and grow such [high quality] teaching and learning in schools district-wide. (p. 628)

For the purposes of this study, central office is defined as the superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, and special education director.

While prior research (Boyd et al., 2011; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Ladd, 2011; Wynn et al., 2007) identifies leadership as a primary factor in novice teacher satisfaction and retention, specific leadership theories have not been studied for their connection to the job satisfaction of novice teachers. As Boyd et al. (2011) observe, “our data do not provide enough richness about the role of administration to determine how or why administrative support affects teachers” (p. 329). The authors later note that, “follow-up studies are necessary to investigate why administrative support is important to teachers and what particularly the administration does or does not do which influences a teacher to stay or leave” (p. 329).

## Conclusion

A review of the literature reinforces the importance of focusing our study on how school and district leadership influence novice teachers' job satisfaction. The research also underscores the need to examine deeply how school and district leaders contribute to the job satisfaction of novice teachers. Therefore, this study examined school and district leadership practices as well as school culture for their relationship to the job satisfaction of novice teachers (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Approach of research team in analyzing school and district leadership practices in a three-domain model of teacher satisfaction

The research team examined the influence of school culture, distributed, servant, social justice, instructional, and central office leadership on the job satisfaction of novice teachers. Definitions of the leadership lenses used in this study are briefly described below.

A collaborative school culture encompasses group norms and values that focus teachers' attention on what is vital in the educational setting and develops a common purpose (Jerald, 2006). Socialization through school culture supports job satisfaction, teacher longevity, and teacher experience, and decreases teacher attrition (Angelle, 2006).

Distributed leadership describes practices that allow for multiple individuals to be leaders in an organization (Gronn, 2002; Hulpia et al., 2009; Spillane, 2006). A primary focus of

distributed leadership is on the interactions between the individuals in leadership roles, both formal and informal, and their organizational environment (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2005). Comparatively, servant leadership is “an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader” (Laub, 1999, p. 81). This model of leadership places a strong emphasis on humility, empowerment, ethical behavior, and valuing of others that have been shown to influence job satisfaction (Cerit, 2009).

The ever-growing diversity of public school students has given rise to social justice leadership, defined as those leaders who “actively work to improve teaching and learning, so that all students have equitable opportunities to learn and excel” (Rivera-McCutchen, 2014, p. 749). Research indicates that social justice leadership can positively impact novice teachers’ ability to effectively serve marginalized populations, which in turn, can influence job satisfaction (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Theoharis, 2009).

Yet over the past twenty-five years, research identifies the instructional leadership of principals as a critical component of effective schools (Ramaswami & Babo, 2012; Catano & Stronge, 2007; Glasman & Heck, 1992). Instructional leadership is commonly described as the leaders’ ability to define a clear mission, manage instructional programming and create a positive school climate (Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). The instructional program, comprised of supervision and evaluation of instruction, coordination of the curriculum, and monitoring of student progress, correlate to the job satisfaction of the novice teacher (Blase & Blase, 2000).

Finally, central office, when structured as a learning organization, serves as a coach and model for the novice teacher as new initiatives, programs, and policies are implemented (Honig, 2008). Within the learning organization, communities of practice that support learners “shorten

the distance between their current practice and their deeper engagement in a particular activity” (p. 632). This supports the idea of assistance relationships between central offices and schools. Assistance relationships may play a role in supporting building-level leaders who, in turn, support novice teachers. When present, a central office learning organization can influence the job satisfaction of the novice teacher by providing expertise and guidance to support their success (Honig, 2008).

The aggregate analysis of these six lenses will provide a deeper understanding of how distinct leadership styles intersect with each other in influencing the job satisfaction of novice teachers. As practitioners successful principals do not conform to one particular leadership style at the expense of all others, utilize only one methodology with novice teachers, or stay with a scripted pattern of actions regardless of the context or situation. Leadership evolves and our aggregate analysis shows patterns and themes derived from a range of leadership styles that influenced novice teacher job satisfaction in this case study. The next chapter will describe the methods employed for this study.

## Chapter 2<sup>2</sup>

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this research study was to explore how leadership influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers. The following research questions aimed to interrogate more deeply into how leadership influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers:

- How do school and district leaders perceive their role in the development of novice teacher job satisfaction?
- In what ways, if any, do novice teachers attribute job satisfaction to school and district leadership and, if so, how?

This chapter focuses on the design of the study, district context and the methods used to investigate the research questions and collect and analyze data.

### **Design of the Study**

A qualitative case study design was utilized to answer the overarching research questions, which form the foundation of this study. Merriam (2009) defines a case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40). This approach was most appropriate to the study because the focus was the analysis of a “bounded system,” one Massachusetts school district. It therefore had clear boundaries and a limited focus. This case study research focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of a learning environment during a specific time (Stake, 1995; Willig, 2008). We believe the case study approach best matched our research because we investigated a specific phenomenon with a certain group of people (i.e. leadership influence on novice teachers). According to Yin (2009), a case study design is appropriate when the focus of

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<sup>2</sup> This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Kori Becht, Elizabeth Chamberland, Bridget Gough, Matthew Joseph, Mark McManmon, and Michael Morris

the study is to answer how and why questions and to address conditions relevant to the phenomenon under study.

Additionally, developing thick description, which is defined by Merriam (2009) as “a term from anthropology [which] means the complete, literal description of the phenomenon under study” (p. 43) was another reason for using a case study design. This aspect of case study research was critical to exploring the influence of leadership on novice teachers in a deep and insightful way.

A case study was the most appropriate method to answer the research questions because a case study involves the development of findings that “illuminate [a] reader’s understanding of [a] phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009, p. 44). Our goal was to provide an insightful and nuanced understanding of the connection between school leadership and the job satisfaction of novice teachers. A case study approach provided the opportunity to discover insights that would not otherwise be found using a quantitative approach.

This collaborative study consisted of six individual studies that utilized a common data set gathered from comprehensive interview protocols. While the individual studies include analysis unique to their research questions, findings across the studies were identified by the authors and are shared in Chapter 4.

**Site selection.** This study took place in a Massachusetts public school district that served K-12 students, which we refer to as the Columbia Public School District. The district was selected based on the existence of a significant population of novice teachers and the willingness of school and district leadership to participate in the study. Since the team was studying novice teachers at all grade levels and disciplines in public school districts, selecting a district that allowed for K-12 participants was essential. Additionally, the selected site was classified by the



Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as a Level 3 district to account for multiple variables highlighted in our review of literature that may impact the experience of novice teachers. The state of Massachusetts classifies all public schools on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest based on a complex formula that aims to measure the progress of school districts in narrowing the proficiency gap in the areas of science, math, and English language arts. Focusing on a Level 3 district that included low-performing schools was important as they often have the highest rate of attrition (Lankford et al., 2002). Highlighting and understanding the influence of leadership in struggling districts and schools can support leaders and ultimately lead to improving novice teachers' job satisfaction in low performing schools. Private or religious schools were not included in the study.

### **District Context**

The parts of the school district near the border of the neighboring city tended to be less affluent and include more rental housing, whereas the sections farther from the city had higher rates of homeownership and a lower population density. The population of the school district grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s; since that time period, the community experienced slow but steady growth.

**Student demographics.** Approximately 4,000 students attended the Columbia School District at the time of the study; enrollment had remained stable for the prior 10 years. The district was comprised of one early childhood center that supports preschool and kindergarten students, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The demographics of the district were roughly similar to that of the state in terms of race/ethnicity, ELL status, and special education with the exception of the population of African-American students (3.5%), which was below the state average.

Table 1

*Student Demographics of the District and State*

| Category                   | % of District | % of State |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|
| African-American           | 3.5           | 8.8        |
| Asian                      | 6.5           | 6.5        |
| Hispanic                   | 16.4          | 18.6       |
| White                      | 70.8          | 62.7       |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic   | 2.7           | 3.2        |
| ELL Status                 | 8.3           | 9.0        |
| Special Education          | 20.1          | 17.2       |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 40.5          | 27.4       |

However, there were significant variances in the student demographics by elementary school. While one elementary school was more than 85% white, 13.5% economically disadvantaged, and had no ELL students, another school was less than 65% white, with over 66% economically disadvantaged and 39% ELL students. Although the range of diversity of particular neighborhoods played a significant role in the differences between schools, a district program that bused all elementary ELL students in the community to one school for service delivery was also a contributing factor.

**Accountability levels.** There was also a variance in accountability levels based on state testing data. The table below shows that individual schools in the district ranged from Level 1, the highest rank in the state accountability system, to Level 3, which involves state involvement to improve the achievement of students.

Table 2

*School Type and Accountability Levels*

| Type            | Title One Status | Accountability Level |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Early Childhood | Yes              | N/A                  |
| Elementary 1    | No               | Level 1              |
| Elementary 2    | Yes              | Level 1              |
| Elementary 3    | Yes              | Level 2              |
| Elementary 4    | No               | Level 1              |
| Elementary 5    | Yes              | Level 3              |
| Middle          | Yes              | Level 2              |
| High            | No               | Level 3              |

**Teacher demographics.** Compared to state averages, the district had a highly qualified teaching staff with 99.7% of teachers licensed in their teaching area, which was higher than the state average. However, the racial/ethnic diversity of the teaching staff did not match the student demographics. The racial/ethnic diversity of the teacher population in the district was also below the state average. The table below shows the comparison:

Table 3

*Teacher and Student Demographics of the District*

| Category                 | % of Students | % of Teachers |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| African-American         | 3.5           | 1             |
| Asian                    | 6.5           | 0             |
| Hispanic                 | 16.4          | 2             |
| White                    | 70.8          | 96            |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 2.7           | 1             |

One-third of the teachers were under the age of 40; only 6% were under the age of 26. This lack of youth in the teaching staff was likely, in part, due to the low levels of teacher turnover in the district. The teacher retention rate is over 92%, higher than the state average of 87%. Another factor that may explain the lack of young teachers is that many of the novice teachers

interviewed had worked for a few years in other districts (many of them in urban centers) prior to coming to this more suburban district.

**District spending.** At the time of the study, the district spent approximately \$13,000 per pupil, which is about 11% less than the state average. Beyond aggregated, per pupil spending, a closer look into how financial resources were utilized shows which aspects of the district expenditures were prioritized. For instance, per pupil spending on administration was 34% less than the state average, while per pupil spending on professional development was actually 10% above the state average. Per pupil spending on special education, both in terms of in-district and out-of-district costs, was well above the state average, while per pupil spending on instructional materials and technology was barely over half the state average.

**Leadership turnover.** The leadership team in the district had undergone a significant amount of turnover in the years prior to the research study. The superintendent was in his first year in the role after spending the previous year as the interim superintendent. Prior to this appointment, he was a principal in the district. The School Committee's vote for him to become the permanent superintendent was by a narrow margin.

Out of the eight principals in the district, five were in their first two years in this role in their schools. While many had worked in other positions in the district prior to entering their current role, this significant turnover undoubtedly had implications for the district leadership team. In addition, the director of teaching and learning was in his first year in the district in that role. The leadership team of principals and central office leaders whose work was connected to teaching and learning included a majority of members who were relatively new to their roles.

Also worth noting was that a district improvement plan intended to guide the next three years of work was presented and adopted by the local school committee while this research project was being conducted. The plan included six strategic objectives:

- All Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will include goals and objectives based on student data in order to address targeted student needs;
- Identify an inclusionary model for consideration in the district;
- Create and implement a curriculum review cycle for all grades/content areas;
- Establish a district-wide Professional Development (PD) Team;
- Create a long-range district-wide Professional Development plan that emphasizes peer-led opportunities;
- Address the social and emotional needs of all students.

**Participant selection.** The participants for this study included eleven novice teachers who were in their second and third year of working in the district. Participants also included seven principals and four central office administrators who support novice teachers' development. First year teachers were not included in the study because the timing of the data collection occurred early in their initial year in the district. All participants were selected using a strategy of purposeful sampling, which Maxwell (2009) describes as “a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 235).

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in order to earn Professional Teacher Status a teacher must have successfully served in the same school district for three successive school years under an appropriate license. While the length of probationary periods for new teachers vary by state, in this study we focused on novice teachers in their second or third year in the

Columbia Public Schools who did not have many years of teaching experience in other districts prior coming to the district. Seven principals were also included in the participant pool because they are the primary evaluators and supporters of novice teachers. Additionally, they construct the environment in which the novice works and directly influence the experiences of the novice teacher. Finally, four central office administrators were selected because they typically develop the induction processes and policies for novice teachers.

Every effort was made to select a teacher participant group that was demographically representative of the race, gender, and K-12 grade levels of novice teachers in the district. Novice teacher participants were demographically representative of the district's teachers in terms of gender and school level. 27% of subjects (3/11) were male, which aligned to the district total of 20% and 5/11 teachers were secondary, while 6/11 teachers were elementary. The team conducted twenty-two interviews: eleven interviews of novice teachers in their second or third year in the district and eleven interviews of these teachers' school principals and district leaders. The research team divided into mixed pairs of males and females to complete the interviews. The goal of selecting a target of 22 participants was to seek the point of saturation where "no new relevant data are discovered [and] categories are well developed and validated" (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 108). "Generally speaking, the longer, more detailed, and intensive the transcripts, the fewer the number of participants. In practice, this may mean specifying a range between 5 and 30 participants" (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 108). As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out, a qualitative researcher must be careful to "set boundaries: to define aspects of your case that you can study within the limits of your time and means" (p. 27).

## **Data Collection**

In a case study, “The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 52). As the primary instrument, the research team collected data from interviews with novice teachers, principals, and central office administrators. Additionally, we utilized data collected from documents related to leadership and novice teachers. Finally, the research team collected data from field notes, which are typed or recorded reflections that captured our thoughts and feelings when we reviewed documents or visited a school to conduct an interview with a teacher or school leader.

**Interviews.** Interviews were semi-structured, open-ended, recorded, and conducted in person by one or two members of the research team (Merriam, 2009). The interviews aimed to provide “concrete,” “holistic,” and “lifelike” (Merriam, 2009, p. 44) information that can often only be gathered through case study research. The research team gathered a robust set of data to support the main research questions of the larger study as well as individual study questions. Interviews were transcribed by members of the research team and completed by an outside transcription service. The interviews were designed to learn about leadership characteristics that are perceived to have the greatest influence on novice teacher job satisfaction. The development of interview questions was informed by the relevant literature. The team developed an interview protocol for novice teachers (see Appendix B) and building/district leadership (see Appendix C). We tested interview questions on a convenience sample of novice teachers, building leaders, and central office leaders who were not members of the study to ensure questions were clear and yielded useful data.

**Document review.** Having used purposeful sampling to select interview participants, we also used the same method to select documents for review. According to Creswell (2012),

documents alongside interviews can serve as a useful source of data for qualitative studies. The standard for selecting documents was rooted in the purpose of the study. Therefore, the main criterion for document selection was the information they can provide concerning the manner in which leadership influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers and the ways in which novice teachers perceive leadership. When analyzed in combination with participant interviews, documents assisted in triangulating data and allowed us to develop a more informed, accurate, and substantiated understanding of the job satisfaction of novice teachers and the role of leaders in this process. These documents included:

***School documents.***

- School improvement plans for alignment with district mission and school-based priorities

***Central office documents.***

- District improvement plan
- Mentor agenda
- New teacher orientation agenda and induction materials
- Negotiated teacher contract

**Field notes.** Field notes were also used as a data source in this study. Yin (2009) describes field notes as being used to document descriptions about what was happening at the time of the interviews and what the researcher was thinking during specific time periods or at specific locations or events.

**Data Analysis**

As data were collected from documents, interviews, and field notes, a number of strategies were employed for analysis. The first step in data analysis involved an examination of school and district documents related to leadership and novice teachers. This document analysis



occurred prior to interviews and provided the research team an opportunity to analyze school and district documents using a set of a priori codes developed from a review of the literature. This allowed the research team to learn more about the school district prior to interviewing novice teachers, and school leaders. These codes included such items as leadership, job satisfaction, school culture, empowerment, belonging, feedback, supervision, or humility. The research team then began the data analysis process and identification of themes, document inferences, and findings in August 2015 (see study timeline in Appendix A).

The process of document analysis proceeded as follows. First, as each document was identified, we examined it using a set of a priori codes developed from the literature. For example, does the document demonstrate the importance of valuing people or humility on the part of school leaders? As Maxwell (2009) suggests, codes “may be derived from existing theory, inductively generated during the research, or drawn from the categories of the people studied” (Maxwell, 2009, p. 237). Then, after the first document was analyzed and coded, a second document was reviewed for a similar set of codes or new ones. As additional documents were found and analyzed, we consistently compared codes found in each individual document in order to ultimately generate a common set of themes that sliced across the data. This step-by-step, real time approach to data analysis is consistent with Merriam’s (2009) recommendation that data analysis should be “conducted along with (not after) data collection” (p. 269). These codes were shared with all researchers and all research data was stored using the Dedoose software program.

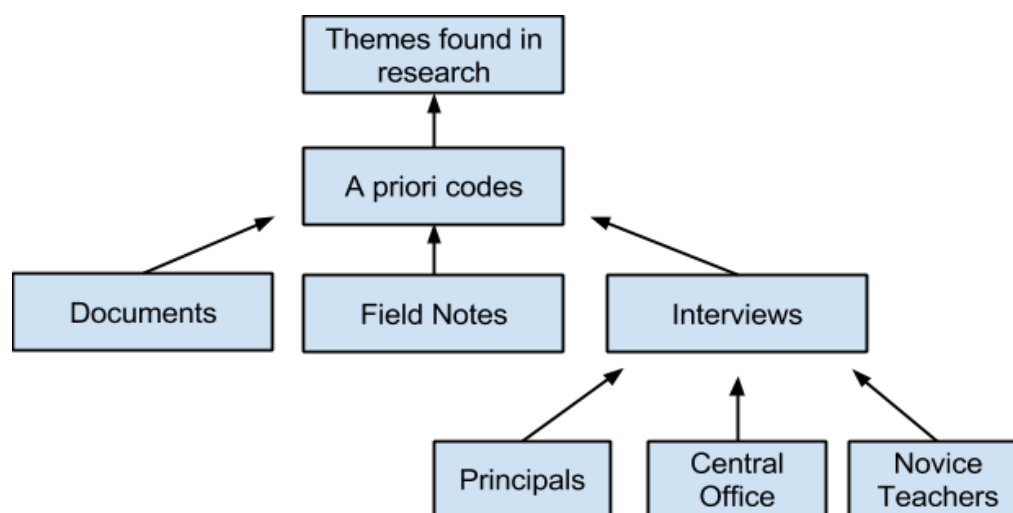
After analyzing documents and developing a common set of codes, the team then conducted interviews with novice teachers, school, and district leaders. We analyzed interviews using the same set of a set of a priori codes used for document analysis. After interviewing the

first novice teacher, one member of the research team analyzed and coded the interview. Then, another member of the research team went through the same document and independently coded it. The two members of the research team then compared their analysis and any discrepancies were referred to a third team member for resolution. This process contributed to inter-rater agreement, but also opened the possibility of a new code that would be agreed upon by all three members of the research team. Then, the transcript of another interview with a different novice teacher was also-analyzed in the same way for similar codes or new ones. As additional interviews with novice teachers, mentor teachers, and school/district leaders occurred, the team consistently compared codes found in each interview to generate a common set of themes and to generate new codes that emerged from the data.

After analyzing documents and interviews, we analyzed field notes developed during the process of reviewing documents and interviewing novice teachers and school and district leadership at their schools. The field notes served as a record of ideas and feelings generated during the process of visiting a school to conduct interviews or during the process of document review. The field notes included interactions between novice teachers, school, and district leadership as well as the physical environment of classrooms, offices, and buildings. These notes were analyzed and coded in the same way as the documents and interviews. Therefore, one member of the research team analyzed the first field note using a priori codes gathered from the literature. Then, another member of the research team also went through the same set of field notes and independently coded it. The two members of the research team then compared their analysis and discrepancies were referred to a third team member for resolution. After analyzing the first field note, the research team analyzed the second field note for similar codes and new

ones. As more field notes were analyzed, we continually compared codes found in the separate field notes with the goal of producing a common set of themes.

Additionally, in an effort to triangulate data, themes that emerged from documents, interviews, and field notes were compared. Thus, data analysis involved a comparison of themes found between novice teachers and school leaders as well as themes found between documents, interviews, and field notes. By analyzing data in this fashion, the team was able to develop a cohesive and insightful understanding about how leadership influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers (see Figure 3).



*Figure 3.* Diagram of data analysis. This figure illustrates the sources and process of data analysis.

Another technique used for the analysis of documents, interviews, and field notes was the creation of visual displays to help organize the data and make clear connections. Maxwell describes the use of visual displays as a tool to help “facilitate thinking about relationships in data and make ideas and analyses visible and retrievable” (Maxwell, 2009, p. 239). This approach to data analysis made assumptions more evident by requiring the research team to outwardly organize its thoughts and connections. The process of continuous conversation about

the data and the group coding process also reduced the chances of unforeseen bias in the conclusions drawn from the research.

Finally, the research team analyzed data by asking team members to play the role of contrarian. Rudestam and Newton (2007) describe this method as one where colleagues ask “tough questions about ... data analysis and data interpretation to keep the researcher honest” (p. 115). An important advantage of being part of a research team is the opportunity for some members to play the role of contrarian in order to challenge codes, themes, and conclusions developed from documents and interviews. While the team approach to coding data and developing themes should assist in developing valid ideas, asking members to explicitly play the role of contrarian can be an important way to avoid groupthink and insure the development of logical and defensible conclusions.

### **Authenticity and Trustworthiness of the Data**

The authenticity and trustworthiness of data collected for this study were maximized through the process of maintaining an audit trail. Rudestam and Newton (2007) describe an audit trail as “keeping a meticulous record of the process of the study so that others can recapture steps and reach the same conclusion” (p. 114). The audit included not just a list of objective steps but also encompassed “the ongoing inner thoughts, hunches, and reactions of the [team]” (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 114). In doing so, the audit trail provided a strong level of transparency and credibility to the study.

### **Individual Biases**

In an effort to minimize potential research biases, we preemptively disclosed any associations with the selected school district or individuals who were part of the sample prior to research in the district. The members of the research team also disclosed their current roles and

school district affiliation to participants in the study. Additionally, we aimed to minimize bias by interviewing participants in pairs, coding interviews as a team, and maintaining an audit trail. The research team is composed of six current educational administrators serving in both public and private schools located in New England. The group has a range of different educational experiences ranging from work teaching in elementary, middle, and high school to serving as assistant principals, principals, and assistant superintendents in their various schools and districts. The team is evenly divided between three men and three women.

### **Ethical Treatment of Participants**

In line with the recommendations of the National Institute of Health, the relationship between researchers and participants in the study were based on “honesty, trust, and respect” (National Institute of Health, 2014). To this end, the three core principles of the Belmont Report, respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, produced by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, served as the ethical grounding of this study (National Institute of Health, 2014).

Research participants were respected during the course of the study. They were required to provide informed consent prior to participation and at no point in time was an individual allowed to participate or continue to be a part of the study if we believed they did not fully understand all of the information communicated to them during the process of informed consent. Participation was on a volunteer basis and contributors did not receive compensation for their contribution. At any point during the interview process, participants were able to withdraw from being a part of the study and were informed of this right prior to the interview. Additionally, we made every effort to explain the information shared during informed consent in a way that was easy to comprehend for all participants.

The well being of the research participants remained at the forefront of the study. We aimed to maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms to individuals who participated in the study (National Institute of Health, 2014). While the potential harms appeared to be minor, the team strived to organize and conduct the study in a way to minimize possible economic, social, legal or psychological harm to participants. In particular, the research team was attentive to the circumstances that could place a novice teacher at risk of losing his job or being ostracized by the school community. As relatively new members of the school district, novice teachers have reduced job security as compared to their veteran colleagues. Therefore, the research team strived to be attuned to these unique circumstances surrounding the experience of novice teachers and worked toward conducting the study and presenting the data to district leaders in a way that protected them from potential repercussions.

Finally, in line with recommendations of the Belmont Report, justice was a third core ethical guiding principle of the study. No individual who was a novice teacher, principal or central office administrator was excluded from participation in this study. In particular, no ethnic or religious minorities were excluded. The process of selecting research participants was open and transparent with a direct invitation emailed to all novice teachers employed in the school district.

Given the confidential and personal nature of gathered information, study data were protected. One method employed to strengthen the privacy of the study was to keep the identity of individuals and their schools anonymous. Each participant and school was labeled with a pseudonym and any connection between the pseudonym and identity of the individual or school was stored in a secure file. This protected participants from possible economic or social harm should anyone be dissatisfied with statements included in the study or its overall findings.

Technology, including the online software program Dedoose, was used to assist in the coding, storing, organization, management, and analysis of the data during the study. Interview transcripts, observation field notes, and artifacts were safely examined and stored using software and Boston College-provided safe space. Predetermined pseudonyms were also developed.

Each research team member utilized these methods in similar ways in their individual study. The following chapter features the individual research questions, a literature review related to those questions, and any methods that were unique to the individual study. Additionally, the findings and discussion sections of the individual study are included.

### Chapter 3<sup>3</sup>

#### **Individual Study: How Central Office Leaders Support Novice Teachers**

Although school level leadership is important to novice teachers, district leadership is as well. Novice teachers face numerous challenges; therefore, it is critical to understand the role central office leadership plays in the job satisfaction of novice teachers. For the purposes of this individual study, central office is defined as encompassing the roles of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, and director of special services. The high rate of novice teacher attrition is a considerable problem facing educational leaders (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Teachers frequently leave the profession as a result of job dissatisfaction and desire for a better career (Ingersoll, 2001). This combination accounts for 42% of departures from the teaching profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The main contributors to teacher dissatisfaction are “low salaries, lack of support from the school administration, student discipline problems, and lack of teacher influence over school-wide and classroom decision-making” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 522).

Bick-Har Lam and Yan (2011) define job satisfaction as, “derived from factors related to job nature, that is, what employees actually do...the job is perceived as providing positive satisfaction if it has characteristics that lead to the satisfaction of higher-order human needs, such as personal growth and recognition” (p. 336). For the purpose of this study, job satisfaction is defined as a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job and job experience” (Hulpia et al., 2009 p.6).

Despite its importance, it is not well known how leaders at the building and district levels influence novice teachers’ satisfaction about their jobs. Novice teachers face numerous challenges; therefore, it is critical to understand the role of central office leadership in the job

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<sup>3</sup> This chapter was individually written by Kori Alice Becht



satisfaction of novice teachers. Examining which factors most positively impact novice teachers' satisfaction would allow building and district leaders to support those practices in the district. In addition, it is important for leaders to understand how their actions affect novice teachers.

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory of job satisfaction and Dinham & Scott's research (1997, 2000) provide the theoretical framework for this study. Both studies describe the factors associated with job satisfaction. Dinham & Scott (1997, 2000) posit that school-based factors, such as school leadership, climate, decision-making, school reputation, and school infrastructure contribute to job satisfaction. As central office attempts to support schools, the school-based factors, which contribute to job satisfaction, are critical components to the work of central office.

### **Problem Purpose and Research Questions**

Taking into account the various factors that contribute to job satisfaction, this research focuses on the role district leaders play in supporting positive job satisfaction of novice teachers. While school level leadership is important to novice teachers, district leadership is considered just as impactful (Honig, 2008, Rorrer et al., 2008). Even though leaders at the district level are physically removed from teachers—unlike leaders in their school buildings with whom teachers regularly interact—district leaders do have an impact on teacher job satisfaction.

Novice teachers face numerous challenges such as adverse school working conditions, lack of autonomy, and little control over school policy (Stockard & Lehman, 2004). According to Shann (1998), "Teacher job satisfaction has been shown to be a predictor of teacher retention, a determinant of teacher commitment, and in turn, a contributor to school effectiveness" (p. 67). In order to keep teachers in the profession, it is critical that they feel satisfied with their work. Either directly or indirectly, district leadership may contribute to novice teachers' satisfaction

with their jobs during the first few years of practice. Given the importance of teachers' overall job satisfaction, it is important to identify central office administration practices that contribute to the unique elements of novice teachers' job satisfaction. By improving novice teachers' job satisfaction, leaders may increase overall job satisfaction, retention, and upward mobility in the profession.

The existing literature indicates central offices should serve as learning organizations or “communities of practice” (Honig, 2008, p. 628). Central offices traditionally have focused on “local operations, such as school buses, facilities, purchasing, and the processing of school teachers and administrators through local civic systems” (p. 638). However, in recent decades, many initiatives have shifted central office focus to the support of teaching and learning for all students. While there is a growing body of literature examining the central office's shifting role in instructional change (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003), research has not fully uncovered the central office's impact on novice teachers—particularly their job satisfaction.

The purpose of this research study was to explore how central office leaders attempt to impact novice teachers' job satisfaction. The research was guided by two research questions:

1. What is the perception of central office leaders in their role in supporting novice teachers' job satisfaction?
2. What is the perception of novice teachers regarding central office leaders' impact on job satisfaction?

The central office sits at the top of an educational organization, often setting the district's mission and vision and establishing district priorities. Through district priorities, leadership must examine the many aspects of district leadership and their effect on novice teachers' job

satisfaction, including the policies they implement, mentoring and induction programs, professional development, and working with building level leaders.

As the central office moves from a bureaucratic, top-down hierarchy to a more collaborative learning organization, understanding its impact on the novice teacher, as well as the district's role in supporting building level leadership, is important for the organization to provide the greatest levels of support to principals and novice teachers.

Communities of practice assist learners by creating a shorter distance between their current practice and their deeper engagement in a particular activity (Vygotsky, 1978). Lave and Wenger (1991) define a community of practice as “participation in an activity system about which participants share understanding concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for communities (p.98). Honig (2008) posits: “ these supports include assistance relationships that seem particularly relevant to the demands of central office administrators to work in partnership with schools” (p. 632). Examining the influence of central office on the schools may lead to greater insights into communities of practices and the various ways central office creates a learning organization.

Existing research has shown the various ways in which leadership may influence novice teachers. This study contributes to the existing body of literature by looking at the perceptions of central office leaders about the job satisfaction of novice teachers in their district.

According to Dinham and Scott's (1997, 2000) third factor, the school-based factors of school leadership, climate, decision-making, school reputation, and school infrastructure play a role in teacher satisfaction. These school-based factors include elements influenced by central offices. Grounded in building- and district-leadership influences examined, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theoretical framework provides the conceptual lens for this study (Sergiovanni,

1967). Without knowledge of the specific factors grounded in theory, central office may focus on the wrong levers thus potentially creating dissatisfaction.

The following literature review describes how this theoretical framework is used to examine the direct and indirect ways central office leaders may affect novice teachers' job satisfaction.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory of job satisfaction posits that satisfying factors are job-intrinsic and internally produced. Dinham and Scott (2000) identify a "third factor" that may impact a teacher's satisfaction or dissatisfaction comprised of largely school-based factors. Falling between the universally perceived intrinsic rewards of teaching such as self-growth and pupil achievement (most satisfying), and the universal extrinsic hindrances to teacher satisfaction and effectiveness such as educational change, the status of teachers and increased administrative workloads (most dissatisfying), are school-based factors such as school leadership, climate and decision-making, school reputation, and school infrastructure. It is among these factors where most variation occurs from school to school and thus, the greatest potential for change within schools. Central office impact on school-based factors such as school leadership, decision-making, and school infrastructure may impact novice teachers' job satisfaction.

### **Central Office**

A school district's success depends in part on how the central office operates (Honig, 2008, 2009; Honig et al., 2010; Honig & Rainey, 2012; Anderson, Mascall, Stiegelbauer, & Park, 2012; Corbett & Wilson, 2006; Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2008). District effectiveness must be thoroughly examined in order to create conditions conducive to supporting and leading school-wide efforts (Anderson et al., 2012; Bidwell, 2001; Corbett & Wilson, 2006; Johnson &

Chrispeels, 2010, Honig, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008). Such efforts can provide greater levels of support to schools and novice teachers. However, the method and strategy of central office reform advocated vary greatly depending on the perspective of the researcher. This understanding is necessary if central office is to make the most meaningful impact on teaching and learning. Without the connection to teaching and learning, central office may become disassociated from the work of schools leading to frustration and lack of support from the schools and staff.

Several prominent research studies have focused on examining the principal's role in instructional leadership (Honig, 2008; Louis, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008). Similarly, numerous research studies have examined the role of the superintendent and his or her ability to affect teaching and learning (Honig, 2008; Louis, 2008; Rorrer et al., 2008). However, little research has been conducted on the relationship between central office responsibilities and the job satisfaction of novice teachers.

Louis (2008) states, "for district leaders and central office to become potent actors in school improvement, they must transcend the myth of strategic, top-down planning and embrace the complexity of becoming a learner" (p. 682). Often, the work of the central office appears to be disconnected from the work of building administrators and teachers. The central office is affected by external factors such as the priorities and needs of school board members—whose purview is the operation of the entire school district. In contrast, building-level administrators are internally focused. The building-level leaders' focus is ensuring the safety and welfare of all students and staff, promoting and maintaining high expectations for student academic achievement, and ensuring the effective day-to-day operation of the building (Larson, 2007). A tighter alignment must occur between schools and central office to ensure all parts of the system

are working together. If a school and district become unaligned, then efforts made at the highest level may not translate to the next level and finally to novice teachers.

Rorrer et al. (2008) articulate four major roles districts should play to better meet the needs of school personnel. These roles include “providing instructional leadership, reorienting the organization, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus” (p. 307). These roles take into account aspects of district leadership, management, values, and norms of operations and governance. Rorrer et al. state, “With the mounting interest in using effective schools research, the older model of a school chief knowledgeable about both curriculum and instruction and visible in the schools beyond the symbolic tour is reasserting itself” (p. 314).

### **Differentiation**

Differentiation is built on the foundation that not all schools are the same or share identical needs. When central office takes the one-size-fits-all approach, schools can be left behind and receive little to no support tailored to their needs. This is an important element relative to central office’s impact on teaching and learning specifically as it relates to the differentiation provided to supporting both novice teachers and building principals.

In contrast, Anderson et al. (2012) introduce the notion of central office differentiation identifying five actions or methods central office can employ to provide varying responses to an individual schools or group of schools: phased intervention, targeted intervention, responsive differentiation, categorical differentiation, and micro-political differentiation.

***Phased Intervention.*** Phased intervention is present when the central office engages in district-wide initiatives focused on a few schools or grade levels. Phased intervention occurs at the beginning of an initiative with the intent to replicate the initiative within the entire school district. In this structure, the central office begins with a small subset of schools rather than a

sweeping district-wide reform. Necessary shifts working within a small framework can occur prior to moving to a wide scale reform. The ultimate goal is to create school-wide capacity.

***Targeted Intervention.*** In the second form of differentiation support is targeted to a specific school. In this component of differentiation, the intervention is based on a need rather than a want or demand. Targeted Intervention addresses a direct issue or concern before the implementation. For example, a newly approved reading program adopted at one particular school might require targeted intervention from central office to ensure the necessary training and resources are provided to staff. In contrast, when central office does not provide this level of differentiation it may result in varying levels of program implementation and lack of teacher support.

***Responsive Differentiation.*** Responsive Differentiation aims to support schools on an individual basis relative to school plans and performance concerns. Central office responds to the performance concern after an initiative is established and the implementation is under way. If a school is struggling around improvement plans, central office provides the guidance and support to assist the development of the plan. If the school improvement plan is an initiative that is already underway but not working, central office responds by intervening.

The temporal factor is the fundamental difference between targeted intervention and responsive differentiation. Targeted differentiation is a direct response to a need prior to initiative implementation whereas responsive differentiation is a direct response to a need after the initiative has begun.

***Categorical Differentiation.*** Categorical Differentiation reflects central office support focused on types of students served and programs offered. Under this form of differentiation, resources and support are targeted based on specific populations. Unlike targeted intervention

focused on specific schools, categorical differentiation targets specific populations or programs. For example, a program serving English Language Learners may be ineffective, and it then becomes the central office's responsibility to provide categorical differentiation and address the gaps in the program.

***Micro-Political.*** Lastly, in Micro-Political Differentiation district personnel develop relationships with particular schools based on competing visions for improvement. Competing visions for improvement suggest that central office may differ in their view on student achievement from that of the schools. With competing views and visions between schools and district office, personnel are deployed to specific schools to build relationships. Once the relationship is established, both parties discuss and align their vision to better meet the needs of both the school and the district. By establishing a strong relationship both central office administrators and schools establish open lines of communication and a joint vision where neither side views they won. Engaging in this work jointly between central office and the schools may lead to a greater level of cohesiveness in the district which perhaps impacts the job satisfaction of novice teachers. This may also lead to higher levels of coherence throughout the district. Therefore, micro-political differentiation is essential to supporting the school-based factors leading to increased job satisfaction.

Building upon Dinham and Scott's (1997, 2000) school-based factors, responding differently to an individual school or schools is vital. In order for central office leaders to effectively impact school-based factors such as school leadership and infrastructure, which may lead to novice teachers' job satisfaction, differentiation is a key element.

Johnson and Chrispeels (2010) suggest that when a district shifts from a loosely coupled, de-centralized system to one that adopts a series of command and control administrative



policies—such as a district-wide curriculum, pacing guides, calendars, benchmark assessments, and data-management systems—a strong structural linkage is created. Similarly, Corbett and Wilson states,

The central office core concern is whether good instructional information is accessible and used in day-to-day school life. The central office's instructional role is to remove this luck factor from the instructional program, i.e., to ensure that idiosyncratic variations in programs, people and policies do not result in systematic differences in the quality of education for children. (Corbett & Wilson, 2006, p. 46)

Ensuring that quality instructional information occurs daily in schools, it is important that central office administrators support novice teachers as they are new to the profession and may not have developed the level of knowledge in pedagogy and instructional practices as their veteran peers. It is the central office's role to guarantee continuity in students' experiences throughout school. Often novice teachers are placed in classrooms with the least amount of support leading to dissatisfaction. Many novice teachers are given more challenging work assignments than their veteran colleagues (Clotfelter et al., 2005; Johnson, 2004). Engaging in this work and removing the "luck factor" may create higher levels of novice teachers' job satisfaction. Without a clear framework and structure from central office focused on instructional information, novice teachers may struggle with pedagogy, curriculum materials, and implementing policy.

Conversely, if the central office focuses only on pedagogy, curriculum materials and developing policy with a top-down approach, novice teachers' job satisfaction may be negatively impacted. Herzberg et al. (1959) note that the presence of hygiene factors can cause dissatisfaction with work. Working conditions and policies that dictate how the work should be done may increase novice teachers' dissatisfaction. Therefore, if the central office leads using a

top-down style, it may cause increased levels of dissatisfaction. However, when novice teachers provide input into the daily work, job satisfaction may increase. As novice teachers enter the profession, they often believe they have high levels of autonomy within their classroom. When this is removed, a greater impact on their satisfaction may occur compared to veteran peers. Veteran teachers may have more autonomy than novice teachers because of status and successful performance. Nonetheless, a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach ignores the impact on teaching and learning, which may cause both veteran and novice teachers' dissatisfaction.

### **Learning Organization**

To address the gaps in the central office's function, educational scholars recommend that school districts and their central offices operate as learning organizations or learning systems (Honig, 2008). A learning organization places the central office "in the engagement of teaching and learning improvement efforts" (Honig, 2008, p. 629). Some researchers have expressed that when the central office functions as a learning organization, district leadership report they have learned from experience. The learned experience is grounded in the feedback provided from schools relative to the most effective ways central office supports the schools. However, such studies are based on "self-reports of whether they believe they have learned," which raises concerns of the validity of these findings. Nonetheless, central offices that act as learning organizations focused on teaching and improvement have emerged in these studies (Gallucci, 2008; Honig, 2008). This model is aimed at increasing the working relationship and cohesion between central office and schools.

Within the learning organization, communities of practice that support learners "shorten the distance between their current practice and their deeper engagement in a particular activity" (p. 632). This supports the idea of assistance relationships between central offices and schools.

Assistance relationships may play a role in supporting building-level leaders who, in turn, support novice teachers.

Effective novice teachers are integral to an effective school system and it is essential to retain them; thereby ensuring good teachers remain in the classroom. Eschewing the age-old stereotypes of the traditional central office is a critical element to system-wide transformation. The central office must define a new reality by redefining the roles of central office leaders as they shift from telling to teaching that underscores the shift from the top-down central office to the learning organization (Honig & Rainey, 2012). In order for districts to understand the direct and indirect ways in which the central office contributes to novice teachers' job satisfaction, the central office must shift from simply focusing on compliance to focusing on continuous improvement. This shift is essential for central office to become a system that supports novice teachers' job satisfaction (Honig, 2008, 2009; Honig et al., 2010). By focusing on only compliance, the factors that affect job satisfaction are potentially ignored.

**Direct Impact.** Given the changing roles of central office, it is important to examine the existing literature that depicts how the central office directly affects or impacts the novice teacher.

**Professional development.** Effective professional development is based upon theories of curriculum, effective teaching, and assessment (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). Teachers must be afforded quality professional development to improve their practice, and the central office plays a key role in developing and aligning such professional development (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Furthermore, Mezirow (2000) emphasizes that the learner's reflective discourse must occur in an environment of acceptance and trust. Therefore, the educational leader has a responsibility to create conditions and provide tools for novice

teachers to take ownership of their learning. When creating the professional development curriculum, the district must take into account the learning of both novice and veteran teachers.

Johnson and Chrispeels (2010) detail the links between central office and schools, using the term *linkage* as an organizational frame. Resource linkage is defined as “encompassing material, technological, and human capital brought to the system to enhance reform” (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010, p. 46). Resource linkages in professional development promote teacher knowledge in content and pedagogy. Further, professional learning through developing teams, enhancing content knowledge, using data effectively, and focusing on instructional strategies all promote a positive linkage to effective use of resources. The effective use of resources includes the direct connection between resources and the way those resources support novice teachers.

According to Gallucci (2008), learning environments for teachers, “need to offer powerful images of teaching and learning, engage teachers as active learners, challenge teachers intellectually, reinforce learning over time, and ensure that learning is relevant to the problems teachers face” (p. 544). Therefore, professional learning and development may increase the job satisfaction of the novice teacher (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010). When central office directs resources to professional development in service of continuous adult learning through professional development, novice teachers’ job satisfaction may increase. By engaging in this work, the barriers become removed to novice teachers’ participation in Professional Learning Communities and professional development.

***Mentoring and induction.*** Early-career teachers who have a low sense of self-concept are more likely to leave the profession within their first few years (Elliot, Isaacs, & Chugani, 2010). Central office support for novice teachers is essential to the overall success and retention of novice teachers. Central office must discover the factors that contribute to new teachers’ low

self-confidence and in turn create structures and programs designed to improve their confidence, which may lead to greater job satisfaction.

Similarly, effective mentoring positively impacts novice teachers' ability to network and receive valuable feedback. Sergiovanni's (1967) two-factor theory states that achievement and recognition are the most critical factors influencing teacher satisfaction (Sergiovanni, 1967). Mentoring helps novice teachers develop resilience, persistence, and reflection (Huisman, Singer, & Catapano, 2010; Johnson et al., 2012; Liu & Ramsey, 2008; Rodriguez, 2007; Scherff, 2008; Yee, 1990)

Novice teachers report a sense of satisfaction with past teaching success (known as mastery experience), which is the most influential factor on teacher self-concept (Yost, 2006). "Understanding the connection between self-concept beliefs and teacher preparation/mentoring may provide information to enhance retention rates or retain quality teachers in schools" (Elliot et al., 2010, p. 135). Mentoring and induction programs are most often an essential function of the central office and therefore, offer a direct connection between the central office and the novice teacher.

**Indirect.** Indirect influences, such as policy and building level supports, may also affect the novice teacher in various ways. Indirect influences do not directly link from central office to the novice teacher but rather through other channels before reaching the novice teacher.

**Policy.** As a prerequisite to implementing school practices that sustain high achievement for all students while promoting excellent teaching, the central office leadership should implement system-wide policies that create the conditions for effective school-based leadership. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding how central office policies directly influence the novice teacher.

Regarding central office policies, Schmoker (2006) observes:

If we want to accelerate major improvements beyond individual schools, then districts must firmly establish new practices, policies, and job descriptions. Like it or not, organizations are either supported or constrained by those who exercise authority at the next highest level. (p. 151)

An examination of policies affecting school districts shows that schools are engulfed in accountability issues due to state and federal mandates (Honig & Rainey, 2012). As a result, increased internal and external performance pressure has occurred. School districts are left on their own to muddle through federal compliance regulations and determine the most effective methods for improving (Honig, 2008). Policymakers now recognize that individual schools should not be held solely accountable for student performance since each individual school is part of a system. Therefore, the system, not individual schools, should create accountability measures. Understanding the relationship between schools and their district is a key factor in overall educational improvements (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010). Because schools are nested in districts, improvement efforts must take this crucial relationship into account. A central office operating on their own without relationships with schools creates a separation between schools and central office. As a result, accountability measures are often targeted toward one or a group of schools. It is the role of central office to provide the framework for the system in which the system is held accountable.

***Building-level support.*** While it is widely understood that principals play a pivotal role in the improvement of teaching and learning, many districts have given little attention to creating the necessary conditions for principal success. Honig and Rainey (2012) suggest that central office staff play a large role, viewing them as supporting principals. Viewing the district's

leadership through a teaching lens provides support to building administrators. If supporting principals is a primary responsibility of the central office staff, then the overall role of the central office will begin a transformational shift. Understanding how adults learn allows the central office to provide meaningful professional development.

The next section addresses this study's research design and methods. The study's design and methodology are grounded in literature regarding central office leadership and novice teachers' job satisfaction.

### **Research Design and Method**

This individual study explored how central office leaders impact novice teachers' job satisfaction. A single case study was conducted involving novice teachers, along with building- and district-level leaders.

#### **Study Design**

The larger study involved a qualitative case study design to answer the primary research questions: How do school and district leaders perceive their role in the development of novice teacher job satisfaction? In what way(s), if any, do novice teachers attribute job satisfaction to school and district leadership? ). Merriam (2009) defines a case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). In this case study, we explored and analyzed a bounded system.

The case study method is the best approach for this study, as it provides insight into how school and district leadership influence novice teachers' job satisfaction. Developing a thick description, defined by Merriam (2009), is "a term from anthropology [which] means the complete, literal description of the phenomenon under study" (p. 43), which provided in-depth

insight into the factors that affect novice teachers' job satisfaction as well as the role central office plays in influencing those factors.

### **Data Collection**

According to Yin (2009), "the goal of the screening procedure is to be sure that you identify the final cases properly prior to formal data collection" (p. 91). After identifying the site by utilizing the above criteria, data collection occurred from August to December 2015. The data collection included interview transcripts, document review and field notes.

**Interviews.** Two members of the research team conducted semi-structured interviews in person. Participants interviewed included the superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, special services director, principals, and novice teachers. Teams of two, a male and female researcher, jointly interviewed participants. Novice teachers in their first year in the district but with previous teaching experience, second and third year teachers were also selected for interviews. All teacher participants held Massachusetts certification obtained from a traditional, teacher preparation, licensure program.

The interview questions aimed to produce "concrete," "holistic," and "lifelike" (Merriam, 2009, p. 44) information that is best gathered through case study research. The interview questions strived to examine the perception of both central office's role in supporting the job satisfaction of novice teachers and novice teachers' perceptions.

Specifically I asked novice teachers the following questions: "Can you discuss how district leaders influence your job satisfaction? Can you give some specific examples? Describe your mentoring and induction experiences. In what ways do central office practices affect you as a novice educator?" Further, I asked both district and school level leadership the following



questions: “What elements of district leadership do you believe influence the job satisfaction of your novice teachers and what district supports are provided to novice teachers?”

Data came from twenty-two interviews, three documents, and field notes. Eleven novice teachers were interviewed. In addition, eleven administrators were interviewed; four central office administrators and seven building-level administrators. In total, nine were male and thirteen female. Three out of the four central office participants were male. Because the research occurred from August to November, novice teachers in their first year were excluded because they did not have enough teaching experience to respond to the interview questions. The goal of selecting a target of twenty-two participants is, as Miles and Humberman (1994) express, to “set boundaries; to define aspects of your case that you can study within the limits of your time and means” (p. 27).

Pre-determined and open-ended questions were used to elicit specific information from each respondent. The interview protocol included the six aspects of leadership directly linked to novice teachers’ job satisfaction. Moreover, interviews were utilized to capture problems in the interview protocol, which led to question refinement.

**Document Review.** According to Creswell (2008), analyzing documents alongside interviews can serve as a useful source of data for qualitative studies. Thus, to serve this purpose as well as assist with the triangulation of the data, the following documents were reviewed: new teacher induction meeting objectives and agenda, the district improvement plan, and the new teacher mentoring workshop agenda. The documents were reviewed prior to conducting the interviews. This allowed the research team to become familiar with the school district and the important information included in these documents.

## **Data Analysis**

The interviews were uploaded and transcribed using the software program Dedoose. Coding of data was utilized to help triangulate the findings. First, data were coded by description, code, and sub-code. The codes allowed the researcher to distinguish evidence regarding how central office administrators' work with novice teachers as well as how novice teachers perceive the central office. Second, themes that emerged from document review, interviews, and field notes were compared.

## **Glossary**

- Novice Teacher: Teachers who are in their second and third year in the district of study and working in the field of education for five years or fewer and have completed accredited teacher licensure program, and hold an Initial License in the state of Massachusetts.
- Job Satisfaction: "Pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experience" (Hulpia et al., 2009, p. 6).
- Central Office: Superintendent, Acting Assistant Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and Director of Special Services

## **Findings**

Research question one: "What is the perception of central office leaders in their role in supporting novice teachers' job satisfaction?" aimed to directly connect central office responses to their perceptions of their role in supporting novice teachers' job satisfaction. The second research question: "What is the perception of novice teachers regarding central office leaders' impact on job satisfaction?" was also directly related to novice teachers' perceptions of central office's impact on their job satisfaction.

The codes *mentoring, induction, supporting novice teachers, professional development, policy, and district supports* addressed these questions. Both research questions were related to novice teachers' job satisfaction therefore the codes *recognition of the work and autonomy with instructional decisions* were also used.

One key theme emerged from the data collected from central office administrators: their perceptions that the structure of the mentoring and induction programs resulted in a positive impact on novice teachers.

The Columbia School Districts offers both mentoring and induction programs. Findings from the document review indicate the first session of the new teacher orientation program occurred in the month of August. According to this session's agenda, key personnel and their roles were introduced as well as the dates relative to the induction program beginning in September and ending in June totaling five meetings. Further, the educator evaluation criteria were discussed as well.

The mentoring program, as outlined in the New Teacher Orientation agenda, described the principal as responsible for assigning mentors and mentees. The document did not specify the structure of the mentoring program or the individual or group of individuals responsible for the facilitation of the program.

### **Central Office Perceptions**

One theme that emerged from the interviews was the administrators' perceptions that the mentoring and induction programs had a positive impact on novice teachers. With remarkable consistency, all central office leaders reported that the mentoring and induction programs were the primary ways that central office supports novice teachers. Although the superintendent is responsible for the new teacher induction program, all four administrators reported positive

results. As one central office administrator described the work, “The greatest support that we offer is the new teacher induction program, and then the assigning of a mentor. Those are the two primary functions.” Another central office administrators similarly shared that:

We certainly do try and help them out in any way. In fact, we encourage them to contact us if they need anything. We do try as part of the teacher orientation. We provide them with a list of anybody we feel they need access to.

The New Teacher Induction document, distributed to novice teachers, provided articulated objectives outlining the purpose and structure of the induction meetings. Examination of high priority teaching strategies, reading relevant literature, and defining key personal take-aways were the three main purposes as outlined in the induction document.

While all central office leaders in the study reported positive results regarding mentoring and the induction program, three out of the four perceived high job satisfaction on behalf of novice teachers. As one central office administrator noted:

Scale of 1 to 10. They're probably pretty up there. I'd say they're ... I'll say very satisfied. And I base that not anecdotally but on retention. We don't have too many teachers leave out of what we deem unhappiness but rather change in life circumstances. So, now I guess I'm of the impression that if you stay, you must like what you do.

There is overwhelming evidence corroborating the notion that central office administrators view the mentoring and induction program as the primary support provided to novice teachers. Four out of the four central office leaders interviewed pointed to the mentoring and induction programs as the greatest support offered to novice teachers. References to professional development and policy support from Central office were almost absent from interview data. Although the interview protocol asked research participants to discuss supports provided

by central office to novice teachers, only one novice teacher briefly discussed Professional Learning Communities and grade level professional development. The lack of responses around professional development and policy support in the data prohibit discussion of additional findings regarding central office supports.

### **Novice Teachers' Perceptions**

The second research question addressed the perception of novice teachers regarding central office leaders' impact on their job satisfaction. Three themes emerged around mentoring, induction, and organizational clarity. While central office administrators identified mentoring and induction as a combined district support, novice teachers separated the two functions and responded differently to each. Although central office reported strong results regarding both mentoring and induction and spoke about the two interchangeably, novice teachers reported support from mentoring, but results were mixed regarding the induction program.

*Perceptions of the Mentoring Program.* There are qualitative differences between the mentoring program and the induction program. The mentoring program occurs at the building level with supports from one assigned teacher to a mentee. The mentoring program occurs throughout the school year. Conversely, the induction program is organized and run by the superintendent with bi-monthly meetings occurring with all new teachers in the district. Novice teachers interviewed seemed confused about mentoring and the induction program, often mixing up the two.

Eight out of the eleven novice teachers shared positive responses regarding the mentoring program. As one novice teacher discussed the experience with new novice teachers:

We had meetings once a month for the new teachers in the district. We all met and did different professional development activities and got to know each other. We could learn

on each other as new teachers in the district. That was really helpful to have that. He always was walking through; if there's anything you need, let us know. I really want feedback. He was always asking for feedback, so it made me feel really comfortable to express that if I needed help with something or support.

The participants responded favorably to the support they received from their mentors and felt they were provided a colleague they could turn to. In one novice teacher's words, "it was nice to have her to help me out. I knew I could go to her with any question." Many novice teachers discussed feedback given to them by their mentors as a strong component of their job satisfaction. One novice teacher described the interaction between herself and the mentor stating:

Because my mentor was one of the teachers that run the language department, so, she knew exactly what I was going through. She knew exactly how I had to teach the classes, how to help me, in which ways she could help me. The mentoring was useful.

Another teacher, provided an overarching endorsement indicating, "The mentoring was great."

Conversely, those respondents who did not find value in the mentoring program attributed it to the mismatch of being assigned a mentor with a dissimilar job function. One novice teacher expressed:

I had another third grade teacher as my mentor. The problem I had with it is that I had a mostly English language learner class last year, and this teacher was a mainstream teacher. If they knew I was an SEI teacher they should have had someone who is SEI mentoring me.

While an occasional poor match between mentor and mentee was the primary dissatisfaction about the program, the structure of the program was not identified as a weakness. Only two out of the eleven novices felt the mentoring program did not meet their needs as teachers.

However, when the match was appropriate and useful between the mentor and mentee, respondents expressed positive satisfaction.

*Perceptions of the Induction Program.* Novice teachers portrayed a different perspective regarding the usefulness of the induction program. Although novice teachers did not define the mentoring program, a few novice teachers described the induction program stating, “it was once every other month, and we just met with him and talked about issues in the district and different ways to approach them.” Another respondent outlined the induction program commenting, “They meet in the summer. The superintendent meets with all the new teachers in the summertime over a couple of days. They workshop, if you will, and that continues throughout the year.” While the majority of novice teachers were satisfied with the mentoring program, the opposite was found for the induction program. Seven out of the eleven novice teachers expressed displeasure with the program, specifically reporting the lack of application to classroom practice and disorganization of the meetings. As one teacher noted:

I am being very honest. I didn’t like the meetings. I didn’t think the meetings helped us. They would talk about different methodologies, they would talk about resources we could use but I didn’t see how it would affect my classroom.

New teachers were not particularly reflective about how new methodologies could be integrated into their practices. Many new teachers are still at the pre-reflective level and need to be told explicitly what and how to do something.

Another respondent commented:

We would all meet and it was all the new hires in the district, so we would meet at the high school, and we would have an agenda. We’d go through it. I felt that some of it was all over the place. There were topics that I could never implement in an elementary

classroom, and I made that known. I felt like a lot of it was there was cold calling, like they would call you on a topic that I had no idea about, and it was very awkward and I don't do well being put on the spot anyway, so I felt like that made me look like lesser of a person in front of them. We're all adults; we can raise our hands and contribute to a conversation. That's how I felt, but we were just called randomly, and that was very discouraging as well.

One novice teacher expressed displeasure over the expectations for new teachers and the amount of data collected for accountability. She stated:

They're annoying. It's awfully annoying what they expect of the new teachers and everything. With the district, all the data that he's really trying to collect and ... I can't really put it all on him. It is the district. They're asking for data, and they put it all on the teachers, and there's nothing really ... not so much being a new teacher. It's sort of trying to learn to be a good classroom teacher, but I'm too busy reporting data for him to put in his portfolio for him.

However, not all novice teachers expressed dissatisfaction over the induction program. Four novice teachers expressed moderate to mild appreciation for the induction program. One novice teacher indicated:

It was nice because we had these meetings all throughout the year. It's an induction series like every month or every other month. I see all those people again, and we are building off that. In that way, it's nice because you feel you are not alone in being new.

The findings did not reveal a consistent pattern of satisfaction or dissatisfaction about the induction program by school or elementary level compared to secondary level. The results were mixed across both elements. Being part of a learning community integrates the social and



emotional element as well as the accountability stressors of demonstrating results when new teachers are learning how to teach.

### **Perceptions About Organizational Clarity**

Two out of the four central office administrators discussed clear roles and organizational support provided by the district. As one central office administrators pointed out:

We give them a lot of training on My Learning Plan, which is also tied to Aesop, so we try to help them understand that if they're going to be out on a professional day in district or out of district, how the two connect together so that no one's questioning where they were, and that they entered everything correctly, so we try to connect them to the people or explain to them who can help them at central office to get these different things done so that nobody questions anything that they do. We try to define who has what role for them as best we can.

This training is tied to induction, as it is part of the system teachers must learn in order to participate in prescribed induction activities. The data gathered suggested mismatch between central office's perceptions about information they are providing and how novice teachers are receiving it. Six out of the eleven novice teachers critiqued central office's ability to provide clarity around information and their ability to understand "who to go to for what." As one novice teacher put it,

So many people do different things. Maybe if that had like a master list, or every new teacher coming in just has something they can refer to that, this person takes care of receipts, this person does this because...

Another novice teacher expressed:

Sometimes I've even asked my mentor and she'd be like, that's a good question, because things pop up. You run around and you send three emails before you find the right person. Like "oh sorry, I don't handle that. Send it over here." It wastes my time, too, because I have to send that stuff wherever. I think an organizational chart with brief descriptions of what they do would be good.

Although the new teacher orientation agenda articulated the responsibilities of both district and building level leaders, clarity emerged as an area of concern for novice teachers. As a novice teacher pointed out:

There's no one to really guide you. I talk all the time, like, "Are we doing this right?" We don't know. Who do we even talk to that knows this because a lot of other teachers that are veterans, they don't even have to do half the stuff that we're doing right now like all the paperwork and data.

On the basis of the evidence, it seems fair to suggest that some confusion remains with novice teachers and some veteran staff regarding where and how to access certain information. However, it is important to note that in this research study, those novice teachers in year three who expressed concern did not experience the new teacher training, as a newly appointed superintendent served in the interim for the 2014-2015 school year and was hired permanently this school year. Thus, some teachers interviewed were reporting results from the previous induction program. The data did not establish the extent to which the induction program might have changed from the previous superintendent.

### **Discussion**

In light of current scholarship, school and district leadership may have a strong impact on novice teachers' job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). One key finding in this study

suggests that central office perceived both mentoring and the induction program as important functions of central office leadership. Yet, this finding is not reflected in the perceptions of novice teachers. As a result, a mismatch occurred between central office's perception of what was working and novice teachers' perceptions of what was working. Novice teachers generally expressed negative feedback about the induction program, while central office administrators perceived the program as effective and beneficial. Honig (2007) states that, "school district central office administrators face unprecedented demands to shift their roles from regulating to supporting schools" (p. 3). As central office focuses on supporting schools, they must acknowledge teachers' perceptions and perspectives in order to provide meaningful support. Indicating and expressing support is not nearly enough without understanding the impact on staff from throughout the organization.

While the Columbia School District attempted to "support" novice teachers through the induction program, the impact is not evident in their job satisfaction. With little evidence of the connection and the influence on classroom practices, novice teachers expressed dissatisfaction and disconnect between the district office and classroom needs. The literature notes that school-based factors such as school leadership, climate and decision making, school reputation, and school infrastructure, yielded the greatest factors around job satisfaction; however, novice teachers in this study perceived that new teacher induction was being "done to them" instead of providing "meaningful information useful to the classroom" (Dinham & Scott, 1998).

The direct impact on classroom instruction provided by central office is a missing link. Whereas novice teachers' craved practical information transferrable to the classroom, it seemed central office approached new teacher induction from a "one-size-fits-all" method. Anderson et al. (2012) detail the many forms of central office differentiation, identifying five actions or

methods central office can employ to provide varying responses to an individual schools or group of schools: phased intervention, targeted intervention, responsive differentiation, categorical differentiation, and micro-political differentiation. Data from this study suggest that central office administrators designed and implemented a universal approach to the induction program. By providing a framework for differentiation, the district might be best served by developing actions around one or more of the five forms of differentiation to better meet the diverse needs of novice teachers. A targeted intervention approach may benefit the school district whereas the district targets the specific needs and backgrounds of novice teachers thus tailoring programs and supports offered to novice teachers.

One key implication from this research is the continued need for central office leaders to maintain more direct and explicit connection with novice teachers. Mezirow (2000) emphasizes that the learner's reflective discourse must occur in an environment of acceptance and trust. Therefore, educational leaders have a responsibility to create the conditions and provide tools for novice teachers to take ownership of their learning. The research suggests the induction program lacked a reflective discourse between central office and novice teachers, therefore resulting in a wide disparity in perceptions between central office and novice teachers.

Embedding and understanding adult learning would greatly impact the induction program and provide a differentiated approach as opposed to a one-size-fits-all approach. In fact, it was not clear from the data how many central office personnel were involved in the induction program. It appeared the only contact novice teachers maintained with central office was the induction program. Central office appeared removed from the day-to-day operation of schools; this may have lead to a disconnect between central office, schools, and novice teachers. Lastly, a lack of evaluation of the induction program may have also led to this disconnect.

The district should be commended for offering both mentoring and an induction program and attempting to support novice teachers. Additionally, most novice teachers were pleased with the mentoring program and expressed satisfaction derived from the embedded supports the program provided. However, the data suggest there may be a lack of organizational clarity for novice teachers in terms of the roles and responsibilities of district staff. Further, the research identified a lack of understanding from both central office and novice teachers relative to the differences between the purposes of the mentoring and induction program. A lack of clarity from the top of organization to those working in the organization may lead to confusion as identified in this study. Central office paired the two processes commenting on both mentoring and induction as if they were the same program. If central office is not clear on the differences between mentoring and induction, it becomes difficult to expect novice teachers to understand the fundamental difference between the two. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) state, “the quantity of induction is important, programs that are more comprehensive, or longer or include more depth of support appear to be better (p. 228). The Columbia School District offered five induction sessions. The duration may not have been long enough to positively impact novice teachers. The mentoring program continued throughout the school year, which appeared sufficient for novice teachers. This finding may contribute to the differences in perceptions regarding the induction and mentoring program.

As Gallucci (2008) states, learning environments for teachers, “need to offer powerful images of teaching and learning, engage teachers as active learners, challenge teachers intellectually, reinforce learning over time, and ensure that learning is relevant to the problems teachers face” (p. 544). Without creating the conditions necessary for useful application by novice teachers, central office has missed the opportunity to shift from a “telling to teaching”

organization (Honig & Rainey, 2012). In sum, central office must realign their work on new teacher induction to more accurately impact novice teachers' job satisfaction. The greater connection they can provide to classroom practices, the greater ability there is for central office to shift to a learning organization. Using this research to springboard the revamping of the induction program may yield strong results in the perception of novice teachers about central office's role in their job satisfaction.

Until recently, studies have focused primarily on the effective structures and support provided by schools. The majority of school districts in the United States are structured with a central office; therefore, continued research on the effective practices directly from the district office would benefit our schools and district. Emerging research has focused on central office's role in supporting schools and novice teachers. Continued research focused on those supports provided by central office on the job satisfaction of novice teachers would benefit schools and districts throughout the nation.

## Chapter 4<sup>4</sup>

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

The purpose of this case study was to explore how leadership and school culture influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers. We grounded our research in the work of Herzberg et al. (1959) and Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) who described the factors integral to job satisfaction. In line with Dinham and Scott, our research shows that school-based factors can and do influence the job satisfaction of teachers. Chapter 1 provides a detailed description of the conceptual framework of this study.

School leadership was the primary, school-based factor studied in this research. This is reflected both in the findings and recommendations outlined below. An additional factor that surfaced during the study was the way the work of central office also influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers, notably in the discussion of the induction program. These results support the primary findings of Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000), but also provide more elaboration as to the influence of specific school-based factors on novice teacher job satisfaction.

This chapter synthesizes the findings from six separate research studies that examined the influence of school culture and distributed, servant, social justice, instructional, and central office leadership on the job satisfaction of novice teachers. In this synthesis, we connect the research on job satisfaction to our research in this district. First, we briefly detail leadership changes and contextual factors that may have influenced the findings. Next, we describe findings related to the impact of interpersonal relations between school leaders and novice teachers that influence novice teacher job satisfaction. Then, we describe findings related to the areas where novice teachers and school leaders possess divergent perceptions on factors influential to the job

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<sup>4</sup> This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Kori Becht, Elizabeth Chamberland, Bridget Gough, Matthew Joseph, Mark McManmon, and Michael Morris

satisfaction of novice teachers. Finally, the chapter provides recommendations for areas of improvement that may influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers.

### **District Context**

The Columbia School District has recently undergone a significant transition in both school and district leadership. A majority of central office and building level leaders are either new to the district or new to their leadership role. Research indicates that organizational change often takes three to five years to occur, especially with a new administrative team and the implementation of associated initiatives (Russell, 2003; Timperley et al., 2007). While adjusting to transitions in leadership the district is also working to meet the needs of a diverse population of students. Additionally, like many districts across the state, the Columbia School District is responding to accountability measures related to state-mandated standardized assessment outcomes. Student performance on these assessments has resulted in a Level 3 rating of the district. Therefore, the district is under increased pressure to improve student performance. Finally, it is important to note that data gathered during this research reflect both the presence of a collaborative school culture, as well as opportunities for the district to further develop initiatives that may support the job satisfaction of novice teachers.

### **Interpersonal Relationships**

One primary theme identified across the findings of our research is the importance of positive interpersonal relationships. These relationships are often associated with a pattern of supportive and caring peer relationships in an educational setting (Wubbels & Levy, 1993) such as sharing expectations for teachers' success, listening to colleagues willingly, administrators reaching out to know teachers on an individual basis to build professional relationships and ensure ongoing support, and demonstrating concern for colleagues' personal issues. Our data



show that interpersonal relationships played an important role in the job satisfaction of novice teachers. The data illustrate the significant role school leaders and their relationships with novice teachers play in contributing to job satisfaction. Several attributes appear to contribute to positive interpersonal relationships. They include such practices as open communication, school culture, supervision and feedback, leadership visibility and accessibility, selfless leadership, valuing novice teachers, and collegial collaboration. School leaders and novice teachers found these interpersonal factors influenced novice teacher job satisfaction. Novice teachers identified interpersonal relationships with building leaders as a critical influence on their job satisfaction.

### **Communication**

A study conducted by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) found that principals who establish strong lines of two-way communication throughout the school community support teachers more successfully. Our study found a connection between the communication of teachers and administration and the job satisfaction of novice teachers. One teacher said “my [principal and vice principal] are communicating one hundred percent of the time by speaking and listening to us.” An additional study identified that effective school principals allow teachers to play a role in decision-making and building productive relationships with colleagues (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). On the whole, principals in the Columbia School District pay attention to the culture of the school and focus on creating a collaborative work environment. The school sites in which participants were interviewed fostered high levels of communication that seemed to enhance job satisfaction.

### **School Culture**

Novice teachers found that positive collaborative relationships enhanced their communication with colleagues and increased job satisfaction, thus contributing to a positive

school culture. Principals interviewed spoke very proudly about ensuring that novice teachers had essential human and material supports, to begin their careers at the school successfully. One principal was very clear that her first supportive step is to ensure new teachers could communicate with colleagues and administrations and “felt a part of the school.” Another principal noted the importance of creating a culture with high levels of communication because, “It is very hard for a new teacher to ask for help because they think you’re going to look down on them or look that they are less because of it.”

### **Supervision and Feedback**

Another major finding across our studies was the value both school leaders and novice teachers placed on supervision and feedback. School leaders and novice teachers in the Columbia School District perceived supervision and feedback to be connected to the job satisfaction of novice teachers. In line with the findings of Herzberg et al. (1959), Sergiovanni (1967), and Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000), supervision and feedback may be connected to intrinsic motivators such as personal achievement and growth, which are important elements of job satisfaction. One novice teacher observed, “From the times [the principal] has been in the classroom, there’s not a single person that has made me think about my learning process and my methodology more than her. Not a single person . . . ” He went on to point out, “[The principal’s] work with me made all the difference in those first few months.”

Likewise, school leaders also perceived the supervision and feedback process to be positively connected to the job satisfaction of novice teachers. One school leader noted:

I do a ton of walk throughs, so I’m in classrooms pretty frequently and giving [novice teachers] feedback. I meet with my new faculty probably once a month just to check in. How are things going? What do you need? Is there anything I can get for you? If I see

something in their classroom that I would like them to improve on, I might talk about that, but I also will give them suggestions to go observe in another classroom.

Thus, school leaders and novice teachers in the Columbia School District perceive supervision and feedback to be positively associated with novice teacher job satisfaction.

### **Leadership Visibility and Accessibility**

Another main finding connected to interpersonal relationships was the importance of school leadership visibility and accessibility. School leaders and novice teachers associated the visibility and accessibility of school leadership with the job satisfaction of novice teachers. All novice teachers interviewed enjoyed seeing the principal around the school, walking through classrooms, and socializing in the lobby. Visibility and accessibility may breed comfort and familiarity, and in the process potentially increase the satisfaction of novice teachers. One teacher affirmed that “I like knowing that I will see my principal at some point during the day either in the hall, lunchroom, or in my classroom.” Being visible and accessible may reduce divisions between administrators and teachers and build a more collaborative approach.

Our study found that maintaining an open office door policy, establishing regular meeting times with each novice teacher or simply visiting a teacher’s classroom during the course of the school day to check in, were seen as behaviors associated with visibility, accessibility, and novice teacher job satisfaction. One elementary teacher noted, “[The principal] frequently stops into our grade level meeting and casually asks how it is going.” This is also an opportunity for novice teachers to connect with the principal in order to ask questions that may be important to the novice teachers. One school leader shared his approach to making himself and other members of the administration available to support teachers: “it is important that at least one

administrator is available to talk throughout the day” to make school leadership accessible to teachers at all times and address questions or concerns in a timely way.

While school leaders felt visibility and accessibility were important, our research found novice teachers also found the visibility and accessibility of school leadership to be important as well. Many novice teachers pointed out the positive influence accessibility to school leadership had on their experience as a novice teacher. Whether it entailed a spur of the moment decision to stop in the hallway to spend time with a novice teacher or a more systematic practice of checking in with novice teachers each day, the findings of our study suggest visibility and accessibility positively influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers.

### **Selfless Leadership**

A fourth major finding related to interpersonal relationships was the significance of selfless leadership. School leaders and novice teachers perceived the selfless behavior of school leaders to be associated with the job satisfaction of novice teachers. This finding is consistent with work of Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) that highlights the importance of school-based factors in increasing the job satisfaction of teachers. In particular, both novice teachers and school leaders associated the willingness of school leaders to place the good of followers ahead of their own needs, whether it be helping to clean up in the cafeteria, shifting money in the budget, or serving as a substitute paraprofessional teacher, to be connected to novice teacher job satisfaction. As one school leader observed, “There’s not a hierarchy or anything [at the school]. There’s no job that I don’t do, that I wouldn’t do. If somebody got sick, I’ll clean it up. I mean that’s the reality of the job.” He goes on further to note, “If I was a teacher, I would want to know that anything I was asked to do, [school leaders] would be willing to do. . .”

A different school leader also discussed the importance of selfless leadership as it applied to the school district budget. She pointed out:

I'll never ask for something if I know that somebody else needs something ahead of me.

If someone says, 'I really want to participate in this opportunity,' we will shift money around appropriately to make sure that person can take advantage of it.

Novice teachers also perceived the influence of selfless leadership on job satisfaction. For example, one novice teacher observed how school leaders improved his school day by helping him at lunchtime with students with special needs. From his perspective, the selflessness of school leadership positively influenced his experience as a teacher. He noted:

[The principal and vice principal] are technically supposed to have administrative responsibilities during lunch and recess but they help us out. They come here and they work with her so we can have lunch. They are taking time to step out of their administrative roles and really essentially work as a one-to-one with this girl... [It] has been huge.

Thus, our findings suggest that school leaders and novice teachers perceive the willingness of school leaders to place the needs of others first and accept tasks that might normally be considered beneath their role to positively influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers.

### **Valuing Novice Teachers**

A final finding noted across our studies was the importance of valuing novice teachers, another factor of servant leadership. School leaders and novice teachers perceived being valued as important to the job satisfaction of novice teachers. This finding is not only consistent with the research of Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000), who found that school-based factors such as school

leadership and school climate play an important role in the job satisfaction of novice teachers, but it is also consistent with the research supporting servant leadership. Building on the work of the two-factor theory of job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959), Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) found that teachers' job satisfaction is not solely based on intrinsic motivators and hygiene factors. Instead, they found school-based factors such as "school leadership, climate and decision making, school reputation, and school infrastructure" (2000, p. 16) to be a third set of factors that can contribute to both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The findings of our research support the conclusions of Dinham and Scott and highlight the importance of school leadership in making novice teachers feel valued in their schools. While other intrinsic motivators or hygiene factors may play a role in the job satisfaction of novice teachers, our findings suggest feeling valued by school leadership to be an important contributing factor to novice teacher job satisfaction.

School leaders made novice teachers feel valued by making a deliberate effort to get to know them. Novice teachers consistently discussed the significance of being recognized. Surprisingly, novice teachers connected being known by their first names to their job satisfaction. For example, one novice teacher noted:

I've had [members of the central office] in my room and I've always gotten positive feedback. What I like is [they] know my name. And it sounds weird but they know your name, and it's like "Okay, they know me. They at least care to know my name."

This account highlights how a simple action like knowing a teacher's name can have a positive influence on the experience of a novice teacher. While it may appear to be a small gesture, it was perceived to be an important action by this novice teacher. These data also indicate that at least some central office administrators have relationships with some novice teachers.

A different novice teacher highlighted a similar sentiment with regard to the importance of feeling valued by school leadership. He observed:

I feel [school leaders] have gone out of their way to just personalize it with me, check in, or come down to my office like, ‘What’s going on? How is everything going?’... It means a lot to me if someone comes to my office and says, ‘Hey, can we eat lunch together today? I just want to hear how it’s going for you.’

In the view of this novice teacher, school leadership was able to enhance his experience at the school by taking the time to make him feel valued. Like the previous novice teacher, this novice teacher perceived this minor gesture of school leadership to play an important role in making him feel like a valued member of the school community. These novice teachers’ accounts highlight how school leadership can influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers by helping them feel valued. Whether it is knowing a teacher’s name or setting aside time to check in, novice teachers perceived being valued to be positively associated with job satisfaction.

### **Collegial Collaboration**

In addition to the positive influence of formal leaders, novice teachers identified collegial collaborations that included strategy-specific learning and sharing, increased their knowledge about students and enhanced their professional growth. Frequent and consistent collegial collaboration within the schools of the Columbia School District was identified as an important factor in novice teacher job satisfaction. This collaboration may be borne out of the challenges that come with being a novice teacher; as one stated, “You can’t just do everything on your own.” Hence, this concept stresses the importance of having multiple avenues of collegial collaboration, with both novice and veteran teachers, in order to provide access to information, knowledge and expertise and build a positive school culture. Building leaders noted they work to

ensure time for collegial collaboration by adjusting schedules, changing meeting times if necessary, and/or coordinating common daily responsibilities to allow for maximum colleague collaboration. In addition, the mentor program provided positive collegial relationships among staff. Research by Rodriguez (2007) identified the components of an effective mentoring program. Several of these components were reflected in the Columbia Public School District where mentors took time to answer questions, consistently visited the mentees' classrooms, and also provided sustained support. As one novice teacher noted,

She . . . would come in and observe me [in my first year]. I would go into her room and observe her. That first year, we were meeting on a daily basis writing curriculum, doing our plans together, really trying to get on the same page. That was very, very helpful.

Novice teachers indicated a high level of support through the mentor program, which ultimately led to increased job satisfaction.

### **Divergent Perceptions**

As our study indicates, the extent to which school leaders provide useful supervision and feedback, are visible and accessible, exercise selfless leadership, and value people can influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers. Although these factors were clearly evident in the district, there were several discrepancies between the perceptions of leaders and novice teachers on other school-based factors that influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers. These discrepant school-based factors included the induction program, teaching grounded in social justice, educator evaluation and teacher leadership opportunities. In each of these areas, the perceptions of school and district leadership were inconsistent with that of novice teachers.



## **Induction**

Leaders and novice teachers held differing views of the district's induction program. All district leaders reflected positively about the program and stated that it was the primary support provided to novice teachers. One central office administrator indicated that, "The greatest support that we offer is the new teacher induction program..." District leaders also noted the induction program empowered novice teachers. However, the majority of novice teachers either felt neutral about the induction program or stated that the program did little to empower them. Seven out of eleven novice teachers indicated there was a lack of application to classroom practice. Novice teachers also felt this training had a one-size-fits-all focus and lacked differentiation related to the diverse experiences and needs of novice teachers and their classrooms. For example, one novice teacher noted, "I personally did not find it beneficial. It was very off topic. There were too many grade levels in there to make it specific to each. It was just all over the place." As a result, the current induction program, as described by novice teachers, may not have a positive influence on their job satisfaction.

## **Social Justice**

The research indicated a discrepancy in the perceptions between school leaders and novice teachers with regard to professional development focused on social justice. While the majority of leaders stated they provided opportunities for novice teachers to reflect on their understanding and knowledge of diverse populations, less than half of novice teachers indicated that they actually engaged in critical self-reflection about diversity and issues of social justice. Similarly, although leaders stated they provided professional development to novice teachers designed to meet the needs of diverse learners, novice teachers did not perceive receiving this type of support. As a result, many novice teachers voiced a need for culturally relevant pedagogy

in order to practice culturally responsive teaching. One teacher commented, “I’m not getting as much help as I could...I look at it as, how am I going to figure this out? I like the diversity, but sometimes I feel like I need a bit more support in some areas.” Another teacher recognized that leaders offered professional development to assist with teaching ELLs and provided feedback on student learning needs. Although she received this support, this novice teacher conveyed her first experience working in a diverse classroom:

I came in and had no idea what to expect. I didn’t know what cultures I had... what languages I had. You kind of take the bull by the horn and you have to learn. This was my first experience being completely thrown into kids who don’t speak English, the different cultures, the different traditions. I’m learning.

While leaders acknowledged providing supports for novice teachers, they also recognized the importance of additional training and continued dialogue about social justice. Without the appropriate training, novice teachers may not feel equipped to meet the needs of their students, which may impact their job satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 1997, 2000). It is also critical that novice teachers identify their own biases and beliefs about diversity.

### **Educator Evaluation**

Despite the positive influence of supervision on novice educators, school leaders and novice teachers did not have consistent perceptions of the evaluation process. In general, evaluation was typically viewed as a summative feedback process designed to rate the performance of a teacher. Recent state and district mandates have precipitated the implementation of evaluation systems in all school districts comprised of a cycle that includes self reflection, goal setting, analysis of student progress and ongoing observations by building leaders. School leaders in the Columbia School District described the self-reflection and

goal-setting process as critical to the development and job satisfaction of novice teachers. The leaders described this process as “empowering” for the novice teachers and thus, as described by Blase (2001), teachers who feel empowered are more likely to be satisfied with their job.

In contrast, none of the eleven novice teachers interviewed connected the evaluation process to job satisfaction. Novice teachers did not provide any connections between goal setting and self-reflection to job satisfaction. Novice teachers described evaluation as “written feedback and lacking a conversation” or as an opportunity for a “gotcha moment” where the building leader provides negative feedback. This may indicate that novice teachers perceive written feedback as negative because it can be used to rate their performance. Noticeably absent from the interview data with novice teachers is any reference to receiving guidance on the evaluation process. As a result, the evaluation process does not seem to have a positive influence on the job satisfaction of novice teachers. This is problematic, as the evaluation process will determine the retention or dismissal of the novice teacher.

### **Teacher Leadership Opportunities**

This research discovered inconsistent availability of leadership opportunities for novice teachers. While district administrators and supporting district documents illustrated a commitment to teacher leadership opportunities, this research found disparities between how this was enacted in the schools. Some building leaders acted with intentionality in communicating teacher leadership opportunities to novice teachers to encourage their participation. Several leaders initiated conversations with novice teachers, encouraging them to take on leadership roles. Teachers in these schools stated that this experience had a positive impact on their job satisfaction. Leaders also recognized that a leadership role could overburden a novice teacher. Therefore, these opportunities were individualized to those novice teachers who expressed

interest. Novice teachers provided interview data demonstrating the value they placed on leadership opportunities. One novice teacher noted the satisfaction she gained serving as a member of her school's Outreach Committee designed to support students at risk in her school. She pointed out:

I think it makes [my job] even more worthwhile because a lot of the [students] are from refugee families who [are] learning what the culture is like here... They want what is best for their kids... They just [need] a little more support.

However, other school leaders appeared more passive in their approach toward novice teachers in leadership roles. In these schools, leaders did not report providing direct encouragement to teachers. As a result, all teachers in the district did not receive the same opportunities to participate in teacher leadership roles. This disparity may have impacted their job satisfaction based on the positive response by novice teachers to participation in leadership roles, even if the commitment was relatively minor. Having cited the areas in which the perception of leaders was inconsistent with that of novice teachers, the chapter now turns to a discussion of recommendations that will help strengthen practices supporting novice teachers in the district.

### **Recommendations**

Research states that a learning organization is a place where all the members of the organization, as individual persons, are continually learning, and the organization itself is highly adaptable. The organization is able to routinely modify its shared knowledge and practices in accord with experience and need. Honig (2008) posits that, when functioning as a learning organization, central office administration becomes proficient in mining for evidence to inform teaching practices, discriminates to identify the priorities that will impact teaching and learning,

and serves as a “boundary spanner” to link new priorities to new action through collaboration and relationship building. This is consistent with findings from Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) where they note the important influence of leadership, communication, and decision-making on the job satisfaction of teachers. Based on our findings, it would be beneficial for this district to continue to develop itself as a learning organization to support the job satisfaction of novice teachers and potentially create a more fruitful learning environment for all staff members.

In line with Honig’s research (2008) where the district serves as a “boundary spanner,” there is evidence that this district would benefit from enhancing the link between district policy and practice regarding teacher evaluation. For instance, the negotiated teacher contract provides a detailed description of the educator evaluation process. However, discrepancies related to the implementation and understanding of the teacher evaluation process exist between novice teachers and building leaders. District and school leaders should provide clear direction and guidance on the application of policies such as educator evaluation to school-based practice. Additionally, a method for monitoring the implementation of such initiatives would allow leadership to be responsive to questions and concerns related to the initiative. Doing so may enhance the consistency and coherence of practices within and between each school in the district.

## **Induction**

One recommendation suggests promising improvements to the induction program. Most districts struggle to create and implement induction programs that are tailored to novice teachers each year. This is due in part to the ever-changing professional needs and roles of the novice teachers who are hired. However, some of these suggestions may serve to guide the future thinking of the district as they develop their induction programming. First, the induction program

for teachers should be designed to meet the needs for each teacher learner. Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) note that job satisfaction can be negatively impacted when teachers feel overwhelmed or underprepared in their role. This means that the instruction provided during the initial induction session should include only what they need to start the year. The information presented during this initial session may include overall information needed by all staff members and should be carefully selected to ensure that teachers are not overwhelmed with new learning. Subsequent induction sessions should be constructed in a similar manner ensuring that the content presented is tailored to the needs of the novice teachers. Many induction programs try to deliver too much information at once (Sweeny, 2008). Pacing, volume and quality of content must be carefully considered.

The induction program should be designed to reflect the same approach to teaching that is applied in the teaching of diverse learners in the classroom. It should meet the needs of novice teachers from a variety of educational levels, types of experiences and content knowledge (Sweeny, 2008). Whole group activities should be utilized for concepts clearly connected to all members of the group. These activities should be followed by small group work that is tailored to the needs of the learner. For instance, induction should address culturally responsive teaching tailored to the diverse needs of each school. Novice teachers should continually be surveyed for needs that extend beyond the planned induction activities as well to evaluate the induction program itself. Inclusion of principals in the planning and implementation of the induction program would ensure the integration of induction concepts at the school level. Finally, consideration should be given to the creation of an induction program that extends beyond the common practice of one year. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) note that induction programs that are longer than one year and provide a greater depth of instruction can positively impact the

experience of the novice teacher. In this way, the district will demonstrate that they are responsive to the needs of novice teachers while also taking a proactive stance toward professional development needs.

### **Professional Development**

The district has a diverse student population. Research indicates that whether or not novice teachers feel they can meet student needs plays a major role in job satisfaction and their attrition rate (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The research of Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) further supports that teachers who feel prepared and able to meet the needs of their students are more satisfied with their job. The data gathered from this district reflects similar results. Professional development needs were identified both for novice teachers and for the administrators who support development. The following paragraphs include the recommendations related to professional development in this district.

**District-wide planning.** In order for a learning organization to be effective, a cohesive communication strategy is essential (Honig, 2008; Dinham & Scott, 1997, 2000). It is important for the communication strategy to be structured in a way that allows central office, building leaders and novice teachers to consistently collaborate about supervision, evaluation, leadership opportunities, and meeting the needs of diverse populations. The district should determine an effective method for the dissemination of information to ensure consistency and the cohesive implementation of new initiatives within the district. The district might consider the development of a teacher and building leader survey to determine professional development needs. Looking forward, central office, along with the district-wide professional development team, could create a plan to be proactive in seeking out promising professional development activities to further enhance the instructional skills of novice teachers. Finally, central office and the professional

development team, including novice teachers, could establish processes for sustainability of professional development initiatives in response to future staffing changes in schools and in central office. Efforts related to our recommendations for professional development are already underway in the district. The Superintendent's District Improvement Plan that was approved by the School Committee at the time of this research emphasizes professional development initiatives. The first improvement plan objective notes the need for a district-wide professional development team. The second objective is the development of a district-wide professional development plan. Therefore, while it is evident that the district has already identified some of the recommendations noted in this research, our findings may also serve as a tool to further develop the professional development agenda already in progress.

**Self-Reflection.** Professional development should guide teachers and administrators through the self-reflection process to examine personal practices and beliefs that may impact the learning opportunities they present to students. The first step in developing culturally responsive teaching is to help all teachers and leaders develop ideological clarity. The professional development should be designed to help teachers explore their own ideas and attitudes about diversity, identify the learning needs of a diverse population and be coupled with specific tools and strategies targeted to those needs. As with the induction program, building leaders and teachers should be regularly surveyed for professional development needs beyond what was planned. The district should also be prepared to provide support to teachers of students who arrive after the start of the school year who present with needs or challenges outside of those for which training had been provided.

Additionally, there is evidence from the district that there are pockets of highly effective practice related to students with diverse learning needs. This is most evident in those schools



with highly diverse student populations. In those schools, novice teachers stated that their ability to meet the needs of their students contributed to their job satisfaction. The district should utilize the expertise of teachers and principals from these schools to share best practices across the district. Since there is district-based expertise, opportunities for peer observation could be very powerful.

**Evaluation.** State, local and district policy has elevated the emphasis placed on educator evaluation. This emphasis requires that building leaders and novice teachers become intimately aware of the usefulness of the evaluation process to develop and refine novice teachers' skills and understandings. This is grounded in the collaborative, trusting, coaching relationships that are present in the district between building leaders and novice teachers discussed earlier. The research of Dinham and Scott (1997, 2000) clearly supports that these characteristics each contribute to the job satisfaction of teachers. These characteristics are the foundation upon which a powerful evaluation process can be built. Targeted, timely and appropriately paced professional development should be provided for new teachers and building administrators on the district objectives and processes around educator evaluation. This professional development should be timed throughout the school year so that novice teachers are not overwhelmed by the many requirements of the process. A brief reference document could be created from the 46-page contract addendum to make the process easily understood by novice teachers.

Principals and teachers should receive training that connects classroom supervision and feedback to the evaluation process. Engaging in this work will connect the already strong supervision and feedback cycle to the overall evaluation process given that there are clear professional communities of inquiry and practice present in the district. The connection between supervision and evaluation is most easily accomplished when emphasis is placed on student

outcomes in contrast to teaching practices. The teachers should be included in the conversation about student outcomes and subsequent plans to improve student performance. Platt and Tripp (2014) found that when the teacher is included in the decision making process related to the outcomes of students and the accompanying teaching practices, the evaluation process is enhanced. Conley et al. (2006) further the importance of including novice teachers in the decision-making process identifying this as a contributing factor to teacher autonomy, which has been shown to influence job satisfaction and higher levels of reflective judgment. As a result, a process of constant improvement embedded in a climate of trust, feedback and self-reflection will become common practice and teacher job satisfaction will be enhanced.

### **Teacher Leadership**

There is a significant body of research that shows distributed leadership opportunities can positively influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers (Angelle, 2006; Hulpia et al., 2009). Novice teachers are often overwhelmed by the preparation time required during the first years of teaching. It is helpful to find leadership opportunities that require a limited time commitment for novice teachers and connect them to other teachers, such as serving on committees that inform school policy, like one on parent outreach. The principal must play an active role in the cultivation of teacher leaders. Given a leadership role, novice teachers should be guided throughout the leadership process to avoid ineffectiveness. Novice teachers should be viewed as an untapped resource of enthusiasm, engagement and knowledge that can be harnessed to influence the culture and abilities of the school. However, the work of teacher leaders must be connected to school and district goals. If the leader ensures a connection to school and district goals while providing guidance and supervision of the leadership process, there is great potential

in the leadership capabilities of novice teachers. As a result, the job satisfaction of novice teachers may be enhanced.

### **Implications for Future Practice**

Finally, while our research focused on the job satisfaction of novice teachers, there may be implications beyond this particular population of teachers. Each of the areas discussed above may have implications for veteran staff as well. Our research raises questions for district consideration:

- Would veteran teachers benefit from additional professional development on social justice?
- Would veteran teachers benefit from additional professional development on the process and objective of the process of evaluation?
- Would veteran teachers benefit from the inclusion of novice teachers in building-based leadership opportunities?

District consideration to each of these questions could potentially serve to improve the job satisfaction of all staff members.

### **Limitations**

Although there are many strengths of case study research, there are also weaknesses. One limit to a case study is that it relies on the “researcher [as] the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 52). Therefore, if a researcher felt unsupported during his first years as a novice teacher then he/she may have a bias in favor of the novice teachers participating in the study. On the other hand, a researcher with a background in administration may have a bias in favor of other administrators being interviewed in the study.

The research team through group conversations about data and team coding addressed this potential bias.

A second limitation is the reliability of the data collected from novice teachers. Given they have yet to complete the probationary period of employment, novice teachers may not share their complete or honest opinions about their job satisfaction. If some participants are unsatisfied with their jobs, they may be reluctant to attribute their dissatisfaction to school and district leadership for fear of repercussions, which might include the possibility of losing employment.

The third limitation is the use of self-reported data. School leaders and novice teachers shared with the research team their perceptions. Therefore, novice teachers' lack of experience and high stress levels may influence how they perceive the school and district. They may lack an understanding of the history and scope of school and district work. They are also novice teachers, so perhaps they are concerned with their job security and therefore tend to paint a rosier picture. The school leaders may perceive an incentive in positively reporting their work and the work in their school.

While the study provided a cross section of leaders and novice teachers from different schools and central office settings, one school in the district, which contained a large number of low-income students and had a low accountability rating from the state, did not participate in the study. This may have been due to the leader's availability or the possibility that there were not any novice teachers at this particular school. Nevertheless, comparing interview responses from this school with the data from other schools with greater student diversity may have increased the study's generalizability.

The time frame of this study was another limitation. Several leaders were new to the district and although they may have prioritized several aspects of school and district leadership,

effective change usually occurs within three to five years. The sample of novice teachers for this study ranged in years taught in the district and educational background. Although we did not report on teacher preparation programs, a few novice teachers self reported these data. One novice teacher was in the first year in the district with previous experience while all other novice teachers were in the second or third year in the district with a total ranging from two to six years in the profession. As a result, their responses may not have reflected current practice provided to novice teachers within the school district, especially given the leadership transitions in the previous few years at both the school and district level. Revisiting novice teachers and leaders near the end of the school year and then again at the end of a three-year period would have increased the validity and reliability of this study.

The final limitation of this study is the generalizability of the findings. Since case study research focuses on a single unit of analysis, which in this case is one suburban Massachusetts school district, the results of the study may be limited to other school systems in Massachusetts or the United States with similar characteristics and may not be applicable to school districts with different demographics, achievement levels, and geographic contexts. Therefore, this may limit the generalizability of the study, but does not mean a research study focused on one district cannot provide insight or a better understanding of how leadership influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers. In fact, Merriam (2009) points out that “It is the reader, not the researcher, who determines what can apply to his or her context” (p. 51). Related to sample size, however, one has to be careful about extrapolating the findings to other novice teachers and school leaders. In a different school or district, we could find school leaders and novice teachers had different experiences. We also cannot make causal connections as there may be other explanations or factors involved. Future research could further illuminate the school-based factors that influence

the job satisfaction of novice teachers. In conclusion, although this research has some limitations, this research accomplished its goal.

### **Conclusion**

There is broad consensus that having talented and skilled teachers in our nation's classrooms are of critical importance to the educational attainment of students (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Retaining teachers in schools has long been a priority because experienced teachers tend to contribute to student achievement at a higher level than their novice counterparts (Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2008). Teacher quality and retention issues are not equally distributed across schools; as Johnson (2004) writes, "If schools fail to attract and retain a strong, committed cohort of new teachers in the coming years, students will be severely penalized, and those in low income communities will be likely to pay the greatest price" (p. 329).

Furthermore, the importance of novice teacher retention has grown increasingly more important in recent years as the pool of applicants entering teacher preparation programs and teachers entering the job market have diminished (Sawchuk, 2014; Westervelt, 2015). As Mary Vixie Sandy, the executive director of the California Commission on Teaching Credentials, states, "We are going to see it play out in this year and in the coming year with an increase in demand, and a not very deep pool of teachers to fulfill that demand" (Sawchuk, 2014, p. 1). Furthermore, this trend of a reduction in the number of applications received by teacher preparation programs does not appear to be a fad; Bill McDiarmid, the dean of the University of North Carolina School of Education, recently stated that, "The erosion is steady. That's a steady downward line on a graph. And there's no sign that it's being turned around" (Westervelt, 2015,

p. 1). Given these trends, retaining and developing novice teachers should be a high priority for schools and districts to ensure there are enough high quality teachers to fill their classrooms.

Job satisfaction is a primary factor in the retention of novice teachers (Boyd et al., 2011; Ladd, 2011). Our research confirms the findings of Dinham and Scott (1998): leadership can influence the job satisfaction of novice teachers. The leaders and novice teachers in the Columbia Public School District value interpersonal relationships, and as a result, this has contributed to the job satisfaction of novice teachers. Looking forward, the district could continue to enhance the experience of novice teachers. An ongoing commitment by school and district leadership to enhance professional development in the areas of induction, self reflection, evaluation, and teacher leadership, will allow school and district leadership to further elevate the job satisfaction of novice teachers. Furthermore, the many strengths already present within the district coupled with a commitment to ongoing growth in these areas, could serve to benefit the practice and job satisfaction of all teachers.

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Appendix A  
Study Timeline

| <b>Start Date</b> | <b>End Date</b> | <b>Research Task</b>   |
|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| March 2015        | May 2015        | Begin researching districts that fit the profile of participants needed to complete a robust study of novice teachers. Sample size must have 20 novice teachers, 10 teacher mentors, 10 building based administrators, and a central office cabinet. |
| May 2015          | May 2015        | Defend group research study proposal.  |
| May 2015          | June 2015       | Select district and contact district leadership to make initial introductions and presentation of proposed study.  |
| June 2015         | August 2015     | Complete initial study of research group's individual district profile.  |
| August 2015       | October 2015    | Begin data analysis process and identification of themes, document inferences, and findings.   |
| September 2015    |                 | Schedule perspective interviews with available personnel. Complete initial interviews and collect initial data and artifacts.  |
| November 2015     | January 2016    | Data Analysis  |
| December 2015     | January 2016    | Continue with data analysis and identification of themes, document inferences and findings to write up findings.   |
| March 2016        |                 | Defend Dissertation  |
| April 1, 2016     |                 | Submit Dissertation in Practice  |



## Appendix B

### Novice Teacher Interview

#### Introduction

- Greet and introduce yourself and your role and explain to the teacher the purpose of the study - to gather data and to explore how leadership influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers
- Go over the disclosure statement and highlight the informed consent and confidentiality. Remind the participant that they are not required to participate in the interview. They may choose not to answer a certain question or all questions. They may stop the interview at any time
- State that the interview will begin with an inquiry into their educational history

#### Leadership

1. What has the principal directly or indirectly done to impact your initial years in the profession?
2. How does your principal influence you as a novice teacher?

#### Job Satisfaction

3. Describe the factors of your school that influence your job satisfaction.
4. Describe the aspects of your teaching position you find to be rewarding and frustrating.

#### School Culture

5. How do you differentiate between your role in a school's culture and that of the administration? Detail each role.
6. Do you feel you get support/assistance in your teaching when you have a problem? If so, from who and what does that support/assistance look like?

7. Are there structures within the school day that help foster collaboration between you and your colleagues? Explain your answer.

#### Distributed Leadership

8. In what ways do teachers have opportunities to take on leadership roles in the school?  
How does seeing other teachers in leadership roles influence your experience?
9. Have you been involved in any teacher leadership activities? How has that affected your experience at the school?

#### Servant Leadership

10. Do school and district leaders empower novice teachers? Can you offer some specific examples?
11. Do you feel valued by school and district leadership? Can you provide some specific examples?
12. How does school leadership respond to feedback from teachers? Is leadership open to different views? Can you provide some specific examples?

#### Central Office

13. How does central office support you as a novice teacher? Please identify the direct or indirect support provided by central office.
14. Describe your mentoring and induction experience?
15. In what ways does policy affect you as a novice educator?

#### Social Justice Leadership

16. Describe your experiences teaching a diverse population of students (special education, ELL, low-income, ethnicity)

17. What district or building supports are available to help you meet the needs of all students?
18. Have you been encouraged to reflect on your understanding and ability to teach diverse student populations? If so, how?

#### Instructional Leadership

19. What evaluation feedback do you find most helpful to you as a novice teacher? Please explain your choice(s) to me.
20. Does your principal connect feedback to student achievement and if so, how?
21. Does your principal provide supervision that influences your practice and if so, how?

## Appendix C

### School and District Leader Interview

#### Introduction

- Greet and introduce yourself and your role and explain to the teacher the purpose of the study - to gather data and to explore how leadership influences the job satisfaction of novice teachers
- Go over the disclosure statement and highlight the informed consent and confidentiality. Remind the participant that they are not required to participate in the interview. They may choose not to answer a certain question or all questions. They may stop the interview at any time
- State that the interview will begin with an inquiry into their educational history

#### Job Satisfaction

1. Do you believe novice teachers are satisfied with their jobs? How do you know?
2. What elements of the school or district do you believe influence the job satisfaction of your novice teachers?

#### School Culture

3. How do you differentiate between your role in a school's culture and that of the teacher? Detail each role.
4. How do you feel you give support/assistance to your novice teachers when they have a problem? If so, what does that support/assistance look like?
5. Are there structures within the school day that help foster collaboration between you and the novice teachers? Explain your answer.
6. What words do you immediately associate with school culture?

### Distributive Leadership

7. In what ways do teachers have opportunities to take on leadership roles in the school?  
How do you let go of your authority to promote this practice?
8. Are novice teachers able to take on leadership roles? How do you promote those with less experience being connected to leadership opportunities?

### Servant Leadership

9. How do you empower novice teachers? Can you offer some specific examples?
10. How do you make novice teachers feel valued? Can you provide some specific examples?
11. How do you respond to feedback from teachers? Are you open to different views? Can you provide some specific examples?

### Central Office

12. What district supports are provided to novice teachers?
13. Is there a direct impact from central office to novice teachers? How do you measure that?

### Social Justice Leadership

14. What district or building supports are available for novice teachers to meet the needs of all students?
15. How have you provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on their understanding and knowledge of diverse populations?
16. Is there a cultural mismatch between novice teachers and student populations? If so, how do you address this?

### Instructional Leadership

17. What evaluation feedback do you believe is most helpful to a novice teacher? Please explain your choice(s) to me.
18. Do you provide feedback to the novice teacher that connects to student achievement and if so, how?
19. Do you provide supervision to the novice teacher that influences their practice? If so, can you provide examples?