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An Analysis of Job Stress As Experienced by Public School Site Administrators

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AN ANALYSIS OF JOB STRESS AS EXPERIENCED
BY PUBLIC SCHOOL SITE ADMINISTRATORS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Educational Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Joe Bosco

May 2021

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The Designated Dissertation Committee Approves the Dissertation Titled

AN ANALYSIS OF JOB STRESS AS EXPERIENCED
BY PUBLIC SCHOOL SITE ADMINISTRATORS

by

Joe Bosco

APPROVED FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2021

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF JOB STRESS AS EXPERIENCED BY PUBLIC SCHOOL SITE ADMINISTRATORS

by Joe Bosco

Public school site administrators face enormous challenges day in and day out. COVID-19 has created more challenges than ever for any organization, but for public school site administrators these types of challenges are once in a lifetime. When crisis hits, leaders are expected to be strong and levelheaded. However, these leaders are experiencing high levels of stress which can lead to burnout, depersonalization, or worse. Using a quantitative method, the study was done to better understand the stress public school site administrators are under. Public school administrators in Silicon Valley were surveyed using the Administrator Stress Index, which is the first phase of the administrator stress cycle developed by Dr. Walter Gmelch. Using statistical analysis, the study analyzed the stressors that the public school administrators in Santa Clara County are under and fall under these four categories: (1) role-based stress, (2) task-based stress, (3) boundary spanning stress, and (4) conflict mediation stress. In addition, the study sought to better understand the stress that public school administrators are under by asking participants to provide responses to three open-ended questions on the survey. Findings show the COVID-19 crisis has created more stress overall and made managing a school site very challenging during the pandemic. In addition, it was evident that site administrators value collaboration and inclusion. Recommendations to reduce stress and increase well-being include building support groups, communication enhancements, and structural support for crisis leadership.

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Chapter One: Introduction

My Leadership Story

I grew up in a household that was strong on education, meaning first homework, then play. Education was always an important aspect in our household as my father was a professor of education at the university near where we lived. My parents were engaged in my education and instilled a sense of pride in me and my two brothers for going to our local public schools. I decided to follow in my father's footsteps and become an educator. I went to college and after many trials and tribulations, I got my degree in education and finally took over my first classroom as a solo teacher at twenty-nine. I learned the joys and the challenges that came from being a teacher and working in a public school. After five years of teaching, I decided I wanted to help students and the school in a larger way and became a summer school principal. I got my administrative credential and began to learn what it takes to manage a school site. I became an assistant principal in a middle school and then at the high school level. Finally, my educational journey brought me to where I am today. I am currently an elementary school principal and have been at the same school for the last ten years. As a veteran site administrator, I have had the honor and privilege of working with children, families, and staff for almost two decades. I have truly enjoyed supporting and celebrating learning and my job.

Then, in March 2020, along came something that I never thought would occur ever, which was COVID-19. I had to close my school site down, something I have done for a few hours or a day or two when the power was out or when the smoke from the wildfires was too bad to bear. I never could imagine shutting down the school for the rest of the

school year or for a whole entire year and yet that is exactly what happened this year. Never to see the fifth graders who would be going on to middle school, and gone were the proper send offs for employees who have worked at the school site for multiple decades and who were retiring or moving on. The positive energy that I got from work and from life in school every day was now gone. In its place, work became making and posting videos, constant meetings with school and district staff via Zoom, checking and responding to email, and only getting to observe students and teachers by watching lessons via Zoom.

We were isolated, all of us, and it was a challenge to stay connected, to learn how to function, to get into a routine. Many people like me found themselves working at home with children doing school from home. Keeping our spirits up the whole time was challenging and because work was now at home, the workday did not have an end. Never before have we had such large amounts of screen time for our whole family and the challenges were immense. However, I knew we were lucky and had the privilege of being in a home, and safe and not having COVID-19. That silver lining always outweighed the challenges and provided the spark I needed every day to be the leader my school needed during the pandemic. The shelter-in-place and the new normal of my job responsibilities brought on stress, lots and lots and lots of stress. This reached a pinnacle for me in late February of 2021 in the middle of this dissertation with the sudden loss of my father due to a tragic accident.

I first began this study because I wanted to better understand the causes of administrator stress and what support might help. I had lost a colleague tragically and

wanted to do more to support educator wellbeing. Having lived through the stressful experience of the COVID-19 pandemic as a school principal, I felt a personal connection to the topic. Stress comes in different forms and people deal with stress in different ways. I believe more understanding about what causes administrators stress is needed and I believe that districts should have multiple avenues for administrators to say I need help, this is not working, without being seen as weak or ineffective. My hope is that this study provides insight into both causes of administrator stress and strategies for support.

An Unresolved Issue in Education: Administrator Stress

For those not involved in the day-to-day life as a school site administrator, the issue of stress with which administrators must contend may not be visible. Stress might come in the form of a new priority established by the district office or as serving as the point person for teachers pertaining to rules or practices that are unpopular with them. While there are many accounts of stress being a negative, there are also times where stress can lead to positive effects. An example of “good stress,” or what Selye termed ‘*eustress*’ (Selye, 1976), is when a student is stressed about a homework assignment that is not being completed, or an administrator is nervous about speaking to the school community introducing an exciting event. The term *eustress* serves to denote the positive aspects of stress as opposed to the negative aspects which he termed “distress.” This research will focus on the “distress” or negative effects of stress as it relates to the job conditions of public-school site administrators. For example, school site administrators may have to deal with reporting domestic abuse in some form as mandated reporters and may experience difficulties supporting children who have experienced trauma. Administrators are often

confronted by parents or external groups who are upset or angry with school decisions or lack thereof. Stressful situations are not uncommon to a school site administrator, such as when a student shows up with wounds that are self-inflicted, or in the worst case of dealing with the tragedy of death of someone in the school community.

Administrators must also deal with responding to crises. Administrators not only have to prepare their staff and students for the worst by practicing “code reds” or active school shooter drills with terms that have become familiar in the administrators’ lexicon: run, hide, and defend drills even with their youngest students, but this year they had to shut schools and pivot to a distance learning environment overnight. Today’s administrators are contending with something that is unprecedented with the COVID-19 pandemic. The result is that administrators who were already working in high stress jobs have had to deal with greater levels of stress and be leaders of their schools during this time of crisis. A study by Eaton, Anthony, Mandel, and Garrison indicates that stress has become a prevalent aspect of life in the 21st century (Eaton et al., 1990). Add on the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is even greater stress and challenges school staff must face.

Statement of the Problem

Stress is a “fact of life” and it certainly affects persons in many, if not all, occupations. School administrators work in particularly stressful jobs and there is a need to better understand the causes of their stress, how to mitigate that stress, and how to provide better support. In March 2020 the world shut down due to an outbreak of COVID-19. School site administrators are constantly dealing with external factors out of their control, but dealing with a crisis such as the one during this study was something most if not all of

us were unprepared to deal with. The conditions set forth by the pandemic contributed to a less predictable workplace and school environments that were hard to manage, with issues that seemed beyond the control of administrators. Training and support to ensure administrators are able to make good decisions for the community they serve over a sustained period of time, while remaining emotionally and physically healthy was not in place at the time of the shutdown. No one in schools saw the pandemic coming and so there was very little preparedness. The problem addressed by this research project was to better understand the causes of administrator stress and how the pandemic affected the stress levels of site administrators.

Significance of the Problem

Schools best serve students in a healthy environment. The administrator has a role in creating a healthy student environment. To do so requires administrators to model healthy behaviors while creating an atmosphere of care among the staff and adult community: “It’s not just what you know, but also how you interact with others that shapes your influence” (Donaldson et al., 2009, p. 11). School districts often do not address the issues that stress can cause for the administrator, the personnel who report to the administrator, and most importantly the students. Many districts may have employee assistance programs. For many employees in general, and for administrators in particular, asking for help does not come easily, nor is it encouraged in the workplace. A recent study indicates that disclosing emotional or mental issues on the job is difficult for a substantial number of employees:

Although approximately 44 million adults in America are dealing with some form of mental illness, many are hesitant to disclose their conditions to employers. In fact, despite the fact that half of all employees in a recent survey said they would want to

help a coworker coping with mental illness, nearly four out of 10 wouldn't disclose their own mental health problem to a manager. (Celio, 2019, p. 2)

Employees may be reluctant to seek help in dealing with emotional or psychological problems for multiple reasons: fear that seeking help puts their job at risk; concern that by coming out and saying one needs help will impact an opportunity for advancement (Dewa, 2014).

While there are laws to protect employees from their employers for inquiring about mental illness, leaders in these organizations still need to ensure a work environment that is safe and free from stigmatization of mental health issues (Celio, 2019). Too often, the costs to the organization take priority over the well-being of its employees. The view is that when people are absent from work there are costs to the organization. In education, if an administrator is absent (s)he may require a substitute. This results in a fiscal impact in waiting for the employee to recover from whatever mental ailments may be causing him or her to step away from the work. When educators are absent there is also an impact to students in that the substitute may not have relationships with staff and students which can make it harder to interact and work together. Also, the substitute administrator may not have the necessary following from the community to backfill the administrator. In addition, the replacement administrator may set a new standard in the community causing some to question if they want the administrator to come back. As a result, even with protections, many administrators may feel pressure to keep working and are reluctant to share with their employer that they are not well and need some support or that they may need to take a short leave. They may fear being branded as having “mental health problems” and even losing their job (Dewa, 2014).

On the other hand, private sector organizations have a stake in ensuring that their employees are successful on the job. Evidence of a more progressive approach to organizational work conditions can be seen in the technology field such as those companies in Silicon Valley. Google, for example, rose to become “techno-entrepreneurial elite” by bolstering highly competitive people and even providing a more relaxing work culture as a way to lure talent (Davidson, 2011, p. 5). While the work in technology companies may seem less stressful where hours are not the traditional nine to five and employees may choose to work from home, at times the industry can move through employees at a fast rate if burnout, or exhaustion, take over (McGrath, 1984). In response to the stress that is endemic to such organizations, the workplace is set up to have other comforts for employees and allow for amenities such as dry cleaning on site, or free food fixed by chefs. These workplace conditions are good for morale and may create a workplace that is more desirable, but opinions differ on if they make the workplace less stressful.

Staff wellness is an area being addressed by many organizations (Kohll, 2016). Cost may play a part in the organization’s willingness to do more about employee wellness issues. Employee assistance programs have been shown to reduce employee absenteeism and be a good return on investment (Celio, 2019). In the private sector the bottom line may be an important aspect of trying new ways of instilling a wellness program. In education organizations, wellness efforts are more often directed toward the students rather than the staff through the provision of tiered interventions and support for behavioral and emotional issues (Saeki et al., 2011). While some school districts are starting to

direct resources towards exploring ways of supporting staff, much less attention has been paid to supporting site administrators and helping them deal with job stress, which is often seen as a “given.” While there is a growing recognition of the need for greater support for well-being of employees, school districts are still in the early stages of implementation of such programs, especially programs supporting the health and well-being of school site administrators.

Purpose of the Study

This research investigated the conditions and stressors that are associated with the role of the school site administrator. The research sought to understand the causes of administrator stress and looked for strategies that reduce stress and reduce the impact of the elements that were seen by administrators as causing distress. By surveying school administrators, the research hoped to both explicate key conditions and stressors and identify supports that site administrators would like from their districts. In addition, the study sought to offer practical recommendations to districts for developing practices and programs that will reduce the negative consequences of prevailing stressors and to improve the mental health of school site administrators and their effectiveness on the job.

Research Questions

The focal research questions that were addressed in this dissertation are:

RQ1. What were the stressors that school site administrators identified?

RQ2. What differences (if any) were found in administrators reporting stress across (a) gender, (b) years of experience, and (c) type of administrator position?

RQ3. What types of district support did administrators describe and report as available, that would be helpful to manage the stresses of the job?

Limitations of the Study

One limitation for this project was the location of this study, which was limited to Santa Clara County, California. Since the location is in a large urban environment, some might perceive this setting as less stressful; others might view it as more stressful. Readers can decide for themselves whether the characteristics of the Silicon Valley area match their own locations. My bias is that living in this location is stressful based on my own personal experience living here. I have lost friends in the business to suicide. While we may never know the reason, I have wondered if there was a connection to job related stress. What I do know from speaking with my colleagues is that stress and anxiety levels seem to be rising. Given social media and other public reactions going viral and so often in the news, there seems to be a higher rate of exposure along with added consequences, when leadership makes mistakes.

The timeframe for which this study was done posed many challenges and also resulted in additional concerns over generalization. This study was done during the global COVID-19 pandemic, which was obviously related to greater overall stress for many or most people. The shelter-in-place imposed by the pandemic started in the spring of 2020 and lasted throughout this study. The respondents who took part in this research were leading their schools during a time of a pandemic. They were facilitating distance learning school for students and trying to figure out how to reopen schools while contending with widespread fear of catching the virus. Vaccines were only developed and began to

be distributed after the data collection portion of this study. As a result, the overall history of the pandemic makes interpreting and generalizing administrator stress more challenging. To mitigate these limitations, the researcher limited questions to define administrator stress and then added more open-ended questions to account for the time we live in.

Assumptions, Background, and Positionality of the Researcher in the Study

I have worked in education for over twenty years and I have loved every day of it until this year. I am the son of an educator who devoted most of his career to helping students become researchers, teachers, and administrators in the education department at a university in the Midwest and I have held positions as a teacher, an assistant principal, and currently work as a principal in an elementary school. I have worked as an administrator in elementary, middle, and high school levels. I am married to an educator who also is an administrator at the high school level and who has also spent time as an administrator at the elementary level. I have experienced stress in many forms over my career but none more severe than this year. I selected this project to better understand the extent of this problem and to help others who are currently in the field dealing with the pressures of the job. While we cannot eliminate stress from the job of school administrators, we can try to understand it better in order to devise better ways of dealing with it. We need strategies that work to help administrators lead healthy lifestyles throughout their careers.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to better understand the stress our public school site administrators are dealing with, including the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stress

can weigh heavily on a person and cause them to make mistakes or miss important information. Site administrators are educational leaders who have been asked to lead schools during a time when everything in education is changing quickly. I wanted to understand what types of support administrators want and would take part in. The research contributed to a deeper understanding of the problem of administrator stress; it provided a snapshot of administrators' views of the causes and effects of administrator stress and informed suggestions for training and support to mitigate the most harmful effects of administrator stress.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 1 discussed the need to support leaders in education based on the mounting stress that the job entails. School leaders in general, and those working in Silicon Valley schools in particular, were described as being vulnerable to many different forms of pressure resulting in a high degree of stress and associated negative consequences. In this chapter, I will review the literature pertaining to this view.

The next section will focus on the literature that explains what it means to be a leader and the role of school and district administrator. The following section will discuss the literature related to the impact of being an educator and an educational leader in a stressful job in education, followed by a discussion of crisis leadership. Then I will provide context for school leadership within Silicon Valley, followed by discussion of potential implications of this study for district policies and procedures. Next will be presented the conceptual framework for this study, which is based on the tenets of Gmelch's understanding of stress. Then I will discuss the gaps in the literature, and finally, I will provide a summary of the chapter.

Site Administrators as Leaders

Webster's dictionary (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) says that a leader is defined as "someone who guides other people, someone or something who is ahead of others in a race or competition and a powerful person who controls or influences what other people do: a person who leads a group, organization, country." Leaders go beyond maintaining the status-quo and fostering positive change to forward advancement for the group they lead.

Leadership may be considered a more prestigious job in many private organizations, and within the private sector. Often these types of jobs come with higher salaries, larger offices, and greater political clout. In education organizations, good leadership may be more often associated with serving others and advancing student learning. This part of the job provides a sense of achievement feeling successful on the job and meaning that comes from the accomplishment of goals (Seligman, 2018). For some—and this is particularly true of administrators who see themselves as leaders—the perks of helping others outweigh the aspects of success measured by leaders in corporations with higher salaries, material rewards like luxury cars, or symbolic recognition such as a large office with the nice view.

The work of Gardner (2011) is particularly valuable as a basis for understanding the role of leadership and the complex issues and rewards leaders face in their efforts to be effective. Gardner presents a cognitive framework for leadership followed by case studies recounting the leadership narratives of business CEO's, political figures, religious leaders, and academic or disciplinary leaders and researchers. In Gardner's (2011) view, leaders all face different challenges to be overcome and no leader leads in the same way.

Leadership also depends on the context of its implementation, including the developmental sophistication of followers. To be seen as effective, the leaders must rise above the immediate challenges they face, regardless of the toll it takes on them. Leading through turbulent times can result in loss of wealth, family, and even one's life (Gardner, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the term "leaders" will refer to educational administrators who have been identified by the role classifications within each of the Silicon Valley

districts surveyed. As noted by Black and Danzig (2019), there is a “marked difference in the classification of job titles that may be considered administrative or leadership positions. Though some positions were easily identified as school administrators (e.g., principal and assistant principal) other job titles were not consistently used across local settings” (p. 56). Black and Danzig (2019) chose to categorize individuals through their leadership or non-teaching roles. They identified individuals as education leaders in their districts by virtue of the roles in which they serve roles such as principal, superintendent, director, district administrator, principal, assistant principal, coordinator, dean, or any other position that is deemed to be part of the management team.

Others have added to the definition of school leaders. Leithwood and Riehl (2005) suggest that “although leaders are individuals, leadership is embedded in social relationships and organizations and is expected to accomplish something for a group” (p. 13). Hattie (2009) says that educational leaders have a large impact on the communities they serve (p. 83). He suggests that leadership is defined by learning, engagement, and safety, major priorities that are typically set forth by the district. In Hattie’s view, education leaders have instructional and transformational backgrounds that have a positive effect on the achievement scores of the student population. They thrive as leaders when they are able to inspire and create a learning environment for everyone (Hattie, 2009). For purposes of this study, I will focus on school site leaders including assistant principals and principals of K–12 public schools.

The Detrimental Consequences of Stress on Site Administrators as School Leaders

Occupational stress for educators is ubiquitous and is not confined to one particular role or job performance. To better understand this view, a study from the University of Pennsylvania (Greenberg et al., 2016) is helpful. The authors define job stress as the harmful and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress in the form of distress can lead to poor health including psychological symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, poor sleep patterns, and even physical injury (Greenberg et al., 2016, p. 3). In this view, school personnel do their job with insufficient resources. Lack of resources and concern about wellbeing is especially disconcerting if one considers that educators make decisions that affect students' lives and that the work of school personnel is of the utmost importance to society.

The pattern of job distress in education permeates the literature on schools and school leadership. Teaching is stressful, leading to burnout and a reduction in the pool of experienced teachers headed into leadership positions (Herman et al., 2018). These authors report that "teacher stress also contributes to teacher turnover. About half of teachers leave the field within their first 5 years, often due to stress of the profession" (Herman et al., 2018, p. 90). Teachers leaving the field reduce the pool of qualified teachers who seek to rise to leadership positions. One result is that the pool of willing and talented new educators who have the ability to lead continues to shrink (Fink & Brayman, 2006). As a result, there is a need to find ways to better equip educators and

education leaders to better cope with the stressors of the job and have a more successful career, one that is based on meaningfully impacting the lives and learning of students.

A review of the literature indicates many issues related to the stressors that affect school administrators. A well-being survey that was done by the Australian Catholic University and led by Chief Investigator Herb Marsh found that administrator stress comes in many different forms such as “The combined impact of record levels of heavy workloads and offensive behavior by parents and students, burn-out from the sheer quantity of work, employer demands and student mental health issues” (“Australia’s Principals,” 2020). Causes of stress for school administrators comes in many forms as they carry out their job responsibilities. “School principals are constantly required to cope with a broad range of external stressors, all while maintaining an internal state of emotional symbols of all that we want staff, students, and parents to strive for and be” (Wicher, 2017, p. 1). They are required to deal with many difficult issues such as reprimanding staff, managing parental concerns, maintaining high academic standards, mediating issues, and dealing with limited resources, all of which can be viewed as stressors (Wicher, 2017).

To better understand this view, consider the consequences stress and anxiety have on well-being. Stress comes in many forms and humans process stress in different ways. Some forms of stress may be considered more positive, as having more positive or beneficial effects. Selye (1976) labeled this more positive attribution as ‘eustress’. The focus of this research, however, is on the more negative forms of job-related stress or occupational stress. Gmelch, Gates, and Parkay (1994) concluded that the education

leader's "health is impacted by a number of personal and professional variables such as, on the positive side, exercise, coping, job satisfaction, and administrative performance, and negatively by role conflict and ambiguity, stress, and emotional exhaustion" (Gmelch et al., 1994, p. 10).

Leadership During a Crisis

During the 2020 school year, the World Health Organization (2020) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic and communities started ordering shelter in place. Education leaders had to figure out how to get students connected to teachers for remote instruction essentially overnight. Silicon Valley tech companies played a large role in ensuring site administrators were able to continue with education. During the pandemic many educators had the stress of learning remote learning tools such as Zoom, and Google Meets. Without these tools, site administrators would not have been able to connect with one another or their staff. In addition, messaging to school communities became a priority to ensure organization and a sense of connectedness:

How people react in a crisis is dependent on their ability to tolerate intense stress and maintain effectiveness. And while a crisis will exercise this capacity, you want your staff to have a pretested set of tools they can use on their body and mindset to stay steady for those they serve and repair when the crisis has passed. (Pacific Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network, 2020, p. 19)

The rise of concerns over school safety continues to impact leaders and adds stress related to the decisions that impact their schools, whether in regard to resources being directed to support a safe school environment or the decision to be made in a crisis situation. Tragic events such as those pertaining to attacks with guns in schools require administrators to serve as leaders and to do everything possible pertaining to life and

death issues, which have become increasingly more common in 21st century schools (Walker et al., 2019). Decision making has always been part of the role of school leaders. A bulletin distributed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals stated that “political environments of the principal with calls for change and improvement are common denominators of the contemporary views of principalship” (Wells, 2013, p. 337). For leaders in education, the pressures come from all sides and it can seem daunting to make decisions, but decisions are imperative to move forward one way or another and many in school organizations demand that decisions are made in a timely manner. What is new is the level of concern over school safety issues. The life and death decisions that are required in gun violence situations can have lasting effects on the organization and the people making these critical decisions, regardless of outcome (Walker et al., 2019). COVID-19 is another crisis in which administrators have to make critical decisions while under extreme stress. Decision making is crucial but hard to do when information is slow. Ensuring open lines of communication is a must:

During crises, the ability to make strategic decisions is critical. Unfortunately, during such times it becomes difficult to access our best and brightest ideas, as objectivity can be clouded by panic. Establishing information channels and ensuring that they remain open during a crisis as well as consulting with trusted confidants will help to overcome this obstacle. (Anderson & Bhakuni, 2010, p. 3)

Maintaining trust in each other can also become a challenge, especially during a crisis. During a crisis, stress can take a toll on an individual in many ways. Isolation is one way it affects a leader in that it can cause a person to be abrupt to others or impatient and irritable with them, leading to affect relationships in negative ways, thus creating an environment where the counsel of others is reduced and thus limiting the perspective of

the leader during the crisis and creating a sense of isolation (American Psychological Association, 2020).

The Pacific Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network (2020) and the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement partnered to look at how to combat those stressors that impeded leaders from being effective during a crisis. The partnership developed a guide, “School Mental Health Crisis Leadership Lessons” based on lessons learned from those who have led through a crisis. Their intent was to provide a framework towards supporting school crisis leadership. The framework centered around “the 4R’s” of crisis leadership: Readiness, Response, Recovery, and Renewal. The lessons shared by school staff highlighted important skills and attributes that can be used as part of a tool box when leading through a crisis. The guide gives tangible action steps to take when working through a crisis towards recovery. Two key themes emerged that focused on building trust and cultivating relationships in each step on the path to recovery. The framework also provides a timeframe as to when each stage of the process should be focused on in relation to the crisis (Pacific Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network, 2020).

School Leadership Within the Local Context of Silicon Valley

Santa Clara County is in the Silicon Valley and sits between the San Francisco Bay to the east, the Santa Cruz Mountains to the west, and the Pacific Coastal Range to the southeast. The name “Silicon Valley” reflects the importance of computer technology in the development of the region. Silicon is used in the manufacturing of computer chips and it was the emergence of some of the most important superconductor companies on Earth,

which stimulated a wide variety of computer hardware and software companies that gave the region its name. Many of the most important developments in technology being used throughout the world were created in Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is one of the most productive areas in the USA, and its diversity leads to many challenges for the people living in this environment where fear of failure is very prevalent no matter your zip code.

The push for excellence and financial success has had secondary consequences that are troublesome (English-Lueck, 2000). Many technology executives have been driven by a work ethic that has resulted in dividends that allow them to live a comfortable and stable life. “Technical brilliance, innovation, creativity, independent work ethics, long hours, and complete dedication to projects are the main requirements for companies trying to position themselves on the cutting edge” (Cooper, 2000, p. 385). This type of environment creates many psychological repercussions for all involved, and the most common repercussion talked about as a negative consequence is stress. “Stress is prevalent in modern society and can have many consequences in the business world, including job burnout, ill-health, high staff turnover, absenteeism, low morale, and reduced efficiency and performance” (Yu et al., 2009, p. 365).

Silicon Valley is riddled with different organizational cultures and stories but the commonality is the stress that many endure in such a high-pressure community. Enduring years of work results in loss of work-life balance (e.g., seeing your family or taking a family vacation). Competition is what drives most businesses to succeed or fail. It pushes companies and businesses to new heights in regards to developing new ideas. The push is to get the newest and greatest technology out before competitors do in order to make

more money and control the field. This type of competition can be conducive to the organization's bottom line; however, this can lead to high levels of anxiety centered on fear of losing. How does all this stress in Silicon Valley impact the public educators who live in this highly competitive environment? Much of the research reviewed in this area centers on the causes of administrator stress and the core aspects of stress including burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of low accomplishment (Borg & Riding, 1993; Gmelch et al., 1994; Gmelch & Torelli, 1993; Koch et al., 1982; Maslach et al., 1986; Warner, 1980). When I asked my colleagues if they feel emotionally exhausted, they report that they are emotionally drained and physically tired. Many of my colleagues cannot afford to live in the areas they serve in Silicon Valley with the cost of housing. Most educators have to commute, and even then, it is still costly for a family to live anywhere near where they work. Depending on where the person lives and works, commuting can add many hours to the workday. A long daily commute takes a toll on many people and also means increased time away from family, rest, and recreation. Navigating the crowded roads can also be stressful.

Another factor faced by public educators in Silicon Valley is a general lack of respect for teaching in the community. Writing in *NEA Today*, Morgan Hermann, a teacher who left the field recently, wrote:

In addition to crushing workloads, I saw teachers being targeted by administrations. I saw administration protect at all costs the teachers who everyone knew were ineffective and lacked integrity, but were the most vocal about their 'success.' Millennials prize ethics in their work, and I was learning that schools can be very unethical places. As teachers, we would never create that kind of culture within our own classrooms. Why isn't the education system in whole held to the same expectation? (Hermann, 2017, p. 4)

Another growing problem for school communities in Silicon Valley has to do with a declining (student) population in some districts or a growing population (of students) in other districts. While it might seem easier and offer some advantages to have fewer students, there are also definite downsides. Schools are closing and jobs are being eliminated due to the lack of student enrollments. And the need for specialized teachers does not decline in the face of a declining student population.

While local school districts are dealing with declining enrollment, and many experienced teachers are being laid off, school districts are still hiring based on the needs of their student population. There is always a need for teachers who specialize in a specific subject matter, particularly math, science, English language learning, and Special Education,” says Peter Daniels, Chief Public Affairs Officer for Santa Clara County in a recent press release by the Santa Clara County Office of Education (Reeves, 2018, para. 2).

Uncertainty about the future can be a factor that produces continuing distress, even if these uncertainties are not readily apparent to others. “Many teachers are nearing retirement age, yet we do not see as many new teachers entering the workforce, it is a constant struggle to deal with the rate of attrition, so there is always a need” (Reeves, 2018, para. 2).

Educating the children of high achievement oriented and high affluence parents who work in high stress environments can add to the pressure and stressors faced by schools and by education leaders. These parents are often driven by a work ethic that has resulted in individual benefits and remuneration that allows them to live a comfortable and stable lifestyle. Working in such an intense environment can create many psychological challenges for those involved, and one of the negative consequences is stress. In Silicon Valley, stress can come in the form of a technology employee worrying about meeting a

deadline or perhaps struggling to make ends meet even on a six-figure salary. Silicon Valley is not a one-dimensional environment, but one commonality across multiple communities and employers is the stress that many people endure in such a high pressure packed community. While this can be the case in communities other than Silicon Valley, my colleagues report that the extreme pressures towards academic excellence expected of children in the Silicon Valley region augment the typical situation faced by teachers and administrators, making it feel even more intense. An acute example of this tragedy is student suicide and none more troubling than the multiple student suicides experienced by the Palo Alto schools (Rosin, 2015).

Vulnerability in Site Leadership

People often think of vulnerability as being a sign of weakness. However, vulnerability can also be a strength and the opposite of weakness. In education settings, stakeholders often want their leaders to be strong but also vulnerable (Amin, 2020; Kiltz, 2014). In the article “Vulnerable Leadership: The Key to Building Trust,” Amin (2020) discusses vulnerable leadership and how this practice can help open doors and strengthen the team. The author goes on to describe this type of leadership as the key to starting conversations that lead to trust and meaningful relationships. Vulnerability in leadership can therefore create more lasting emotional connections for the leader and thus open doors to build and foster trust. In addition, asking for help is a very important trait. Too often leaders try and take it all on; by asking others for help and trying not to be the superhero, however, the leader may end up getting the right people in place to do the job (Amin, 2020).

In order to combat role anxiety, emotional stress, and burnout, school leaders need to prepare themselves emotionally for the job. The complexity of school site leadership continues to change daily in regard to what is expected of the site administrators. In the article titled “Principals’ Emotional Competence: A Key Factor for Creating Caring Schools,” Mahfouz et al. (2019) discussed principals’ social and emotional competence and how influential the site administrator is in regard to the school communities and to social emotional learning. The article goes on to share the importance of site administrators developing social and emotional competencies that will influence their individual well-being in a positive manner. Also, high turnover rates in the position of principal (3 to 4 years) interferes with the timeframe it takes to impact the school’s success. Strategies to support school leaders in the area of social and emotional learning (SEL) are mindfulness-based interventions, emotional intelligence training, coaching/mentoring, pre-service principal intervention programs, professional development programs, and policy changes to support prosocial school leaders (Mahfouz et al., 2019).

Implications for Practice and Policy

The literature reviewed indicated that the stresses on educators, particularly in the Silicon Valley region, are on the rise, resulting in job burnout and people leaving the region (Lai, 2021). At the same time, the literature suggests that there are also many who are not burning out and stay in the job even though they are beset with stress. While it seems little can be done to mitigate against some of the stress factors, the research literature on stress provides examples of how educators have been able to successfully manage the stress. For example, San Francisco Unified School District reported success using Transcendental

Meditation practices to help reduce stress and at the same time raise student achievement.

A study of 90 administrators concluded,

The results of this study indicate improved brain integration and reduced mood disturbance in administrators and staff due to practice of Transcendental Meditation. These results have implications for organizations interested in improving the mental health and neurocognitive behavioral competencies of employees. (Travis et al., 2018, p. 104)

The results also showed that staff is having a positive reaction to the practice. Another example from the Silicon Valley region is Sunnyvale School District, which is offering new or alternative ideas to help ease the environment of stress. Through their partnership with Acknowledge Alliance, the district is arguing that promoting an atmosphere of acceptance will lead to positive changes. When the culture of the school district promotes a culture of working collaboratively, it is harder for teachers and administrators to work in silo, which leads to becoming disenfranchised. Employee assistance programs and private counseling services provide adults with a healthy outlet when stress rises. Districts that provide support systems send a message to the employees that their health matters to the organization. This review of literature suggests that the level of care shown in San Francisco and Sunnyvale should be available to all employees; it will help teachers and administrators work through the stresses from the job. Many businesses and other organizations have established wellness programs. The characteristics of these programs include: employee assistance programs, flexible work options, and health seminars. While there are some positive signs, for most school districts there is little evidence of programs to support the well-being of administrators who are in charge of our schools (Allegrante, 1998). Leaders set the tone for culture. Former General Electric

CEO Jack Welsh says leadership is best taught by example, and that “leaders establish trust with candor, transparency, and credit”; he goes on to say “trust happens when leaders are transparent, candid and keep their word” (Severson, 2017, p. 5).

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study was based on Gmelch’s conceptual understanding of administrator stress (Gmelch, 1991). Dr. Walter Gmelch is a leading researcher in higher education and a professor of education at San Francisco State University (“Walter H Gmelch,” n.d.). He has conducted various studies and has published hundreds of articles, papers, journals, and books. Dr. Gmelch has studied the topic of administrator stress extensively and has received numerous honors for his research. After reading his work as part of this study, I reached out to make a connection with him and was granted permission to use the Administrator Stress Index (see Appendices A and B) as part of this study. Gmelch’s development of the Administrator Stress Cycle (Koch et al., 1982) was used to measure school administrators’ perceptions concerning the sources of occupational stress. Gmelch’s study provided four stages. Stage one is designed to measure four demands or stressors placed on the administrator; Gmelch describes these four demands as:

1) Role based stress, perceived from administrators role set interactions and beliefs or attitudes about his or her role in the schools: 2) task-based stress, arising from the performance of day-to-day administrative activities, from telephone, and staff interruptions, meetings, writing memos and reports, to participating in school activities outside of the normal working hours; 3) boundary-spanning stress, emanating from external conditions, such as negotiations and gaining public support for school budgets; and 4) conflict-mediating stress arising from the administrator handling student discipline. (Gmelch et al., 1994, p. 4)

Stage two of the administrator stress cycle consists of how the individual perceives or interprets the stress. Stage three is the response to that stressor, while stage four is the consequence of the stress over time.

While the research in this project was intended to better understand the stressors that site administrators were facing as part of their normal work at school site, the COVID-19 pandemic hit resulting in increased challenges and stress. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of those challenges and stress as faced by school administrators during the COVID-19 pandemic. Administrators must contend with the needs and concerns of parents, students, board, and staff. These positive and negative interactions affect the school administrator in many ways. For example, the first time I welcomed students back to campus during the pandemic was stressful and satisfying all in the same moment. Students wearing masks, social distancing, and using plexi shields to ensure safety create a sense of insecurity in the minds of site administrators worried about the spread of the illness. However, there is also joy of seeing students back on campus learning and laughing as a sense that maybe the world is moving in the right direction. This concept is further explained by Herzberg's motivation theory model, or two factor theory developed in 1959. Herzberg contends that there are two factors that organizations can adjust to improve motivation in the workplace: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators influence employees to work harder while hygiene factors won't, but they will cause employees to become less motivated if not tended to (Expert Program Management, n.d.; American Psychological Association, 2020). Site administrators dealing with COVID-19 know that hygiene factors can cause a direct lack of motivation; therefore, it is imperative to ensure proper steps are

Figure 1

Administrator Well-Being as a System

taken to ensure safety and hygiene of the school site facility. During this unprecedented time it has become abundantly clear that administrators need additional support.

Professional development, mentoring, and support with self-care all became extremely important and districts had little systems or funding to provide those types of support.

Gaps in the Literature

There have been many studies done in the last sixty years on the causes of stress and the impact of stress on those in leadership and managerial positions (Gmelch & Torelli, 1993). There has also been research to understand what can be done to support students

and staff. Much less has been done, however, in regard to the social-emotional aspects of leading education organizations or pertaining to what can actually be done to support administrators' well-being. Research is needed on the extent of the problem for site administrators and how leading in times of crisis impacts stress levels. This research, therefore, examined the issue of stress and school leaders. It looked at the characteristics associated with stress and selected demographic and personal characteristics that may be associated with stress and which may result in greater vulnerability to the stress such as years of experience, gender, and formal position. Finally, the research provided important incidental findings related to administrator stress and wellbeing because it looked at the problems in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, an event with consequences and stressors of historic proportions. Though no attempt was made to look specifically at the effects of COVID-19, the data collected as part of this research was collected in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and provides a backdrop, at least, for understanding how stress is experienced at a time of high stress.

Summary

The literature review provided an overview of the role of school leader. It pointed to various definitions and consequences of stress that are experienced on the job of school administrator. It provided a discussion of the context of leading in schools in the Silicon Valley. This chapter provided a discussion of crisis leadership including the implications of working in a stressful environment and how stress impacts administrator decision-making during a crisis. It also discussed gaps in the literature in this area and the conceptual framework for this study. In the next chapter, I will provide an overview of this study's methodology.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Introduction: Restatement of the Problem

The intent of this study was to better understand the perspectives of site administrators on work related stress. This chapter will present the methodology for this mixed methods study. The purpose of this study was to better understand the nature and extent of stress that administrators face as they work to fulfill their job requirements; it was also to understand how stress (including the stress introduced by COVID-19) has impacted their performance on the job. In addition, this study probed administrators about their perspectives on support that districts can provide to help them manage stress and ways to mitigate negative consequences of stress.

Stress is a “fact of life” and it affects persons in many, if not all, occupations to a greater or lesser extent. School administrators work in particularly stressful jobs and there is a need to better understand the causes of administrator stress, how to mitigate stress, and how to better support those negatively impacted by stress.

Research Methodology

The study was reviewed and approved by the San José State University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). The study was based on a mixed methods design that included the administration of a quantitative survey and the collection of qualitative data from current school site administrators working in schools in Santa Clara County. To better understand how stress impacts administrators, this study sought to get answers from the very people doing the job. Hatch puts it best when he says “thinking about and exploring the definitions of others is useful because it forces researchers to

consider the boundaries of what they are doing” (Hatch, 2002, p. 4). Using a survey research approach, I sought to understand the types of stress administrators face and capture what works for administrators in terms of support.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was K–12 public school site administrators who responded affirmatively for a request for participation that was sent to all school site administrators in Santa Clara County. The initial list of school site administrators was identified by looking at the Santa Clara County Office of Education website at a listing of current site administrators and their email addresses. The invitation letter and participation form shown in Appendices B and C were sent to all potential participants on this list. Participants included administrators who are currently serving in the role of principal or assistant principal and included 74 administrators from 33 school districts in the county. Site administrators provided perspectives that are most directly pertinent to areas that are similar in demographics, size of population, and organization of district boundaries.

The 74 participants, who remained anonymous, were a mix from the following school districts: Alum Rock, Berryessa, Cambrian, Campbell, Cupertino, Evergreen, Franklin-McKinley, Lakeside, Loma Prieta, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Luther Burbank, Moreland, Mount Pleasant, Mountain View Whisman, Oak Grove, Orchard, Saratoga, Sunnyvale, Union, East Side Union, Fremont Union, Los Gatos-Saratoga Union, Campbell Union, Metropolitan, Mountain View-Los Altos, Gilroy, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, Palo Alto, San Jose Unified, Santa Clara Unified, Redwood City, and Woodside.

Instrumentation

Research on administrator stress by Gmelch (Gmelch et al., 1982; Gmelch & Swent, 1984) led to the development of the Administrator Stress Index survey tool, which was used as the basis of data collection in this study. Each question of the Administrator Stress Index represents a demand placed on administrators which would be grouped into four areas he called the stress factors. The four stress factors outlined first by McGrath (1984) and later refined by Gmelch (Gmelch & Torelli, 1993, p. 4), which they felt better represented the multidimensionality of a site administrator. Gmelch and Swent (1984) uncovered four factors of administrative stress: (1) task-based, (2) role-based, (3) conflict mediating, and (4) boundary spanning (Koch et al., 1982).

The Administrator Stress Index (Appendix D) was developed and validated by Gmelch et al. (1982). Gmelch granted the researcher access and permission to use the Administrator Stress Index. A copy of the permission email is included as Appendix E. The survey instrument used in this study (Appendix F) and developed by the researcher contained 25 questions regarding potential stressors such as “Trying to resolve differences with my superiors” or “Handling student discipline problems.” Response to the items makes use of a 5-point Likert scale: (1) Rarely or Never Bothers me, (2) Rarely Bothers me, (3) Occasionally Bothers me, (4) Bothers me, or (5) Frequently Bothers me.

The respondents in this study were asked to share their perceptions in regard to the various areas of concern as noted on the survey. While the Index did not provide any open-ended responses, I added three open-ended questions at the end of the twenty-five-question survey to understand the impact of COVID-19 and support that districts can

provide administrators dealing with stress. I also added demographic questions to get information from the respondents in regard to gender, administrative role, and the number of years employed as a school administrator to start the survey. The demographic data was used to explore relationships between the strength of the stressors experienced by the project participants and demographic factors. A copy of the Administrator Stress Index is included in Appendix D.

Validity and Reliability

The twenty-five questions from the survey, numbers four through twenty-eight, were developed and validated through a series of iterations (Gmelch et al., 1982) by Dr. Gmelch. The Administrator Stress Index was field tested with over twelve hundred principals and superintendents. In addition to the twenty-five questions borrowed with Dr. Gmelch's permission (Appendix E) from the Administrator Stress Index, I added three open-ended questions that were piloted with colleagues to ensure they would be reliable for the qualitative part of the study. This process helped me develop questions that would elicit the data that was needed to answer the research questions.

Looking at the demographic portion of the study, three questions were developed that had to do with gender, role, and years of service. I excluded race or ethnicity due to the small pool of potential respondents and the desire to ensure the survey would be anonymous. In Chapter 5, I will discuss recommendations for future research including adding race as a demographic question and area of study. Adding this would help to further understand how stress affects our respondents.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure for this study was a single stage survey (Creswell, 2009). Data collection began by sending an email to all members of the population with information about the purpose of this study, and an anonymous Google Form survey link (Appendix B). Those who chose to participate were then sent the survey (Appendix F) via email. Two weeks after the initial invitation was sent, a follow-up email was sent to garner additional participation. The survey data from the 31 questions was collected anonymously using Google Forms. The data collection took place during a shelter-in-place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have impacted administrator stress and survey responses, including response rates due to increased demand for email communications. In addition, the roles of the site administrator were also changing due to the closure of the site and transition to remote learning. Demands of the site administrator were shifting depending on which district you worked for.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Procedures

Quantitative data analysis was completed using descriptive statistics in order to report the findings from the survey tool (Creswell, 2009). Means and standard deviations were calculated for all survey questions. Tables were then prepared which analyzed responses by individual questions, and by groupings of questions based on the factors that were part of the instrument. Further comparisons were done using contingency tables to identify relationships among demographic characteristics and selected survey questions or variables.

Qualitative Procedures

In order to analyze the open-ended questions, I read and reread each of the participant's responses to the open-ended questions and utilized thematic analysis to identify powerful excerpts and key themes in the responses. Nowell et al. (2017) describe thematic analysis as a phased approach with six phases, including "familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report" (p. 4). After reading and re-reading the excerpts, I developed a set of codes and then I added codes as I went through the various responses. The codes I utilized included: (a) support from district leadership, (b) better communication, (c) support groups/mentoring, (d) support clarifying roles and responsibilities, (e) support with prioritizing tasks, (f) autonomy, (g) none, (h) professional development, and (i) more salary and appreciation. In order to identify the most common themes I coded the responses for frequency using these codes and a qualitative analysis software tool called Dedoose. This helped me to identify key themes and representative excerpts.

Summary

Table 1 includes a list of the research questions addressed in this study, followed by the corresponding sources of information (data used) and corresponding data analysis procedures. Table 1 below summarizes the specific list of questions that have been grouped by stress factors: (1) task-based stressors, (2) role-based stressors, (3) conflict mediating stressors, and (4) boundary spanning stressors. Data analysis and reporting procedures including descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, standard deviation) and qualitative analysis procedures (thematic analysis using Dedoose) were summarized.

Table 1*Match of Research Questions to Corresponding Sources of Data and Data Analysis*

Research Question	Data to be Used	Analytic Method
RQ1: What were the stressors that school site administrators identified?	<p>Responses to each of 25 survey questions from the Administrator Stress Index using the five responses of perceived impact on the subject.</p> <p>Responses to the open-ended question regarding the impact of COVID-19 on administrator stress.</p> <p><u>Task-based stressors</u></p> <p>Q4. Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls.</p> <p>Q5. Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people</p> <p>Q9. Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk</p> <p>Q10. Imposing excessively high expectations of myself</p> <p>Q11. Writing memos, letters, and other communications</p> <p>Q14. Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time.</p> <p>Q15. Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor.</p> <p>Q21. Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.</p> <p>Q25. Feeling that meetings take up too much time.</p> <p>Q26. Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time.</p> <p><u>Role-based stressors</u></p> <p>Q6. Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly</p> <p>Q7. Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me.</p> <p>Q12. Trying to resolve differences with my superiors.</p> <p>Q13. Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance.</p> <p>Q18. Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me.</p> <p>Q24. Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are.</p> <p>Q27. Trying to influence my immediate supervisors' actions and decisions that affect me.</p>	Frequencies and graphical representation of the data including mean and standard deviation

Table 1—continued

Research Question	Data to be Used	Analytic Method
(RQ1, continued)	<p><u>Boundary spanning stressors</u> Q17. Preparing and allocating budget resources Q20. Being involved in the collective bargaining process. Q22. Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies. Q23. Administering the negotiated contract (grievances, interpretation, etc.). Q28. Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs.</p> <p><u>Conflict mediating stress</u> Q8. Trying to resolve the differences between/among students Q16. Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts Q19. Handling student discipline problems.</p> <p><u>Open Ended Responses to Question about Stress and COVID-19</u> Q29. Has COVID-19 made your job more stressful? If yes in what ways?</p>	
RQ2: What were the differences in administrator stress reported across: (a) gender; (b) years of experience; (c) type of administrator position.	The data used for this question will be the responses to the 25-item Administrator Stress Index survey and the 3 demographic questions	Mean and standard deviation to indicate the extent of variability among the participants based on gender, years of experience, and position.

Table 1—continued

Research Question	Data to be Used	Analytic Method
(RQ2, continued)		Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics in the form of the Chi Square test. <i>t</i> -test
RQ3: What types of district support did administrators describe that would be helpful to manage their stress?	The data used for this question are the responses from the final two open-ended survey questions. Q30. Would you participate in a support group for administrators if your district provided it confidentiality? Q31. What types of support would you like from your district?	Thematic analysis and coding using Dedoose to identify common themes.

Chapter 4 will include a better understanding of job stresses current administrators face and the support they desire. The findings will also investigate how this group managed during COVID-19, what support they would participate in if their district offered such services, and what support they desire.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

This dissertation research was intended to investigate stressors that affect the emotional and mental well-being of school site administrators. Using stage one of the Administrator Stress Cycle developed by Gmelch et al. (1982), I further understood the demands, or stressors, placed on site school administrators who work within the boundaries of Silicon Valley. This study identified the type and intensity of stressors that administrators experience (Brimm, 1983; Koch et al., 1982). The data I sought helped me to develop strategies that reduce the impact of the elements which cause stress. This chapter is intended to present the findings and results of this study. I will open this chapter by describing the participants in the study and then present findings and results for each of the research questions. I will then close this chapter by providing a general summary of the findings.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The names of administrators who took part in this study were collected from the Santa Clara County Office of Education website where the emails of site administrators are listed. Using a scripted email (Appendix D), I contacted 320 school site administrators to request anonymous participation by taking a 31-question survey through Google Forms developed from Gmelch's stage one Administrator Stress Index (Gmelch et al., 1982). A total of 74 site administrators took part in the study, giving a response rate of 23%. Fifty-three females and 21 males responded to my request. Fifty-four of the 74 respondents were site principals. Forty-three of the principals were female while 11 principals were

male. Forty-five of the respondents reported they were in the first 10 years of being a site administrator.

Findings and Results

RQ1: What Were the Stressors That School Site Administrators Identified?

In order to answer RQ1, the researcher analyzed the responses to the questions from the adapted Administrator Stress Index that was developed by Gmelch and others, and adapted for this study. To better understand how stress is affecting site administrators, the research analyzed the responses from the four dominant stress factor areas: (1) task-based stress, (2) role-based stress, (3) boundary spanning stress, and (4) conflict mediating stress. Participants' responses on the Likert-type scale were used to identify mean and standard deviations for each of the survey questions. In addition, responses to the open-ended question about the impact of COVID-19 on administrator stress were analyzed using qualitative methods. The information below outlines these findings.

Table 2 illustrates the response options and numerical scale that respondents had to choose from. There was an option for a non-applicable response which was excluded from the data analysis along with any blank responses that may have happened.

Table 2*Survey Response Scale and Meaning*

Scale	Response Options on Survey
1	Rarely or Never Bothers me
2	Rarely Bothers me
3	Occasionally Bothers me
4	Bothers me
5	Frequently Bothers me

As mentioned above, the Administrator Stress Index is broken into four categories of factors that were used as the data were organized. The survey questions are not in order of factors so the respondents did not know the categories as they answered the questions. The respondents were given the prompt “School administrators have identified situations as sources of stress. It’s possible that some of the situations bother you more than others. How much are you bothered by each of the situations listed below? Please click the appropriate response.” Statements such as “Being interrupted by phone calls” or “Supervising or coordinating the tasks of many people” are given with the responses that are displayed in Table 3. A complete list of questions can be seen in Appendix F. The questions used from the ASI were grouped and mean scores were developed for the four stress areas and are shared in Table 3.

Table 3*Factors Associated with Administrators Stress by Overall Mean Scores*

Four Factors of Stress (<i>n</i> = 74)	Mean
Role-Based Stress (Questions 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21)	2.97
Task-Based Stress (Questions 4, 11, 15, 17, 21, 25, 26)	2.85
Boundary Spanning Stress (Questions 9, 22, 23, 27, 28)	2.51
Conflict Mediation Stress (Questions 8, 12, 16, 19)	2.36

Site administrators rated role-based stressors as the highest stress factor on the survey overall. Question 6 on the survey is role-based and had the highest perceived stress rating at an average answer of $M = 3.72$ with a standard deviation of $SD = 1.14$, meaning there was some variation and the responses spread out. The stem for this question, “Knowing I can’t get information needed to carry out my job properly,” was rated as the most bothersome of all items by the respondents.

The task-based stress had an overall mean that was slightly lower. Of the questions in this group, Question 25, “Feeling that meetings take up too much time,” was the top stressor from the Task Based category, with a mean of $M = 3.62$ and a standard deviation of 1, which means our responses show some variance but the mean is trending towards “Bothers me” on the Likert scale. A mean response of $M = 3.45$ was given to Question 21, “Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.”

Table 4 provides a summary of the mean response rate and the standard deviation from participants for the three highest rated (most bothersome) administrator stressors.

Table 4*Highest Rated Administrator Stressors (Top Three by Stress Factors) (n = 74)*

Question	Stress Factor	Mean	SD
Q6. Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	Role-Based Stressor	3.72	1.14
Q25. Feeling that meetings take up too much time.	Task-Based Stressor	3.62	1.00
Q21. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.	Task Based Stressor	3.45	1.13

Administrator information demands, meetings (time), and workload were areas that were top 3 stressors. Respondents reported highest stress around these questions and almost the opposite can be said for helping others or mediating conflict as seen in the respondents' lowest rated responses as outlined below in Table 5.

Table 5*Lowest Rated Administrative Stressors (Bottom Three by Stress Factors) (n = 74)*

Question	Stress Factor	Mean
Q8. Trying to resolve the differences between/among students.	Conflict Mediating Stressor	1.82
Q4. Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls	Task-Based Stressor	2.11
Q9. Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk	Task-Based Stressor	2.22

Trying to resolve the differences between/among students was the lowest mean score ($M = 1.82$) on the responses on the survey. The respondents were also less stressed about being interrupted either by phone or staff ($M = 2.11$). “Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls” (Q8, $M = 2.22$) and “Having my work frequently interrupted by staff” (Q9) were rated in the “Rarely Bothers me” category for both.

While Role-Based and Task-Based Stress Factors had the highest overall mean scores (Table 3), there were variations across questions included in each category. As a result, it is likely that administrators face greater and lesser stresses in each factor and category. Preliminary analysis indicated, however, that time and information needs (Table 4) were more stressful than workplace interruptions or conflict among students (Table 5).

Qualitative Data Excerpts Related to Job Stress During COVID-19.

Seventy-one out of the 74 participants answered questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on job related stress. Sixty-four participants indicated that COVID-19 has made their job more stressful while 7 participants indicated it has not. Table 6 below outlines the percentage of respondents who answered the open-ended question regarding the impact of COVID-19 on job related stress as having made their jobs more stressful.

Table 6

Perceived Impact of COVID-19 on Job Related Stress (n = 71)

Question	Yes	No
Q29. Has COVID-19 made your job more stressful? If yes, in what ways?	90.1% (n = 64)	9.9% (n = 7)

Over 90% of respondents answered ‘Yes’ that COVID made their jobs more stressful. Several of the 64 participants who answered yes provided additional narratives on how COVID-19 has made their job more stressful. The following excerpts highlight common themes and are particularly descriptive of the responses provided by the participants to the prompt “Has COVID-19 made your job more stressful? If yes, in what ways?”

Yes. Because of distance learning it is much more difficult to communicate directly to students as I used to be able to just pull them from class. Students, and parents to a certain degree, now can easily just ignore my emails/phone calls making it very difficult to get in touch. (Participant 23)

Getting the information needed to carry out their job for participant 23 is a troubling theme that also came out from the quantitative side of the survey. Communication at the beginning and throughout the pandemic relied heavily on telephone communication, video conferencing, and email. More often than not, this increased the amount of time administrators spent online.

Another COVID factor that has increased job stress is that my days often feel like endless back-to-back Zoom meetings without a break or even the opportunity to stand up out of my chair (for example, I have 4 consecutive meetings today without a break from 12:30-4:30!). Finally, there are certain job responsibilities that do require me to be on campus and in contact with MANY students (photo day, textbook distribution, etc.) even though our campus is technically closed. Regardless of all the careful precautions we take to maintain safety during these events, it’s hard not to think about exposure risk that I then may be bringing home to my family.

There is a certain portion of our community that feels like educators should be considered “essential workers” and that exposure risk is now just part of the job, similar to health care professionals. Although I long for the day where we can bring students back to campus safely, I do resent and harbor stress that I somehow HAVE TO be exposed to many students from time to time. (Participant 23)

A common theme began to emerge around the overlap of home and work during the shelter-in-place. Also, many respondents felt a loss in regard to the joys they extracted from the job. There also is a theme in regard to the expectations to meet virtually.

Absolutely, 100%, I thrive on working with kids, and instead I am on endless Zoom meetings and managing state mandates instead of working with kids. When I am working with families it is because of crisis, attendance, or failing. I have no time to connect outside of the negatives. (Participant 54)

Trying to manage the support I need to give my son as he struggles with distance learning while trying to focus on my own job can often be a huge stressor. (Participant 23)

Many respondents also talked about stress in regard to the workload. Participant 20 describes below the stress from not being in person and the challenges this presents.

The number of emails I receive and am expected to respond to every day has grown exponentially. Everything takes longer to do (observing instruction, handling student conflicts, resolving parent concerns, etc.) because I have to wait for people to respond, rather than just being able to walk down the hall to see someone. Zoom fatigue is real. There is a lot of stress from all stakeholders (parents, students, staff) that I am trying to manage, in addition to my own stress. The stress of the unknown (will we reopen, when, what will happen, etc.) has caused a lot of anxiety for me and others I work with. We are better able to see the extreme needs of students but are less able to do anything about them. (Participant 20)

A lack of control for the situation was described as creating a more stressful situation for these respondents. Getting the information needed to carry out their jobs was a consistent concern that was raised throughout the responses. Most, however, continued to describe a lack of joy in the job of education and a desire to get more information. Participant 8 below lays out a large concern about education and the burn out rate.

So much of the joy I get from being an educator is missing right now with no kids on campus. It's also a very stressful time because everyone is having to create new policy and procedures as we go and no one knows what to do. Add concerns about personal and family health and you have a recipe for nearly unmanageable levels of stress. I don't know anyone in education that isn't burnt out right now. (Participant 8)

In fairness, seven individuals answered Q29 no, COVID-19 has not made the job more stressful. Participant 63 said that, “it has just created different responsibilities.” Participant 59 shared a similar response, saying work was “not more stressful, but there are different areas to be stressed about.” One participant, Participant 26, said that COVID-19 has actually made their job easier and responded, “right now with full distance learning I feel my job is easier. I have more time not having students on campus, but I miss them terribly.”

Summary of Findings for RQ1.

In summary, respondents in Silicon Valley report very high levels of stress during the pandemic. The factor that was described as causing the most overall stress from survey results was role based in nature. “Knowing I can’t get information needed to carry out my job properly” was rated at a mean of 3.72. Respondents also noted that “Meetings take up too much of [their] time” and rated that the second highest mean at 3.62.

During the pandemic, all humans were advised to stay home and shelter in place unless you were an essential worker. Many public schools in Silicon Valley remained closed during the last months of 2020. As this survey was being taken the respondents were dealing with a new normal of running a school site from a distance. Many of the respondents who took part in the survey reported getting information to plan and communicate led to many stressors. In addition, meetings using the platforms Zoom or Google Meets allowed site and district teams to meet with staff and community members more frequently.

***RQ2: What Were the Differences in Administrator Stress Reported Across:
(a) Gender, (b) Years of Experience, and (c) Type of Administrator Position?***

Findings.

In order to answer RQ2, responses were calculated to find the mean for each factor to better understand the extent of variability among all of the participants across demographic characteristics. Restated, the four factor areas were Task-based, Role-based, Conflict mediating, and Boundary spanning (Gmelch et al., 1982). Table 7 shows the four stress factors that were surveyed and the means for each factor by gender. The first column is each factor area, followed by the female mean, with the finale column displaying the male mean. Out of the 74 respondents to the survey, 21 reported a gender of male whereas 53 reported they identified as female.

Table 7

Stress Factor by Gender

Factors	Mean for Males (<i>n</i> = 21)	Mean for Females (<i>n</i> = 53)
Task-Based Stressors	2.75	2.89
Role-Based Stressors	2.70	3.06
Conflict Mediation Stressors	2.41	2.32
Boundary Spanning Stressors	2.35	2.55

Task-based stressors rated highest for males whereas role-based stressors were rated highest by the female respondents. Males rated imposing “High expectations on oneself” just as stressful as “Feeling that meetings take up too much time” with a mean of 3.45—whereas female participants rated Question 10 on the survey, “Imposing excessively high

expectations” at a mean of 3.39, which they rated lower than “Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.” A summary of the top stressors for females shown in Table 8 illustrates that females are seeking information.

Table 8

Summary of Top Stressors: Females (n = 53)

Question	Stress Factor	Mean
Q6. Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	Role-Based Stressor	3.87
Q25. Feeling that meetings take up too much time	Task-Based Stressor	3.65
Q21. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day	Task-Based Stressor	3.51
Q7. Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me	Role-Based Stressor	3.40

Female respondents report a strong stressor is “Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly.” “Satisfying the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me” has a mean of 3.40. Table 9 below is a summary of our male respondents who rated imposing high expectations on themselves as a specific top stressor.

Table 9*Summary of Top Stressors: Males (n = 21)*

Question	Stress Factor	Mean
Q10. Imposing excessively high expectations of myself.	Task-Based Stressor	3.45
Q25. Feeling that meetings take up too much time.	Task-Based Stressor	3.45
Q21. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.	Task-Based Stressor	3.45
Q6. Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly.	Task-Based Stressor	3.31

When comparing top stressors by gender, female respondents had getting the right information, a role-based stress factor, as the highest stressor ($M = 3.87$). But males, on the other hand, rated a task-based stress factor, “Imposing excessively high expectations of myself,” as highest ($M = 3.45$). Males and females, however, agreed that “feeling that meetings take up too much time” and “feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the workday,” is a high stressor for both males and females. Both genders agree that “knowing I can’t get information to carry out my job” bothers them.

Table 10 looks at stress factor by role. Assistant principals, generally considered less experienced on the job, indicate much higher stress than principals related to Task-Based Stressors. This finding would be consistent with the challenges and ambiguities in the tasks that assistant principals are asked to accomplish. Table 10 looks at the overall means for each stressor based on roles the respondents reported in the demographics questions.

Task-based stressors bothered assistant principals almost to the point of frequently bothersome, the highest rating possible.

Table 10

Stress Factor by Role

Factors	Mean for Principals (<i>n</i> = 54)	Mean for Assistant Principals (<i>n</i> = 20)
Task-Based Stressors	2.73	4.82
Role-Based Stressors	2.96	2.93
Conflict Mediation Stressors	2.47	2.39
Boundary Spanning Stressors	2.25	2.88

Table 11 shows the top four questions from the survey as answered by the assistant principals and the principals. When looking at role-based stressors, assistant principals rated “feeling that meetings take up too much time” as the highest stressor whereas principals rated “feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day” as their highest stressor. However, principals report role-based stressors as their high stress factor. Stressors such as getting information, interruptions, trying to complete reports, too heavy a workload, and meetings that take up time all fall in the task-based stressor category. “Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me” is a stressor to our assistant principals as reflected in Table 11. However, “imposing excessively high expectations of myself” is a high stressor for our respondents ($M = 4.00$).

Table 11*Summary of Top Stressors for Assistant Principals (n = 20)*

Question	Stress Factor	Mean
Q10. Imposing excessively high expectations of myself	Task-Based Stressor	4.00
Q21. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day	Task-Based Stressor	3.83
Q6. Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	Role-Based Stressor	3.58
Q7. Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me	Role-Based Stressor	3.50

Table 12 summarizes the top stressors principals responded to in the survey. Principals are bothered most by “knowing I can’t get information needed to carry out my job properly” at a mean score of 3.76.

Table 12*Summary of Top Stressors for Principals (n = 54)*

Question	Stress Factor	Mean
Q6. Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly	Task-Based Stressor	3.76
Q25. Feeling that meetings take up too much time.	Task-Based Stressor	3.64
Q21. Feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day	Task-Based Stressor	3.40
Q10. Imposing excessively high expectations of myself	Task-Based Stressor	3.26
Q7. Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me	Role-Based Stressor	3.26

The last demographic breakdown, Table 13, looks at years of service and the stress factors. Stress numbers seem to increase in a U-shaped curve, with stress going up in early years on the job but declines as time on the job increases. For reasons that will be explored further in Chapter 5, more experienced administrators indicated less stress, particularly those with 21+ years of experience.

Table 13

Stress Factor by Years of Service

Stress Factors	Years of Service				
	1–5 (<i>n</i> = 19)	6–10 (<i>n</i> = 26)	11–15 (<i>n</i> = 13)	16–20 (<i>n</i> = 9)	21+ (<i>n</i> = 7)
Task-Based Stressors	2.55	2.99	2.45	2.75	2.57
Role-Based Stressors	2.38	3.07	3.18	2.81	2.70
Conflict Mediation Stressors	2.83	2.44	2.38	2.35	2.28
Boundary Spanning Stressors	2.26	2.56	2.57	2.48	2.36

Summary of Findings for RQ2.

The previous section looked at the differences in administrator stress reported across: (a) gender, (b) type of administrator position, and (c) years of experience, and responses were calculated to find the mean for each factor to better understand the extent of variability among all of the participants across demographic characteristics. When looking at the data by demographics, stress is reported in a different manner depending on your gender, role, or years of service. When reporting the data by gender there is a difference in which stress factor is rated highest. When reporting by role, it is clear that positionality at the site affects your answer, as does your years of service. These factors

play a part in how our respondents answered the questions. Basically, job responsibilities, and years of service matter when reporting work-related sources of stress.

RQ3: What Types of District Support Did Administrators Describe and Report as Available, That Would Be Helpful to Manage the Stresses of the Job?

In order to answer RQ3, the research analyzed the narrative data provided in the two open-ended questions listed in Table 14. The analysis coded responses based on the research questions, review of the literature, and from reading over the responses. The researcher used a qualitative tool (Dedoose) to code the data, find common themes and excerpts, and interpret their meaning and importance. Table 14 shows a summary of the findings based on this analysis of responses to open-ended questions 30 and 31, that were part of the survey instrument.

Table 14

Willingness to Participate and Recommendations for District Support

RQ3. What types of district support did administrators describe that would be helpful to manage their stress?	
Q30. Would you participate in a support group for administrators if your district provided it confidentially?	Q31. What types of support would you like from your district?
The responses for the ($n = 69$) participants were: no ($n = 11$), 15.9%; not sure ($n = 16$), 23.2%; yes ($n = 42$), 60.9%	Suggestions for District support by the ($n = 67$) participants were: support from district leadership ($n = 31$), 46.3%; better communication ($n = 21$), 31.3%; support groups/mentoring ($n = 13$), 19.4%; support clarifying roles and responsibilities ($n = 9$), 13.4%; support with prioritizing tasks ($n = 8$), 11.9%; autonomy ($n = 7$), 10.4%; none ($n = 7$), 10.4%; professional development ($n = 2$), 3%; more salary ($n = 2$), 3%; appreciation ($n = 1$), 1.5%

Question 30 asked participants whether or not they would participate in a confidential support group in their district. Sixty percent of participants said yes, while 16% said no and 23% said that they weren't sure.

Yes, like we have in the past. We would have off site, admin only meetings with other principals to discuss questions, concerns, etc. Currently we do not have this space, and honestly, not sure how it could be productive... in past meetings it became a venting fest, and that is not what I would like to be a part of. (Participant 72)

I'd love something like this. (Participant 12)

Totally...I already do. (Participant 24)

Our district does provide this - I do not, because I am fortunate to work with two other APs who I am able to process and vent with when needed. (Participant 33)

Have participated in the past, would not in my current position. (Participant 25)

I don't know. I have created my own support system within my Principal group and within my Admin team. (Participant 4)

Maybe. I would need to feel safe and supported without feeling like what I shared would be used against me in some way. (Participant 36)

Question 31 asked participants about support they would like to receive from their districts. The top three most frequently reported responses were in the areas of (1) support from district leadership team members, (2) better communication between the site and district office leaders, and (3) support groups/mentoring. Nearly half (46.3%) of the participants expressed a desire to have increased support from their district leadership teams.

In this difficult time, the district administration has adopted a very top-down decision making process. While expedient, it leaves many others out of the conversation about how best to meet the needs of the students. I would appreciate support that respects input from those of us who must implement the plans that are adopted. (Participant 71)

Departments talking with each other so that they can coordinate communication and assigned tasks, more check ins that are affirming and conversation based. (Participant 60)

I think we have been cut down to the bare bones and still expected to do the same work plus some. I think being realistic of what we can accomplish, what can go or isn't as necessary as we deal with a global pandemic, and giving more support to get things done. I think often we are given things to do but when we ask questions, answers aren't ready or figured out. So having answers to as much as possible ahead by navigating through with focus groups would be helpful. We have some focus groups but I also feel they don't utilize them for the voices but more for planning. In other words, the people in the groups don't always get to analyze the plan but just make it a roll it out without looking for holes, flaws, problems, etc. (Participant 54)

Close to one third (31.3%) of the participants reported they would like to have better communication with the staff at the district office.

Better communication with the community and feedback. Also, site principals are the only administrators besides the executive team who are actually reporting to work on campus. Everyone else works from home and it doesn't feel supportive. (Participant 49)

About a fifth (19.4%) of the participants indicated that they would be interested in participating in confidential support groups and/or receive mentoring from other administrators.

The resilience group helps. What also helps is knowing that everyone else is dedicated and working hard to help our students make it through this crisis. (Participant 8)

Having safe places to bring things up. Let's be real, some folks who are in positions of power don't have the skills to lead others. They're not upping their game and keeping inequitable systems in place. We need gamechangers and ways for people to try different things so we get different results instead of just staying the course for mediocrity. (Participant 46)

Informal support groups that do not include direct supervisors who serve in evaluative roles. Clarity around long-term planning and scope of work. Flexibility and adaptive leadership. (Participant 21)

Summary of Findings

Ninety percent of our respondents answered that the pandemic is making their job more stressful. Getting information to carry out their job is reported as the highest rated question on the survey. Respondents report ($M = 3.72$) meetings that take up too much time are a high stressor. Role-based stress ($M = 2.97$) rated highest overall of the four stress factors, while Conflict Mediation stress ($M = 2.36$) was the lowest rated factor.

When looking at the data by gender, males and females report different stress factors as the highest. Males reported Task-Based Stressors ($M = 2.75$) as their highest stressor while females reported Role-Based Stressors ($M = 3.06$) as their highest stressor. Females report “getting the information needed to carry out their job” as the highest rated question on the survey. Males reported “imposing excessively high expectations of myself” ($M = 3.45$) as the highest rated question. When looking at roles, 43 out of our 54 respondents report that getting information to carry out their job is the top stressor.

Forty three percent of the respondents indicated they were interested in more support from district leadership, while 31% wanted better communication. Twenty percent requested support groups/mentoring. Thirteen percent wanted support by clarifying roles and responsibilities, while 12% requested support with prioritizing tasks. Eleven percent requested more autonomy, and two of the respondents requested higher pay. The majority of our respondents wanted better communication, access to more accurate and timely information, and safe places to bring things up.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Introduction

In this chapter I will further discuss interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations based on the research findings. The first section begins with a restatement of the problem, purpose of the study, and key findings from the quantitative data from the survey and qualitative data from the open-ended questions. In the next section I make recommendations for practice based on these conclusions and based on the match between research findings and the researcher's personal experience with administrative stress, including his experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and personal loss. Lastly, the chapter provides recommendations for practice which will include recommendations for current site administrators contending with stress. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research in this area and implications of this research.

Conclusions and Applications

The problem for this study was to better understand how school administrators work in particularly stressful jobs and the need to better understand the causes of administrator stress, how to mitigate that stress, and how to provide better support. The purpose of the study was to investigate the conditions and stressors that are associated with the role of the school site administrator and identify support that they desire. By surveying school administrators, I hoped to both explicate key conditions and stressors and identify supports that site administrators would like from their districts. The research questions for this study were: RQ1: What were the stressors that school site administrators identified? RQ2: What differences (if any) were found in administrator reported stress across (a)

gender, (b) years of experience, and (c) type of administrator position? RQ3: What types of district support did administrators describe that would be helpful to manage their stress?

Increasing Stress Levels During COVID-19

I administered my survey during the COVID-19 pandemic. Administrators reported moderate levels of stress in regard to the questions on the stress index. The impact of the pandemic was sure to be felt by site administrators whose brick-and-mortar buildings were deemed not safe for students. Ninety percent of our respondents on the survey reported the pandemic has made their job more stressful. The respondents were overwhelmingly in agreement that the pandemic has increased their stress levels in a negative way. Also, the respondents' comments gave this researcher the impression that they were feeling a sense of disconnect from others in their organization. Many administrators have to find alternate ways to continue to connect with their communities. As pressure mounts to stay connected, many administrators are filming, editing, and posting videos to ensure students felt a sense of community. Leaders would hold meetings and town halls to discuss school plans based on the latest information the county has released. School districts developed online learning options so students could continue to learn from afar. COVID-19 changed the way we as humans interacted almost overnight in Silicon Valley. Shelter-in-place created more isolation, and site administrators who usually interacted with many individuals from the community just by walking around the campus were now thrown into endless meetings that would last late into the night. Responsibilities that usually were done in concert with administrative support were now done without because those administrative supports were no longer easily accessible. Overall, I believe that the

research suggests public school site administrators face high levels of stress under the best of circumstances; however, when a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic hit, stress levels spiked.

In contrast to all of this, there was a very small group of administrators who reported a reduction in stress levels. Students were sent home, no longer the problem of the site administrator. Working from home provided a respite for a very small group of administrators. The data suggested that role plays a part in this perspective as discipline and facility issues can often fall to the assistant principal in a larger school community. Students were not mixing so discipline problems for school administrators flexed to more online offenses. Facilities were closed so school buildings were vacant. Whether these views will be short lived is unclear. What is clear, however, is that stress affects administrators differently depending on role, status, and circumstances.

One of the key themes of causes of stress that came out of the survey data was administrators “getting the information they need to carry out their job.” Public school site leaders have to follow school district and ultimately county guidelines in regard to public health. Public schools were getting information and guidelines from the Santa Clara County Health Department and making decisions about how to proceed. This process over the last year has led to hours of time devoted to planning for scenarios that never materialized. In addition, school districts were slowly opening up facilities in order to provide learning labs or after school care in some cases. This required site administrators to return to campus and supervise these activities which can also lead to increased stress levels in regards to the health of students, staff, and their own families. County guidelines

for reporting and opening facilities were set by counties in California and deciphered and implemented by school districts. Protocols were communicated to staff and community by the site administrator who in turn had to ensure they were being followed. In addition, the reporting of positive case numbers and advising staff to quarantine after making contact with a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 also became a new job responsibility by most site administrators in Silicon Valley. This type of environment also led to many meetings by district leadership to ensure understanding and coordination. This effect led to our respondents “feeling that meetings take up too much time,” which was the top stressor from the Task-Based category ($M = 3.62$). During a shelter-in-place, meetings were increased and frequent due to a necessity to discuss the ever-changing information and also because it was convenient to do so. Connecting was made possible through platforms such as Zoom and Google Meets. However, with this came comfortability and longer meetings. No longer was the excuse of leaving as easy. Meetings began to run over and screen time increased for administrators who have long been used to mixing with students on the playground or supervising a basketball game.

Cultivating Trust Within the School District Community

When crisis hits, school site leaders need to understand what to do next and ways to give input to district leadership. School site leaders need to follow federal, state, and local guidelines. Site leadership requires a high level of trust by the leader and those they are working with and for. When trust is eroded or fragile, many within the system start to question the leader. Our respondents reported a high level of stress around getting their roles and getting the information needed to carry out their job. During the pandemic,

isolation was a huge factor and information was slow to come. Many of the respondents reported a lack of trust in district and community leadership during the pandemic. This lack of trust could be felt by many during this time as many in our country were also questioning our federal government's leadership. If site leaders lose trust in those who are making policy or setting district initiatives, many bad things can begin to unfold. The site leader can begin to become disenfranchised and begin to take a different approach towards district mandates and regulations. This can lead to a lack of leadership at the site, thus causing a snowball effect of negative results within the school community. Morale can begin to fracture within the staff, and parents begin to get angry due to a lack of or wrong information. We know a strong site principal can make a very positive impact on a school community. Therefore, the opposite can be said for a principal who is stressed out due to a lack of trust for the organization they work for.

Opening Lines of Communication

Respondents report a need to get information to carry out their job. Principals report the highest degree of stress is getting correct information. During the pandemic, information was hard to come by as the World itself was trying to understand the scope of what we could do as a society. Masks and social distancing were shared as a way to mediate the sickness. However, in the beginning this became a political discussion point with the U.S. president saying at the time he would not wear a mask. Conflicting views create conflicting information. COVID-19 came out of nowhere and our medical practitioners were scrambling to understand what we could and couldn't do as a society. Schools were deemed a breeding ground and had to be closed. Schools would find other

ways to deliver instruction and many iterations of plans would be drawn up in hopes of returning students to school sites. This process went on from March of 2020 and continues to the present moment. Many schools are now reopening and site leadership is even more stressful as most public schools have to plan for both remote learning students and in-person students. Parents and communities are growing more impatient with educators as they worry about the long-term effects of a shelter-in-place and learning lag. District leadership needs to ensure communication is clear and swift even when there is very little. Transparency and consistency are important factors that will lead to maintaining open lines of communication.

Support for Leaders

Question 30 on the survey asked respondents if they would participate in support groups for administrators if it was provided confidentially. This is an area in which many of the respondents would take advantage. Many respondents said this is a private problem, and it would need to be put together thoughtfully. Many of the respondents also worried about risking their jobs or chance at advancement just by coming out and saying I need help. There is a lot about our society that continues to hold people back from seeking help or taking advantage of workplace programs. Having the courage to say I am not feeling well and need some help is hard for folks to do in their own home, much less at work. In thinking about American society in regard to wellness, we still have a long way to go in making it OK to need a hand. I look to change this aspect in our system and ensure that our administrators are feeling supported and thus maintaining a healthy lifestyle and strong work efficacy.

We are now seeing more and more that by taking care of employees and their state of mind, they are in turn creating a better employee who will be devoted to the organization's efficacy and well-being. My research turned up many employee assistance programs, flexible work options, and health seminars that employers are putting in place to support their employees in the private sector. When people are not at work, they are costing the organization and themselves. Many times, there is a fiscal impact in waiting for folks to recover from whatever mental ailments may be causing them to step away from the work. Many employees might be scared to share with their employer that they are not well and need some support. In education, wellness is more directed towards the students rather than the staff. Many of the studies I found concentrated on the students more so than the employees. Many educators support a culture that helps the adults stay healthy, but time and money is dedicated to students more often than not. Staff wellness is a touchy issue no matter the organization you work in, but usually administrator wellness is not discussed. In order to handle conflicts that might arise from investing resources into this issue, my plan includes ensuring that we make this a visible problem within the system.

Recommendations for Practice

One recommendation of this study is to reach out to administrators in Santa Clara County and to start an informal support group. At the outset of this research, I received many replies expressing interest in this work. Through the survey and follow up exchanges and conversations, the research reports a strong desire by many administrators to connect and share stories to help normalize and cope with workplace stress. The researcher will share the findings and continue the discussion to understand more about the causes of

stress in the workplace and find effective ways to manage it. I have included in Appendix G a sample invitation to participants and other administrators in the County. The findings suggest that administrators should support other administrators struggling with stress and work-life balance or mental health by creating informal support groups. Networks of formal and informal participation are needed to support mental health related stress. These networks must go beyond school and district sites in order for administrators to find safe harbor to share stress related factors and events. Districts need to cultivate external partnerships with mental health providers and other organizations that currently serve students. The hope is that these providers will be interested to also add or extend support services for staff/administrators. Districts can improve district to site communication by creating a communications coordinator whose specific role is to disseminate information across the community. In this way, communications will be more consistent across sites within a district. While principals say that want to keep some autonomy over communications, the stress involved in communicating across a district will fall on district as well as site administrators. Districts should support administrators in developing skills in building relationships by providing coaching and mentoring. Districts should provide administrators with additional training in Cognitive Coaching (Norgon, n.d.) to enhance communication skills in facilitating reflective conversations, particularly in high stress or crisis situations. This professional development could also include in-service training in trauma informed practices so that staff are better prepared to lead during a crisis. It could also include administrator pre-service programs to facilitate skill building focused on stress management and crisis leadership.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future studies, I recommend continued study on how this stress is affecting site administrators in Silicon Valley post-COVID-19. Schools are beginning to reopen and new stressors have become more of the norm. Stressors such as ensuring protocols are followed and personal protection gear is stocked becomes a must and if not followed could result in the spread of a virus that leads to the closure of the facility or worse loss of life. Continuing investigation into the additional stages of the stress cycle identified by Gmelch and others is also recommended. This research would seek to elicit more data in order to inform additional strategies for supporting school site administrators. Finally, further research is needed to understand the importance of how race and ethnicity is related to administrator stress, and the intersectionality of race, position, age, and experience and its impact on how administrators are affected by and respond to stress.

Implications

When I started on this journey, I had no idea a pandemic would hit. In addition, I had no idea I myself would deal with personal loss during the pandemic. As a site administrator trying to run a public school, I have had many stressful moments (such as the loss of a staff member) which were truly traumatizing. However, this past year has been the most challenging and stressful year of my career. Dealing with the pandemic was something I never saw coming. Doing a study on the impact of administrators has turned over many rocks for me and has enlightened me on my role and my responsibilities, including my own self-care. When doing this study, I lost my father to a tragic event. Not only was I dealing with the stress caused by the virus spread in our community and the world at-large, I also

came to realize that I would never be able to see my dad again. These circumstances brought the importance of better understanding of how administrators experience stress and then, what might be done to reduce the negative impact or consequences of stress.

Leading during a crisis is very hard work by itself. When you also add in a personal crisis, it can almost make the task of leadership impossible. These recent events, along with this research, have pushed me to better understand how stress plays a role in everyday decisions as a site administrator. As a principal at a school, my impact on the school community is significant. I am more certain now that I owe it to the community that I serve to ensure I am in top form in terms of managing my own stress and pay attention to my well-being. I am a human and vulnerable. It is up to me to know when I have reached my limits and when I need to step back and breathe. As a result of doing this research, I better understand the importance of anticipating personal and professional problems, processes, and ensuring systems are in place. This approach can make stress levels more manageable; it can ensure that down time and the freedom to take breaks are available and tapped, in what can sometimes be experienced as never-ending work that comes with running a school site.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

Office of Research
Division of
Research and Innovation

San José State University
One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0022

TEL: 408-924-2272
officeofresearch@sjsu.edu
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SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

IRB Notice of Approval

Date of Approval: 11/4/2020

Study Title: An Analysis of Job Stress as Experienced by Public Site School Administrators

Primary Investigator(s): Dr. Arnold Danzig

Student(s): Joseph Bosco

Other SJSU Team Members:

Funding Source: None

IRB Protocol Tracking Number: 20242

Type of Review

- ☒ Exempt Registration: Category of approval §46.104(d)(2i)
- ☐ Expedited Review: Category of approval §46.110(a)(i)
- ☐ Full Review
- ☐ Modifications
- ☐ Continuing Review

Special Conditions

- ☒ Waiver of signed consent approved
- ☐ Waiver of some or all elements of informed consent approved
- ☐ Risk determination for device:
- ☐ Other:

Continuing Review

☒ Is not required. Principal Investigator must file a [status report](#) with the Office of Research one year from the approval date on this notice to communicate whether the research activity is ongoing. Failure to file a status report will result in closure of the protocol and destruction of the protocol file after three years.

☐ Is required. An annual [continuing review renewal application](#) must be submitted to the Office

of Research one year from the approval date on this notice. No human subjects research can occur after this date without continuing review and approval.

Approved by Dr. Pamela C. Stacks
Associate Vice President
Institutional Official
Office of Research
San Jose State University

IRB Contact Information:
Alena Filip
Human Protections Analyst
Alena.Filip@sjsu.edu
408-924-2479

Primary Investigator Responsibilities

- Any significant changes to the research must be submitted for review and approval prior to the implementation of the changes.
- Reports of unanticipated problems, injuries, or adverse events involving risks to participants must be submitted to the IRB within seven calendar days of the primary investigator's knowledge of the event.
- If the continuing review section of this notice indicates that continuing review is required, a request for continuing review must be submitted prior to the date the provided.

Appendix B: Participation Invitation Letter

Dear Colleague,

My name is Joseph Bosco. I am a doctoral student in the San Jose State University Educational Leadership program. I am requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting tentatively titled- An Analysis of Job Stress as Experienced by Public Site School Administrators. The purpose of my study is to learn more about stress factors affecting school administrators and to assist building level administrators in dealing with job stress. My research starts with the assumption that efforts to alleviate administrator job stress can contribute to a more healthy and effective workplace for staff and the establishment of a more effective learning environment for our students.

Your participation in the study involves a 20-minute electronic survey. Participation is completely voluntary; your participation in the study is completely confidential. Participation does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. If you would like to participate in the study, please read the Informed Consent letter below. To begin the study, click the survey link at the end. Your participation in the research will be of great importance and assist in social change by ensuring that future administrators are receiving adequate and effective support services. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Joe Bosco, Principal

Ed.D. Candidate, San Jose State University

If you are willing to participate please click this [LINK](#)

Appendix C: Participant Information Form Attached to Participation Letter

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

An Analysis of Job Stress as Experienced by Public Site School Administrators

NAME OF THE RESEARCHER.

Joe Bosco student at San Jose State University

I am currently a student working to complete my ED.D at San Jose State University in the field of Educational Leadership.

PURPOSE

My dissertation topic is focused on finding a framework of coping strategies to help new and current site administrators better understand ways of dealing with stress from the job.

PROCEDURES

The participants in their project will be asked to answer questions about the stressors of being an administrator.

COMPENSATION

There is no compensation for participation.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect on your relations with San Jose State University. You also have the right to skip any question you do not wish to answer. This consent form is not a contract. It is a written explanation of what will happen during the study if you decide to participate. You will not waive any rights if you choose not to participate, and there is no penalty for stopping your participation in the study.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

For further information about the study, please contact Joseph Bosco at 408-594-1932 or joseph.bosco@sjsc.edu

Faculty Supervisor is Arnold Danzig who can be reached by email at arnold.danzig@sjsu.edu

Complaints about the research may be presented to the Department of Education by contacting the Dean of Education, Heather Lattimer at heather.lattimer@sjsu.edu or calling 408-924-3600.

For questions about participants' rights or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Pamela Stacks, Associate Vice President of the Office of Research, San Jose State University, at 408-924-2479.

Appendix D: Administrator Stress Index*

School administrators have identified work-related situations as sources of concern. It's possible that some of the situations bother you more than others. How much are you bothered by each of the situations listed below? Please circle the appropriate response.

		Not Applicable	Rarely or Never Bothers Me		Occasionally Bothers Me		Frequently Bothers Me
1.	Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Trying to resolve differences between/among students.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Imposing excessively high expectations on myself.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Writing memos, letters and other communications.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Trying to resolve differences with my superiors.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Applicable	Rarely or Never Bothers Me		Occasionally Bothers Me		Frequently Bothers Me
11.	Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Preparing and allocating budget resources.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Handling student discipline problems.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Being involved in the collective bargaining process.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Administering the negotiated contract (grievances, interpretation, etc.).	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Applicable	Rarely or Never Bothers Me		Occasionally Bothers Me		Frequently Bothers Me
22.	Feeling that meetings take up too much time.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Trying to influence my immediate supervisor's actions and decisions that affect me.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

*Gmelch et al. (1982). Copyrighted. Reprinted by permission.

Appendix E: Consent to Reproduce Administrator Stress Index

From: Walter H Gmelch <whgmelch@usfca.edu>

Subject: RE: Administrator work Inventory

Date: April 15, 2021 at 5:44:51 PM PDT

To: Joseph Bosco <joseph.bosco@sjsu.edu>

Dear Joseph:

Per your request, I hereby verify that as the copyright owner of the ASI I am aware that ProQuest may supply single copies upon request. I hereby consent to this agreement as long as my copyright is published on the ASI document.

Best regards,

Walt

Walter H. Gmelch, Ph.D.
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415-233-3611 (Cell)
E-mail: whgmelch@usfca.edu
<https://usfca.zoom.us/j/7479082156>

Appendix F: Participant Survey Sent to Administrators via Google Forms

*Questions 4–24 are from the Administrator Stress Index and were used with permission from Dr. Gmelch

Demographics

1. 1. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Prefer not to say

2. 2. What is your current administrative role?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Principal
☐ Assistant Principal
☐ Dean
☐ Coordinator
☐ Other: _____

3. 3. How many years have you served as an administrator?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-5
☐ 6-10
☐ 11-15
☐ 16-20
☐ 21 plus

**Source
of
Stress**

School administrators have identified work-related situations as sources of stress. It's possible that some of the situations bother you more than others. How much are you bothered by each of the situations listed below? Please click the appropriate response.

4. 4. Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not Applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

5. 5. Supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

6. 6. Knowing I can't get information needed to carry out my job properly

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

7. 7. Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of those who have authority over me.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

8. 8. Trying to resolve the differences between/among students

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

9. 9. Having my work frequently interrupted by staff members who want to talk

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
☐ Rarely Bothers me
☐ Occasionally Bothers me
☐ Bothers me
☐ Frequently Bothers me

10. 10. Imposing excessively high expectations of myself

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
☐ Rarely Bothers me
☐ Occasionally Bothers me
☐ Bothers me
☐ Frequently Bothers me

11. 11. Writing memos, letters and other communications

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
☐ Rarely Bothers me
☐ Occasionally Bothers me
☐ Bothers me
☐ Frequently Bothers me

12. 12. Trying to resolve differences with my superiors.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

13. 13. Not knowing what my supervisor thinks of me, or how he/she evaluates my performance.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

14. 14. Feeling I have to participate in school activities outside of the normal working hours at the expense of my personal time.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

15. 15. Feeling that I have too much responsibility delegated to me by my supervisor.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

16. 16. Trying to resolve parent/school conflicts

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

17. 17. Preparing and allocating budget resources

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

18. 18. Feeling that I have too little authority to carry out responsibilities assigned to me.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

19. 19. Handling student discipline problems.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

20. 20. Being involved in the collective bargaining process.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

21. 21. Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

22. 22. Complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

23. 23. Administering the negotiated contract(grievances, interpretation, etc.).

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

24. 24. Being unclear on just what the scope and responsibilities of my job are.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

25. 25. Feeling that meetings take up too much time.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

26. 26. Trying to complete reports and other paper work on time.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

27. 27. Trying to influence my immediate supervisors actions and decisions that affect me.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

28. 28. Trying to gain public approval and/or financial support for school programs.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Rarely or Never Bothers me
- ☐ Rarely Bothers me
- ☐ Occasionally Bothers me
- ☐ Bothers me
- ☐ Frequently Bothers me

29. 29. Has Covid 19 made your job more stressfull? If yes in what ways?

30. 30. Would you participate in a support group for administrators if your district provided it confidentiality?

31. 31. What types of support would you like from your district?

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Appendix G: Peer Support Group Invitation