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### Level of Preparedness for Conducting Teacher Evaluations as Reported by Minnesota School Principals

Zachary Dingmann

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**Level of Preparedness for Conducting Teacher Evaluations as Reported by Minnesota**

**School Principals**

by

Zachary Dingmann

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in Educational Administration and Leadership

December, 2021

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### **Abstract**

The significance of a principal as an instructional leader became a concept over 40 years ago (Jenkins, 2009). Edmonds (1982) noted one of the top five effective school characteristics was a “principal’s leadership and attention to the quality of instruction” (p. 4). Part of being an instructional leader for a principal is performing teacher evaluations by observing teachers’ instruction.

The process in which principals conduct teacher evaluations and observe most teachers is useless, unproductive, and a waste of a principal’s time (Marshall, 2005). According to Marshall (2005), principals need to improve in how they observe, support, and evaluate teachers to more precisely connect teacher observation to improving teaching and learning. Cooper, et al. (2005) noted teachers see the evaluation process as just another step they have to complete to satisfy their job requirements, not as a way to learn and grow in the profession.

According to the National Governors Association (2011), there is not enough time allocated in university college preparation courses for principals to effectively evaluate teachers. Qi et al. (2018) asserted that administrators need training and continued support to practice observing teachers in order to have valid and reliable performance ratings.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain Minnesota principals' preparation with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, the types of professional development Minnesota principals receive for evaluating teachers and the usefulness of the professional development, along with challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations.

This study will further examine all these areas in order to find ways in which principals can be better supported in performing the teacher evaluation process.

### **Acknowledgment**

The process of earning my Doctorate has been the most challenging and rewarding endeavor I have ever done. This process has pushed me to become a more well-rounded educator and leader.

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Finally, I want to thank my wife, Jamie. Being a principal and working on a dissertation requires constant sacrifices that affect us as a family. I could not have done this without your never-ending love.

### **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to all the principals and assistant/associate principals in public education. I am grateful for all the administrators I have worked with and met during my career. You have served as amazing role models to me as I entered the administrative world. I would not be where I am today without the support and encouragement all of you have provided me.

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

Teachers are a significant part of students' lives, influencing them beyond the school day and into the real world (Stronge, 2018). To improve student learning, a teacher has to receive a summative evaluation by a trained administrator (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a).

Part of the process for a teacher to move from probationary to continuing contract is to have his or her teaching evaluated by an administrator (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). As a probationary teacher, a teacher must be formally evaluated a minimum of three times during the school year, with the first evaluation happening within the first ninety days of school (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a).

Daley and Kim (2010) claimed teacher evaluations aid in holding teachers responsible and help teachers continue to grow professionally. Principals hold themselves to a high standard when evaluating teachers and believe in the process (Peterson, 2004). However, Cooper et al. (2005) pointed out teachers often view the evaluation as a process to complete in order to fulfill their job contract and not as professional growth and improvement. Marshall (2005) declared, "Principals need a better way to observe, support, and judge teachers—a way that is more accurate and time-efficient and more closely linked to an effective strategy for improving teaching and learning" (p. 731).

During principals' preparation courses, principals learn about their role as evaluators in the teacher evaluation process. Hess and Kelly (2007) broke down their study, "Learning to Lead: What Gets Taught in Principal-Preparation Programs," into seven key leadership areas. The principal program areas covered were; Managing for Results, Managing Personnel, Technical Knowledge, External Leadership, Norms and Values, Leadership and School Culture,

Managing Classroom Culture, and Managing Classroom Instruction (Hess & Kelly, 2007).

Approximately 15% of the principal course time was managing personnel, which entailed the hiring process, employee motivation, teacher evaluation, and conflict management (Hess & Kelly, 2007). Of these four areas under managing personnel, approximately 24% of the time was teacher evaluation (Hess & Kelly, 2007). This equated to universities spending less than 4% of the entire principal course program having aspiring principals learning about teacher evaluation (Hess & Kelly, 2007).

The other experience a principal has when it comes to learning how to conduct teacher evaluations correctly is through the professional development provided by their current school district. The types of professional development supports and the amount of professional development time school districts provide principals lack in research. In addition, the literature and research in this area were limited.

There are numerous challenges principals face when conducting teacher evaluations. Limited research was also found about the challenges principals report they face with regard to maintaining validity when it comes to conducting, rating, and performing teacher evaluations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Depending on the principal conducting a teacher's evaluation, the teacher may receive a different rating (Goe et al., 2008). According to Danielson (2012), when there is a disagreement among a teacher's performance rating, it is crucial to know if the disagreement is from the evidence collected or on how the principal interpreted the performance. Danielson (2012) asserted it is essential that administrators are trained to correctly and consistently evaluate teachers.

The study was designed to determine to what extent principals report their perceived level of preparedness is to evaluate teachers effectively. This study is limited in scope to the state of Minnesota. Participants in the study are limited to members of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) and members of the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP).

Data were amassed by surveying Minnesota principals along with interviewing select Minnesota principals. The survey instrument collected demographics data on administrators' specific roles, years of experience being an administrator, the administrator's current school district's student population, and the grade-level configuration that best depicted the administrator's current school.

The survey instrument collected data on the level of preparedness principals reported they are at conducting teacher evaluations and how well administrators perceived their current school district has prepared them for conducting teacher evaluations. The survey collected data on the various types and usefulness of professional development received by administrators from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation. The survey also gathered data on challenges administrators face with regard to being valid and consistent when conducting teacher evaluations.

Participants for the interviews were members of either MESPA or MASSP and randomly selected. The interviews conducted focused on the same questions as the survey; however, it allowed principals to go further in-depth with their answers and the researcher an opportunity to have principals explain their reasoning.

Data collected from the survey instrument were used to provide descriptive statistics and frequencies. Data from the interviews were transcribed by the researcher and then coded using content analysis and discourse analysis.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain Minnesota principals' preparation with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, the types of professional development Minnesota principals receive for evaluating teachers and the usefulness of the professional development, along with challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations.

Marshall (2005) asserted, "The process by which most teachers are supervised and evaluated is inefficient, ineffective, and a poor use of a principal's time" (p. 727). In reviewing the literature on teacher evaluation, it was noted that the teacher evaluation process has evolved and changed in Minnesota over time. As a result, numerous researchers have developed teacher evaluation philosophies and instruments to best aid principals with this process, dedicating years of research in this area of education.

There is a lack of research on the level of principals' preparedness to evaluate teachers effectively. Some college universities' preparation programs do not allow enough time for aspiring principals to practice conducting teacher evaluations (National Governors Association, 2011). Qi et al. (2018) asserted that administrators need training and continued support to practice observing teachers in order to have valid and reliable performance ratings.

Limited research was found on professional development provided to principals with regard to conducting teacher evaluations. Critical decisions are being made about teachers' careers based on minimal understanding by principals on how to correctly use an instrument

during teacher evaluations (Goe et al., 2008). Goe et al. (2008) emphasized in Brandt's survey (2007) that only 8% of school districts trained principals as part of their teacher evaluation plan.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What do Minnesota principals report as their level of preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations?
2. What do Minnesota principals report as the various types and usefulness of professional development received from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation?
3. What do Minnesota principals report as challenges with maintaining validity while conducting evaluations?

### **Assumptions of the Study**

Assumptions of a study are the parts alleged to be factual (Roberts, 2010). The study was based upon the views and opinions of Minnesota school administrators when they completed the survey and interviewed with the researcher. The researcher, when conducting the survey and interview questions, made the following assumptions:

1. It was assumed all participants answered questions truthfully.
2. The participants' responses correctly reflected their professional views.
3. The study sample accurately represented Minnesota school principals and assistant/associate principals.
4. All administrators desire to be fair in their teacher evaluations.

## **Delimitations of the Study**

Delimitations are the influences controlled by the researcher (Mauch & Birch, 1998). The factors that were under control by the researcher included:

1. The survey was administered at a specific time of the school year.
2. The study was limited to each principal's perceptions when they answered and responded to the survey.
3. Principals responded to the survey anonymously and individually, so the results are based on their honest perspectives.
4. The study is limited to each principal's perceptions when selected principals answered questions during the interview.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are specifically defined for the study to assist the reader:

*Administrator:* For the purpose of this study, an administrator is an individual who oversees a school's managerial and instructional leadership, synonymous with principal or assistant/associate principal.

*Continuing contract teacher:* A Minnesota teacher who has successfully completed the probationary period and is now on a continuing contract with his or her school district (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a).

*Evaluation:* The process in which a teacher is assessed by a school administrator (Goldrick, 2002).

*MASSP:* Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, a professional organization representing secondary school principals and assistant principals in Minnesota.

*MESPA*: Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association serving elementary and middle school principals across the state of Minnesota.

*MET Project*: A project funded by Bill and Melinda Gates, the Measure of Effective Teaching is research conducted to test effective teaching measures encompassing 3,000 teachers and several research teams.

*Principal*: For the purpose of this study, principals were both head principals and assistant/associate principals from the state of Minnesota who conduct teacher evaluations. Excluded from this definition were deans or other administrative type roles that do not conduct teacher evaluations.

*Reliability*: “Generally the repeatability and consistency of a test” (Robinson & Leonard, 2019, p. 213).

*Teacher*: For the purpose of this study, teachers were referred to as employees of a school district who are evaluated by a school’s principal.

*Teacher Evaluation*: “Teacher evaluation refers to the formal process a school uses to review and rate teachers’ performance and effectiveness in the classroom. Ideally, the findings from these evaluations are used to provide feedback to teachers and guide their professional development” (Sawchuk, 2015, p. 1).

*Validity*: “Generally refers to the degree or truthfulness or accuracy of a measure or item” (Robinson & Leonard, 2019, p. 214).

*Widget Effect*: A term coined that portrays teachers as interchangeable widgets and not individual professionals (Weisberg et al., 2009).



## **Organization of the Study**

The study was formatted into five distinct chapters. Chapter I encompassed an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, assumptions, delimitations, the definition of terms, and organization of the study.

Chapter II covered a review of the related literature in the areas of teacher evaluation legislation, teacher evaluation models, challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity during the formal evaluation process, principal preparation as it pertains to teacher evaluation and a summary of the chapter.

Chapter III detailed the methodology delivered in addressing the study, which is composed of an introduction, research questions, research design, instrumentation, study participants, human subject approval, data collection procedures, data analysis, and procedures and a timeline of the study.

Chapter IV featured the study's results and Chapter V summarized the study while offering recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter II: Review of Literature**

Minnesota administrators are faced with the task and obligation of evaluating teachers. According to Caposey (2017), "Studies show the most powerful determinant of school success is the quality of its teachers" (p.19). Having an efficient and effective teacher evaluation system is essential according to Danielson and McGreal (2000) as they emphasized, "Because educational research has advanced over the past 25 years, and classroom practice is following suit, the evaluation of teaching must reflect these newer techniques" (pp. 3-4).

Due to varied experiences, personal philosophy, knowledge, and rapport with teachers, administrators gather data on teacher evaluation differently (Barnett, 2012). "Just about every important decision about teacher unitization—whether the teacher is certified as competent, hired, receives tenure, is recognized as meritorious—depends on someone's judgment of how well that teacher performs in the classroom" (Medley & Coker, 1987, p. 242).

The aforementioned may affect a teacher's performance evaluation; furthermore, it may impact some teachers receiving continuing contracts and others not. Principals need to be trained to understand and implement specific approaches and methods during the evaluation process to effectively make precise and constant decisions on a teacher's performance (Danielson, 2012). Although formal evaluation of teachers is a component of an administrator's duty, it is also an area where administrators may lack significant experience and education due to scarce experiences during principals' preparation courses (National Governors Association, 2011). This dilemma is not uncommon among administrators and can be attributed to how they are prepared and trained to evaluate teachers by universities and school districts.

This chapter reviews the literature on teacher evaluation into themes of teacher evaluation legislation, teacher evaluation models, challenges administrators encounter with maintaining validity during the formal observation process, and principal preparation pertaining to the teacher evaluation process.

### **Teacher Evaluation Legislation**

The teacher evaluation process has transformed substantially throughout the years with most of the change following new legislation (Kersten & Israel, 2005). According to Daley and Kim (2010), before the 1950s, teacher performance was evaluated on teacher's individual characteristics. During the 1950s, it changed, and teachers started being assessed increasingly on observable behaviors, but the behaviors were not tied to student learning (Daley & Kim, 2010). From these visible behaviors, the teacher evaluation process has transformed into the current notion of teachers' observation and evaluation (Daley & Kim, 2010).

Traditionally the teacher evaluation process has been mostly left up to local school districts (Goe et al., 2014). Due to the reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009, and Race to the Top (RTT) in 2010, states across the country had to change their outlook and direction on teacher evaluation. As Goe et al. (2014) stated, "states are expected to play an increasingly larger role in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the nation's teaching force" (p. 3).

Minnesota's most recent change in legislation on teacher evaluation was in 2011. This change in legislation stated by the 2014-2015 school year, districts and local teacher unions had to "develop a teacher evaluation and peer review process for probationary and continuing contract teachers through joint agreement" (Minnesota Department of Education 2013b, p. 4). If

the school district and local union are unable to develop a joint agreement, then they must adopt the state model, which was created not only for this purpose but also as an example for school districts and local unions (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b). Minnesota State Statutes §122A.40 and 122A.41 define teacher evaluation requirements and the process local school districts must follow.

A teacher is considered probationary for the first three consecutive years in a single district or the first year in a district subsequently in another school district (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019b). Part of the process for a teacher to move from probationary to continuing contract is to have his or her teaching evaluated by an administrator (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019b). As a probationary teacher, a teacher must be formally evaluated a minimum of three times during the school year with the first evaluation happening within the first 90 days of school (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019b).

Once a teacher moves from probationary to continuing contract, the teacher is placed on a 3-year professional review cycle (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). A school administrator must formally evaluate the continuing contract teacher at least once every three years (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). The other 2 years, the continuing contract teacher will follow the peer review process to complete the 3-year cycle (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a).

The teacher evaluation and peer review plan created by school districts and their local teacher unions must entail numerous components per Minnesota Statute §122A.40 Subdivision 8. First, a professional review cycle needs to be created to include an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, and a formal evaluation conducted by a qualified administrator (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). In the years when an administrator does

not formally evaluate a continuing contract teacher, that teacher must be evaluated through a peer review process (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). The teacher evaluation and peer review plan must be aligned to professional teaching standards and tied to staff development that aids teachers with evaluation goals (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). The teacher evaluation and peer review plan must also allow teachers the opportunity to present a portfolio that documents evidence, which illustrates professional growth (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). Teachers' portfolios need to use valid data aligned to state and local academic standards and longitudinal student engagement data (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). Schools need to have qualified and trained school administrators conduct summative teacher evaluations, support teachers in need through the teacher improvement process, and discipline teachers not making adequate progress (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). The teacher evaluation and peer review plan may include time during the school day or year for peer coaching and teacher collaboration, professional learning committees around teacher evaluation, and a mentoring or induction program (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a).

In years one and two for a continuing contract teacher, the focus is on formative self-assessment, a peer review process, and revisions or changes to their individual growth and development plan (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b). However, in the third year, teachers still partake in a formative self-assessment and a peer review process, but they also have a summative evaluation done by an administrator (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b). Teachers then make a new individual growth and development plan and repeat the 3-year cycle (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b).

Minnesota's state model for teacher evaluation consists of three components: Teacher Practice, Student Engagement, and Student Learning and Achievement (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013a). Teacher practice is broken down into four separate domains of planning, instruction, environment, and professionalism (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013a). The teacher practice component is weighted at 45% of the total model (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013a). Minnesota Department of Education (2013b) defines student engagement as "an organizing framework for examining a student's commitment to and involvement in learning, which includes academic, behavioral, cognitive, and affective components" (p. 8). This component is weighted at 20% of the total model. The last component of the state's model is Student Learning and Achievement. Student Learning and Achievement is defined as "student outcomes as measured by the assessments that have the highest levels of confidence and commonality" (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013, p. 8). This component of the state model is weighed at 35% of the total model (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b).

During the summative evaluation year, teachers are given feedback on areas to grow along with an overall performance rating by an administrator (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b). The performance rating completed by an administrator is based on all three component areas with rating scores ranging from: Exemplary, Effective, Development Needed, and Unsatisfactory (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b). If a teacher receives a score of exemplary or effective, the teacher is fine as a score of effective is expected (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b). A teacher receiving a rating score of development needed must be supported throughout the 3-year cycle and through his or her individual growth and

development plan (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013b). However, the Minnesota Department of Education (2013b) stated:

A teacher with a final summative performance rating of "Unsatisfactory" must be supported through the teacher improvement process (TIP) . . . and potentially disciplined as outlined in Minnesota Statutes §122A.40 and §122A.41 for not making adequate progress to improve. (p. 10)

A teacher may be terminated due to his or her evaluation, but other factors can also play a factor.

Terminating a teacher varies on whether the teacher is probationary or continuing contract. If a teacher is probationary, a school board may choose to non-renew for any reason (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). If a school board chooses to non-renew a probationary teacher's contract for the following school year, the school must provide written notice to that teacher no later than July 1 (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). A non-renewed probationary teacher may request a reason for the decision in which the school must state the reason in writing to the teacher within ten days after receiving the request (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). The process for terminating a continuing contract teacher is different from a probationary teacher.

A teacher who is under a continuing contract may be terminated at the end of the school year following the criteria in Minnesota Statute §122A.40 Subdivision 9 (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). This criterion entails inefficiency in teaching, neglect of job duties, conduct unbecoming, or other sufficient grounds depicting the teacher is incapable of performing his or her job duties (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). However, the teacher may only be terminated if he or she failed to correct those deficiencies after receiving a written notice along

with adequate time to correct those deficiencies stated in the written notice (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). A teacher may be immediately discharged under Minnesota Statute §122A.40 Subdivision 13 if he or she displays willful neglect of his or her duty, immoral conduct, insubordination, or convicted of a felony (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a).

As state legislation makes changes to the teacher evaluation process, school districts need to ensure their chosen teacher evaluation practices reflect current mandates. Teacher evaluation models play a crucial part in education because these models inform teachers on how to improve instruction and meet the ever-changing needs of their students.

### **Teacher Evaluation Models**

There are numerous teacher evaluation models a school district can choose to adopt and implement for their teacher evaluation process. Haefele (1993) believed a quality teacher evaluation model should: filter out inexperienced teachers, offer beneficial feedback, acknowledge and highlight outstanding practice, guide staff professional development, have evidence that is factual and not subjective, dismiss teachers that are not performing, and join teachers and administrators in the efforts to improve student learning. Hunt et al. (2016) insisted teacher evaluation should be used as a formative professional development tool in order to grow teachers in their practice. Selecting a teacher evaluation model for a school district to implement is an important decision.

Four well-known researchers whose frameworks are commonly implemented by school districts are: Robert Marzano, Kim Marshall, Charlotte Danielson, and James Stronge. These frameworks all have some similarities and differences when it comes to evaluating teachers.



The Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model from Learning Sciences Marzano Center has been recently revised. The Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model is different from previous versions as it is a scientific-behavioral evaluation model (Carbaugh et al., 2017). Carbaugh et al. (2017) asserted, "This behavioral approach emphasizes observable elements with specific evidence of effectiveness to determine scores and construct feedback, as opposed to constructivist approaches that determine evaluation scored based on lesson scripting and employing a much larger number of elements" (p. 4). Carbaugh et al. (2017) saw the importance for current evaluation models to be different from models years ago since those models were not aligned with standards-based instruction. The Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model is not only aligned to standards-based instruction, but Carbaugh et al. (2017) claimed the model also to be easier for administrators to implement and score.

Marzano's new model consists of 23 elements within 4 domains or areas of expertise (Carbaugh et al., 2017). This new model condensed the number of elements from a previous 60 to 23, which is designed to help teachers be more intentional with standards-based instruction and increase rater reliability with scoring (Carbaugh et al., 2017).

The four domains in the Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model are: Standards-Based Planning with 3 elements, Standards-Based Instruction with 10 elements, Conditions for Learning with seven elements, and Professional Responsibilities with three elements. With this model, teachers are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from Not Using (0), Beginning (1), Developing (2), Applying (3), and Innovating (4) (Carbaugh et al., 2017). Carbaugh et al. (2017) asserted:

Our goal in updating the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model is to ensure that schools and districts utilizing the model can take advantage of the most current framework available, one that is both validated by research and that meets national and state policy initiatives. (p. 20)

Another well-known teacher evaluation system researcher is Kim Marshall. Marshall's Teacher Evaluation Rubrics has six domains with each domain having 10 specific criteria. The six domains are: Planning and Preparation for Learning, Classroom Management, Delivery of Instruction, Monitoring, Assessment, and Follow-Up, Family and Community Outreach, and Professional Responsibilities. This model is based on a 4-point scale ranging from Does Not Meet Standards (1), Improvement Necessary (2), Effective (3), and up to a rating of Highly Effective (4). Marshall (2014) noted teachers who score an effective rating have a firm performance in this area, but not many teachers should receive a highly effective score because of the rigor it requires. Beginning teachers may receive improvement necessary as a score and should be motivated to improve in that specific area; however, if a does not meet rating is given to a teacher, improvement needs to be made right away (Marshall, 2014).

Marshall (2014) emphasized these rubrics are not classroom checklists and are to be used as an end-of-the-year summative review. Administrators must be in classrooms often and should not fill out the rubrics based on one classroom observation (Marshall, 2014). "Rather, the rubrics should inform teachers' work and supervisors' observations throughout the year and serve as a memory prompt and structuring protocol when it's time to evaluate the year's work" (Marshall, 2014, p. 1). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2013), which encompassed findings from the MET Project's 3-year study, supported Marshall and stated, "For observation to be of value,

they must reliably reflect what teachers do throughout the year, as opposed to the subjective impressions of a particular observer or some unusual aspect of a particular lesson" (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013, p. 16).

A third predominant teacher evaluation model is Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Charlotte Danielson's teacher evaluation model was first constructed in 1996 and then adapted in 2007, 2011, and now in its current edition, 2013. Danielson's original 1996 Framework for Teaching addressed research from Educational Testing Services (ETS) which encompassed a vast range of teaching skills and knowledge from various states. In 2007 Danielson's Framework for Teaching incorporated more research and added recognition from state curriculum standards. This updated framework addressed non-classroom specialists such as librarians, nurses, and counselors. In addition, five components were renamed in order to clarify language.

Danielson's 2011 updated framework incorporated research from the Measure of Effective Teaching (MET) project. As a result, rubrics were modified for easier use, essential characteristics of teaching were added to each level of performance, and examples of teaching and learning were added to the rubrics for each component.

Danielson's 2013 Framework for Teaching edition added more descriptive language that aligns to Common Core standards (Danielson, 2013). Danielson (2013) stated this new framework provides administrators with more explicit teaching examples in order for them to specifically identify teaching that indicates student learning toward the Common Core (Danielson, 2013).

Danielson's Framework for Teaching consists of four domains, 22 components, and 76 elements. The four overall arching domains of the framework are: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities (Danielson, 2013). Each domain is broken down further into a combined 22 components. For example, Planning and Preparation, along with Professional Responsibilities, have six components each with Classroom Environment and Instruction having five components each (Danielson, 2013). The components are broken down even further into elements with each component having anywhere from two to five elements for a combined total of 76 elements in the framework.

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching has four different levels for rater scoring (Danielson, 2013). Level 1 is an unsatisfactory rating, level 2 is a basic rating, level 3 is a proficient rating, and a level 4 is a rating score of distinguished (Danielson, 2013).

Similar to the other evaluation models, Stronge Effectiveness Performance Evaluation System by James Stronge is broken down into different components. The main components are performance standards, performance indicators, and the performance appraisal rubric (Stronge & Associates, 2017).

Teachers have six performance standards: Professional Knowledge, Instructional Planning, Instructional Delivery, Assessment of/for Learning, Learning Environment, and Professionalism with an optional standard of Student Progress that can be implemented (Stronge & Associates, 2017). Each performance standard is broken down and defined more with evidence called performance indicators (Stronge & Associates, 2017).

Stronge Effectiveness Performance Evaluation System rating scale is divided into four categories (Stronge & Associates, 2017). The rating categories are Ineffective, Partially Effective, Effective, and Highly Effective (Stronge & Associates, 2017).

Having a reliable and valid assessment tool alone will not progress teaching (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012). Donaldson and Donaldson work on improving teacher evaluation focused on five key steps. The first step was including teachers in the development of the evaluation system. Teachers must believe in any system implemented which fosters student learning (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012). According to Donaldson and Donaldson (2012), when teachers do not have a say in the process, they do not "respect nor trust the process" (p. 79) along with the principals who are carrying it out. Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) claimed this process should start with teachers and administrators discussing and researching teacher effectiveness along with successful models. Another critical component in strengthening teacher evaluation is having professional growth opportunities for teachers.

Self-assessment, reflection, and professional conversations are essential pieces of the teacher evaluation system that often get overlooked. Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) noted post-observation conferences are fit into a short period of time and done quickly, which results in one-way conversations where teachers are not engaged in professional dialogue. In order for this to improve, principals and coaches need professional development around post-observation conferring (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012). Once this is established and professional dialogue occurs, principals can tailor professional development to teachers to improve student learning. Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) found the best professional development is when teachers can

directly apply it into their classroom. As principals and coaches improve their observing and conferring skills, teachers will have more personalized professional development.

Effectively evaluating teacher performance takes time, with many components needing to be done well in order for teachers to learn and grow. Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) affirmed this process could no longer be treated as a simple task or activity. In order for school districts to devote the time required for teacher evaluation, they need to utilize resources such as peer coaches. Support and professional development need to happen in order for administrators and peer coaches to clearly define their roles (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012).

Setting instructional growth, of high importance in the district, was the last step Donaldson and Donaldson made for strengthening teacher evaluation. Strong leadership is vital when it comes to improving teacher performance. Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) stated when the district office is involved and makes teacher performance a priority, teachers have a growth mindset and as a result, student learning increases. Unfortunately, teacher evaluation tends to be difficult for district leaders, as many other initiatives come up or manage to get in the way (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012).

Donaldson and Donaldson (2012) stated, "To cultivate high quality teaching, school leaders need to focus on the human side of teacher assessment" (p. 78) along with emphasizing "supervisors cannot help teachers develop the complex instructional skills they need without time, resources, and trusting relationships" (p. 82).

Steinberg and Donaldson (2016) claimed classroom observation as the most critical component of the teacher evaluation system. Despite the teacher evaluation system districts utilize, principals encounter challenges during the formal observation process.

## **Formal Observation Challenges**

Evaluating teachers has evolved over the years. Currently, Minnesota principals have to evaluate teachers either yearly or once every 3 years based on teachers' status of being probationary or on a continuing contract (Office of the Revisor Statutes, 2019a). Besides formally observing a teacher, a principal must consider teacher collaboration with colleagues along with teachers' contribution to the school as a whole (Reid, 2018). This raises numerous challenges for principals and shortfalls with the teacher evaluation process.

Conley and Glasman (2008) quoted Stronge and Ostrander on the inadequacies formal observations may have:

First, the number and length of observations are almost inadequate for making generalizations. Second, evaluators focus attention on their personal interest; this, what they notice reflects their personal viewpoints. Third, poor recording systems force observers to rely on recollections that are influenced by preexisting conceptions. Fourth, and personal relationships to alliances between evaluators and their subject present confounding factors. Finally, the visit itself alters the behaviors of teachers and students, narrowing the chances of evaluators seeing a representative sample of teaching. (p. 74)

According to Dodd (2016), due to principals' high vast job assignments, they spend less time doing teacher evaluations with fidelity. Hunt et al. (2016) further declared a significant obstacle in evaluating teachers is defining effective teaching. Danielson (2010) emphasized school leaders must be able to define quality teaching clearly. "I can't define good teaching, but I know it when I see it" is not good enough according to Danielson (2010, p. 36). Traditional evaluations where a teacher is observed, the evaluator takes notes and writes up the findings, and

either gives the teacher the notes or tells the teacher the notes taken does not put any onus on the teacher (Danielson, 2010). This may be a reason for teachers to find the evaluation process pointless in helping them grow in the profession (Danielson, 2010). Danielson (2010) suggested:

If we want teacher evaluation systems that teachers find meaningful and from which they can learn, we must use processes that not only are rigorous, valid, and reliable, but also engage teachers in those activities that promote learning—namely self-assessment, reflection on practice, and professional conversation. (p. 38)

A significant study on how school systems treat teachers through traditional teacher evaluation systems was called The Widget Effect.

Weisberg et al. (2009) stated, "The Widget Effect describes the tendency of school districts to assume effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher. This fallacy fosters an environment in which teachers cease to be understood as individual professionals, but rather as interchangeable parts" (p. 32). From The Widget Effect study, Weisberg et al. (2009) found:

1. All teachers are scored as good or great on evaluations.
2. Above-average teaching goes unnoticed.
3. There is insufficient professional development tied to evaluations.
4. Not much time is devoted to new teachers.
5. Underperforming teachers are not confronted.

Weisberg et al. (2009) showed no matter the point scale; teachers were often rated with high marks. School districts that had two rating categories of satisfactory and unsatisfactory on their teacher evaluations had 99% of teachers rated as satisfactory (Weisberg et al., 2009). Daley and Kim (2010) took the 2- 3- 4- and 5-point rating systems data from The Widget Effect study



and convert it into an equivalent 5-point scale. Daley and Kim (2010) discovered over 80% of teachers were given a score of either a 4 or 5. Caposey (2017) highlighted:

Most districts place teachers with "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement" ratings on a plan for growth and ignore proficient teachers whose further growth also would benefit students. For those school districts seeking to be great, the personalization of professional development for every single teacher is the most significant investment you can make in growing your most important resource—your personnel. (p. 21)

Weisberg et al. (2009) discovered over half the teachers and administrators in The Widget Effect study agreed high performing teachers were not being acknowledged. Additionally, 73% of teachers stated they did not get any growth area recommendations on their last evaluation (Weisberg et al., 2009). Ho and Kane (2013) noted almost all principals rated teachers towards the middle of a 4-point rubric, seldom rating teachers inadequate or exemplar. Jacob and Lefgren (2008) believed:

Principals are quite good at identifying those teachers who produce the largest and smallest standardized achievement gains in their schools (i.e., the top and bottom 10%-20%) but have far less ability to distinguish between teachers in the middle of this distribution (i.e., the middle 60%-80%). (p. 103)

Forty-one percent of approximately 1,300 administrators in The Widget Effect study admitted they never non-tenured a probationary staff member (Weisberg et al., 2009). However, 81% of administrators and almost 60% of teachers stated a teacher was underperforming at their building (Weisberg et al., 2009). Weisberg et al. (2009) concluded from The Widget Effect study stating, "Improved evaluation will not only benefit students by driving the systematic

improvement and growth of their teachers, but teachers themselves, by at last treating them as professionals, not parts" (p. 35).

Kraft and Gilmour (2017) discovered teachers across states receiving a below proficient rating score varied considerably. States such as Hawaii, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Delaware all had less than 2% of their teachers rated below proficient, where Tennessee, Kansas, and Oregon had approximately 11-12% of their teachers receiving the same score (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017).

Kraft and Gilmour (2017) found a similar correlation with the percentage of teachers rated above proficient. The range of teachers receiving an above proficient score ranged from Georgia having approximately 6% of their teachers to Tennessee having up to 62% of their teachers receiving a score above proficient (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017). The data were then broken down even further to look at states that used four and five performance categories for scoring. Kraft and Gilmour (2017) pointed out:

These findings suggest that new evaluation systems that include multiple rating categories have not necessarily resulted in more differentiated ratings. Although states with five performance categories tend to rate more teachers as top performers, more rating categories do not appear to translate into greater differentiation at the lower end of the rating scale. (p. 237)

In a district case study, Kraft and Gilmour's charge was to see if principals' perceptions of teacher performance aligned with how teachers were evaluated. The study results showed principals perceived approximately four times more teachers were below proficient than were below proficient in their summative evaluation (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017). Kraft and Gilmour took

the study further and looked at formative evaluation ratings. Principals scored twice as many teachers as needing improvement on formative evaluations than they did on summative evaluations (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017). On the other hand, Kraft and Gilmour (2017) noted principals gave an exemplary score on teacher summative evaluations two times more than on their formative evaluation. There could be several reasons for teachers receiving better scores on their summative evaluation versus their formative evaluation; however, Kraft and Gilmour (2017) noted, "The large differences in the distributions of formative versus summative ratings is primarily the result of the higher stakes attached to summative ratings" (p. 239).

Principals rationalized scoring fewer teachers with below proficient ratings by stating time constraints, teacher's potentials and motivation, personal discomfort, and the challenges around removing and replacing a teacher as obstacles (Kraft & Gilmour, 2017). Kraft and Gilmour (2017) suggested implementing a multidimensional approach instead of a summative performance rating might help principals more accurately identify teachers who require support.

Kraft and Gilmour (2016) noted in their study, "Several principals expressed concerns that they were unable to provide the frequent feedback necessary for supporting teachers' professional growth because of the sheer number of teachers they were required to evaluate" (p. 3). Principals felt less confident when evaluating a teacher who taught in a subject area the principals were unfamiliar with themselves teaching (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). Kraft and Gilmour (2016) also discovered, "Some principals shied away from using feedback conversations to push teachers on their growth areas for fear of jeopardizing this relational trust" (p. 4). Kraft and Gilmour (2016) suggested in order for principals to help coach teachers and

prepare professional development days to grow teachers' practice, lead teachers should take on some of the managerial tasks in order to free up time for the principal.

Manzeske et al. (2014) found for many evaluation items; principals did not have enough evidence to give a score. The not applicable ratings were primarily found in the areas of educator's knowledge, using appropriate consequences, and assessments (Manzeske et al., 2014). Manzeske et al. (2014) discovered principals were less likely to give a not applicable score and more likely to give a distinguished score than a peer rater which shows principals seem to be easier scorers than peer raters. Manzeske et al. (2014) believed this might be due to principals wanting to retain staff or principals possibly having prior opinions about the teacher before his or her observation. Ho and Kane (2013) pointed out that if an administrator observed a teacher and had a negative notion toward that teacher, that impression would tend to last. According to Marshall (2011):

Some supervisors sugar-coat criticism and give inflated scores to keep peace and avoid hurt feelings. This does not help teachers improve. The kindest thing a supervisor can do for an underperforming teacher is give candid, evidence-based feedback, listen to teacher's concerns, and provide a robust follow up support. (p. 1)

When collecting evidence, Danielson (2012) asserted principals must collect evidence and not just interpret what they observed. Danielson (2012) reported that almost all evaluators claim to use some interpretation or opinions while taking notes during an observation. "When observers disagree about a teacher's level of performance, it's essential to know whether the differences stem from a difference in the evidence collected or in how the observer has interpreted that evidence" (Danielson, 2012, p. 35). When an observer and teacher meet after a

lesson, interpretations and views can be shared through an intellectual dialogue. Danielson (2012) stated the dialogue after a lesson is the best time for the observer to help engage and push teachers in order to fine-tune their practice. DuFour, Marzano, and Marshall recognized other challenges with the teacher evaluation process.

DuFour and Marzano (2009) argued by stating if the primary goal of the principal is to increase student learning, then the evaluation process needs to be reduced or even excluded from a principal's job duties. This will help free up time for the principal to work collaboratively with teachers on studying proof of student learning and what instructional strategies match those results (DuFour & Marzano, 2009).

Marshall (2012) agreed with the Measure of Effective Teaching (MET) Project, which stated teachers should be evaluated on three factors: classroom observations, student achievement gains, and feedback from students. Marshall (2012) believed this because the success of the evaluation falls heavy on the implementation of these three areas. Marshall (2012) explained there is a lack of accurate description of daily activities in the classroom if classroom observations are conducted only a few times a year. Marshall (2012) further emphasized, "Day-by-day teaching practices are what drive student achievement" (p. 50). Doing approximately 10 unscheduled informal visits to each classroom, which lasts 10-15 minutes by the same administrator, will give administrators a better understanding of the daily teaching in the classroom (Marshall, 2012). A checklist focusing on Safety, Objectives, Teaching, Engagement, and Learning (SOTEL) was suggested by Marshall (2012) as a helpful tip for administrators to use while doing these quick visits.

"If principals want to improve student achievement in their school, rather than focus on the individual inspection of *teaching*, they must focus on the collective analysis of evidence of student *learning*" (DuFour & Mattos, 2013, p. 37). DuFour and Mattos (2013) also believed, "The most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning, however, is not by micromanaging instruction but by creating the collaborative culture and collective responsibility of a professional learning community (PLC)" (p. 37). DuFour and Mattos (2013) claimed the best way to improve teacher instruction is through the PLC process, not classroom observations. DuFour and Mattos (2013) stated principals should ask themselves the right questions and "The question isn't, How can I do a better job of monitoring teaching? but How can we collectively do a better job of monitoring student learning?" (p. 39).

Marshall (2005) affirmed this belief by stating school districts must relook at the way teachers are observed because "The engine that drives high student achievement is teacher teams working collaboratively toward common curriculum expectations and using interim assessments to continuously improve teaching and attend to students who are not successful" (p. 731). This philosophy shifts the responsibility off the principal and more on the teachers (Marshall, 2005). With more accountability on the classroom teacher, some school districts look towards student test scores as an indicator for teacher effectiveness.

Whitehurst et al. (2014) declared from their research "nearly all the opportunities for improvement to teacher evaluation systems are in the area of classroom observations rather in test score gains" (p. 2). Whitehurst et al. (2014) further pointed out test scores do not give teachers the specific feedback they need, like classroom observations, which helps improve their instruction.

Whitehurst et al. (2014) found only about 22% of teachers could use student test scores because not every grade and subject area is tested at the state level. So teachers in non-tested grades or subjects had 50% to 75% of their evaluation depend on classroom observations (Whitehurst et al., 2014). Whitehurst et al. (2014) furthered claimed teachers with higher-performing students generally received higher marks during their classroom observation scores.

Whitehurst et al. (2014) recommend teachers' observation scores should be altered to reflect their student demographics, statewide data should be weighted for school districts, at least one observation should be done by an outside observer, and school-wide data should be eliminated because it negatively impacts good teachers and positively impacts terrible teachers. This is crucial because teachers who have higher achieving students in their classroom tend to receive higher marks on their evaluation, which implies they are being evaluated incorrectly solely based on having higher-performing students (Steinberg & Garrett, 2016).

Marshall (2012) concurred and stated standardized tests are not meant to evaluate teacher performance. Utilizing standardized testing scores also raises fear in which teachers will worry too much about their scores and focus less on collaboration with their colleagues.

Marshall (2012) suggested a 5-point scale survey where students anonymously answer questions about their teacher. Even though most educators would argue against students evaluating teachers, students are with teachers a significantly more amount of time than any principal. Instead of a teacher being scored based solely on student survey scores, Marshall (2012) insisted at the end of the year; principals should go over the results with teachers and base this evaluation part on how teachers respond to the data. Marshall (2012) summarized using

standardized test scores by stating, "It's problematic to use standardized test scores to evaluate teachers" (p. 52).

When an evaluator observes a teacher, he or she must observe the teacher effectively and give the teacher valuable suggestions through a productive dialogue about best practices (Danielson, 2010). "Evaluator-teacher conversations, when conducted around a common understanding of good teaching-and around evidence of that teaching-offer a rich opportunity for professional dialogue and growth" (Danielson, 2010, p. 39). In Medley and Coker's (1987) study, "The Accuracy of Principals Judgments of Teacher Performance," they concluded:

The most important finding of this study is the low accuracy of the average principal's judgments of the performance of the teachers he or she supervises. What is particularly striking about this finding is its consistency with the findings of earlier studies, and the clear implication that the negative findings of the earlier studies cannot be blamed on any limitations in instrumentation or methodology. (p. 245)

Graham et al. (2012) claimed, "Since observation ratings inherently rely on evaluators' professional judgment, there is always a question of how much the ratings depend on the particular evaluator rather than the educator's actual performance" (p. 4). Graham et al. (2012) emphasized, inter-rater agreement, to be most valuable to educators and defined as "the degree to which two or more evaluators using the same rating scale give the same rating to an identical observable situation" (p. 5). In order to improve rater agreement, Graham et al. (2012) declared administrator training to be the most effective way.

Danielson (2012) concurred it is imperative to have "trained and certified observers who can make accurate and consistent judgments based on evidence" (p. 37). With countless



challenges principals face during the formal observation process, principals must fall back on their previous education and professional development to overcome these challenges and carry out the teacher evaluation process correctly and successfully.

### **Principal Preparation**

According to Danielson (2012), there are numerous skills principals need to acquire to accurately and effectively observe a teacher. However, the National Governors Association (2011) asserted, "Principal preparation programs have little or no focus on evaluating teachers" (p. 2).

High stake accountability measures are now being tied to teacher evaluation; thus, it is important principals receive adequate training in order to administer the process successfully (National Governors Association, 2011). The National Governors Association (2011) pointed out, "Some preparation programs do not provide enough clinical experiences for principals to learn about evaluating teachers and to practice conducting evaluations" (p. 2). A way to combat this is by having universities offer specific preparation courses with clinical hours that require principals to observe teachers in order to prepare principals better when they officially evaluate teachers (National Governors Association, 2011).

Johnson (2008) reported two-thirds of principals agreed that "typical leadership programs are out of touch with the realities" of today's schools and administrative courses should spend more time on "practical, hands-on experience" (p. 75). Hess and Kelly (2007) claimed that 96% of principals stated they learned more while on the job and from other administrators in the position than their college courses. Principal course work focuses too much on the theory of

principalship and very little on the reality of what a principal does every day (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

According to Goldrick (2002), many steps need to be taken to aid principals with teacher evaluation:

Evaluators need preservice training opportunities to conduct more accurate and effective teacher assessments. Training might focus on skills such as analyzing effective teaching practice, determining a teacher's impact on student learning, and providing leadership for professional development and remedial assistance. (p. 2)

Observation training allows administrators to sharpen their skills around the knowledge of the evaluation tool and then accurately apply those newly developed skills to the rubric (Joe et al., 2013).

Numerous states now require administrators to be certified in order to conduct teacher observations due to the high stakes tied to teacher observations (Danielson, 2012). Certain states piloted evaluation tools before implementation in order to give principals adequate time and training (National Governors Association, 2011).

Almost all evaluation tools entail training for the evaluator with some requiring more training than others (Goe et al., 2014). Goe et al. (2014) asserted:

Implementation fidelity is most important when the selected measures are dependent on human scoring with observation instruments or rubrics. Effective evaluator selection and training is essential if the integrity of the system is to be maintained, ensuring that the resulting scores are fair and defensible. (p. 37)

The instrument tool for an observation is intended to measure classroom behaviors and interactions observed (Joe et al., 2013). During observer training, Joe et al. (2013) emphasized that administrators must disregard their previous ways and focus on the rubrics and their descriptions. "Everyone has biases; that biases can be positive or negative; and that biases are a natural by-product of personal experience, environment, and/or social and culture conditioning" (Joe et al., 2013, p. 15). Part of the observer training must incorporate bias awareness because it helps make observers more cognate of their biases and how those biases might influence their scoring during a teacher's observation (Joe et al., 2013).

Barnett (2012) discovered, "The rationales for ratings varied based on principal's personal belief. Issues of favoritism also arose—a favorite teacher received a high rating she felt was unjustified while a person who routinely challenged the principal received a low rating" (p. 310). Barnett (2012) found inconsistencies such as pre-observation meetings ranging from 5 minutes to 1 hour, some pre-observation meetings had documents or forms and others did not. Barnett (2012) observed some principals showing up to observation on time, some principals were late to the observation, and others rescheduled the observation numerous times. The post-observation did not always occur either (Barnett, 2012). Barnett (2012) concluded by stating, "The process was not consistently implemented" (p. 310).

According to Barnett (2012), because principals view teacher evaluation differently, teacher evaluations are not completed with consistency. Principals' views varied on teacher evaluation due to "principal leadership style, previous experience/subjectivity concerning purpose, personal relationship with the teacher" (Barnett, 2012, p. 311).

Contradictory to other studies regarding principal observations, Reid (2018) asserted principals' training on teacher evaluation had minimal impact on how they observed teachers and rated their performance. Instead, "principals in this study relied on factors such as their personal beliefs of what constituted good teaching, and intimate knowledge of their teaching staff and school context, and their relationships with teachers when evaluating their staff" (Reid, 2018, p. 249). Reid (2018) summarized that principal training does not play a huge part in how teachers are evaluated because it focuses more on using the system versus actually helping principals evaluate teacher performance. Knowing how an evaluation system works is crucial; however, principals must understand and effectively evaluate teacher performance (Reid, 2018). Reid (2018) suggested training for principals should be focused on specific "characteristics of effective teaching" that covers domains such as planning, instruction, and interaction (p. 250).

Danielson (2010) also emphasized the importance of well-trained principals for conducting teacher evaluations in order for principals to critique teachers effectively and for teachers to believe in the evaluation. "Although considerable attention has been paid to the need to evaluate teachers to determine their effectiveness, far less attention has been paid to ensuring principals are prepared to conduct the evaluations" (National Governors Association, 2011, p. 1).

Joe et al. (2013) asserted training observers is important because the training:

Helps ensure everyone has the same understanding of teacher quality for observation purposes. . . . verifying that observers are calibrated to the instrument's scoring levels, helps ensure the accuracy and reproducibility of the observation data that your system collects. (p. 2)

Ho and Kane (2013) also expressed how crucial it was for observers to be well trained prior to observing teachers. When different administrators observe two or more lessons of the same teacher, the rating results are more precise (Ho & Kane, 2013). The MET project found in their study when two administrators observe individual lessons of the same teacher, the reliability of their scoring doubles, opposed to if the same administrator was to observe the same teacher twice (Ho & Kane, 2013).

Goe et al. (2008) concurred with Hoe and Kane and stated that training principals on the teacher evaluation system would help alleviate bias, thus, ensuring principals rate teachers accurately against the standards. "Proper training is essential because raters are making moment-by-moment judgments about what they see" (Goe et al., 2008, p. 25). Qi et al. (2018) asserted:

Targeted training and ongoing support should be provided to regulate administrators' rating practices and assist them in integrating the rubric and their perceptions in a way that does not stray from the intention of the observation protocol, thereby minimizing the threat of distortion. (p. 15)

Over the years, progress has been made in training principals on teacher evaluation systems; however, teachers may still receive different rating scores based on the principal doing the observation (Goe et al., 2008). Brandt's survey (as cited in Goe et al., 2008) noted that only 8% of districts trained their principals as part of the school district's adopted teacher evaluation plan. Goe et al. (2008) asserted, "Career consequences are being based on the assessments of evaluators who may have little understanding of how to use the instrument in ways that ensure valid scores" (p. 26). Wilkerson and colleagues (as cited in Goe et al., 2008) stated, "student ratings of teachers were better predictors of achievement than principal rating" (p. 27).

Even with training, Dodd (2016) pointed out that principals mostly revert back to their personal experiences and their school's culture when evaluating teachers. According to Derrington (2013), principals stated that the teacher evaluation training they received was quick and lacked adequate time to understand the evaluation system; thus, they had to learn it along the way during the process. To ensure principals have the specific knowledge and skills to implement a teacher evaluation system, training must be done over time and before it is implemented with teachers (Derrington, 2013).

Qi et al. (2018) additionally pointed out, "Even shortly after training (and more so as time passed), raters used reasoning strategies not supported by their training to make scoring decisions" (p. 1). Factors such as the relationship between a principal and a teacher can affect an observation (Qi et al., 2018). "Administrators tend to integrate their professional training, professional experiences, and own understanding about teaching with the observation protocol used when evaluating teaching" (Qi et al., 2018, p. 2). In order to address reliability and accuracy concerns, Qi et al. (2018) emphasized researchers need to be aware of these factors when raters use evaluation protocols. Qi et al. (2018) noted that an administrator might vary the scoring based on how recent their evaluation training had occurred, along with how much work the administrator is undertaking at the time, all playing a factor in how administrators score an observation. This may lend itself to the notion that; "raters tend to drift toward the center rating categories" when these factors are in place (Qi et al., p. 2).

Armstrong (2010) stated numerous rater effects that lead to errors in performance evaluations with the following being the most common:

- halo effect
- horns effect
- central tendency effect
- first impression effect
- leniency effect
- personal bias effect

According to Armstrong (2010), the halo effect is when principals tend to rate teachers high in all performance areas based on one outstanding quality. Contrary, the horns effect is when principals tend to rate teachers low in all performance areas based on one poor quality (Armstrong, 2010). The leniency effect occurs when principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings while the harshness effect is when principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings (Armstrong, 2010). The central tendency effect is when principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings (Armstrong, 2010). Armstrong (2010) pointed out when principals tend to rate teachers within the first few minutes of the observation, it is called the first impression effect. The personal bias effect can be either when principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristics or when principals tend to rate teachers with low ratings because they have opposite characteristics (Armstrong, 2010).

Roberson (1998) asserted that one of the primary reasons for error in teacher evaluation is the lack of professional observer training. Manatt (as cited in Roberson, 1998) suggested training is the primary method in order to reduce observational errors. Boehm & Weinberg (as cited in Roberson, 1998) argued an observer is not sufficiently trained until reaching a 90% agreement rate with a qualified observer during training sessions. According to Manzeske et al. (2014):

When a rubric is used inconsistently, teachers may not receive useful feedback, and the rubric could lack teacher buy-in, resulting in views that the evaluation does not provide credible information. This can undermine the utility of the instrument and, more broadly, the policy initiative on which use of the rubric was founded. (p. 1)

Manzeske et al. (2014) also asserted, "Without clear guidance on how to rate teachers and without proper calibration activities, scores on these rubrics can become upwardly biased, leading to an inability to distinguish among teachers at different performance levels" (p. 1).

Derrington (2013) insisted in order to remove factors that affect the teacher evaluation process and for a teacher evaluation system to be effectively executed, principals need to be heard. Administrators have to learn it will take multiple evaluation opportunities to hone in on the skills it requires when observing a teacher (Danielson, 2010). Adequate time within the work hours is a challenge for administrators to effectively observe teachers and then follow it up with meaningful dialogue (Danielson, 2010). Susan Race, a senior director of professional Learning and Institute at Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and former principal, was quoted by DeNisco (2015) and stated, "As observers and evaluators of teachers, principals need to be skilled in their knowledge of curriculum and whatever standards the state has adopted, as well as be an expert in observing, evaluating and coaching teacher performance" (p. 21). This will affect the perception teachers have of the evaluation system.

Duffett et al. (2008) specified teachers felt formal observations are predominantly used to measure teacher quality, with 41% of teachers viewing the evaluation system as "just a formality" and 32% of teachers stating "it was well-intentioned but not particularly helpful" (p. 3). "When evaluations are a mere formality, many teachers say they are, not only do teachers



lose out on the chance to improve their craft, but ineffective teachers slip through and gain tenure" (Duffett et al., 2008, p. 4).

Wood et al. (2014) emphasized when administrators give teachers differing feedback, teachers cannot grow in their instruction, and it ruins the integrity of the evaluation system. Wood et al. (2014) claimed, "Trustworthy observations are the result of a proven observation rubric, carefully scaffolded observer training, assessment of observer accuracy, and ongoing monitoring of observations" (p. 5) and "at the heart of a trustworthy observation system is a well-designed rubric" (p. 8). When training administrators, it is important to have pre-scored teacher evaluation videos by professional raters (Wood et al., 2014). Training observers goes beyond classroom observations, also encompassing a skillset of note organization, dialogue with a teacher, knowledge of each element of teaching, and ability to provide meaningful feedback (Wood et al., 2014).

Weems and Rogers (2010) believed teacher evaluation served two purposes; gauge a teacher's expertise and grow them professionally. In other words, "The purpose of teacher evaluations is to provide feedback that will enable teachers to improve their performance and professional growth . . . a continuous and cooperative effort on the part of the teachers and administration to improve instruction" (Weems & Rogers, 2010, p. 22). Hunt et al. (2016) declared:

If the observation is performed by an observer who is not certified, trained or knowledgeable in the field, then this directly affects the type of feedback given and, consequently, will affect how much the teacher can improve his or her practice. (p. 23-24)

Darling-Hammond et al. (2011) summarized principal preparedness for formal observations by stating evaluator training, and ongoing professional development must occur in order for an evaluation system to be successful.

### **Summary**

Due to research in the educational field over the past few decades, classroom practice has changed, and so must the evaluation of teaching (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). The National Governors Association (2011) recognized substantial focus had been put on the need for teacher effectiveness; far less consideration has been given to preparing principals in conducting teacher evaluations.

For various reasons, such as prior knowledge, personal viewpoints, different experiences, and relationships with teachers, principals gather information differently when conducting teacher evaluations (Barnett, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative administrators receive adequate training and support in order to accurately and reliably observe and evaluate teachers (Qi et al., 2018).

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

Limited research exists on the level of principals' preparedness to evaluate teachers effectively. It was apparent in the review of literature that an essential role of a principal is to evaluate teachers. However, there was no specific research that was shown to determine to what level of preparedness Minnesota principals report they are at conducting teacher evaluations, the various types and usefulness of professional development offered to principals, and challenges principals encounter with regard to validity when conducting teacher evaluations.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain Minnesota principals' preparation with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, the types of professional development Minnesota principals receive for evaluating teachers and the usefulness of the professional development, along with challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations.

This study was mixed methods research. The study consisted of a survey to principals across the state of Minnesota and individual interviews with principals. This chapter describes the research methodology, including the research questions, the research design, instrumentation, the study participants, human subject approval, data collection methods, data analysis, procedures and timelines, and a summary.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are addressed:

1. What do Minnesota principals report as their level of preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations?

2. What do Minnesota principals report as the various types and usefulness of professional development received from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation?
3. What do Minnesota principals report as challenges with maintaining validity while conducting evaluations?

### **Research Design**

The research design for this study was mixed-methods using a survey and interview. Mixed-methods research encompasses quantitative and qualitative approaches to understand better the research problem versus using either method alone (Creswell et al., 2007).

The survey was distributed through an internet-based survey platform, Qualtrics. Participation from Minnesota school principals and assistant/associate principals was anonymous and voluntary. Participants were either members of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) or Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP).

The researcher obtained permission from both MESPA and MASSP to use their listservs along with support in emailing their members (see Appendix A and Appendix B). The researcher used the listservs from both MESPA and MASSP to send out the survey to administrators across Minnesota. The survey was emailed to 1,978 participants with 851 being members from MESPA and 1,127 members from MASSP.

Participants received an email with an invitation to participate and the survey link (see Appendix C). The survey's introduction included background information and the purpose, an invitation statement, procedures, benefits, risks, confidentiality, voluntary participation and withdrawal, research results, and acceptance to participate (see Appendix D). It was estimated

that participants would spend 5 minutes taking the survey. Two weeks after the initial invitation was emailed out to participants, a second request to participate in the study was emailed to participants (see Appendix E).

Before administering the survey to participants, the survey was piloted by various administrators. The pilot sample was with a small group of the researcher's administrator colleagues. The survey was also piloted with the researcher's doctoral cohort. The feedback received from these groups helped refine questions, terms, and overall clarity of the survey.

A simple random sampling was used to select participants for interviewing. According to Bergin (2018), "In a random sample, every unit (i.e., each individual or organization or other entity you are interested in) has an exactly equal possibility of being selected for the sample. The sample is truly selected at random from the population" (p. 39). The researcher put both listservs from MESPA and MASSP into two separate secure google sheets. A random sampling calculator was used to select two administrators from each organization, totaling four administrators selected to be interviewed.

Once administrators were selected to be interviewed, the researcher called the administrators using a recruitment script (see Appendix F). If the participant agreed to partake in the study, the researcher and participant decided on a time for the interview. The researcher then followed up with an email to the participant summarizing the conversation along with the time and Zoom link for the interview. All interviews were conducted via Zoom.

The interviews were structured following an interview protocol (see Appendix G). Each interview started with the researcher reading the oral consent agreement to the participant (see Appendix H). The interviews were audio/video recorded in order to accurately analyze, quote,

summarize, and review commonalities and differences with other participants. The researcher used the audio/video recording feature in Zoom to record the interviews. The researcher also used a handheld recording device as a backup to audio record the interview. The interviews were then transcribed by the researcher and safely secured on a password-protected computer.

These results were reported out anonymous with no risk to the participants. Responses from the interview were kept strictly confidential with participant names not being disclosed. During the interview, participants were able to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw at any time. After completing the interviews, participants received their transcribed interview and had the opportunity to expand on any responses or note omissions to the transcription.

### **Instrumentation**

A survey was used to gather quantitative data for the study. The researcher developed the survey based on studies from relevant research on teacher evaluation and principal training (Armstrong, 2010; Goe et al., 2008; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Joe et al., 2013; Tetzlaff, 2018). The survey's first page went through background information and the purpose, invitation, procedures, benefits, risks, confidentiality, voluntary participation and withdrawal, research results, and the participant's acceptance to participate in the study.

The survey had a consent to participate question. If participants selected yes, the survey went into the next section. The survey then had two skip logic questions. Participants had to select yes to both of these questions in order to go further into the survey. If participants selected no for either of these questions, the survey thanked them for their time and ended. The following four questions on the survey were multiple-choice demographic questions followed by two Likert scale questions, a multiple-choice question, and two select-all questions.

The other step in the mixed-method research was conducting interviews via Zoom. The interview protocol started with an introduction about the study followed up with an opportunity for the participant to do an introduction and share any background knowledge about themselves in order to feel relaxed. The researcher did an introduction and background as well. The interview participant was asked to rate themselves on a scale from 1-5 with (1) being not prepared at all, (2) being somewhat prepared, (3) being prepared, (4) being well prepared, and a (5) being very well prepared on their level of preparedness on conducting teacher evaluations. The researcher then had the interview participant explain why they felt the preparedness they selected, what had prepared them to be at this level, and what may have inhibited them from being more prepared.

The researcher then asked the interview participant how well their current school district had adequately prepared them for conducting teacher evaluations along with how many hours are offered to them in professional development each year with regard to teacher evaluation. Participants were then asked to elaborate on the types of professional development offered to them from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation and how beneficial the professional development had been.

The participant was then asked of the challenges they faced with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations. At the end of the interviews, participants had a chance to add any final comments or thoughts with regard to principals conducting teacher evaluations.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study were Minnesota school principals. For the purpose of this study, principals were defined as both lead principals and assistant/associate principals. Elementary and secondary principals were emailed the survey, which was distributed to

members of both the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) and Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). MESPA had 851 members who were emailed the survey while MASSP had 1,127 members emailed the survey. The researcher expected to have between 15%-25% response rate from the survey.

### **Human Subject Approval–Institutional Review Board**

The research was conducted with permission and adhering to all conditions set forth by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix I). Participation in the study was voluntary and all participants surveyed and interviewed were able to decline to participate at any time. The survey data were collected without personal identification information in order to maintain confidentiality. The interview data were collected securely and referenced in the study, so participants were unidentifiable. The data were destroyed after the completion of the degree. At any point, the participants could choose to opt-out of the research study.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The research method used in this study was mixed-methods. Data from the survey were disseminated with the help of the Statistical Consulting & Research Center at St. Cloud State University. Data collected from the survey instrument were used to provide descriptive statistics and frequencies. The researcher transcribed data from the interviews and then applied content and discourse analysis as a coding strategy. This coding strategy was applied to find common phrases and themes from each interview. "Coding is the process of applying descriptive labels to a qualitative dataset to identify key themes present within the dataset" (Bergin, 2018, p. 141).

### **Data Analysis**

Permission was granted by both MESPA and MASSP to distribute the survey to their



members. Data were analyzed using the analytical tools available through the survey in consultation with The Center for Statistical Consulting & Research at St. Cloud State University (SCSU). The Statistical Center at SCSU was accessed for further support and assistance regarding the analysis of data collected in the study. Basic descriptive statistics and frequency were used to generalize and infer back to the sampling frame. Qualtrics was the internet platform used to administer the survey.

The qualitative interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded by the researcher. The researcher then transcribed each interview separately. Once all the interviews were transcribed, the researcher was able to code responses in each section of the interview protocol in order to identify and analyze the emerging themes.

### **Procedures and Timelines**

Initial contact with MESPA and MASSP leadership was made in June of 2020 with regard to the study. This gave the researcher promising lead-time in order to obtain approval from the IRB, administer the survey, and conduct the interviews.

The survey and interviews began in January of 2021; however, this was not the date the researcher had initially planned to distribute the survey and administer interviews. The researcher initially had chosen to administer the survey and conduct interviews in the Fall of 2020. This period was initially selected due to the timing of the school year for principals. This date and time of the school year were thought to secure a higher return rate due to the restraints and tasks being completed by principals at this time. The timeline of the study is further explained under the limitations section in Chapter V.

The data from the study were processed, disseminated, and analyzed in the Spring of 2021 with the study being completed in July of 2021.

### **Summary**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain Minnesota principals' preparation with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, the types of professional development Minnesota principals receive for evaluating teachers and the usefulness of the professional development, along with challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations. This chapter gave a synopsis of the study's methodology along with the research questions, research design, the instrumentation, the study participants, human subject approval institutional review board, data collection procedures, data collection analysis, and procedures and timeline. Chapter IV will summarize the results from the study with Chapter V providing a conclusion of the study and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter IV: Results**

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain Minnesota principals' preparation with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, the types of professional development Minnesota principals receive for evaluating teachers and the usefulness of the professional development, along with challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations.

### **Questions of the Study**

Chapter IV reports the findings of the study. The researcher developed survey questions after reviewing the literature and analyzing other studies with regard to teacher evaluation. The interview protocol was based on the survey but allowed participants to go more in-depth with their explanations and rationale. Data from the survey and interviews were analyzed, and findings were reported by each research question. The study's research questions are as follows:

1. What do Minnesota principals report as their level of preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations?
2. What do Minnesota principals report as the various types and usefulness of professional development received from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation?
3. What do Minnesota principals report as challenges with maintaining validity while conducting evaluations?

## Study Sample

All study participants were members of the Minnesota Elementary School Principal Association (MESPA) or Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). The researcher contacted Rachel Dillon, Program & Operations Manager for MESPA along with David Adney, Executive Director of the MASSP. Both organizations gave the researcher permission to use the website's directory along with support in an email to members. The researcher emailed the survey to 851 MEPSA members and 1,127 MASSP members. The researcher divided the email addresses of members into two separate Google documents, MESPA and MASSP. Each principals' organization was then separated by their division. When the emails were distributed, the researcher sent emails to members by their division. The rationale for distributing the survey this way was to reduce the chances of having the email flagged as spam from participants' email servers. Participants were all blind carbon copied in the email. The first email to participants was distributed on January 26, 2021. A second request for participation in the study was emailed to participants two weeks later on February 9, 2021. A total of 1,978 administrators were emailed the survey. The researcher was able to obtain 459 completed survey responses, equating to a 23% return rate.

Two participants from each organization, MESPA and MASSP, were randomly selected for interviews using a simple random calculator. Interview participants were first contacted via the telephone by the researcher. If the participant accepted the invitation to partake in the study and be interviewed, the researcher followed up the telephone conversation with an email summarizing the conversation and details about the Zoom interview. If an interview participant who was selected denied taking part in the research or never returned the researcher's telephone

call, another participant was selected by using the same process. For reporting purposes and maintaining confidentiality, interview participants were reported using gender-neutral names; Principal Ainsley, Principal Bailey, Principal Casey, and Principal Dakota.

## Research Findings

**Table 1**

*Type of Administrator*

N = 459		Administrator Type:	
Item #	Question	Principal	Assistant/Associate Principal
3	Type of administrator	n = 303 (66.0%)	n = 156 (34.0%)

A total of 466 administrators responded to the survey. One participant was disregarded due to denying consent, four participants were excluded because they were not currently employed as an administrator, and two participants were removed because they do not conduct teacher evaluations in their current role. Participants were asked to report the type of administrator that best describes them. Table 1 depicts 459 participants answered the question with 303 participants or 66% selected principal best describing their role while 156 participants or 34% selected assistant/associate principal.

**Table 2**

*Years being a School Administrator*

N = 459		Years:			
Item #	Question	1-3	4-6	7-9	10 or more
4	Years being a school administrator	n = 90 (19.6%)	n = 110 (24.0%)	n = 72 (15.7%)	n = 187 (40.7%)

Table 2 depicts the number of years of experience participants reported being a school administrator. There was a total of 459 responses. Ninety or 19.6% of participants reported

having 1-3 years of experience being a school administrator. A total of 110 or 24% of participants had 4-6 years of experience. Participants with 7-9 years of administrator experience consisted of 72 participants or 15.7% and 187 participants or 40.7% had reported being a school administrator for 10 or more years.

**Table 3**

*School District Student Enrollment*

N = 459		Enrollment:			
Item #	Question	1-499	500-999	1,000-1,499	1,500 or more
5	Students enrolled in your school district	n =85 (18.5%)	n =82 (17.9%)	n =46 (10.0%)	n =246 (53.6%)

Table 3 illustrates the number of students enrolled in the participants' school district. There was a total of 459 responses with 85 or 18.5% of participants reported a school district size between 1-499 students. A total of 82 or 17.9% of participants reported a student enrollment size of 500-999 students while 46 or 10% of participants reported a school district size of 1,000-1,499 students. Over half of the participants, 246 or 53.6%, reported having a student enrollment of their district of 1,500 or more.

**Table 4**

*Current School Grade Level Configuration*

N = 459		Level:			
Item #	Question	Elementary (K-6)	Middle School (5-12)	Secondary (7-12)	All (K-12)
6	School grade configuration	n =177 (38.6%)	n =78 (17.0%)	n =173 (37.7%)	n =31 (6.7%)

Table 4 presents the grade configuration that best depicts participants' schools. The question encompassed four different categories with a total of 459 participants responding. A total of 177 or 38.6% of participants identified as an Elementary (K-6) configuration while 78 or

17% of participants identified as a Middle School (5-12) configuration. A total of 173 or 37.7% of participants responded as identifying as a Secondary (7-12) school grade level configuration, while 31 or 6.7% of participants selected All (K-12) as the grade level best representing their school's grade configuration.

The research questions are presented individually. The data are displayed first followed by the quantitative findings and then proceeded by the qualitative findings. Basic descriptive statistics and frequency along with content and discourse analysis were used to generalize and infer back to the sampling.

### ***Research Question 1***

1. What do Minnesota principals report as their level of preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations?

**Table 5**

#### *Principal Level of Preparedness at Conducting Teacher Evaluations*

<b>N = 355</b>				<b>Scale:</b>				
<b>Item #</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>1 Not prepared</b>	<b>2 Somewhat prepared</b>	<b>3 Prepared</b>	<b>4 Well prepared</b>	<b>5 Very well Prepared</b>
7	Level of preparedness	4.21	.841	n = 2 (0.5%)	n = 20 (5.6%)	n = 35 (9.9%)	n = 176 (49.6%)	n = 122 (34.4%)

Table 5 explains participants' level of preparedness at conducting teacher evaluations on a scale of 1 to 5 with (1) being not prepared, (2) somewhat prepared, (3) prepared, (4) well prepared, and (5) very well prepared. A total of 355 participants responded to the question. The rating of 4 or well prepared was the most frequently selected level among participants with 176 or 49.6% of participants choosing this level of preparedness. Very well prepared or a level of 5 was the second most frequently selected level with 122 or 34.4% participants selecting this level

of preparedness. A total of 20 participants or 5.6% of participants responded by declaring being somewhat prepared or a level of 2 at conducting teacher evaluations. A total of two participants or 0.5% of participants responded stating they were a 1 or not prepared at conducting teacher evaluations.

The mean reported for the level of preparedness at conducting teacher evaluation as reported by principals was 4.21. The standard deviation reported on the level of preparedness for conducting teacher evaluations was .0841.

Principal Ainsley reported 4 as the level of preparedness for conducting teacher evaluations. Principal Ainsley elaborated by stating, "My program, I don't think my program did a lot to prep, necessarily. It was more district work."

Principal Bailey stated feeling "very well prepared" at conducting teacher evaluations while Principal Casey reported being at 1.5 for preparedness. Principal Casey explained by stating, "I don't think that we're provided enough, like professional development on what the components look like in a classroom for teachers. I know what we think they should look like. But are they really, is that, is that what we're seeing? And then with that, how do we help teachers take that next step?"

Principal Dakota reported being at a level 5 or very well prepared for conducting teacher evaluations. Principal Dakota justified the rating of a 5 based on years of experience, previous role as an instructional specialist, and leading district initiatives with regard to interrater reliability work.



***Research Question 2***

2. What do Minnesota principals report as the various types and usefulness of professional development received from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation.

**Table 6**

*Types of Professional Development*

N = 459		Scale:	
Item #	Question	No	Yes
10	Networks (Interaction with other principals)	n = 219 (47.7%)	n = 240 (52.3%)
	Self-study courses (Independent reading or more advanced online activities)	n = 307 (66.9%)	n = 152 (33.1%)
	Taught Courses (Classroom sessions taught by a trainer)	n = 316 (68.8%)	n = 143 (31.2%)
	Choice Seminars/ Conferences (Formal meeting either in person or on-line by an organization)	n = 332 (72.3%)	n = 127 (27.7%)
	No professional development offered	n = 356 (77.6%)	n = 103 (22.4%)
	Job Shadowing (Observing a colleague)	n = 375 (81.7%)	n = 84 (18.3%)
	Other	n = 411 (89.5%)	n = 48 (10.5%)

**Table 7***Usefulness of Professional Development*

N = 459			Scale:		
Item #	Question	Frequency	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
10	Networks (Interaction with other principals)	N = 240	n = 7 (2.9%)	n = 90 (37.5%)	n = 143 (59.6%)
	Self-study courses (Independent reading or more advanced online activities)	N = 152	n = 4 (2.6%)	n = 100 (65.8%)	n = 48 (31.6%)
	Taught Courses (Classroom sessions taught by a trainer)	N = 143	n = 2 (1.4%)	n = 75 (52.4%)	n = 66 (46.2%)
	Choice Seminars/ Conferences (Formal meeting either in person or on-line by an organization)	N = 127	n = 1 (0.8%)	n = 78 (61.4%)	n = 48 (37.8%)
	Job Shadowing (Observing a colleague)	N = 84	n = 2 (2.3%)	n = 26 (31.0%)	n = 56 (66.7%)
	Other	N = 48	n = 3 (6.2%)	n = 19 (39.6%)	n = 26 (54.2%)

Table 6 and Table 7 display the results of the various types of professional development offered to participants and the professional development's usefulness according to participants who selected the professional development. Five different professional development choices were given to participants. Participants could have also selected "Other" which then allowed them to write in the type of professional development received with regard to conducting teacher evaluations. Participants were also able to select no professional development offered. Participants were able to select all professional development options that applied.

There was a total of 459 participants who responded to this question. After participants selected the type of professional development, the survey then had participants rate the usefulness of the selected professional development. Participants could rate the professional development as being not at all useful, somewhat useful, or very useful.

The most frequently selected type of professional development was networks. Two hundred forty or 52.3% participants chose this type of professional development. One hundred forty-three or 59.6% of the participants who selected networks rated networks as very useful and 90 or 37.5% of participants rated networks as somewhat useful.

The next most frequently selected type of professional development was self-study courses and taught courses. One hundred fifty-two or 33.1% of participants selected self-study courses offered by their school district followed by taught courses with 143 or 31.2% of participants. Of the 152 participants who selected self-study courses, 48 or 31.6% of the participants said this type of professional element was very useful while 100 participants or 65.8% stated this type of professional development was somewhat useful. Of the 143 participants who selected taught courses, 66 participants or 46.2% claimed this type of professional development was very useful and 75 participants or 52.4% stated this type of professional development offered to them was somewhat useful.

Principal Ainsley reported breakout sessions at professional organizations and informal discussions within organizational division meetings as the types of professional development received with regard to teacher evaluation. Principal Ainsley admitted, "Beyond the breakout session at . . . I have not had any other, I guess, formalized [professional development] through conferences or workshops or anything. It's been more informal, I guess."

Principal Bailey reported receiving professional development from the school district with regard to teacher evaluation about every 4 or 5 years. Principal Bailey claimed to receive this professional development in the form of in-service days. During the years professional

development was offered to administrators; the professional development was only done during in-service days. Principal Bailey described the training by stating,

Three times that year on how we do PAS [performance appraisal system], and what the interrater reliability and those kinds of things kind of included in there. But I'm going to be, and I don't mean to be off-hand when I say this, but our district has gone through a lot of change in district leadership, superintendent, associate superintendents. So it really is at the whim of whoever's thinking about PAS at the time, what we are going to do about it.

Principal Bailey went on to elaborate about the school's administration team's experience and shared staff,

But I think there's enough of us who have been in administration, a long enough time that we feel confident in our, in our own interrater reliability because when we share staff . . . so, I feel like sharing the work has been the best staff development rather than the seminars and things that we go to.

Principal Bailey suggested, "If we got together and really, at the end of the year, looked at each other's writing . . . [we would be] accountable to each other."

Principal Casey reported completing self-study courses with regard to teacher evaluations. Principal Casey added,

I have completed some conferences like I did the Kim Marshall [conference] when that was available . . . I did it by myself . . . [and] it's hard doing it by yourself because if you end up having questions or wonderings about what's being presented, you don't really have anybody to bounce that off of.

Principal Casey suggested wanting to receive specific professional development on how to approach areas of concern with staff when discussing their evaluations.

Principal Dakota reported receiving a day and a half of professional development on the school district's teacher evaluation system rubric when first hired. However, due to Principal Dakota's background, the entire professional development was not required. Principal Dakota claimed only to have to attend towards the end of the professional development day. Principal Dakota described this professional development as a "seminar-type session."

Principal Dakota also reported attending networking professional development on interrater reliability. Principal Dakota described the professional development as "so-so." Principal Dakota stated,

I think the part that was like slightly frustrating for me was just like, I know the rubric really well, and I understand observations, but they kind of glossed over the things that I needed, like, you know, oh, where did you find this form and like what's expected of me so I found myself having to reach out to colleagues. If somebody maybe didn't know what they needed to even ask, like, they might have been, I don't know, not doing a very good job or, you know, like, out of compliance, or they might have like, panicked, you know, maybe come like January, February, like, oh, I didn't know I had to do that.

**Table 8**

*My Current School District Adequately Prepared me for Conducting Teacher Evaluations*

N = 456				Scale:				
Item #	Question	Mean	S.D.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8	School district adequately prepared me for conducting teacher evaluations	3.45	1.114	n = 24 (5.2%)	n = 83 (18.2%)	n = 83 (18.2%)	n = 195 (42.8%)	n = 71 (15.6%)

Table 8 reports how participants responded to the statement, "My current school district has adequately prepared me for conducting teacher evaluations" by selecting their level of agreement with the statement. A total of 456 participants responded to the question with 24 participants or 5.2% selecting they strongly disagree and 83 participants or 18.2% stating they disagree. There were 83 or 18.2% of participants who neither agreed or disagreed with the statement. The most frequently selected was where 195 or 42.8% of the participants agreed with the statement. A total of 71 or 15.6% of participants stated they strongly agreed with the statement that their current district has adequately prepared them for conducting teacher evaluations.

The mean was 3.45. This was acquired by giving a numerical number to each scale option; (1) for strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, and a (5) for strongly agree. The standard deviation was 1.114.

Principal Ainsley and Principal Bailey agreed with the statement, "My current school district adequately prepared me for conducting teacher evaluations," while Principal Casey and Principal Dakota neither agreed or disagreed. Principal Casey elaborated and stated,

I don't think it's really a school district's responsibility to, to provide that, because I think you should have some of it when you come in. So I think it would be more of the college level. But . . . [they] have to provide opportunities for that [preparing principals at conducting teacher evaluations].

**Table 9**

*Approximate Hours per Year your Current School District Provides in Professional Development on Conducting Teacher Evaluations*

N = 456		Scale:			
Item #	Question	0	1-2	3-4	5 or more
9	Approximate hours current school district provides in professional development to administrators on conducting teacher evaluations	n = 169 (37.1%)	n = 172 (37.7%)	n = 73 (16.0%)	n = 42 (9.2%)

Table 9 describes the number of professional development hours per year participants reported their school district provides them with regard to conducting teacher evaluations. A total of 456 participants responded to the question. One hundred sixty-nine or 37.1% of participants selected 0 hours while 172 or 37.7% of the participants selected 1-2 hours of professional development given to them each year by their current school district. There were 73 or 16% of participants who selected 3-4 hours per year their school district provided them with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, while 42 or 9.2% of the participants selected 5 or more hours of professional development.

Principal Ainsley and Principal Bailey claimed to receive approximately 1-2 hours a year of professional development on conducting teacher evaluations. Principal Casey reported 0 hours of professional development with regard to teacher evaluation received while Principal Dakota reported 5 hours of professional development received each year from the school district.

### ***Research Question 3***

3. What do Minnesota principals report as challenges with maintaining validity while conducting evaluations?

**Table 10**

#### *Principal Tendencies When Evaluating Teachers*

N = 459		Scale:	
Item #	Question	No	Yes
11	Principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings.	n = 288 (62.7%)	n = 171 (37.3%)
	Principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristics.	n = 290 (63.2%)	n = 169 (36.8%)
	Principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings.	n = 294 (64.1%)	n = 165 (35.9%)
	Principals tend to rate teachers within the first few minutes of the observation.	n = 298 (64.9%)	n = 161 (35.1%)
	Principals tend to rate teachers high in all performance areas based on one outstanding quality.	n = 363 (79.1%)	n = 96 (20.9%)
	Principals tend to rate teachers with low ratings because they have opposite characteristics.	n = 403 (87.8%)	n = 56 (12.2%)
	Principals tend to rate teachers low in all performance areas based on one poor quality.	n = 421 (91.7%)	n = 38 (8.3%)
	Principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings.	n = 450 (98.0%)	n = 9 (2.0%)

Table 10 depicts the results of when participants were asked to select principal tendencies while evaluating teachers. These tendencies were based on Sharon Armstrong's work with regard to common rater error when evaluating performance. The tendencies chosen were based on rater errors such as the halo effect, horns effect, central tendency effect, first impression effect,



leniency effect, and personal bias effect. Participants were able to select all tendencies options that applied.

A total of 459 participants responded to the question. The most frequently selected tendency was "principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings" with 171 or 37.3% of participants selecting this tendency. The second most frequently selected tendency was "principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristics" which had 169 or 36.8% participants selecting this tendency. This was followed by 165 or 35.9% of the participants selecting "principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings" and 161 or 35.1% of the participants selecting "principals tend to rate teachers within the first few minutes of the observation." The lowest frequency selected tendency was "principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings" with only nine or 2.0% of all participants selecting this tendency.

When asked about principal tendencies, Principal Ainsley commented on the importance of being consistent by stating, "I will be the first one to admit, one of the areas that I always have to keep myself aware of is, it's a whole lot easier to go in and give some constructive feedback about something you want changed with a first, second, third-year teacher than it is with a 35-year veteran." Principal Ainsley also mentioned a challenge of matching what was observed in the evaluation to the teacher evaluation model's rubric and ensure the principal and teacher both understand and agree on the rating. Principal Ainsley elaborated by stating, "Because you want this to be a collegial process, we're in this together, I'm here to help you. And then when you get to that [disagreement], it can be challenging to where it's like, well, but I don't agree, and ultimately I hold veto power."

Principal Bailey claimed finding and devoting the appropriate time to every evaluation is a challenge. Principal Bailey suggested having principals shadow each other, especially newer principals, in order for principals to learn and discuss what they see and record in an observation. Principal Bailey also recommended that principals should review each other's observation documents and have conversations about what each principal is seeing with each teacher, specifically for shared staff.

Principal Casey reported consistency during observations as a complex challenge principals face. Principal Casey also noted hard conversations with staff afterward are difficult and sometimes principals are consistent at having those conversations and sometimes not.

Principal Casey stated,

I try to be as prepared of what I'm going to be seeing and what I'm going to be evaluating and looking for when I go in. I try to look at the same components for everyone. Those just general components, and then if I see something that may be surprises me as outstanding or whatever, then I'll, I'll put that in also, but just to make sure that I'm fair with everyone that I'm looking for the same thing.

Principal Casey noted it can be difficult to have hard conversations with staff, particularly veteran teachers, around feedback in which to improve their teaching. Principal Casey asserted, Most of the teachers that I'm doing [evaluating] have been here forever. They're not first-year teachers. They're not even like, five or younger [years of experience]. So it's like, well, I know you've been here a long time. You know, no one's said anything bad about you. So you must be a good teacher. Which, that's not really right, either. But I think being able to even like say, you know, you do this really well, but have you ever thought

about something new, like bringing something for them that that they can try, you know, to grow? Because I think everybody needs growth.

Principal Dakota emphasized maintaining validity in terms of the scoring on the rubric as a challenge when observing teachers multiple times a year. Principal Dakota pointed out it can be challenging to determine if a component was missing, if the component was just not in this particular lesson, or if the teacher never does the component. Principal Dakota stated, "There's like, a couple elements that you're just not seeing, you know? . . . And then there's also kind of that nuance of like, okay, is it that, that they really just aren't doing that? Or is it that it's just not happening in that lesson?" Principal Dakota followed up by stating, "But I would ask that teacher, you know, in a post-conference, you know, if it was something I just didn't see in that lesson." Principal Dakota concluded by stating, "So I think just that that interrater reliability, and like kind of the difference between like one lesson versus multiple times in a room is a challenge."

## **Summary**

A total of 459 administrators participated in the survey. Of the 459 participants, 303 participants identified as a principal and 156 participants identified as an assistant/associate principal. Most participants who participated in the survey either had between 4-6 years of administrator experience (24.0%) or 10 or more years of administrator experience (40.7%). Over half of the participants, 246 or 53.6%, reported having a student enrollment in their district of 1,500 or more students. A total of 177 or 38.6% of the participants identified as an Elementary (K-6) principal and 173 or 37.7% of the participants identified as a Secondary (7-12) principal.

Approximately 84% of the participants reported their level of preparedness at conducting teacher evaluations as a 4 (well prepared) or a 5 (very well prepared). The most frequent professional development selected that was offered to principals from their school district was "networks" with 240 or 52.3% of participants. Of the 240 participants who selected networking, 143 or about 60% found networks very useful. The lowest frequency selected professional development was "job shadowing" with 84 or 18.3% of participants selecting it as professional development offered to them by their current school district.

Two hundred sixty-six or 58.3% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed school districts adequately prepared them for conducting teacher evaluations. However, 341 or approximately 75% of all participants claimed to receive 0-2 hours of professional development each year on teacher evaluations from their current school district.

One hundred seventy-one or 37.3% of participants selected "principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings" as the most frequent tendency principals make while observing teachers. The second most frequent tendency selected was "principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristic" with 169 participants or 36.8% participants selecting this tendency. The lowest tendency, "principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings, " was selected by 9 or 2% of all participants.

Chapter IV summarized the findings of the mixed methods study which entailed both quantitative and qualitative data. In Chapter V, the data findings will be related to the review of the literature and each research question. Limitations to the study are discussed along with the researcher's recommendations for further research and practice in the field are presented.

## **Chapter V: Conclusions and Discussion, Limitations, Recommendations, and Summary**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain Minnesota principals' preparation with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, the types of professional development Minnesota principals receive for evaluating teachers and the usefulness of the professional development, along with challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations.

The study results were intended to gain better insight into the preparedness principals report at conducting teacher evaluations, and better prepare principals for this aspect of the job. The study's findings also revealed the types of professional development Minnesota principals report as useful for conducting teacher evaluations, and the challenges Minnesota school principals face with maintaining validity when evaluating teachers.

This chapter includes the conclusions and discussions related to the research questions, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and a summary. Findings in this chapter are based on the study conclusions as well as correlations to the literature review.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

This section addresses each research question's significant findings pertaining to the study and review of the literature along with discussion from the researcher's viewpoint.

#### ***Research Question 1***

*What do Minnesota principals report as their level of preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations?*

According to the National Governors Association (2011), substantial efforts have been given to ensure teachers are evaluated to ensure their effectiveness; way less consideration has been directed towards guaranteeing principals are prepared to conduct teacher evaluations.

However, most participants (93.8%) in the study reported on the survey as being either prepared, well prepared, or very well prepared at conducting teacher evaluations. The interviewees varied on their level of preparedness ranging from a 1.5 up to a 5. This was explained by their various backgrounds and previous experiences with conducting teacher evaluations.

Hess and Kelly's (2007) study, *Learning to Lead: What Gets Taught in Principal-Preparation Programs*, discovered less than 4% of the entire principal course program has aspiring principals learn about teacher evaluation. Hess and Kelly (2007) also claimed that 96% of principals stated they learned more while on the job and from other administrators in the position than their college courses. This research concurred with Principal Ainsley's statement with regard to learning more from district work than college programs.

Principals learn vast amounts of knowledge on the job and from their colleagues; however, they still must learn and understand how to use the teacher evaluation tool their district utilizes. It was discovered that no matter the principal's background, training on teacher evaluation is still imperative. Principal Casey suggested more professional development on the various components of the teacher evaluation system, specifically identifying evidence of the practice versus a principal being subjective. Danielson (2012) asserted training must occur in order for principals to understand and implement specific approaches and methods during the evaluation process in order to effectively make precise and constant decisions on a teacher's performance.

Over 93% of the participants who completed the survey reported being either prepared, well prepared, or very well prepared at conducting teacher evaluations. This was a high

percentage, especially with almost 20% of all participants being in their first, second, or third year as an administrator.

The high percentage of administrators that reported being prepared, well prepared, or very well prepared could be for various reasons. Administrators may have received adequate training from their college preparation courses, had prior knowledge with evaluation in their previous position, or received useful training from their current school district. During the interviews, the interviewees varied on their rationale for being prepared. The reasons varied from years of experience conducting teacher evaluations to previous positions held within the district. Only one interviewee, Principal Casey, reported not feel prepared for conducting teacher evaluations. Principal Casey emphasized the need for more professional development stating administrators think they know what they should be doing but questioned if principals were conducting teacher evaluation correctly.

With a high percentage of principals reporting being prepared to conduct teacher evaluations and almost 20% of those principals being in their first few years in administration, the researcher believes some principals may have rated their preparedness higher on the survey than their actuality. There could also be false confidence that administrators feel prepared and believe they are doing well at conducting teacher evaluations when in reality they are not implementing research-based best practices when conducting teacher evaluations.

### ***Research Question 2***

*What do Minnesota principals report as the various types and usefulness of professional development received from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation?*

Networks, defined as interactions with other principals, was the most frequently chosen professional development selected by administrators (52.3%) with 59.6% of those administrators rating it as a very useful form of professional development. Self-study courses was the second most frequent form of professional development selected by administrators which was defined as independent reading or more advanced online activities. One hundred fifty-two (33.1%) of the participants selected self-study courses with 48 (31.6%) of those participants stating this type of professional was very useful.

Goe et al. (2008) cited Brandt's survey which stated only 8% of districts trained their principals as part of the school district's adopted teacher evaluation plan. One hundred three (22.4%) of the participants in the survey reported not receiving any professional development from their current school district with regard to teacher evaluation. Principal Ainsley also reported no formal professional development through conferences or workshops, just informal professional development.

A total of 169 (37.1%) of participants selected 0 hours were given to them by their current school district with regard to administrator professional development on conducting teacher evaluations while 42 (9.2%) of the participants selected 5 or more hours of professional development were given to them by their current school district. These findings depict some school districts may not be giving administrators enough training on teacher evaluation because Joe et al. (2013), asserted training observers is important because training ensures principals are all collectively understanding teacher quality, the instrument being used for the observation, and the scoring levels of the instrument.



Principal Bailey reported professional development for administrators on teacher evaluations was affected by district office administrators their priorities. Principal Bailey suggested administrators getting together more often to collaborate on reviewing each other's evaluations would hold a benefit and hold administrators accountable to one another. Principal Casey stated completing conferences on teacher evaluation, however, completing it by oneself was difficult because discussions and follow-up with other colleagues were missing. This goes with Derrington's (2013) study which asserted principals' training on teacher evaluation is often quick and with no enough time allotted to really understand the evaluation system, thus principals often have to learn as they go through the process. Derrington (2013) was adamant principal training must be done over time and before being implemented with teachers.

Principal Dakota reported attending networking professional development on interrater reliability but did not find it useful. Principal Dakota stated feeling confident in understanding how to observe teachers but wanting to know more about the forms that go with the teacher evaluation model. Contrary, Reid (2018) declared most principal training goes in-depth on how teachers are evaluated because it focuses more on using the system versus actually helping principals evaluate teacher performance. Reid (2018) urged training for principals should focus on specific educational pedagogy features that cover the main teaching domains such as planning, instruction, classroom management, and assessment.

A total of 456 participants responded to the statement, "My current school district has adequately prepared me for conducting teacher evaluations," with 266 (58.3 %) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Principal Ainsley and Principal Bailey agreed with the statement, "My current school district adequately prepared me for conducting teacher

evaluations," while Principal Casey and Principal Dakota neither agreed or disagreed. Principal Casey believed adequately preparing principals at conducting teacher evaluations was not the school district's responsibility but more of the college or universities' responsibility. However, Caposey (2017) emphasized in order for school districts to go from good to great, school districts need to personalize professional development for every single teacher which will improve a school district's most important resource, personnel. This can be applied to administrators as well; personalizing professional development for administrators, such as teacher evaluations, can improve a school district.

Networks, self-study courses, and taught courses were the most frequently selected professional developments offered to administrators. The researcher was not surprised by this data. Even in the interviews, discussion on interactions with other principals came up as a valuable learning and growth opportunity for administrators.

When participants were asked to respond to the statement, "My current school district has adequately prepared me for conducting teacher evaluations," participants were able to select from five different options ranging from strongly disagree up to strongly agree. The mean was 3.45 with the most frequently selected rating being a 4 or agree. However, a total of 107 or 23.5% of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. With all the research highlighting the importance of administrators effectively evaluating teachers, this is quite significant to have almost 1 in every 4 administrators stating they do not feel their district has adequately prepared them to conduct teacher evaluations.

This correlated with the approximate number of hours per year school districts provided administrators with professional development to conduct teacher evaluations. One hundred sixty-

nine or 36.8% of participants selected 0 hours while 172 or 37.5% of the participants selected 1-2 hours of professional development given to them each year by their current school district. This is a significantly small amount of time devoted to administrators for professional development especially with the amount of time evaluations take and the important role evaluations play in retaining teachers.

In order to improve teacher instruction, administrators need more consistent professional development on teacher evaluation. This should be a multifaceted approach done by school districts and professional organizations. School districts must have a specific amount of hours each year dedicated for administrators to learn and grow in conducting teacher evaluation. This will help improve teacher instruction, thus improving student learning. Professional organization must also provide support and professional development to administrators. This can be done through a smaller setting such as during division meetings or provided during the yearly state meetings.

### ***Research Question 3***

*What do Minnesota principals report as challenges with maintaining validity while conducting evaluations?*

Steinberg and Donaldson (2016) argued classroom observation as being the most crucial piece of the teacher evaluation system; however, according to Dodd (2016), due to principals' broad array of job duties, principals spend less time conducting teacher evaluations with fidelity.

Participants in the study were asked to select challenges they perceive principals face, with regard to validity, while conducting teacher evaluations. The most frequently selected tendency was "principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings" with 171 (37.3%) of the

participants selecting this tendency. The second most frequently selected tendency was "principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristics" which had 169 (36.8%) of the participants selecting this tendency. This was followed by 165 (35.9%) of the participants selecting "principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings" and 161 (35.1%) of the participants selecting "principals tend to rate teachers within the first few minutes of the observation." The lowest frequency selected tendency was "principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings" with only 9 (2.0%) of all participants selecting this tendency.

Graham et al. (2012) asserted since observation ratings are essentially a principal's professional conclusion, there is always a question on whether the rating was the principal's judgment or the teacher's actual performance. Danielson (2012) further exclaimed the importance for principals to collect evidence and not just interpret what they observed. Danielson (2012) reported that almost all evaluators claimed to use some interpretation or opinions while taking notes during an observation.

Principal Ainsley commented on being consistent with feedback to teachers. Principal Ainsley also mentioned that a challenge can be to ensure the principal and teacher both understand and agree on the principal's rating. Principal Casey also noted hard conversations with staff afterward are complicated and sometimes principals are consistent at having those conversations and sometimes not. Principal Casey noted it can be challenging to have hard conversations with staff, particularly veteran teachers, around feedback in which to improve their teaching. According to Danielson (2012), when there is a disagreement among a teacher's performance rating, it is essential to know if the disparity is from the evidence collected or how the principal interpreted the performance.

One hundred sixty-five (35.9%) of the participants selected "principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings" as a perceived challenge principals face, with regard to validity, while conducting teacher evaluations. One of the reasons why principals may tend to rate all teachers as average was stated by Marshall (2011), "Some supervisors sugar-coat criticism and give inflated scores to keep peace and avoid hurt feelings" (p. 1).

Principal Bailey claimed finding and devoting the appropriate time to every evaluation is a challenge. Principal Bailey suggested having principals shadow each other, especially newer principals, in order for principals to learn and discuss what they see and record during an observation. Principal Bailey also recommended that principals should review each other's observation documents and have conversations about what each principal is seeing with each teacher, specifically for shared staff.

Principal Dakota emphasized maintaining validity in terms of the scoring on the rubric as a challenge when observing teachers multiple times a year. Principal Dakota pointed out it can be difficult to determine if a component was missing, if the component was just in this particular lesson, or if the teacher never does the component. Principal Dakota stated a challenge with maintaining inter-rater reliability and scoring the same teacher's lesson consistently when being in the room multiple times over the course of a school year. In 2012, Graham et al. (2012) claimed inter-rater agreement to be imperative and the most effective way to improve inter-rater agreement was through administrator training.

According to Barnett (2012), because principals have various views on teacher evaluation, teacher evaluations are not completed with consistency. Principals' viewpoints may differ on teacher evaluation due to leadership style, experience, knowledge, or because of

personal relationships with teachers. Due to these numerous variables, a principal's level of preparedness and effectiveness may differ when conducting teacher evaluations.

Participants in the study were asked to select challenges they perceive principals face, with regard to validity, while conducting teacher evaluations. The most frequently selected tendencies were "principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings" followed by "principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristics," then "principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings," and "principals tend to rate teachers within the first few minutes of the observation." The lowest frequency tendency selected was "principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings."

The researcher was not surprised by "principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings" as a frequently selected principal tendency. This rationale could be multiple faceted with principals not understanding the instrument or the rubric being used or because administrators are unsure how to score teachers so administrators just score teachers with a high rating. This tendency could also be attributed to the administrators' mindset that all teachers are good unless proven or seen otherwise.

Administrators also could be rating teachers high because principals can then avoid difficult conversations during the post-observation discussion. During the interviews, participants often discussed the challenge of having difficult conversations with staff. Scoring teachers with a high rating is a way to avoid these conversations. With this notion coming up multiple times during the interviews, the research holds this to be true and a challenge administrators must overcome.

## **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations are parts of a study the researcher knows may impede the researcher's ability to generalize the results (Roberts, 2010). Most studies have some limitations that the researcher overlooked or could not control. The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. Administrators are asked to participate in numerous research surveys throughout the school year. As a result, survey fatigue may have affected the return rate.
2. The survey was distributed to administrators in January and February of 2021. The 2020-2021 school year was quite trying and stressful for administrators and everyone in education. Therefore, surveying administrators in a different school year might have produced different outcomes. Likewise, surveying administrators at a different time during the school year also may have yielded different results.
3. The researcher sent out the survey instead of MESPA or MASSP to acquire a higher response rate. In doing so, participants were blind copied so the email had the perception of being only sent to them. This may have caused some unintentional skepticism from participants because some principals declined participating in the survey. Although the research had permission to use MESPA's and MASSP's listserv along with their support in an email, some participants denied participating because the research did not first go through their school district.
4. Although there were various examples of principal tendencies that may affect validity while conducting teacher evaluations, the option to have "other" as a choice and the ability for participants to share examples may have been beneficial.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings from the study, the field of education may benefit from further research, particularly in the area of teacher evaluation, in the following areas:

1. A study can be conducted more intentionally on principal biases when conducting teacher evaluations.
2. A correlation study can be conducted based on years of experience with regard to administrator preparedness at conducting teacher evaluations.
3. A study can be conducted in which principals are similarly asked how prepared they are at conducting teacher evaluations and then examining how actually effective those principals are at conducting teacher evaluations.
4. A study can be conducted based on how principals report their college preparation class has prepared them to conduct teacher evaluations.
5. A qualitative study can be conducted on college universities' principal preparation course work focusing on the instruction and time dedicated for teacher evaluation.
6. This study can be replicated in another state in order to see if the results hold true in various parts of the United States.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations for practice are recommended:

1. It is recommended school districts and professional organizations provide continuous training for administrators on conducting teacher evaluations. This training needs to be held throughout the school year, each year.



2. Teacher evaluation training for administrators should be separated by learning about the school district's evaluation model and instrument versus training on rater bias, identifying evidence during an observation, and follow-up conversations with staff.
3. It is recommended school districts should offer specific training to new principals in order to support them in the process of evaluating teachers. This training should consist of inter-rater reliability so consistency is maintained and applied while conducting teacher evaluations.
4. It is recommended principal preparation courses devote more course work time to effectively evaluating teachers for aspiring principals. Part of principals' intern hours must be with a trained administrator where job shadowing the evaluation process occurs.
5. It is recommended administrators prioritize the amount of time they devote to teacher evaluation. Evaluating a teacher's performance followed by a conversation with constructive feedback will likely increase the teacher's instruction and student achievement.

## **Summary**

Stronge (2018) exclaimed teachers are imperative in shaping students' lives, affecting them beyond the classroom and into life. In order to ensure teachers are influencing and growing students, school administrators must evaluate their performance. The review of literature stressed the importance of training administrators in order to adequately support them so teacher observations are meaningful, effective, valid, and reliable.

The study was mixed methods consisting of surveying and interview principals. This method was chosen in order to have a comprehensive understanding of principals' preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations. By also interviewing principals, it allowed participants to authentically express their thoughts, feelings, challenges with conducting teacher evaluations, and provide specific recommendations and ideas for improvement.

The study indicated a majority of Minnesota principals felt prepared in conducting teacher evaluations. A variety of professional development types were offered to principals, ranging in usefulness as reported by Minnesota principals with networking being the most frequently selected professional development type. A commonality that emerged in both the literature review and the study was the importance and value of learning from other administrators and consistent professional development. It was also discovered that administrator training on teacher evaluation needs to be specific and focused. There are numerous challenges administrators face while conducting teacher evaluations. One challenge that principals noted with maintaining validity while conducting evaluations was the perceived notion that principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings.

Administrators make important decisions about teachers with very little understanding of how to correctly use an evaluation instrument during teacher evaluations (Goe et al., 2008). Teachers must have a say and buy-in with the teacher evaluation process in order for them to respect and understand the process (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012). Teachers must be engaged in these processes in order to find valuable meaning (Danielson, 2010). The teacher evaluation process needs to be a collaborative effort with all stakeholders taking an active role in

understanding and learning. A key piece is guaranteeing school administrators are prepared and feel confident in conducting teacher evaluations, which in return will affect a school's success.

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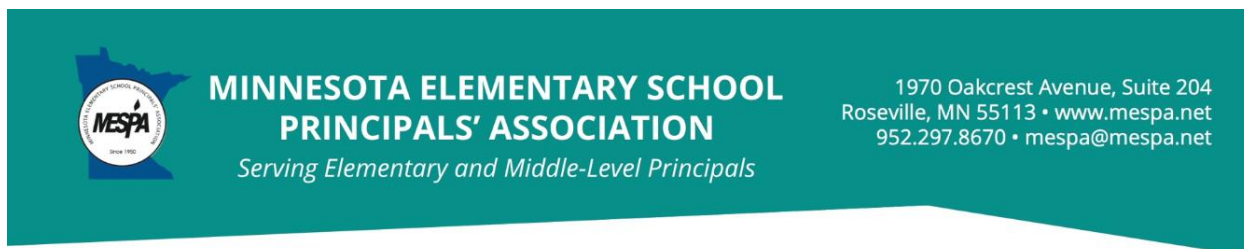
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## Appendix A: MESPA Letter of Support



Institutional Review Board  
St. Cloud State University  
Letter of Support

August 28, 2020

Institutional Review Board,

This is a formal letter of support where Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) has agreed to support Zachary Dingmann's research as part of his requirement for a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. The focus of Zach's research is teacher evaluation as he is attempting to discover the level preparedness principals report they are at conducting teacher evaluations. Zach has our permission to utilize our website's directory along with our support in an email to members. At the conclusion of Zach's research, he will make his study available to MESPA members.

Thank you,

*Rachel Dillon*

Rachel Dillon  
Program & Operations Manager  
[rachel@mespa.net](mailto:rachel@mespa.net)  
Office: 952.297.8675

Jon Millerhagen  
MESPA Executive Director  
[jhm@mespa.net](mailto:jhm@mespa.net)  
Office: 952.297.8673  
Cell: 612.816.5400

## Appendix B: MASSP Letter of Support

# Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

2 Pine Tree Drive • Suite 380 • Arden Hills, MN 55112 • 612-361-1510 • Fax: 612-361-6340 • massp.org



Executive Director  
Dave Adney

Attorney/Lobbyist  
Roger Aronson

Coordinator of  
Student Activities  
Doug Erickson

Office Manager  
Renee LeForte

Finance and  
Membership Manager  
Patti Anderson

Project Manager  
Natalie Kenneally

August 25, 2020

Institutional Review Board,

This is a formal letter of support where Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) has agreed to support Zachary Dingmann's research as part of his requirement for a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. The focus of Zach's research is teacher evaluation as he is attempting to discover the level preparedness principals report they are at conducting teacher evaluations. Zach has our permission to utilize our website's directory along with our support in an email to members. At the conclusion of Zach's research, he will make his study available to MASSP members.

Sincerely,

David Adney  
Executive Director

DA/rl

The Voice of Middle Level and High School Principals

### **Appendix C: Initial Invitation to Participate in Survey**

Dear School Administrator,

You are invited to participate in my dissertation study with regard to teacher evaluation. This study will gather information on the level of preparedness Minnesota school principals report they are at conducting teacher evaluations.

I have designed a brief survey for you to take in order to gather this important data. Results from this study will be made public through St. Cloud State University dissertation repository.

This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Completing this survey means you will be a consent respondent to this study, with all your information remaining anonymous. This survey is voluntary with no foreseeable risks to any of the respondents.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and helping me collect vital data for my dissertation around this topic. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact me by phone at (320) 295 – 8014 or by email at [zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu](mailto:zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu). You may also contact my advisor, Dr. David Lund, at [dlund1@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:dlund1@stcloudstate.edu).

Survey Link

[https://stcloudstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eKHo28kC29gylSZ](https://stcloudstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eKHo28kC29gylSZ)

Zachary Dingmann, Ed.S.  
Principal, Riverview Intermediate School  
St. Cloud State University Doctoral Candidate

## **Appendix D: Survey Instrument; Qualtrics**

### **Background Information and Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to examine the level of preparedness for conducting teacher evaluations as reported by Minnesota school principals.

### **Invitation**

You are invited to participate in a research study about school principals' level or preparedness at conducting teacher evaluations. You were selected to participate as an active member of Minnesota Association of School Principals (MASSP) or Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA). The research project is being conducted by Zachary Dingmann, a doctoral candidate at St. Cloud State University.

### **Procedures**

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to complete a survey that will take approximately 5 minutes. The survey responses will be anonymous and will be compiled with other respondents. There will be no identifiable information. It is important that we have as many people as possible complete the survey to generate an accurate representation of principals in Minnesota.

### **Benefits**

Benefits of the research will provide a broader understanding of how well prepared principals report they are at conducting teacher evaluations. As a participant in the study, information that is collected will help contribute to the scholarly literature and find ways in which principals can be better supported in performing the teacher evaluation process.

### **Risks**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in the study.

### **Confidentiality**

Data collected will remain confidential and there will be no identifying information associated with participants. Data will be reported and presented in aggregate form with no more than two descriptors presented together.

### **Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal**

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

### **Research Results**

If you have questions about this research study, you may contact Zachary Dingmann at [zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu](mailto:zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu) or the advisor, Dr. David Lund at [dlund1@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:dlund1@stcloudstate.edu). Results of the study will be published at the St. Cloud State University Repository.

### Acceptance to Participate

Your completion of the survey indicates that you are at least 18 years of age and your consent to participation in the study.

1. Are you currently employed as a principal or assistant principal in a Minnesota school district?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. As part of your job responsibilities, do you conduct teacher evaluations?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Which type of administrator best describes your current role?
  - a. Principal
  - b. Assistant/Associate Principal
4. How many years have you been a school administrator?
  - a. 1 – 3
  - b. 4 – 6
  - c. 7 – 9
  - d. 10 or more
5. How many students are enrolled in your school district?
  - a. 1 – 499
  - b. 500 – 999
  - c. 1,000 – 1,499
  - d. 1,500 or more
6. What level best indicates your current school?
  - a. Elementary (K-6)
  - b. Middle School (5-8)
  - c. Secondary (7-12)
  - d. All (K-12)
7. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 = not prepared at all and 5 = very well prepared, please rate your **current level** of preparedness at conducting teacher evaluations.

1	2	3	4	5
○	○	○	○	○
Not prepared	Somewhat prepared	Prepared	Well prepared	Very well prepared

8. Respond to the statement below by selecting the box that best reflects your level of agreement with the statement.

My current school district has adequately prepared me for conducting teacher evaluations.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Approximately how many hours a year does your current school district provide in professional development to administrators on conducting teacher evaluations?

- a. 0
- b. 1 – 2
- c. 3 – 4
- d. 5 or more

10. Select the types professional development, with regard to teacher evaluation, offered to you from your current school district. Please check all that apply. From the ones that you checked apply, rate how useful the professional development was at increasing your level of preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations.

<input type="checkbox"/> Taught Courses (Classroom sessions taught by a trainer)	<input type="checkbox"/> very useful	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat useful	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all useful
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<input type="checkbox"/> Self-study courses (Independent reading or more advanced online activities)	<input type="checkbox"/> very useful	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat useful	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all useful
---	--------------------------------------	--	--

<input type="checkbox"/> Networks (Interacting with other principals)	<input type="checkbox"/> very useful	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat useful	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all useful
--	--------------------------------------	--	--

<input type="checkbox"/> Seminars   Conferences (Formal meeting either in person or on-line by an organization)	<input type="checkbox"/> very useful	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat useful	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all useful
--	--------------------------------------	--	--

<input type="checkbox"/> Job Shadowing (Observing a colleague)	<input type="checkbox"/> very useful	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat useful	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all useful
---	--------------------------------------	--	--

<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> very useful	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat useful	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all useful
---	--------------------------------------	--	--

☐ No professional development offered



11. Select the types of challenges you perceive principals face, with regard to validity, while conducting teacher evaluations. Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings.
- ☐ Principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings.
- ☐ Principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings.
- ☐ Principals tend to rate teachers within the first few minutes of the observation.
- ☐ Principals tend to rate teachers high in all performance areas based on one outstanding quality.
- ☐ Principals tend to rate teachers low in all performance areas based on one poor quality.
- ☐ Principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristics.
- ☐ Principals tend to rate teachers with low ratings because they have opposite characteristics.

### **Background Information and Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to examine the level of preparedness for conducting teacher evaluations as reported by Minnesota school principals.

### **Risks**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in the study.

### **Confidentiality**

Data collected will remain confidential and there will be no identifying information associated with participants. Data will be reported and presented in aggregate form with no more than two descriptors presented together.

### **Research Results**

If you have questions about this research study, you may contact Zachary Dingmann at [zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu](mailto:zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu) or the advisor, Dr. David Lund at [dlund1@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:dlund1@stcloudstate.edu). Results of the study will be published at the St. Cloud State University Repository.

Please click the arrow below to submit your survey. Thank you for your participation.

### **Appendix E: Second Request**

Dear Administrator,

I hope the second half of the school year is off to a great start. Two weeks ago, on January 26<sup>th</sup>, I sent you an email asking for your participation in a survey I am conducting as part of my doctoral research. I am doing research on the level of preparedness for conducting teacher evaluations as reported by Minnesota school principals.

If you have completed the survey, I thank you, and you can disregard this email. If you have not completed the survey, I am hoping you will take the time to do so; your response is critical to the accuracy of the data. I have included the link to the survey below. You will also have access to the data once my degree is completed.

**Survey Link**

[https://stcloudstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eKHo28kC29gylSZ](https://stcloudstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eKHo28kC29gylSZ)

With much appreciation,

Zachary Dingmann, Ed.S.  
Principal, Riverview Intermediate School  
St. Cloud State University Doctoral Candidate

## **Appendix F: Verbal Recruitment Script**

Hello, my name is Zachary Dingmann and I am a doctoral candidate at St. Cloud State University. I am calling to invite you to participate in my research study about the level preparedness principals report they are at conducting teacher evaluations.

I obtained your contact information from either the MASSP or MESPA website. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be helping us understand the levels of preparedness principals report they are at conducting teacher evaluations. You would be participating in approximately an hour interview where we will discuss a range of topics around teacher evaluation. This will be a structured interview; therefore, I would like to audio/video record your interview and then use the information to analyze, quote, summaries, review commonalities and differences with other participants, and report the level of preparedness, professional development, and challenges principals face with being reliable and valid when conducting teacher evaluations. Your audio/video will be kept safe, and your identity will not be disclosed. This would be completely anonymous and I have considered the factors and determine that there will be no risk.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate, we can go ahead and schedule a time for me to meet with you to give you more information. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also call or email me with your decision.

Do you have any questions for me at this time? If you have any more questions about this process or if you need to contact me about participation, you may contact me by phone at (320) 295 – 8014 or by email at [zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu](mailto:zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu). You may also contact my advisor, Dr. David Lund at [dlund1@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:dlund1@stcloudstate.edu). Thank you for your time today.

### Appendix G: Interview Protocol

Name of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Introductions and Greetings:

- Explanation of the research, purpose, and consent forms.
- Tell me about yourself (education, career, items of interest).
- Did your background influence your decision to become a principal?
- How many years have you been a principal? In this district?

#### What do Minnesota principals report as their level of preparedness in conducting teacher evaluations?

Prompts:

- What is your level of preparedness on conducting teacher evaluations?
  - o Not prepared at all up to very well prepared.

1	2	3	4	5
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Not prepared	Somewhat prepared	Prepared	Well prepared	Very well prepared

- Why do you feel you are that prepared?
- What prepared you to be at this level or what inhibited you from being more prepared?

Additional comments:

#### What do Minnesota principals report as the types of professional development received from their school district with regard to teacher evaluation and the professional development usefulness.

Prompts:

- "My current school district has adequately prepared me for conducting teacher evaluations."

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Approximately how many hours a year does your current school district provide in professional development to administrators on conducting teacher evaluations?
  - a. 0
  - b. 1 – 2
  - c. 3 – 4
  - d. 5 or more
- What types professional development have you participated in on teacher evaluation from your school district?
  - o Taught Courses (Classroom sessions taught by a trainer)
  - o Self-study courses (Independent reading or more advanced online activities)
  - o Networks (Interacting with other principals)
  - o Seminars | Conferences (Formal meeting either in person or on-line by an organization)
  - o Job Shadowing (Observing a colleague)
- How beneficial has this professional development been to you?
  - o What have you learned because of this professional development?
  - o How has it changed the way you have conducted teacher evaluations?
  - o What additional professional development do you need with regard to teacher evaluation?
- If no professional development has been given by the district with regard to teacher evaluation:
  - o What do you need in order to improve at evaluating teachers?
  - o What would this professional development opportunity look like?

Additional comments:

## **What do Minnesota principals report as challenges with maintaining validity while conducting evaluations?**

Prompts:

- What are some of the challenges you face with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations?
  - Why are these challenges for you?
  - How do you get past these challenges?
  - How do you ensure consistency while facing these challenges?
- Do any of these challenges effect the way you perceive principals conduct teacher evaluations?
- Rater Errors and Principal Tendencies
  - Halo
    - Principals tend to rate teachers high in all performance areas based on one outstanding quality.
  - Horns
    - Principals tend to rate teachers low in all performance areas based on one poor quality.
  - Leniency
    - Principals tend to rate all teachers with high ratings.
  - Harshness
    - Principals tend to rate all teachers with low ratings.
  - Central Tendency
    - Principals tend to rate all teachers with average ratings.
  - First Impression
    - Principals tend to rate teachers within the first few minutes of the observation.
  - Personal Bias
    - Principals tend to rate teachers with high ratings because they share similar characteristics.

- Principals tend to rate teachers with low ratings because they have opposite characteristics.
- Of these challenges which ones do you believe to be the greatest challenge for principals?

Additional comments:

**Any final comments or thoughts with regard to principals conducting teacher evaluations?**

### **Appendix H: Oral Consent**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain Minnesota principals' preparation with regard to conducting teacher evaluations, the types of professional development Minnesota principals receive for evaluating teachers and the usefulness of the professional development, along with challenges principals encounter with maintaining validity while conducting teacher evaluations. This study will assist in contributing to the scholarly literature and further examine all these areas in order to find ways in which principals can be better supported in performing the teacher evaluation process. Would it be okay with you if I used the information we talk about in my study? This is completely voluntary and you may say no if you do not want this information used in the study. If you agree and we start talking and you decide you no longer want to do this, we can stop at any time. I will not identify you or use any information that would make it possible for anyone to identify you in any presentation or written reports about this study. If it is okay with you, I might want to use direct quotes from you, but these would only be cited as from Principal A, B, C, etc. using gender neutral pseudonym names. There are no expected risks for helping me with this study. After the completion of the interviews, you will receive your transcribed interview. At this point, if you wish to expand any responses or note omissions to the transcription, you may. Do you still want to proceed with the interview?



## Appendix I: IRB Approval



### Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

**Name:** Zachary Dingmann  
**Email:** zrdingmann@go.stcloudstate.edu

### IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: Exempt Review

**Project Title:** Level of Preparedness for Conducting Teacher Evaluations as Reported by Minnesota School Principals

**Advisor:** David Lund

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

**IRB Chair:**

Dr. Mili Mathew  
Chair and Graduate Director  
Assistant Professor  
Communication Sciences and Disorders

**IRB Institutional Official:**

Dr. Claudia Tomany  
Associate Provost for Research  
Dean of Graduate Studies

#### OFFICE USE ONLY

SCSU IRB# 1986 - 2573  
 1st Year Approval Date: 10/26/2020  
 1st Year Expiration Date:

Type: Exempt Review  
 2nd Year Approval Date:  
 2nd Year Expiration Date:

Today's Date: 10/26/2020  
 3rd Year Approval Date:  
 3rd Year Expiration Date: