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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ON EARLY CAREER SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' RETENTION DECISIONS

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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ON EARLY
CAREER SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' RETENTION DECISIONS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ON EARLY CAREER SPECIAL
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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between administrative support and

retention of early career special education teachers. Research has shown that there is a shortage

of special education teachers; however, teachers leaving the field may be driving the shortages.

Based on the work of Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture, this study identified how

different types of support (i.e., emotional, instructional, technical, and environmental) can

influence early career special education teachers' decision to remain in their current position.

Participants, including teachers and administrators from a suburban school division in Virginia,

completed a modified version of the Administrative Support Survey. A correlational research

design was used to answer research questions comparing support perceived by principals to

support received by teachers and support perceived by teachers to support provided by

administrators.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent samples t-test, and descriptive statistics were conducted. Results revealed that the majority of teachers reported they received support and intended on returning to their position. However, the teachers who reported they were not returning to their position indicated receiving little support from their principals. Further, differences in support were also reported by race, grade level, disability taught, licensing status, and delivery model of instruction. Limitations and implications for practice, policy, and research are reported.

CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION

School administrators are continuously seeking highly qualified special education teachers (SETs; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Fideler, Foster, & Schwartz, 2000; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001); however, school administrators are challenged with providing adequate support to SETs that would encourage them to remain in the profession beyond three years (Edgar & Pair, 2005; Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). To be successful in retaining early career SETs, school administrators must provide sufficient support (Billingsley, 2003; Conley & You, 2017; Hughes, Matt, & O'Reilly, 2015). Consequently, school administrators must be knowledgeable about the support needs of these teachers and equipped to incorporate strategies to meet the needs of SETs effectively.

Prior research has indicated that administrative support of novice teachers is vital to create a positive work experience and impact student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, Smith, & Leal, 2002). However, there is little research that investigates the type of administrative support provided and valued most by SETs, particularly for those teachers with less than 3 years of experience. The lack of research examining administrative support needs to be addressed to understand the attrition of early career special education teachers.

Context of the Study

Special education teachers continue to be one of the highest need areas across the nation. Every year, 10% of the SET workforce departs, contributing to 90% of overall teacher shortages (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) reported that between 2005 and 2012, the number of SETs in schools decreased from 420,000 to 346,000, representing a 17% decline. Yet, the number of students with disabilities has grown from 6.3 million in 2012 to 6.7 million in 2016 and is projected to continue increasing (McFarland et al., 2017). The increase in students with disabilities, along with the decreasing supply of SETs (Aragon, 2016), further impacts critical shortages and the need to better retain special educators.

One of the most pressing issues regarding the shortage of SETs is that early career SETs leave the field at higher rates than early career general education teachers (Connelly & Graham, 2009). Because SET retention is highly influenced by the support provided from school administrators, (Billingsley, 2003; Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Conley & You, 2017), it is critical that administrators understand the types of support that are most impactful to support the needs of early career special teachers. A considerable amount of research highlights the lack of administrative support for teachers (Billingsley, 2003; Brownell & Smith, 1992; Gonzalez, Brown, & Slate, 2008; Otto & Arnold, 2005), including administrators' lack of knowledge of the SETs role (Thornton, Peltier, & Medina, 2007), unequal workloads (Player, Youngs, Perrone, & Grogan, 2017), and a lack of direct support regarding compliance and managing behavior (Ingersoll, 2001). Further, Prather-Jones (2011) identified appreciation and assistance in forming relationships with other staff members, as additional areas in which SETs expressed needing

help. However, much of the research is not inclusive of early career SETs who are leaving the profession at alarming rates (Griffin et al., 2009).

Although the literature is clear that SETs desire support from their administrators, the literature is vague about what support early career SETs need and the knowledge base from which administrators operate. If administrators are not knowledgeable about the needs of early career SETs, they may be unable to support them, thus unable to retain them.

Factors Impacting Retention

SETs leaving the field accounted for 5.6% of teacher turnover in 2011-2012 (Sutcher et al., 2016) and rose to 6.6% the following year (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013). Although research provides a myriad of factors about why teachers leave, there appears to be no comprehensive theory to adequately explain the increasing turnover rates. Policymakers have provided a variety of reasons regarding the high rates of attrition, including low salaries (Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007), decreased enrollment of special education majors in institutions of higher education (McLeskey, Tyler, & Saunders Flippin, 2004), and an increase in accountability standards (Brownell, Hirsch, & Seo, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Therefore, it seems teachers are expected to do more with minimum compensation. Factors such as workload and teacher autonomy, particularly with SETs (Conley & You, 2017), are noted as factors impacting teacher retention. Grissom (2011) indicated that even though student demographics can impact teachers' decisions to leave, the impact of an effective administrator is more significant in teachers' decisions to remain. This argument suggests that working conditions, specifically administrative support is more impactful than student demographics. While Grissom (2011) did not focus specifically on early career SETs, findings suggest teachers will remain in their same positions if administrative support is in place, even when other negative

factors are present. Grissom (2011), however, highlighted the need to do further research on the connection between administrators and SET retention, advancing the association between administrative support and retention of special education teachers.

Administrative Support

Support, particularly from supervisors, is a social system of interpersonal transactions that can provide direct assistance (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980) or can assist in dealing with stress from job-related issues (House, 1981). These interactions could also include supplying information or resources for development. In the context of special education, support has been categorized into four areas: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical (Balfour, 2001; House, 1981; Hughes et al., 2015; Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994). These four categories have been identified in the literature as various types of support for SETs; however, the literature does not directly address whether these support categories are germane to early career SETs, who may require different types of support than veteran educators (Otto & Arnold, 2005).

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Statement of the Problem

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Prior research has focused on the retention of teachers as an issue related to factors such as salary and teacher autonomy rather than focusing on specific considerations at individual schools. Although studies have correlated a lack of administrative support with teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2003; Conley & You, 2017; Hughes et al., 2015), it is not as clear what supports school administrators provide to early career SETs, what supports early career SETs need from school administrators, and the impact that administrator support has on the retention of early career SETs.

Despite 48 states reporting that special education is their number one shortage area (Cross, 2017), few researchers have studied the impact of specific administrative support actions on early career SETs. Studies focusing on teacher retention often are limited to general education teachers or list several factors contributing to retention in addition to administrative support. These studies did not entirely focus on early career SETs. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate the differences in support given by administrators and support valued by early career SETs.

A review of the literature also reveals that certain demographic variables (e.g., race, disability category, licensure status; Billingsley, 2003) affect retention of special education teachers, but it is still not clear how these variables can impact SETs earlier in their career. As such, the current study examines what impacts administrative support has when these demographic variables intersect with the early career SETs. The variables to be explored are race, grade level, disability category, licensure status, and least restrictive environment.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning of this work is in line with Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture. In this theory, Schein asserted artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions are key components to understanding a culture. Thus, while investigating the culture within a school, this theory supports the premise that early career teachers' perceptions of the support they need are often incongruent with the administrator's perceptions of support, particularly if the administrator is not knowledgeable in special education. This incongruence may lead to administrators providing support in areas that the teachers do not value and a perception by the teacher that the administrator is not supportive.

In examining the incongruences between SETs and administrators, Hagaman and Casey (2018) found that although novice SETs report high caseloads as a reason they would leave, administrators did not recognize teacher caseload as a factor for retention. When asked about support, new SETs listed paraprofessionals as support whereas administrators cited grade-level teams (Hagaman & Casey, 2018). Thus, the disconnect between identified support and reasons for retention identified by administrators and teachers indicate that Schein's three levels of culture theory can provide insight into the cultures of the schools in this study. Further, the assumptions about what supports early career SETs need impacts the culture of the building and could lead to early career teachers feeling unsupported. This theory provides a deeper understanding of the basic underlying assumptions that teachers and administrators carry.

Purpose of Study

The lack of administrative support significantly impacts early career SETs, with many opting to leave the profession. With the rising rates of teacher attrition and a need to increase retention for special educators, a close examination of administrator support is necessary. Although administrative support is mentioned many times in research as a factor in teacher retention, there is a scarcity of studies investigating supports provided by school administrators and supports valued by early career SETs. Therefore, using a correlational research design, this study examined perceptions of support between administrators and early career SETs. This study also identified how teachers' perceived and received support differs by race, grade level, disability category, licensure status, and least restrictive environment. Furthermore, this study used a survey to examine the types of support administrators perceived to be most valuable compared to the actual support they provide. Administrator support was measured against teachers' perceptions of support needed to the support they receive. The results provide a way to

examine the underlying assumptions that both early career teachers and administrators hold about support.

Research Questions

The following five research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What are administrators' perceptions of the types of support early career special education teachers need to be successful?

2. What are early career special education teachers' perceptions of the types of supports administrators can provide them to be successful?

3. What are the differences between types of support administrators report providing and support early career teachers report needing by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment?

4. What are the differences between supports early career special education teachers report and perceptions of support administrators think is appropriate by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment?

5. Is there a relationship between the type of administrative support early career special education teachers receive and their decision to remain a special education teacher?

Definition of Terms

The following section will provide a list of definitions used in the study. These definitions can often be misinterpreted so their use in the study that follows is clarified here.

Administrator. *Administrator* is defined as the person responsible for implementing, supervising, and evaluating special education programs in the building (Balfour, 2001). In this study, administrators may include principals, assistant principals, associate principals, and school specific roles, such as dean of students or coordinator of special education.

Attrition. *Attrition* is defined as teachers leaving their position for any reason including retirement, transfer to another building, or leaving the field altogether (Billingsley, 1993).

Early career. In this study, *early career* is defined as teachers who are between 0 and 3 years of experience (Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004). These teachers can sometimes be referred to as *novice teachers* in literature (Jones, 2009; Roberson & Roberson, 2008).

Least restrictive environment. In this study, *least restrictive environment* refers to the instructional delivery model for the teacher (i.e., self-contained, resource).

Retention. *Retention* is defined as teachers remaining in their positions at the same school the following year (Boe, 2006). This type of retention is ideal as whenever a teacher leaves, no matter the reason, it can create a disruption in the continuity of the instructional programming (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

Support. *Support*, in this context, is defined as the intentional actions that administrators employ to assist early career special education teachers in acclimating to their professional role. Using Schein's (2003) theory of organizational development, the following areas of support are further defined in Chapter 2: emotional support, environmental support, instructional support, and technical support. While Billingsley (2004) introduced these terms in analyzing recruitment and retention trends for teachers, their initial use was in House (1981) when discussing workplace retention factors.

Teacher shortage. Shortages are often defined by vacancies that a school district is unable to fill with a qualified candidate.

CHAPTER TWO—REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 1 outlined the impact of administrative support on early career SETs. Chapter 2 includes an exploration of the topic by examining the issue of support from historical and theoretical perspectives. Further, current empirical literature was examined to better understand administrative support of early career SETs. Specifically, this chapter looks at how literature over the years has provided evidence that administrative support can be more impactful than any of the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in their current positions. Administrators who provide intentional and targeted support to early career special educators are more successful in impacting retention rates (Billingsley, 2004; Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2014; Conley & You, 2017; Hughes et al., 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Administrative support of early career SETs is related to retention (Billingsley, 2003). Numerous researchers have established a link between working conditions and administrative leadership (Billingsley, 2003; Boe et al., 2008; Brownell & Smith, 1992; Grayson & Alvarez, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001). Several studies have provided teacher insights into the reasons for leaving, but the literature fails to provide specificity into what type of support has the most impact on retention of early career SETs. Also, there seems to be limited research on principals' perceptions of what support they as administrators can provide, what is realistic, and what is expected to be provided by teachers. To locate studies related to administrative support, a

systematic literature review was conducted. The next section details how studies were identified for this chapter.

Search Procedures

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to identify all potential published studies utilizing the databases PsycINFO, EBSCO, and Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). The search terms *special education*; *burnout*, *retention*, *turnover*, or *attrition;* and *administrator*, *principal*, or *administration* were used to explore all databases. Publication years were restricted from 2004 to 2018. This restriction was necessary to consider as Billingsley (2004) conducted a systematic review on SET retention and attrition detailing studies conducted from 1980-2003. Due to the level of detail in the Billingsley (2004) review, the present study focused on administrative support as a factor that leads to attrition in the SET workforce from 2004 to the present. The searches through the databases yielded 960 articles. After eliminating duplicates, 830 studies remained.

Eligibility Criteria

After completing the search, all abstracts were screened using the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement guidelines (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). A four-phase flow diagram of the included studies is provided in Appendix A.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Eligible studies had to meet six initial parameters for inclusion. Each study must have (a) been peer-reviewed, (b) contained a quantitative or qualitative research design, (c) consisted of a sample of principals currently working in public schools, (d) included SETs, (e) been written in English, (f) and been published in 2004 or later. Studies that met the initial parameters were then

screened using several criteria. First, any studies outside of public education were eliminated because they often do not adhere to federal and state legislation related to special education (Eigenbrood, 2004). Additionally, teachers in private schools often do not have the same licensing standards as teachers in public schools. After screening for duplicates, articles from pre-kindergarten, preschool, and higher education and articles with samples other than teachers of kindergarten through twelfth grade, such as college freshmen, were excluded. Studies relating to the retention of related services providers, such as speech pathologists and occupational therapists, were also excluded. After the exclusions, 84 articles were included for a full-text review with 12 studies matching all the inclusion criteria. Analysis of these 12 studies required a thorough understanding of the historical and theoretical literature regarding attrition of SET retention. As such, the next section provides some historical context and an analysis of the empirical studies found in the systematic review.

Previous Research on Retention

Prior to 1980, research examining the retention of SET retention did not exist. In 1984, however, the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) detailed how children with disabilities should be educated. Schools were mandated to provide inclusive education services for students with disabilities, thus raising the accountability of special education programming (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001). Prior to the passage of IDEA, only one in five students with disabilities were educated in public schools, and those who were, often found themselves in segregated placements. IDEA mandated a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities (Aron & Loprest, 2012), necessitating a need to study the field of education more, particularly relating to SETs.

Following the passage of IDEA, approximately 15 studies were conducted between 1980 and 1990. Three major systematic literature reviews relating to the retention of SETs were conducted prior to 2004. Brownell and Smith (1992) conducted a critique of special education research from 1980 to 1991 and developed recommendations for policy and practice. At the time, Brownell and Smith (1992) found a limited number of researched-based models for improving the retention of SETs. Twelve studies were identified and the factors that impacted retention were classified into the following five categories: (a) historical influences, (b) teacher characteristics, (c) environmental influences, (d) federal, state, and district policies, and (e) external influences. Brownell and Smith (1992) also explored the relationship between retention and workplace factors. These factors included role conflict, class size, and job support. Brownell and Smith (1992) found a lack of support from administrators was the most frequently cited reason for SETs leaving the profession, and this finding was consistent throughout the research studies they critiqued.

Billingsley (1993) found administrative support does impact SET retention. Billingsley (1993) also provided specific definitions around attrition and a schematic representation of the definitions. Billingsley (1993) differentiated between transfer and exit attrition, clarifying that *transfer attrition* is when a SET transfers to general education, and *exit attrition* is leaving the field altogether. Billingsley (1993) provided a conceptual framework representing the reasons SETs leave. The framework included personal reasons such as retirement, transfers to other jobs within special education, and staying at home. This conceptual model is divided into three separate categories of factors including external, employment, and personal factors, all previously classified as simply an *exit*. The model provided a way for school districts to capture more accurately the reasons why SETs leave and provides clarity for researchers. The model also

explained the interconnectedness of the influences that impact SETs' decisions to remain or stay. Billingsley (1993) further explained that when external and employment factors, such as administrative support, are not as favorable, personal factors can directly impact decisions.

Billingsley (2004) published a literature review of 21 studies published since 1992. The review was consistent with the Brownell and Smith review (1992) in that it emphasized the importance of administrative support. The review also situated administrative support as a component of school culture. Billingsley (2004) started shaping a clearer definition of support purporting that administrative support is based on the definition House (1981) provided using workplace retention theory. Littrell, Billingsley, and Cross (1994) uses House (1981) to shape support in terms of the context of SETs. Administrative support is partially comprised of emotional and instrumental support, with emotional support being one of the most influential on special education teachers' decision to stay (Littrell et al. , 1994). Billingsley (2004) also found both emotional and instrumental support impacted job satisfaction and school commitment, meaning that when teachers received these types of support, they were more apt to remain in their schools.

Billingsley (2004) provided a review of three different path analyses to determine how administrative support impacts retention through other variables, such as stress, commitment, and professional development opportunities. The results of the review indicated that higher levels of support both directly and indirectly impact more latent variables, such as job satisfaction and stress. In contrast to previous studies, the results of the review did not indicate administrative support played a direct role in intent to leave; however, administrative support impacted retention through several mediating variables. The path analysis (Billingsley, 2004) provided insight into the influence of mediating variables on administrative support, showing

that a higher level of administrative support from principals is mediated by role dissonance, professional development opportunities, and satisfaction with current position. Using the previous literature, Billingsley (2004) defined role dissonance as not being able to spend time in ways valued and defined role ambiguity as not understanding the nuances of a specific job or role.

While administrative support was a commonality among all three reviews, the three reviews also shared some common limitations (Billingsley, 1993, 2004; Brownell & Smith, 1992). One common limitation was that all three reviews only contained studies that sampled teachers. While none evaluated administrator perspectives, the reviews heavily analyzed administrative actions. The review did not encompass studies specifically targeting early career SETs. Early career SETs represent a considerable portion of the teachers that leave the field, some before the third year, and research needs to be conducted on the factors behind their departure. Although Billingsley's (2004) review provided a comprehensive critique, little additional information was garnered about specific ideas around support of early career SETs. Billingsley (2004) recommended further research should include novice SETs since so many leave the field. Brownell and Smith (1992) made several recommendations, including further exploration of specific aspects of administrative support to ascertain which actions have the most impact on retention decisions of SETs. Similar to the Brownell and Smith (1992) review, Billingsley (1993) recommended further research on the types of administrative support SETs find as having the most impact.

Theoretical Framework

To explain the theories that frame administrative support of early career SETs, referencing clear definitions is important. First, the literature is divided between focusing on

retention (i.e., those who stay) and attrition (i.e., those who leave). Next, the theories are focused on the teacher and the demographic variables that predict either retention or attrition, such as race and gender; external factors outside of the school, such as federal policies and salary; and internal factors inside the school, such as administrative support and student behaviors. All three factors impact retention; however, Billingsley (2004) purported administrative support can impact all areas directly and indirectly. To understand the perceptions around support, the next section will discuss how Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture impacts administrative support.

Schein's Theory of Organizational Culture

Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture posits culture is comprised of three distinct levels: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. Assumptions are the beliefs to which groups adapt and learn to function. Schein (2003) purported basic assumptions, when not challenged, hinder the ability to form a stable culture. In the previous literature review, (Billingsley, 2004; Littrell et al., 1994), administrative actions are defined mostly by teachers. Without dialogue amongst administrators and teachers, Schein (1993) indicated organizational effectiveness is impacted. Further, the inability to establish common mental models created by dialogue impacts the subculture of an organization. In the context of administrative support, early career teachers have specific ideas of the support they need; however, little research has been conducted on what administrators perceive. Therefore, the inability of the school culture as a collective to meet the needs of an early career SET creates a subculture of isolation perpetuated by staff members as responsibility for establishing school culture is a function of the building principal (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008).

In previous literature, principals have carried three basic assumptions about support of early career teachers: (a) early career SETs need the support provided by administrators, (b) principals, as administrators, are providing the appropriate amount of support, and (c) early career teachers receive the support as intended. Early career teachers carry similar assumptions about support: (a) administrators are aware of the support early career SETs need, (b) principals are aware of the types of support needed for teachers to be successful, and (c) principals are able to provide the support teachers need. These assumptions are often not true, and these untruths result in work environments that may have a negative effect on early career teachers (Hagaman & Casey, 2018; Hughes et al., 2015). By examining these assumptions closer, additional insight into how administrative support impacts early career SETs can be gained. The following study attempted to clarify these assumptions around support by examining the types of support structures teachers and administrators value.

Conceptual Framework

Based on what is known about teacher retention, positive climate leads to higher job satisfaction. Early career teachers who are more satisfied tend to stay beyond the first 3 years (Plash & Piotroski, 2006), and teachers who report strong administrative leadership are less likely to leave their schools (Player et al., 2017). This study follows the conceptual model developed by Gertsen et al. (2001) with an additional component added due to Billingsley's (2004) research on role problems. In Gertsen et al.'s model (see Figure 1), problems with job design relate to the types of support early career SETs need and include role ambiguity, a common issue for novice SETs. When problems such as role ambiguity occur, early career SETs need support and assistance with navigating their new roles. If they do not receive assistance, role problems may be confounded.
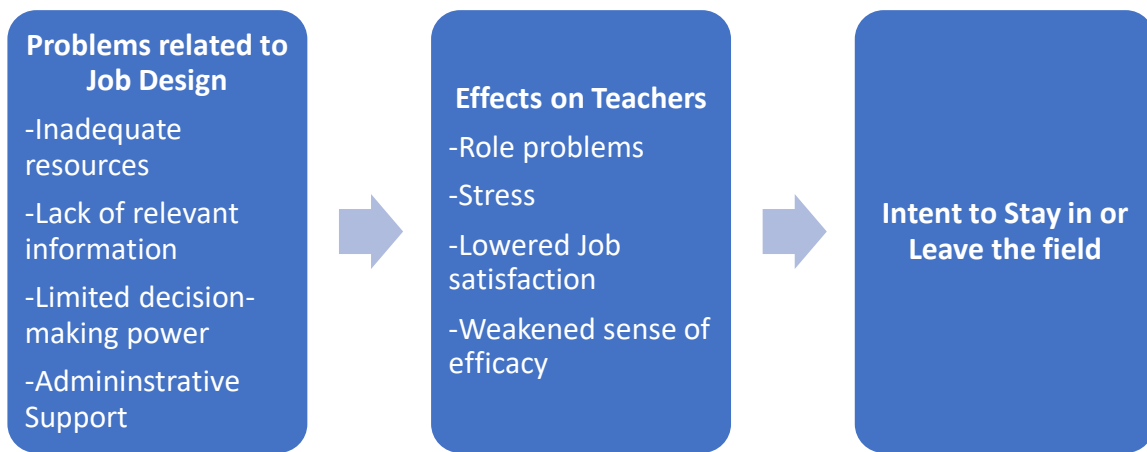
Figure 1. Problems related to job design conceptual model. Adapted from "Working in Special Education: Factors That Enhance Special Educators' Intent to Stay" by R. Gersten, T. Keating, P. Yovanoff, & M. K. Harniss, 2001, *Exceptional Children*, *67*(4), pp. 549-567. Copyright 2001 by Sage.

These problems can have a negative effect on teachers and influence their decisions to leave their positions. This suggests Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture can assist in examining the gap between administrative support and effects on early career SETs' decisions to stay particularly relating to role problems that early career special education teachers experience. Schein's theory of organizational culture provides an opportunity to examine the role problems of special education teachers and principals as many of the problems are based on a set of assumptions and beliefs. Role problems are common with new teachers; however, with novice special education teachers, the problems are exacerbated between the expectations they have of themselves in their new roles and the expectations of colleagues, administrators, parents, and central office staff (Gertsen et al., 2001). If principals are not providing support to assist novice

SETs in conflict management and creating a school culture that supports them, early career SETs are more likely to consider leaving their positions.

Even though Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture provides some understanding of the incongruence of expectations, there seems to be a lack of theoretical frameworks that examine retention of early career SET retention (Billingsley, 2003) or take into account the role ambiguity of both the teacher and the principal. Role problems have been added to this model based on the work of Billingsley (2005) because they describe the issues that early career SETs typically have when they enter the profession.

Billingsley's (2004) analysis contained themes echoed throughout the studies analyzed in this review: problems related to job design, such as administrative support, and effects on teachers like lower job satisfaction, which can impact retention decisions (Gertsen et al., 2001). In the present literature review, several studies were located that examined the impact of administrative support on retention. Results from this literature review include studies using a variety of methodological approaches, sample populations, and research designs. However, each study provided similar results around how impactful principal support actions are on teachers.

Role Problems

Current literature has outlined the need for support of early career SETs and has highlighted the incongruence between the perceptions of principals and early career teachers, a critical component of Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture. Billingsley (2004) noted the term *support* is a construct that has so many nuances it needs to be operationalized to avoid role ambiguity and incongruence for both administrators and early career SETs. However, little research has used both administrators and SETs in the same study to better examine these differences.

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Role problems can cause stress for teachers. Role ambiguity occurs when someone is unclear about roles, and role conflict occurs when someone receives conflicting messages about their role (Otis-Wilborn, Winn, Griffin, & Kilgore, 2005). Although these terms often refer to SETs in the literature reviewed, role problems can be applicable to an administrator's lack of knowledge of special education, which can translate into the inability to support early career SETs (Billingsley, 2003; Brownell & Smith, 1992; Prather-Jones, 2011). Ambiguity and conflict impact the culture as both parties make assumptions about the other's role. Schein (2003) stated these basic underlying assumptions impede progress in building a positive culture in the workplace and must be understood in order to build supportive relationships. Role overload (Billingsley, 2005) is common for early career SETs as they often struggle with prioritizing the responsibilities of the new job. Administrators understanding the types of support that early career SETs need is pivotal to assisting teachers navigate through role problems. The next section discusses the different types of support presented in the research.

Types of Support

Administrative support was first defined by House (1981) in studying workplace retention theories. In this definition, administrative support was comprised of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support. However, some of those categories were renamed by Balfour (2001) to breakdown what administrative support looks like as it relates to SET retention. According to Balfour (2001), administrative support in education is comprised of four types: emotional, instructional, technical, and environmental. Emotional support is showing appreciation and interest in teachers work while instructional support is defined as supporting teachers with instructional strategies, content, and pedagogy. Technical support is ensuring SETs have information relating to the compliance and paper work components of their jobs, and finally

environmental support is administrators providing the necessary resources, space, and time needed to perform all the tasks expected. While all components of support are important, emotional support has previously been found to have the most significant impact on retention of teachers (Balfour, 2001; Hughes et al., 2015).

Conley and You (2017) defined *principal support* as the types of interactions teachers have with their principals, such as recognition and communication, which is supported in previous literature. This definition, however, provides little insight into what support looks like and how it is valued by early career SETs. Hughes, Matt, and O'Reilly (2015) provided additional components of emotional support as principals taking an active interest in teachers' work and open communication. Environmental support encompasses all the tangible items administrators have to provide for SETs to attend to their work responsibilities, such as planning time and equal caseloads. Instructional support involves assisting teachers with effective teaching practices. Technical support refers to the support teachers need specifically for special education around paperwork and compliance issues, which encompasses what Billingsley (2004) referred to as instrumental support. All four of these constructs are intertwined and are necessary to provide a full array of support structures needed for early career SETs to overcome role problems.

Support and Retention

Conley and You (2017) used data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) database to examine which dimensions of leadership had an impact on 2,060 teachers' intentions to leave. SASS is a project sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which surveys public and private school districts, teachers, and administrators to provide descriptive data about education. Conley and You (2017) examined how administrative support impacts

retention. Similar to findings from Hughes et al. (2015), administrators who showed appreciation, took an interest in teachers work, provided feedback, set clear expectations, and provided recognition had an impact on retention (Conley & You, 2017). These examples of support fall directly into the areas of emotional support and the importance of feedback. Ongoing support and feedback to teachers can enhance teachers' feelings of competence and provide them with emotional support (Dzubay, 2001). Conley and You (2017) also found support has a direct effect on teacher retention, with SETs affected by all three mediating variables of school climate, teacher satisfaction, and commitment. Although this study provided specific actions that administrators can do to impact teacher retention, it only sampled secondary SETs. Conley and You (2017) also used data from a national database, meaning existing responses were used to develop constructs and, in some instances, there may have been questions around each theme that produced results to be carefully examined.

Graham et al.'s (2014) mixed-method study of teachers' thoughts on perceived and actual received support used a series of semi-structured interviews and a survey to better understand why mid-career teachers were leaving and if the movement was related to administrator leadership practices. This study was inclusive of principals and teachers who had already left the field. In their research design, Graham et al. (2014) used the Education Queensland's leadership framework (2008), which includes five domains of leadership: personal, relational, intellectual, organizational, and educational. Using interview data from both principals and teachers, Graham et al. (2014) coded all of the responses and matched them with the five domains of leadership to determine which domain had the most considerable influence on teachers' leaving. Findings indicated principals who used their relational skills (e.g., valuing staff, being approachable, being consistent with interactions) had a more significant impact on retention. This study again

reemphasizes the importance of emotional support on teachers as mentioned in previous studies (Conley & You, 2017; Hughes et al., 2015).

The work of Graham et al. (2014) was impactful as it also highlighted the differences in the support teachers stated they needed versus the support principals perceived they provided. Although this study has tremendous implications for the field, the sample did not include early career SETs and was conducted outside of the United States. Introduced as a mixed-methods study, Graham et al. (2014) only reported on the first phase of the qualitative interviews and did not include the quantitative phase. The quantitative portion allows for a considerable amount of information to be covered and generally has more participants than qualitative interviews (Floyd & Fowler, 2009).

Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate (2008) conducted a qualitative investigation of eight teachers who left the field of teaching after 1 year. Seven of the eight interviewees stated administrative support was the most significant contributing factor to their decision to leave education. Several themes were identified related to support including disrespect, lack of appreciation, and general feelings of isolation. Teachers indicated principals often berated them in front of parents and students, and their classrooms became the designated rooms for all behavior problems. One teacher indicated she left because of having to change students' grades at the insistence of the principal without the facts in the case being considered, which led to the theme of corruption. This study represented the most extreme views of the teaching profession and, to contextualize the information, more information about the participants, including the type of school in which they worked, how many years they taught, and their preparation processes, would need to be analyzed against previous literature to ensure this was a fair sample of teachers' experiences. This study emphasized the significance of receiving emotional support from administrators.

Although these studies specifically discussed emotional support, additional studies provided insight into teacher and administrator perceptions of support and are included in the following sections.

Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support

Quinn and Andrews (2004) used a mixed-method approach including surveys and interviews to explore teachers' perceptions of perceived support from their principals in comparison to the total support they received. Using descriptive statistics, Quinn and Andrews (2004) found 39% of teachers interviewed reported that they needed a basic orientation, inclusive of information such as policies and procedures, location of resources, and information specifically for SETs. This form of support is technical and environmental as it provides information needed to perform individual job duties. When teachers lack basic information about their job roles, it is natural to feel disconnected and, as a result, not feel supported (Grayson & Alvarez, 2007). Technical and environmental support empowers early career SETs and helps them confident and prepared. Support of this nature also negates the feelings of isolation that occur as a result of role ambiguity. Although school climate was not addressed in their study, Quinn and Andrews (2004) made several recommendations regarding training programs for principals to address school climate, intimating that principal support is a function of school climate. Quinn and Andrews (2004) suggested significant implications for practitioners and pre-service programs because their study was conducted using first-year teachers in one school district. The study, however, did not provide descriptive demographics of teachers and did not specifically target early career SETs.

Griffin et al. (2009) took an indirect approach in their correlational research study and used quantitative measures developed from qualitative interviews. A survey was created based

on the factors that first-year SETs found to be impactful on their accomplishments and problems. Griffin et al. (2009) found the support from principals was significantly related to teachers' accomplishments and problems. Although not directly a characteristic of the principal, specific areas were influenced by principals, such as such as location of classrooms, the ability to collaborate, and accessibility of resources (Griffin et al., 2009). These are critical components of environmental support because they make early career teachers feel like members of the team.

Griffin et al. (2009) identified teachers who ranked collaboration and communication as a problem also reported their relationship with the principal as low. This particular study contained a sample of 596 SETs and included their ages but did not include other demographics. Demographic information, such as number of years teaching or the type of school, has been reported previously as significant predictors of retention (Ingersoll, 2001).

Further, Edgar and Pair (2005) did a follow-up survey of graduates from teacher preparation programs at a specific college to ask questions for an audit; the responses revealed information relating to administrative support. Approximately 8% of the graduates reported leaving the field of education because they were dissatisfied with the level of administrative support. When teachers who remained were probed about their experiences, many felt administrative support and being a part of a community were crucial to them remaining in their positions. Although this study had significant implications, it contained only respondents from a specific college, meaning the information is not easily generalizable to the population at large. In addition, this study was not designed with the purpose of collecting information regarding administrative support; therefore, the survey tool has very limited use.

Similarly, Kaff (2004) found, in their survey of 400 teachers, principals and general education colleagues who demonstrated knowledge of SETs' roles appeared more supportive. In

this study, SETs indicated they needed additional support from their principals for coordinating planning time with general education faculty, again indicating environmental support as a major construct of support. This sample was drawn from a Midwestern state with a variety of suburban, urban, and rural schools, but the study did not collect any demographic information from the teachers, limiting the ability to see if the findings differ by age, race, or years in the field (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996).

Principals' Perceptions of Support

Several studies introduced the idea of differences between principals' perceived needs of teachers and the expressed needs of teachers (Graham, Hudson, & Willis, 2014; Hagaman & Casey, 2018; Hughes et al., 2015). Hagaman and Casey (2018) used a qualitative research method to explore why SETs leave. Employing a nominal group technique (NGT), a framework used for focus groups, researchers brought together principals, pre-service teachers, and practicing teachers and gave them three research questions. For each question, group members first generated a list of possible responses and then ranked the responses. The researchers found several areas with a distinct difference in the responses of the participants. All groups identified stress and lack of recognition as a major reason why SETs leave. However, new teachers ranked a lack of professional development as a reason they would leave, even though this was not ranked at all by principals. Principals listed teaching teams with planned meeting times as a support mechanism for new teachers whereas new SETs did not rank this at all and indicated their support came from paraprofessionals (Hagaman & Casey, 2018). When asked about roles they would have as a teacher, new teachers listed managing caseloads at the highest level. However, principals did not list this topic at all; instead, principals listed behavior management and building relationships with staff, students, and parents at the highest level. The new teacher

group also listed behavior management as a high priority but did not list the relationship building component (Hagaman & Casey, 2018). This particular study emphasizes the importance of research that provides a comparison between the perceptions of both administrators and early career teachers. Schein (1983) implied understanding each other's job roles without assumptions can positively impact the organizational culture. Further research studies can assist in clarifying these roles.

As an additional component to their correlational research, Hughes et al. (2015) measured perceived support versus received support. The study found principals reported giving higher levels of support to teachers than what the teachers stated they received, with the most significant discrepancy in the area of instructional support. Instructional support had a significant difference in what principals noted and what teachers reported.

This current review sheds light on the gap between perceived and received support. Boe (2006) stated a major predictor of retention in early career teachers is the support they received in the first year. In all three studies that addressed both teachers and principals, there appeared to be incongruence in the perceptions of principals (Graham et al., 2014; Hagaman & Casey, 2018; Hughes et al., 2015). Principals believed they provided adequate support to teachers and additionally believed teachers needed support in areas in which the teachers perceived they did not need support. If new teachers perceive they are not getting adequate support, they may make decisions to leave based on that lack of support, and, conversely, those teachers who get support from their principals tend to express more job satisfaction (Littrell et al., 1994; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2008) and thus, make decisions to stay. Principals can be made aware there are predictors of attrition for early career teachers, particularly in areas over which principals have

direct influence, such as the allocation of materials, the location of classrooms, and induction and mentoring within buildings.

Teachers, Administrators, and Needs for Support

With emotional support being one of the largest areas of support reported by SETs as a reason to stay (Balfour, 2001; Billingsley, 2003; Hughes et al., 2015; Littrell et al., 1994; Prather-Jones, 2011), it seems that the literature fails to investigate administrators and educators together. Although Hagaman and Casey's (2018) qualitative investigation of administrators and educators found a serious disconnect in responses, there needs to be further investigation to determine the similarities and differences in administrators' and early career teachers' expectations of support and how that support is defined.

The studies analyzed were not inclusive of or solely focused on early career SETs. Although many of the reviewed studies recommended this population be carefully examined due to their high attrition rates, not one of the studies focused on these teachers, indicating a clear gap in the research.

The studies in this review advance the argument that administrative support has to be operationalized to impact school climate and provide a positive school experience for early career SETs. Also, operationalization assists administrators who may lack the knowledge and skills to support these teachers. If a clear definition with tangible action is crafted, administrators will have an opportunity to impact the retention of early career teachers.

Virginia's Response to Shortages

In Virginia, the critical shortage list has included special education for almost twenty years (VDOE, 2018). In an analysis of state-level teacher retention data, Miller (2018) found that between 2008 and 2012, Virginia lost close to 5,000 teachers. In the past few years, Virginia has

increased its efforts to examine issues that impact teacher shortages. In 2015, the Virginia General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution 558, requesting that the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) examine teacher shortages in the Commonwealth and compiled a document with a list of resources and strategies for addressing the issue. The document included information on programs that specifically train and develop teachers for school systems across the state (i.e., "grow your own programs" and background information on teacher shortages (VDOE, 2016). Several of the programs listed provide mentoring and induction support for early career special education teachers.

In the fall of 2016, the Governor of Virginia, the Secretary of Education and the VDOE partnered together to form the Taskforce on Diversifying Virginia's Teacher Educator Pipeline. The group represented a broad range of citizens geographically and racially. The workgroup met over the course of nine months where they received information on teaching shortages nationally and at the state level. The group worked to determine the barriers and develop recommendations to diversify the teaching workforces. The final report of the committee dealt more with pipeline issues such as adding a 4-year degree in education and partnering with community colleges to ensure successful transition of education candidates into 4-year colleges and universities. One recommendation indirectly addressed retention by highlighting the high number of minority teachers with provisional licenses. By providing these teachers support, the likelihood of retention would increase. The recommendations, however, still leave a considerable gap in addressing building level factors and their impact on early career special education teachers.

The Governor of Virginia convened a statewide Advisory Committee on Teacher Shortages (ACTS) in May 2017. The committee, chaired by a former chair of the state board of

education and chairman emeritus of a local business, represented a cross-section of K-12 education, higher education, policy, and business. Preliminary recommendations were released in October 2017 and included a focus on recruitment and retention. One recommendation, of direct benefit to early career special education teachers, was to foster positive school climate and to encourage more effort in mentoring and induction programs for teachers and principals, intimating that principals have a responsibility in retaining teachers.

In December 2017, just before leaving office, Governor McAuliffe signed Executive Directive 14, which directed the Board of Education to issue emergency regulations to provide Virginia's colleges and universities the option to offer an undergraduate major in teaching. Currently, programs may offer graduate degrees in education, but state regulations do not permit for undergraduate majors in teaching. Upon Governor Northam taking office in 2018, he proposed several budget actions that directly impact teacher retention. Governor Northam requested $1 million over the biennium to support the recruitment and retention of principals in Virginia's most challenged school divisions with the idea that principal leadership is critical to positive outcomes for students in challenged schools and has a direct impact on the ability to attract and retain quality teachers (Department of Planning and Budget, 2018).

In an effort to examine the reasons teachers note for leaving, the 2017 General Assembly passed Senate Bill 360 for the VDOE to develop a model exit survey that was piloted in five school divisions during the fall of 2018. Data collected from the survey revealed that school administration was reported as the reason for teacher retention. The teachers who reported that they were staying in their positions indicated that they received support and those teachers who reported they were going to leave reported not receiving support. Data revealing specific reasons for leaving was challenging to interpret as participants could select multiple responses and over

40% of the respondents indicated they were retiring (Johnson, 2018).

Virginia held teacher retention summits again in 2017 and 2018 releasing information that showed Virginia's teachers are leaving in large numbers within the first 3 years. The data showed a negative correlation between retention and building factors, the higher the poverty rate of a specific school, the lower the rate of retention (Miller, 2018).

Even though Virginia policymakers have attempted to address shortages affecting the Commonwealth, there still has not been direct statewide action in the area of special education. The information presented by Virginia was missing critical components including racial demographics for some of teaching workforce (Miller, 2018).

According to the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ), many short-term solutions to address teacher shortages are expensive and not effective (Putney, 2009). While retention efforts such as financial incentives have been mentioned and principal training included in budget items, there has been little policy directed at the building level factors that impact retention beyond a brief mention of school climate. This leaves an additional gap in the landscape of Virginia and an opportunity to conduct additional research as the Commonwealth grapples with teacher shortages.

Implications

This literature review provided implications for practice, research, and policy and makes use of Schein's (2003) theory of organizational culture. The incongruence between the perceptions of support between principals and teachers has serious implications for classrooms across the country. If principals can be given opportunities to learn more about actions that impact retention of early career SETs, it is possible to see some impact on retention. Attrition contributes to overall teacher shortages, which are often addressed through policy and

legislation. If principals are responsible for recruitment and retention, researchers and policymakers have to examine this phenomenon to ensure that principals are not widening a gap. Being able to address the issue with more specificity will allow districts and policymakers to address the issue at the state and regional levels.

Need for Additional Research

Additional research is needed that addresses early career SETs and principals, particularly around the incongruence between perceptions of principals' support and SETs' support received. Replication studies are needed using quantitative analyses to see if the differences between principals' and SETs' perceptions are significantly correlated (Hagaman & Casey, 2018). Many of the seminal articles (Billingsley, 2003; Boe, 2006; Boyd et al., 2005; Brownell et al., 2004) in the field are now dated, and more current studies contain fewer participants. Thus, there needs to be additional research not just on the retention of SETs but also on the retention of effective SETs. In addition, further analysis should be done to see how specific variables mitigate support, including race, grade level, disability category, licensure status, and least restrictive environment. While some studies may include these specific variables, none explore early career SETs.

When examining race, the shortage of minority teachers contributes to the overall attrition rates of SETs. The inclusion of race as a demographic variable provides an opportunity to examine if early career minority SETs define types of administrative support differently than early career SETs who are White, as some more recent literature indicates that the support needs of SETs of color may be different (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2017; Scott, 2017). Examining demographic variables of early career SETs and disaggregating their support needs

by race can provide additional insight into predictors of retention particularly for teachers of color.

There is research that suggests that teachers of autism and teachers of emotional and behavioral disorders leave at higher rates (Cancio et al., 2014; Ruble, Usher, & McGrew, 2011). Further analysis needs to be conducted as the numbers of students with autism continues to increase. Disability paired with least restrictive environment also provides additional opportunities to explore how support is experienced by teachers in different delivery models (Sloan & Sosnowsky, 2002).

Finally, there is a need to examine support by licensure status. Early career SETs with alternate licensing may need additional support as they may come into field with little formal knowledge. Research shows that teachers with more training impact student achievement more (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001).

Summary

Teacher attrition is a complex phenomenon related to retention efforts of building principals. Several studies have been conducted that point to incongruence in principals' perceived support and teachers' received support. Studies have reflected support is needed in many different areas, including emotional and instructional support. Although efforts have targeted shortage areas, continued research is needed to examine high impact retention efforts, particularly for early career SETs.

Principals hire and recruit teachers throughout the year, and a significant part of their work is geared towards the induction of new teachers. Induction programs for early career SETs must be designed with retention in mind (Billingsley et al., 2004). If schools, and the administrators that lead them, are in fact a revolving door of early career teachers, even

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unknowingly, then there is a problem that needs to be addressed. The simple definition of teacher shortage is a vacancy in a classroom that cannot be filled. Teacher shortages are happening nationwide, particularly in special education. If principals are contributing significantly to the attrition of teachers by not supporting early career SETs, then additional research on the role of administrative support needs to occur.

Chapter 3 provides the methodology planned to examine the role of administrative support on early career SETs.

CHAPTER THREE—METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 includes a description of the methodology and procedures employed to conduct this study. This study used a correlational research design with data from a self-reported survey to measure the responses of early career SETs on the support perceived and received from administrators and the responses of administrators on the perceived supports that should be provided. This study involved collecting data using the modified Administrative Support Survey (AdSS), which consisted of four subscales of support: emotional, instructional, technical, and environmental. Support was also analyzed in comparison to the independent variables race, grade level, disability category, licensing status, and least restrictive environment. A portion of the survey elicited responses based on statements of support teachers need and was analyzed based on demographic characteristics collected.

The recruitment of SETs continues to be at the forefront of conversations in school districts and institutions of higher education. However, early career teachers are leaving the profession in high numbers. Administrators tasked with retention need to be equipped with skills to support these teachers, particularly during their induction period. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between administrative support and early career special education teachers' decisions to remain in their positions.

The literature surrounding the reasons that early career SETs remain in special education is dominated by administrative support (Balfour, 2001; Billingsley, 2003; Hughes et al., 2015;

Littrell et al., 1994; Prather-Jones, 2011). Retention of early career SETs is significantly

impacted by administrative support; however, little research details the support these teachers

find most impactful on their decisions to stay in their current positions. Also, research often

solicits information about retention and support directly from teachers but rarely from

administrators. Investigating of the impact of specific types of support on retention decisions is

one way to bridge the gap between research and practice.

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between administrators' and

early career SETs' perceptions of support and actual support received. To develop professional

development programs and policy designed to support administrators in retention efforts, it is

necessary to understand the specific components of support valued most by early career SETs.

Therefore, this study worked to determine the most valuable type of support identified by early

career SETs, identify the types of supports administrators provide, delimitate the similarities or

differences among the different participants, analyze the results based on different factors (i.e.

grade, licensing status, teaching setting, etc.), and identify how the levels/types of supports

influence teachers' reasons to stay.

Research Design

To measure the types of support and value of support provided by administrators to early

career SETs, a correlational research design was used. In this design, the relationship between

variables and sets of scores was measured and described (Creswell, 2012). A pre-existing survey

tool developed by Balfour (2001) and modified by Hughes, Matt, and O'Reilly (2015) was

employed to measure the variables and determine the relationship between them (Floyd &

Fowler, 2009). Survey methodology allows the researcher to quantify attitudes and opinions and

explore the direction of relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Correlational research can also determine the strength of a relationship between variables (Creswell, 2012).

Dependent Variables

The main dependent variable measured in this study was the type of administrative support that is the most significantly impacts retention. This was measured on a continuous scale by asking SETs and administrators to rate their responses to specific statements about support in four different areas: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical.

Independent Variables

The independent variables measured in this study include race, grade level, disability category taught, licensure status, and least restrictive environment. Race is defined as the racial or ethnic category with which the respondent identifies. Racial and ethnic categories were the same categories used by the United States Census Bureau (2017). There were six options for specific races and ethnicities and additional options for multiracial, other, and prefer not to respond. Grade level was defined as the grade level to which the teacher provides instruction and could be multi-selected. Grades for this study ranged from kindergarten to twelfth grade. In analysis, the groups were classified into elementary, middle, and high. Disability category taught represented the thirteen categories of disabilities defined by IDEA. Licensure information captured whether a teacher had a professional or provisional license, and least restrictive environment captured where a teacher spends at least 50% of their instructional time and contained five responses such as "self-contained" and "general education classroom." All responses contained an "other" option when applicable, and participants could write in the a specific response. Based on the literature, teachers may have differing experiences based on these independent variables, which need to be investigated further (Adera & Bullock, 2010;

Billingsley, Bettini, & Williams, 2017; Bruno, Scott, & Willis, 2018; Cancio et al., 2014; Fish & Stephens, 2010; George, George, Gersten, & Grosenick, 1995; Hagaman & Casey, 2018).

Research Questions

Specific research questions explored in this study included:

1. What are administrators' perceptions of the types of support early career special education teachers need in order to be successful?

2. What are early career special education teachers' perceptions of the types of supports administrators can provide in order for them to be successful?

3. What are the differences between types of support administrators report providing and support early career teachers report receiving by:

- Race

- Grade level

- Disability category

- Licensure status

- Least restrictive environment

4. What are the differences between supports early career special education teachers report needing and perceptions of support administrators think appropriate by:

- Race

- Grade level

- Disability category

- Licensure status

- Least restrictive environment

5. Is there a relationship between the type of administrative support received by early career SETs and their choice to remain a SET?

Participants

The sample for the study was drawn from a school division in central Virginia with a student body of 60,000 students. Participants were recruited using a non-probability convenience sample. A non-probability convenience sample involves the selection of the most readily available people or objects for a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The sample for this study was identified by analyzing the local area school divisions by number of schools and responses to inquiries about conducting the study. To have variability in the data, divisions needed to have at least 40 schools with a minimum of two SETs per building. School divisions were also screened for granting access. One school division met the criteria and granted preliminary access pending receipt of a packet, including overview of the study, survey, IRB approval, and non-disclosure information.

Instrumentation

Data was collected using a modified version of the Administrative Support Survey (AdSS; Balfour, 2001). The development of the survey was based on previous literature focused on teacher retention and was developed to measure the impact of certification status on administrative support needs of novice special education teachers. The AdSS was pilot tested in 2001 and distributed to 32 SETs working during that time (Balfour, 2001). The original survey included 52 questions with three subsections. The four categories of support measured in the survey included emotional, instructional, environmental, and technical. Questions were formed as a series of statements to elicit responses measured on a Likert-type scale. The Likert-scale is a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being *not true at all* to 5 being *very true*. Teachers

recorded their responses for both perceived supports and received supports. The statements on the administrative survey included the same structured questions, however, they were written as "I statements" to solicit what supports administrators believe are appropriate to provide early career teachers and what supports they actually provide. Written permission was obtained to use and modify the AdSS for this study (Appendix B).

Support rating scales for special education teachers and administrators. The support rating scale section comprised of two Likert-type scales of perceived support and received support with each scale broken into four subscales (see Table 1). There were 52 questions that asked participants to rank both the support they perceived as necessary and the support they received based on a 5-point rating scale. These same questions were used to measure administrator provided supports. Each subscale had 11-16 items (see Table 1). The survey also had 10 demographic questions, bringing the total number of questions to 62.

Demographics section. The demographic section solicited information such as race, grade level, disability category, licensure status, and setting. In the administrative survey, additional information was solicited about position, years in current position, and other personnel that provide support in the building. In the teacher survey, information was gathered about who else provides support as well as their intention to remain in their position in the upcoming school year.

Validity and reliability of measure. The validity of the survey was conducted by reviewing surveys written by other researchers and holding a series of focus groups with eight SETs. Validity is an evaluation of how theory and empirical evidence support the use of the scores and reliability is the consistency of scores (McMillan, 2008). Therefore, to ensure the measure was valid, focus groups of professionals centered on the types of support early career

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Table 1

Supporting Rating Scale Questions by Category From Original Survey

Subscales	*n*	Questions by Subscale
Emotional	16	1, 2, 3, 8, 9,10,12, 13, 15, 22, 24, 30, 31,41, 51, 52
Environment	12	7, 21, 25, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 42, 44, 49
Instructional	13	4, 5, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18,19, 40, 43, 45, 47, 48
Technical	11	6, 20, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 39, 46, 50

Note. n = total number of questions in each subscale. (Balfour, 2001)

SETs look for from their administrators based on the subscales of emotional, technical, instructional, and environmental support.

Reliability, the consistency of scores (McMillan, 2008), was measured by administering a draft version of the original survey to 32 special education teachers and holding follow up group discussions. From this process, changes to the original survey were made to both the format and wording of the survey. Data from the pilot study indicated each area had a Cronbach alpha of 0.70 or greater for the subscales and 0.80 or greater for the total scores. Table 2 demonstrates the scores and reliability coefficients for each subscale (0.70 to 0.93) and the total scores (0.90 and 0.91).

Modified version. While the original survey measured the impact of certification on administrative support needs of novice SETs, the only participants were SETs. Therefore, the survey for the current study was modified to include a version specifically for administrators based on what they perceive to be appropriate supports for early career SETs and the actual support they provide to those teachers. In addition, disability categories were modified to reflect the current disabilities reflected under IDEA and the open-ended questions were removed. The survey was divided into two components: support rating scales and professional demographics.

Table 2

Reliability Coefficients for Subscales and Total Scores From Original Pilot

	Support Expected				Support Received			
	n	*M*	*SD*	*α*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*α*
Emotional Subscale	16	63.23	5.90	.83	16	52.38	11.69	.93
Environment Subscale	12	47.77	6.73	.88	12	40.92	5.71	.73
Instructional Subscale	13	35.92	7.37	.83	13	29.39	8.62	.87
Technical Subscale	11	42.85	5.10	.71	11	35.23	6.25	.70
Total Scores	52	188.54	19.26	.91	52	157.15	21.73	.90

Note. n = total number of items; *M* = mean score; *SD* = standard deviation; *α* = reliability.

The modified survey contained 47 questions soliciting a rating from teachers (see Appendix C) and administrators (see Appendix D).

Data Collection

This study used a survey to collect data regarding types of perceived supports received by SETs and types of perceived supports given by administrators. The instrument was emailed to participants on February 4, 2019, with a link to respond electronically. The survey was emailed to principals (see Appendix E) and SETs (see Appendix F) in separate emails. A reminder email was sent 1 week later, on February 11, 2019 (see Appendix G). On February 25, 2019, a final email reminder was sent (see Appendix H). The survey closed on March 4, 2019. Table 3 outlines the timeline following the receipt of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) IRB approval.

An electronic survey method was used because of its cost efficiency and ability to receive responses quicker (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). It is also an efficient way to collect data used to quantify and describe groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To increase the response rate,

Table 3

Timeline for Data Collection

Day	Description for Data Collection
1	Send Email with Survey Link to all principals in school division
1	Send Email with Survey link to all special education teachers in school division
8	Send second email request (Appendix G)
22	Last follow-up email (Appendix H)
30	Close of Survey

Note. Table denotes the day of each activity and not a specific date.

participants were able to enter their email address for a drawing to receive one of six Amazon gift cards. Email addresses were kept separate from the data and entered into a random name generator to determine the winner. Winners were contacted and emailed their gift card on March 18, 2019 and on March 30, 2019.

Data Management

The modified AdSS was administered anonymously with job, grade level, and experience being the only identifying information. Although email addresses provided by the participating school division were accessible, the emails and data were kept separate. Email addresses provided for the raffle were stored separately from the survey data and were not included in the SPSS analysis. The survey tool, Question Pro, required an active VCU eID to access and could only be linked to one person. The information was stored on a password-protected computer. Therefore, the data was only accessible to one individual with access to the stored information at all times.

Data Analysis

IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 25) was used for the statistical analysis, charting, and reporting. The data analysis consisted of determining descriptive statistics for each question to generate individual and group mean survey scores, and percentage distributions. Outliers were considered for inclusion or deletion, and Cronbach's alpha was completed for each subscale. Box plots were analyzed for normal distribution. Analysis was conducted to see if the assumptions (Field, 2013) for analysis of variance (ANOVA) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) had been met, including normality of the distribution, homogeneity of variance, and independent observations. Further analysis was conducted using a series of two-way ANOVAs. The scores were analyzed by the different variables using a series of ANOVAs and independent samples *t*-tests. A paired samples *t*-test was used to compare the total scores of all items in both the expected support scale and received support scales. The following types of statistical analyses were used to answer the research questions:

RQ1. *What are administrators' perceptions of the types of support early career SETs need to be successful*? Descriptive statistics such as standard deviation and means were analyzed to identify frequencies of the different types of support and to determine administrator perceptions.

RQ2. *What are early career SETs' perceptions of the types of supports administrators can provide to be successful?* Descriptive statistics such as standard deviation and means were analyzed to identify frequencies of the different types of support to determine early career special education teachers' perceptions.

RQ3. *What are the differences between types of support administrators report providing and support early career teachers report received by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment?* A series of ANOVAs and *t*-tests were conducted to compare the two scales of teachers and administrators with the independent variables. The independent samples *t*-test was used to compare the total scores of all items in both the expected support scale and received support scales by race. Grade level, disability category, licensure status, and least restrictive environment were all analyzed using a series of ANOVAs. Post-hoc tests were conducted to determine statistical significance between groups such as early career teachers of students with visual impairments as compared to teachers of high incidence categories such as specific learning disabilities.

RQ4. *What are the differences between supports early career SETs report and perceptions of support administrators think appropriate by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment?* Research Question 4 employed the same statistical analysis as research question three. A series of ANOVAs and *t*-tests were conducted to compare the two scales of teachers and administrators with the independent variables. The independent samples *t*-test was used to compare the total scores of all items in both the expected support scale and received support scales by race. Grade level, disability category, licensure status, and least restrictive environment were all analyzed using a series of ANOVAs. Post-hoc tests were conducted to determine statistical significance between groups such as early career teachers of students with visual impairments as compared to teachers of high incidence categories such as specific learning disabilities.

RQ5. *Is there a relationship between the type of administrative support received by early career special education teachers and their choice to remain a special education teacher?* The

relationship between type of administrative support identified by early career special education teachers and retention decisions was analyzed using an ANOVA. A correlation statistic, R^2, was generated to determine the strength of the relationship.

Potential Ethical Issues

The survey contained options to exit the survey at any time and allowed participants to skip questions. Per VCU IRB, each survey contained information about the project along with contact information (see Appendices C and D). The survey was anonymous, and no identifying information was used in analysis. Email addresses, voluntarily entered by participants, were kept separate from the data on a secure, password protected computer, to ensure no identifying information was linked to data. Participants were also provided contact information if they had any specific questions.

Delimitations

One of the first limitations was that the instrument relied on self-report, which can limit generalizability. The second limitation is that the *n* for principals was 44. According to the power analysis, with adherence to a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level, and with the 72 administrators and 44 teachers responding, power was 90% power. Although Field (2013) indicated that 80% power is acceptable for a dissertation study, generalizability of the study can be limited.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 explained the methodology chosen to conduct this study and included research questions with null and alternative hypotheses, descriptions of participants and the instrumentation, and the data collection and data analysis procedures that were used. Chapter 4 outlines the results from the study.

CHAPTER FOUR—RESULTS

Chapter 3 described the methodology and procedures used to conduct this study. This chapter will examine the results from the data. A correlational research design was used to examine the support and retention of early career special education teachers. Information from a self-reported survey was analyzed to examine the specific types of support administrators provide and types of support early career SETs value. The chapter is organized into four sections: (a) pilot study results, (b) descriptive statistics data and demographic data related to the survey and the participants, (c) results from the Modified Administrative Support Survey, and (d) statistical analysis for each research question. The first section presents information from the pilot study. The second section provides descriptive information on the demographics of participants. The third section highlights overall results of the Modified Administrative Support Survey and includes mean scores and standard deviations of the subscales. The fourth section focuses on the analysis related to each research question including information on the independent variables with overall scores on the survey. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were used to analyze the differences in the subscales of the teachers and administrators for the first two research questions. An ANOVA and independent samples *t*-tests were used to examine the difference between the relationships of the independent and dependent variables for the last three research questions.

Pilot Study Results

Results of the pilot study indicated the response form was easy to use; however, there was a recommendation to make it more visually appealing and to add a progress bar to decrease the number of participants potentially exiting the survey prematurely. There were also a few concerns about the way questions were worded. Because there was a recommendation to shorten the survey, one question was removed from each subscale that appeared to be confusing or repetitive. Graphics were added to make the appearance more visually appealing, and the progress bar was moved from the bottom of the page to the top of the screen.

One question was also added to the teacher survey to capture the amount of support teachers receive from a variety of personnel in the school district. Two recommendations from the pilot challenged the idea of the administrator as being the sole provider of support for special education teachers, particularly on the secondary level. Thus, a question was added for teachers to indicate from whom they receive support and a question was added on the administrative version to capture who else provides support to early career special education teachers.

Upon completion of the pilot testing, changes were made to the survey for the current study before administration. Once edits were made, the final survey resulted in 47 survey questions and eight demographic questions. Table 4 reflects recommendations to the survey and changes that were made.

A final reliability check was conducted. Results from the analysis indicated that each area had a Cronbach's coefficient of 0.80 or greater for the subscales and 0.80 or greater for the total scores. This indicates that the survey and scales have a good internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 4

Recommendations and Changes to the Administrative Support Survey From the Pilot Study

Recommendation	Changes to the Survey
Make survey more visually appealing.	Graphics and color added to add visual appeal.
Survey is long for a teacher.	Progress bar added, five questions eliminated.
Five questions difficult to understand.	Three questions reworded, two eliminated.
Capture who else provides support to special education teachers.	Questions added to both surveys to capture who else may provide support.

Note. Table details changes made prior to administration of the modified survey.

Participants

To compute the necessary sample size, an a priori statistical analysis was conducted. A medium effect size of 0.8, an alpha = 0.05, and power = 0.80 indicated a minimum of 26 paired samples would be needed (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009). At the conclusion of the survey, there were 42 paired samples.

Links to the survey were sent to 244 persons the school district identified as special education teachers with 0-3 years of teaching experience. The survey was viewed by 195 (80.0%) teachers and completed by 85[1] for a 35.0% completion rate. Of the 85 teachers that responded, more than half were early career special education teachers ($n = 44$), and therefore were included in the data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze race, disability category, licensure status, grade level, and delivery model. Results showed that most of the early career teachers were White *(n = 33)*, female *(n = 41)*, and in their second year of teaching ($M = 2.05$). Autism ($n = 40$) was the most frequently selected category for disability taught followed

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[1] Of the 85 participants in the survey, 44 were 0-3 early career special education teachers and were included in the statistical analysis. The additional teachers had over 3 years of experience.

by other health impairment ($n = 26$) and specific learning disability ($n = 26$). All of the 13 disability categories were represented in the survey. Results showed the majority of participants had a provisional teaching license ($n = 31$) and almost half were assigned to self-contained classrooms ($n = 21$). Table 5 shows teacher participant characteristics.

Links to the survey were also sent to 259 persons the school district identified as administrators. The survey for administrators was viewed by 153 (60.0%) administrators and completed by 68 participants for a 29.0% completion rate. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze position, race, gender, and school level. Results showed that most of the respondents identified as assistant/associate principals ($n = 29$), White ($n = 59$), and in the fourth year of their position ($M = 4.38$). Most identified as elementary administrators ($n = 39$). Table 6 displays participant characteristics of the administrators.

Results from Modified Administrative Support Survey

Results from the survey showed, overall, teachers expected more support than administrators assumed they needed ($n = 42$, $M = 79.97$, $SD = 20.47$). Teachers were asked to rate their degree of confidence in the support they expected and the support they received from their administrators using a Likert-type scale of one to five. Teachers reported they received more support from administrators than the administrators reported providing ($n = 42$, $M = 142.66$, $SD = 44.32$). The results from the teacher survey indicated that the type of support they receive most from administrators is emotional ($n = 42$, $M = 42.19$, $SD = 14.53$). A Cronbach's alpha was conducted on the subscales of the modified survey to evaluate reliability. It was found each subscale alpha level was above 0.70, indicating the subscale had an adequate level of inter-item reliability. Results, as well as alpha levels from each subscale, can be found in Table 7.

The results reported in Table 8 indicated that administrators' perceptions around support (*n* = 62, *M* = 71.43, *SD* = 17.19) were similar in value to teachers' perceptions of support (*n* = 42, *M* = 79.97, *SD* = 20.47). Administrators reported emotional support as the type of support provided most (*n* = 68, *M* = 28.92, *SD* = 8.12).

Table 5

Teacher Demographic Data

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Race		
Hispanic or Latino	0	0.0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0.0%
Asian	0	0.0%
Black or African American	6	13.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Caucasian or White	33	75.0%
Multiracial	3	6.8%
Other	0	0.0%
Prefer Not to Say	2	4.6%
Disability Category		
Autism	40	24.1%
Deaf-Blindness	0	0.0%
Deafness	0	0.0%
Emotional Disturbance	18	10.8%
Hearing Impairment	5	3.0%
Intellectual Disability	14	8.4%
Multiple Disabilities	12	7.2%
Orthopedic Impairment	5	3.0%
Other health impairments	26	15.7%
Specific learning disability	26	15.7%
Speech or language impairment	17	10.2%
Traumatic brain injury	2	1.2%
Visual impairment including blindness	1	0.6%
Licensure status		
Regular license	13	29.6%
Provisional License	31	70.4%
Other	0	0.0%
Grade Level		
Elementary	24	57.1%
Middle	8	19.0%

Table 5, continued.

Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
	High	10	23.8%
Delivery Model			
	Resource	1	2.3%
	Self-contained	21	47.7%
	General Education	5	11.4%
	Co-teaching in a general education class	17	38.6%

Note. *n* = 44

Table 6

Administrator Demographic Data

Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
Position			
	Principal	11	14.7%
	Assistant/Associate Principal	29	38.7%
	Coordinator of Special Education	27	36.0%
	Dean of Students	7	9.3%
	Department Chair	1	1.3%
Race			
	Asian	2	2.7%
	Black or African American	12	16.0%
	Caucasian or White	59	78.7%
	Multiracial	2	2.7%
School Level			
	Elementary	39	52.0%
	Middle	18	24.0%
	High School	18	24.0%

Note. *n* = 68

Table 7

Results of the Modified Administrative Support Survey for Teachers

	Support Expected				Support Received			
	n	*M*	*SD*	*α*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*A*
Emotional Subscale	42	23.76	5.90	0.75	42	42.19	14.53	0.70
Environmental Subscale	42	15.73	4.22	0.75	42	29.28	9.76	0.71
Instructional Subscale	42	22.40	7.53	0.74	42	38.90	11.76	0.70
Technical Subscale	42	18.07	5.30	0.75	42	32.28	11.23	0.69
Total Scores	42	79.97	20.47	0.76	42	142.66	44.23	0.76

Note. M = mean, SD = standard deviation, α = alpha.

Table 8

Results of the Modified Administrative Support Survey for Administrators

	Support Assumed				Support Provided			
	n	*M*	*SD*	*α*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*A*
Emotional Subscale	69	20.68	5.42	0.84	68	28.92	8.12	0.83
Environmental Subscale	70	15.54	4.22	0.84	69	28.50	6.24	0.84
Instructional Subscale	69	20.27	6.42	0.85	70	22.56	8.00	0.84
Technical Subscale	69	17.15	5.62	0.84	70	21.35	5.54	0.85
Total Scores	62	71.43	17.19	0.83	62	99.06	21.88	0.85

Note. M = mean, SD = standard deviation, α = alpha.

The overall scores reflected that teachers expected more support than administrators thought they needed; however, final scores reflected higher mean scores on actual support received than the mean scores of actual support provided by administrators.

Findings Associated with Research Questions

This section presents results of the analyses from the five research questions. The first two questions provide an overview of the results of the survey, and the last three questions provide analysis related to the survey and specific demographic variables.

Research Question 1

What are administrators' perceptions of the types of support early career special education teachers need to be successful? The hypothesis for this research question was that there will be a difference in administrators' perceptions of the support early career teachers need by subscale. The null hypotheses stated that there was no difference in administrator perceptions of the types of support early career special education teachers need to be successful. An analysis of descriptive statistics was conducted to determine the administrators' perceptions of support needed by early career teachers. Results from the analysis suggested administrators indicated

emotional support is the type of support most needed by early career teachers (n = 69, M = 20.68, SD = 4.22), and environmental support is the type of support least needed by early career teachers (n = 70, M = 15.54, SD = 6.42). Table 9 reflects the results of all subscales. The findings suggest the hypothesis—there will be a difference in administrators' perceptions by subscale—can be retained with 99.9% confidence, which indicates that there is a difference in subscale scores.

Research Question 2

What are early career special education teachers' perceptions of the types of supports administrators can provide for them to be successful? The hypothesis for this research question was that there will be a difference in early career special education teachers' perceptions of the types of support administrators provided for teachers to be successful by subscale. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference in early career special education teachers' perceptions of the types of support administrators could provide for teachers to be successful by subscale. An analysis of descriptive statistics was conducted to determine the teachers' perceptions of the types of support administrators provided for them to be successful. Results

Table 9

Support Administrators Believe Early Career Teachers Need

Support Assumed by Administrators			
	$\underline{n}$	$\underline{M}$	$\underline{SD}$
Emotional Subscale	69	20.68	5.42
Instructional Subscale	69	20.27	6.42
Technical Subscale	69	17.15	5.62
Environmental Subscale	70	15.54	4.22
Total Scores	62	71.43	17.19

Note. M = mean, SD = standard deviation.

from the analysis suggested that early career special education teachers expected to receive

emotional support the most ($n = 42$, $M = 23.76$, $SD = 5.90$) and environmental support the least

($n = 42$, $M = 22.40$, $SD = 7.53$) from their administrators. The findings suggested that the

hypothesis, there will be a difference in early career teachers' perceptions by subscale, could be

retained with 99.9% confidence, which indicated that there was a difference in subscale scores.

Table 10 provides an overview of the mean and standard deviations for support expected by

teachers by subscale.

Research Question 3

What are the differences between the supports early career special education teachers

report receiving and the perceptions of support administrators think appropriate by (a) race, (b)

grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment?

The hypothesis for this research question was that there will be a difference between the supports

early career special education teachers reported receiving and perceptions of support

Table 10

Support Teachers Believe Administrators Can Provide

Support Expected by Teachers

	n	M	SD
Emotional Subscale	42	23.76	5.90
Instructional Subscale	42	15.73	4.22
Technical Subscale	42	22.40	7.53
Environmental Subscale	42	18.07	5.30
Total Scores	42	79.97	20.47

Note. M = mean, SD = standard deviation.

administrators thought appropriate by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category taught, (d)

licensure status, and (e) delivery model.

Race. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference in the support early career special education teachers reported receiving and the support administrators thought appropriate by race. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the total scores of support administrators believed teachers needed and the support teachers reported receiving by race. There were no significant differences between the support received by teachers by race (t = -0.013, p = 0.990, n = 40) and support administrators believed was needed (t = -0.667, p = 0.508, n = 62). Table 11 provides a summary of significance and effect sizes for each scale.

Grade level. A one-way, between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators reported thinking teachers needed and the support early career special education teachers reported receiving by grade level. Participants were divided into three groups according to the grades they taught (Group 1: elementary; Group 2: middle;

Table 11

Results for Perceived Support by Administrators and Received Support by Teachers by Race

	Support Assumed Administrators				Support Received Teachers			
	n	*t*	*p*	*D*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Emotional Subscale	62	0.400	0.691	0.15	40	-0.173	0.863	0.06
Environmental Subscale	62	0.515	0.614	0.18	40	0.735	0.467	0.25
Instructional Subscale	62	-0.600.	0.551	0.18	40	-0.355	0.725	0.13
Technical Subscale	62	0.377	0.707	0.10	40	-0.067	0.947	0.02
Total Scores	62	-0.667	0.508	0.21	40	-0.013	0.990	0.00

Note. t = t-statistic, p = significance, d = Cohen's d

Group 3: high). There was no significance in scores by grade level for teachers, $F(3,38)$ = 1850.07, p = 0.430, and by administrators, $F(2,59)$ = 103.47, p = 0.712. Subscale results are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Results for Perceived Support by Administrators and Received Support by Teachers by Grade Level

	Support Assumed: Administrators			Support Received: Teachers		
	n	F	p	n	F	p
Emotional Subscale	68	$(2,66) = 15.633$	0.600	41	$(3,38) = 170.412$	0.361
Environmental Subscale	69	$(2,67) = 5.216$	0.752	41	$(3,38) = 170.412$	0.349
Instructional Subscale	68	$(2,66) = 36.072$	0.424	41	$(3,38) = 170.412$	0.548
Technical Subscale	68	$(2,66) = 13.903$	0.651	41	$(3,38) = 170.412$	0.398
Total Scores	61	$(2,59) = 103.47$	0.712	41	$(3,38) = 1850.071$	0.430

Note. F = F-statistic, *p* = significance

Disability category taught. A one-way, between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators report thinking teachers need and the support early career special education teachers report receiving by disability taught. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level in subscale scores for three disability categories: multiple disabilities in the instructional subscale, $F(1,40) = 614.438$, $p = 0.034$; orthopedic impairment in the instructional subscale, $F(1,40) = 373.696$, $p = 0.046$; and severe learning disability in the technical subscale, $F(1,40) = 719.672$, $p = 0.015$. In addition to reaching statistical significance, the effect size, calculated using eta squared, was greater than 0.09 for each of the areas. Table 13 details the analysis for each disability category and subscale.

Table 13

Results for Perceived Support by Administrators and Received Support by Teachers by Disability

Disability	Scale	n	F	P
Autism				
	Emotional Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 25.936$	0.689

Disability	Scale	n	F	p
	Environmental Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 79.238$	0.369
	Instructional Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 82.315$	0.449
	Technical Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 12.315$	0.759
	Total Scores	39	$(1,40) = 706.302$	0.537
Emotional Disturbance				
	Emotional Subscale	17	$(1,40) = 59.319$	0.544
	Environmental Subscale	17	$(1,40) = 18.976$	0.661
	Instructional Subscale	17	$(1,40) = 69.274$	0.488
	Technical Subscale	17	$(1,40) = 134.247$	0.308
	Total Scores	17	$(1,40) = 1021.929$	0.457
Hearing Impairment				
	Emotional Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 54.543$	0.561
	Environmental Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 61.274$	0.430
	Instructional Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 260.975$	0.174
	Technical Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 24.690$	0.664
	Total Scores	5	$(1,40) = 1320.362$	0.398
Intellectual Disability				
	Emotional Subscale	13	$(1,40) = 182.733$	0.285
	Environmental Subscale	13	$(1,40) = 228.471$	0.123
	Instructional Subscale	13	$(1,40) = 216.149$	0.217
	Technical Subscale	13	$(1,40) = 304.561$	0.122
	Total Scores	13	$(1,40) = 3695.036$	0.154
Multiple Disabilities				
	Emotional Subscale	12	$(1,40) = 448.467$	0.090
	Environmental Subscale	12	$(1,40) = 146.438$	0.219
	Instructional Subscale	12	$(1,40) = 614.438$	0.034
	Technical Subscale	12	$(1,40) = 308.571$	0.119
	Total Scores	12	$(1,40) = 5720.238$	0.074
Orthopedic Impairment				
	Emotional Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 239.797$	0.219
	Environmental Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 373.696$	0.046
	Instructional Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 346.997$	0.116
	Technical Subscale	5	$(1,40) = 105.642$	0.367
	Total Scores	5	$(1,40) = 4060.578$	0.134
Other Health Impairment				
	Emotional Subscale	26	$(1,40) = 9.715$	0.394
	Environmental Subscale	26	$(1,40) = 15.004$	0.788

Table 13, continued.

Disability	Scale	n	F	p
	Instructional Subscale	26	$(1,40) = 237.720$	0.085
	Technical Subscale	26	$(1,40) = 32.194$	0.165
	Total Scores	26	$(1,40) = 788.630$	0.247
Severe Learning Disability				
	Emotional Subscale	26	$(1,40) = 252.404$	0.207

Environmental Subscale	26	(1,40) = 156.956	0.203
Instructional Subscale	26	(1,40) = 350.313	0.114
Technical Subscale	26	(1,40) = 719.672	0.015
Total Scores	26	(1,40) = 5469.905	0.081
Speech Language Impairment			
Emotional Subscale	17	(1,40) = 18.011	0.739
Environmental Subscale	17	(1,40) = 29.042	0.587
Instructional Subscale	17	(1,40) = 2.964	0.886
Technical Subscale	17	(1,40) = 12.270	0.759
Total Scores	17	(1,40) = 130.287	0.791

Note. F = *F*-statistic, *p* = significance.

Licensure. A one-way, between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators reported providing and the support early career special education teachers needed based on provisional and regular licensure status, as measured by the survey. There were no significant differences in support received scores by licensure status for teachers, $F(1,40) = 1.685.349$, $p = 0.339$. Table 14 provides the *F*-statistics and *p*-values for each subscale based on licensure status.

Delivery model. A one-way, between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators report thinking teachers need and the support early career special education teachers report receiving by least restrictive environment, as measured by the Modified Administrative Support Survey. There was no significant difference in support received scores by the least restrictive environment for teachers, $F(1,40) = 18.011$, $p = 0.739$. Table 15 reflects the values for the one way ANOVA by least restrictive environment.

Table 14

Results for Perceived Support by Administrators and Received Support by Teachers by Licensure Status

	n	*F*	*P*

	n	F	p
Emotional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 114.576	0.398
Environmental Subscale	42	(1,40) = 127.252	0.253
Instructional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 119.823	0.360
Technical Subscale	42	(1,40) = 65.967	0.477
Total Scores	42	(1,40) = 1685.349	0.339

Note. F = *F*-statistic, *p* = significance.

Table 15

Results for Perceived Support by Administrators and Received Support by Teachers by Least Restrictive Environment

	n	*F*	*p*
Emotional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 18.011	0.739
Environmental Subscale	42	(1,40) = 29.042	0.587
Instructional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 2.964	0.886
Technical Subscale	42	(1,40) = 12.270	0.759
Total Scores	42	(1,40) = 130.287	0.791

Note. F = *F*-statistic, *p* = significance

Although there was no significant statistical significance in the subscales indicating the null hypothesis can be retained with 99.9% confidence, there was a significant difference in the means of early career teachers assigned to a self-contained classroom and those in co-teaching in general education. The mean difference of 0.084 was large, indicating there is a practical significance in the difference of the scores of early career special education teachers report receiving as compared to the support administrators believed the needed based on the least restrictive environment.

Research Question 4

What are the differences between the types of support administrators report providing and the support early career teachers report needing by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment? The hypothesis for this

question suggests that there will be a difference between the support administrators report providing and the support teachers report being needed by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment. The null hypothesis states there is no difference between the support administrators report being provided and the support teachers report being needed by (a) race, (b) grade level, (c) disability category, (d) licensure status, and (e) least restrictive environment.

Race. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the total scores of support administrators report providing and the support teachers report needing by race. There were no significant statistical differences in support scores early career special education teachers report needing by race ($t = -0.370$, $p = 0.713$, $n = 40$) and support provided by administrators ($t = -0.371$, $p = 0.710$, $n = 62$). Table 16 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 16

Results for Support Provided by Administrators and Expected Support by Teachers by Race

	Support Provided Administrators				Expected Support Teachers			
	n	*t*	*p*	*d*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Emotional Subscale	68	-0.561	0.577	0.17	62	-0.003	0.997	0.00
Environmental Subscale	70	0.350	0.727	0.11	62	0.142	0.888	0.05
Instructional Subscale	69	0.491	0.625	0.17	62	-0.975	0.336	0.36
Technical Subscale	70	0.848	0.399	0.24	62	-0.171	0.865	0.06
Total Scores	62	-0.371	0.710	0.15	40	-0.370	0.713	0.13

Note. t = t-statistic, p = significance, d = Cohen's d

Although there was no statistical significance, Cohen's *d* reflects the magnitude of the differences in the mean scores between groups, indicating there is a difference in the expected support of teachers based on race particularly in the area of instructional support.

Grade level. A one-way, between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators report providing and the support early career special education teachers report needing by grade level. Participants were divided into three groups according to the grades they taught (Group 1: elementary; Group 2: middle; Group 3: high). There was no significance in scores by grade level for support needed by teachers, $F(3,38) = 7.82$, $p = 0.997$, and support provided by administrators, $F(2,59) = 78.08$, $p = 0.846$. Table 17 provides the results of the one way ANOVA by grade level.

Disability category taught. A one-way, between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators report providing and the support early career special education teachers report needing by grade level. There was no significance in

Table 17

Results for Support Provided by Administrators and Expected Support by Teachers by Grade Level

	Support Provided Administrators			Expected Support Teachers		
	n	*F*	*p*	*n*	*F*	*P*
Emotional Subscale	68	(2,65) = 12.717	0.804	41	(3,38) = 0.799	0.996
Environmental Subscale	69	(2,67) = 40.380	0.273	41	(3,38) = 1.436	0.973
Instructional Subscale	68	(2,66) = 13.004	0.723	41	(3,38) = 18.264	0.821
Technical Subscale	68	(2,67) = 6.998	0.899	41	(3,38) = 1.940	0.978
Total Scores	61	(2,59) = 78.085	0.846	41	(3,38) = 7.815	0.997

Note. F = F-statistic, *p* = significance

scores by disability taught.

Licensure status. A one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators report providing and the support early career special education teachers report needing by licensure status. There was no significance in support

expected scores by licensure status for teachers, $F(1,40) = 1.721$, $p = 0.950$. Table 19 provides analysis for each subscale.

Delivery model. A one-way, between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the total scores of the support administrators report providing and the support early career special education teachers report needing by delivery model as measured by the Modified Administrative Support Survey. There was no significance in support expected scores by the least restrictive environment for teachers, $F(1,40) = 2.087$, $p = 0.945$. Table 20 provides an analysis of the different subscales.

Results indicate the hypothesis can be rejected with 99.9% confidence. Although there was no statistical significance in the overall scores, the magnitude of the differences between support provided by administrators and support received by teachers with a mean difference = 43.60, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [30.61, 56.58] was very large. This finding indicates there is a practical significance in the difference of scores between early career special education teachers and administrators related to the support early career special education teachers expect to receive and the actual support administrators provide.

Table 18

Results for Support Provided by Administrators and Expected Support by Teachers by Disability Taught

Disability	Scale	n	F	p
Autism				
	Emotional Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 7.978$	0.638
	Environmental Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 49.863$	0.095
	Instructional Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 27.709$	0.492
	Technical Subscale	39	$(1,40) = 34.375$	0.275
	Total Scores	39	$(1,40) = 441.540$	0.311

Emotional Disturbance

	Emotional Subscale	17	(1,40) = 4.908	0.712
	Environmental Subscale	17	(1,40) = 7.060	0.536
	Instructional Subscale	17	(1,40) = 3.700	0.802
	Technical Subscale	17	(1,40) = 27.845	0.326
	Total Scores	17	(1,40) = 441.540	0.562

Hearing Impairment

	Emotional Subscale	5	(1,40) = 13.846	0.535
	Environmental Subscale	5	(1,40) = 36.562	0.155
	Instructional Subscale	5	(1,40) = 142.162	0.115
	Technical Subscale	5	(1,40) = 29.283	0.314
	Total Scores	5	(1,40) = 734.533	0.189

Intellectual Disability

	Emotional Subscale	13	(1,40) = 69.099	0.162
	Environmental Subscale	13	(1,40) = 47.254	0.104
	Instructional Subscale	13	(1,40) = 163.095	0.090
	Technical Subscale	13	(1,40) = 24.828	0.354
	Total Scores	13	(1,40) = 1085.072	0.109

Multiple Disabilities

	Emotional Subscale	12	(1,40) = 1.152	0.858
	Environmental Subscale	12	(1,40) = 1.736	0.759
	Instructional Subscale	12	(1,40) = 41.486	0.399
	Technical Subscale	12	(1,40) = 13.752	0.491
	Total Scores	12	(1,40) = 157.260	0.547

Orthopedic Impairment

	Emotional Subscale	5	(1,40) = 3.295	0.763
	Environmental Subscale	5	(1,40) = 10.162	0.457
	Instructional Subscale	5	(1,40) = 44.649	0.382
	Technical Subscale	5	(1,40) = 12.288	0.516
	Total Scores	5	(1,40) = 230.749	0.465

Table 18, continued.

Disability	Scale	n	F	p
Other Health Impairment				
	Emotional Subscale	26	(1,40) = 9.715	0.604
	Environmental Subscale	26	(1,40) = 15.004	0.366
	Instructional Subscale	26	(1,40) = 237.720	0.039
	Technical Subscale	26	(1,40) = 32.194	0.291
	Total Scores	26	(1,40) = 788.630	0.173
Severe Learning Disability				
	Emotional Subscale	26	(1,40) = 0.004	0.992
	Environmental Subscale	26	(1,40) = 26.465	0.228

Instructional Subscale	26	(1,40) = 200.143	0.060
Technical Subscale	26	(1,40) = 72.824	0.109
Total Scores	26	(1,40) = 770.885	0.178
Speech Language Impairment			
Emotional Subscale	17	(1,40) = 9.788	0.602
Environmental Subscale	17	(1,40) = 0.208	0.916
Instructional Subscale	17	(1,40) = 0.820	0.906
Technical Subscale	17	(1,40) = 4.550	0.693
Total Scores	17	(1,40) = 2.087	0.945

Note. F = *F*-statistic, *p* = significance

Table 19

Results for Support Provided by Administrators and Expected Support by Teachers by Licensure

Status

	N	*F*	*p*
Emotional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 10.839	0.589
Environmental Subscale	42	(1,40) = 0.154	0.927
Instructional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 13.703	0.629
Technical Subscale	42	(1,40) = 1.765	0.806
Total Scores	42	(1,40) = 1.721	0.950

Note. F = *F*-statistic, *p* = significance

Table 20

Results for Support Provided by Administrators and Expected Support by Teachers by Delivery Model

	N	*F*	*p*
Emotional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 9.788	0.602
Environmental Subscale	42	(1,40) = 0.208	0.916
Instructional Subscale	42	(1,40) = 0.820	0.906
Technical Subscale	42	(1,40) = 4.550	0.693
Total Scores	42	(1,40) = 2.087	0.945

Note. F = *F*-statistic, *p* = significance

Research Question 5

Is there a relationship between the type of administrative support received by early career special education teachers and their choice to remain a special education teacher? The hypothesis for this question suggests that there will be a positive relationship between the type of administrative support received by early career special education teachers and their choice to remain a special education teacher. The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between the type of administrative support received by early career special education teachers and their choice to remain a special education teacher.

The relationship between retention decisions and support received was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violations for the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a strong positive correlation between support received from administrators and overall retention decisions. Analysis also indicates that there is a positive relationship between emotional support and retention of early career special education teachers. This suggests that the null hypothesis—there is no relationship between the type of administrative support received by early career special education teachers and their choice to remain a special education teacher—can be rejected with 99.9% confidence. Table 21 outlines the findings of the Pearson product-moment correlations between scores on the Modified Administrative Support Survey and retention decisions.

Table 21

Correlation Coefficients of Support and Retention Decisions

	n	*r*	*p*
Emotional Subscale	42	0.411	0.007

Environmental Subscale	42	0.199	0.207
Instructional Subscale	42	0.265	0.090
Technical Subscale	42	0.322	0.037
Total Scores	42	0.326	0.035

Note. r = correlation statistic, p = significance

Summary

In summary, results from this analysis indicate that the amount of emotional support received by an early career special education teacher has the most significant effect on teacher retention decisions. Overall, there were few statistically significant findings; however, findings indicate there is a difference in the support early career special education teachers report receiving when examining teachers co-teaching in general education and those in self-contained settings. Results for research question 1 indicated that there is a difference in administrators' perceptions by subscale. The hypothesis for Research Question 2 was supported, suggesting there is a difference in early career teacher perceptions of the support administrators can provide by subscale. The hypotheses for Research Questions 3 and 4 were not supported; however, practical significance was found in the differences between the scores of early career special education teachers and administrators. Finally, the hypothesis for Research Question 5 was supported, indicating that there is a positive correlation between low levels of support received for early career special education teachers and lower levels of retention. Chapter 5 will offer interpretations of the results of the Modified Administrative Support Survey, as well as implications for practice, policy, and research. Chapter 5 will also include limitations of this research.

CHAPTER FIVE—DISCUSSION

The present study examined the role of administrative support on the retention of early career SETs. Research has been clear that support from principals is paramount to retention (Billingsley, 2003; Boe et al., 2008; Hagaman & Casey, 2018). Even though many personnel may be responsible for the administration of special education programming, early career SETs still require recognition, appreciation, and attention from their principals (Stempien & Loeb, 2002). As presented in the current study, school districts employ service delivery models that share support responsibilities as they relate to early career special education teachers. Because the models are implemented across school districts, careful attention and planning should take place to make sure all administrators, not just principals, have the necessary skills to retain teachers (Boscardin, 2007).

Administrative support is comprised of four components: emotional, instructional, technical, and environmental (Balfour, 2001). Even though early career special education teachers value all four subscales of support, emotional support is a component teachers express needing from the principal and can also be the most significant factor in retention (Billingsley, 2004; Gonzalez et al., 2008; Hughes et al., 2015). Further, teachers may be most familiar with the principal due to the role the administrator plays in the hiring process (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Early career teachers desire respect from their principals and affirmations that teachers are making progress in meeting the expectations of the job (Richards, 2007).

Because administrative support plays a significant role in the support of early career SETs, it is imperative the gap be closed between the types of support early career special education teachers and administrators value. Few studies to date have explored the types of support early career special education teachers value and the supports administrators provide to early career SETs. As such, this study examined the types of support early career SETs value and what support administrators provide across several variables, such as race and grade level. This chapter provides a summary and interpretation of results and shares implications for practice, policy, and future research.

Research Question 1: Administrators' Perceptions of Support

Research question 1 asked about administrators' perceptions of the types of support early career special education teachers need to be successful. In this particular question, administrators had an opportunity to provide information on the support they perceive early career SETs need to be successful. Analysis of the scores from the modified AdSS revealed that administrators perceived that early career teachers needed emotional support the most ($M = 20.68$) and environmental support the least ($M = 15.54$). The range of the total emotional subscale was 15-75 and range for the environmental subscale was 11-55. The mean scores revealed that many of the responses were low, implying that administrators did not believe that early career special education teachers need significant support which contradicts the research literature about early career special education teachers.

The importance of support for early career SETs has become a growing concern in attempting to understand why this group of teachers leaves at rates 2.5 times greater than their general education colleagues (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Graham et al. (2014) found when administrators were asked about the type of support new SETs' value, there was considerable

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incongruence, even in responses relating directly to a teacher's job description. This finding was similar to the results in the current study in that the administrators' perceptions of support do not match what is currently known about early career special education teachers such as role ambiguity (Billingsley, 2005). Further, Hagaman and Casey (2018) used focus groups with SETs and school principals who ranked ordered components of support generated by the group. They found little to no overlap between what the two groups perceived teachers to value.

In the present study, administrators indicated they had an understanding of the support that should be given by the administrators to SETs. However, when individual support scales were analyzed, the incongruence of the administrators' perceptions and the expectations of the teachers was evident. Early career SETs and administrators had considerable gaps in which supports were deemed most valuable, notably in emotional and instructional support. As mentioned in the results for administrators, the mean score for instructional support ($M = 20.27$) was a little less than emotional support ($M = 20.68$). When supplementary analysis was conducted by each job position listed for the administrative participants, the mean for instructional support was the lowest for principals ($M = 18.00$), indicating principals believed early career SETs have less need in the area of instructional support, which is in direct conflict with the mean score teachers reported expecting ($M = 22.40$). The mean score for all administrative respondents was ($M = 20.27$), which still reflects a lack of understanding of the instructional needs of early career SETs.

Novice teachers may enter the teaching professions not fully understanding their responsibilities because of their limited frame of reference for the job (Roberson & Roberson, 2008). School principals and those working as instructional leaders should anticipate that early career SETs will need instructional support and should be prepared to provide it. Further,

administrators should be adept at instructional practice with an emphasis on teaching, learning, content, and pedagogy (Professional Standards for Educational Leadership, 2015). In the current study, principals' perception of instructional support for early career SETs could be attributed to a lack of knowledge in the area of special education (Gonzalez et al., 2015). However, the perception could also highlight a need for professional development or be partially explained by the addition of administrative personnel in the building devoted to supporting SETs (e.g., coordinator of special education).

The findings of this study reflect that administrators often underestimate the support that early career SETs need and have different understandings of what support should entail. Although one individual subscale may not impact retention, the lack of knowledge in the totality of the need for assistance can affect retention. Additionally, some new SETs may be unaware of the magnitude or type of supports they need to be successful; therefore, administrators, including principals, must be knowledgeable about support and be prepared to provide support that may not necessarily be requested (Jones, 2009).

Research Question 2: Early Career Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of Support

The second research question asked about early career special education teachers' perceptions of the types of support administrators can provide for them to be successful. Results indicated that early career special education teachers expected to receive emotional support the most ($M = 23.76$) and environmental support the least ($M = 22.40$).

Roberson and Roberson (2009) concluded if early career teachers are unable to understand their own needs during the induction period, they could be unable to articulate what supports they will need. Similar to the present study, understanding that early career SETs could under- or overestimate their support needs is essential to understand. Additionally, school

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administrators, specifically principals, serve as the instructional leaders of the building, and teachers expect communication, observations, feedback, and an indication of whether they are progressing in their job responsibilities (Brock & Grady, 1998), all of which are essential components of emotional support. Principals are generally recognized as the instructional leaders at the school and should be able to anticipate some of the needs.

In their work with pre-service and novice special educators and school administrators, Hagaman and Casey (2018) found the three groups rarely agreed on the areas of support needed, and, at times, teachers grossly underestimated the support they would need in all areas of support. New SETs (i.e., those in their first 3 years) ranked paraprofessionals as their number one source of support. The administrative group, comprised of personnel who provided support to SETs, ranked building relationships as a high need and did not list paraprofessionals as sources of support for the teachers. Both groups of teachers ranked caseloads as a top need in terms of support and also as a factor in their retention whereas administrators did not list it, further underscoring the findings in the current study

As a group, teachers in the present study stated emotional support was the most significant area of need that their administrators could provide and indicated that environmental support was the area in which they needed the least help. As Roberson and Roberson (2009) noted, early career SETs often enter the field with limited practical experience. Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) purported that early career teachers are often expected to perform like more seasoned teachers. When further analysis of the present study was conducted, teachers were asked from which personnel they get the majority of their support. Eighty-two percent of early career teachers stated they got the majority of their support from someone other than the

principal; however, only 50% indicated they received their support from the coordinator of special education.

The coordinator of special education was created specifically to provide support to all special education teachers in the area of technical and environmental support. Principals, however, serve as the instructional leaders of the building and are responsible for the induction of new teachers. While this finding could further indicate that early career teachers may not know from whom they should be getting different types of support from, it could also indicate the importance of the principals in ensuring that early career teachers are supported. This could signal while the position of coordinator is charged with providing support, early career SETs still need multiple layers of support, including directly from their principal. The school district would benefit from further analysis of the support structures in individual buildings.

Research Questions 3 and 4: Differences Between Support Perceptions and Support Reality

In research questions 3 and 4, the differences between supports early career special education teachers report receiving and the perceptions of support administrators think appropriate and differences between the types of support administrators report providing and the support early career teachers report needing are examined. The questions also examine perceived and actual support by race, grade level, disability category taught, licensure status, and least restrictive environment. Results indicated that there were differences based on race and disability category but other areas of concern are also identified.

When examining the relationship between early career SETs' perceptions of support and the support provided by administrators, there were more significant differences when independent variables were analyzed. For example, when racial groups were examined, there was a practical significance with effect sizes indicating a small to moderate effect. The effect

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size, represented as Cohen's *d*. Effect sizes compare the size of the differences in two means. In this case, regarding differences in support based on race, the effect sizes shows that there are small to moderate differences. While the effect size alone does not reveal what is occurring, it provides an opportunity to explore why the differences are occurring between the two means and to what extent.

The sample collected is demographically representative of the teaching workforce (i.e., 80% White and female) (McFarland et al., 2018). If school districts are serious about diversifying the teacher workforce, then careful consideration should be made regarding supports specifically for teachers of color. Research has reflected the impact of teachers of color on student achievement, including an increase in student performance for students of color, an increase in graduation rates, and high expectations for post-secondary participation (Sutcher et al., 2016). This finding would denote a need for further studies of support to more accurately see the support needs for early career SETs of color. The small numbers of teachers of color responding ($n = 9$) made more rigorous analysis challenging.

In a study of Black male teachers in Boston public schools, Bristol (2015) found teachers reported feelings of isolation and being overwhelmed with managing behaviors of students for their colleagues, mainly when they were on staff with few or no colleagues of color. In the present study, 75% of both the administrator and teacher sample respondents were White, which is reflective of the national numbers (McFarland et al., 2018). If teachers of color are experiencing difficulties obtaining support, it is imperative that the principal be proficient in providing support to teachers to avoid feelings of isolation (Bristol, 2015). However, the gaps between the scores of administrators and early career teachers indicate that this may be a challenge.

Disability category is an area in which administrative teams can prepare to support early career SETs better. Because the results of the present study showed differences in the support needs of teachers who primarily teach students identified with having other health impairments, orthopedic impairments, multiple disabilities on the instructional subscale, and severe learning disabilities on the technical scale, understanding the individual needs of teachers by disability category is necessary. Novice SETs are challenged with delivering differentiated instruction to students in a variety of disability categories. Of the sample collected, only five of the 44 teachers sampled indicated they taught only one disability category. Each disability category has unique characteristics, and early career SETs are often expected to have the same level of expertise as novice teachers for handling student needs.

In addition to the categories listed, teachers of students with emotional behavior disorders and autism have lower rates of retention (Cancio et al., 2014). In the present study, 16% of all teachers who reported they were not returning to their current position listed autism as one of the disability categories they taught. This result could indicate that teachers of students with autism need additional support to retain them.

One result of this study contrary to literature is that support of provisionally licensed teachers did not differ when compared to fully licensed teachers. The analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference between provisionally licensed teachers and fully licensed teachers; however, according to research, provisional teachers often lack the core classes that provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to support students with disabilities (Nougaret, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2005). This limitation often results in higher attrition rates for provisionally licensed teachers. Virginia's retention data reflected approximately 18% of teachers who were licensed through an alternate route left after the first

year (Miller, 2018). Provisionally licensed teachers also need support from their principals through the completion of their programs as they may be working full-time and taking coursework to complete licensure requirements. Support scores for what administrators perceive early career provisionally licensed teachers need should have been higher, particularly when the data shows that 70% of the teachers who responded are provisionally licensed. Because principals are aware of licensure status when teachers are hired, significant support from principals should be in place for these teachers as they work through human resources components, such as licensure.

Understanding how different components, such as race and disability taught, impact the support of early career SETs is a necessity for anyone who provides direct support to teachers. Administrative teams, led by the principal, should not only be aware of concerns like the delivery model for instruction and licensure status but should understand the intersectionality of what could potentially be factors that impede retention. Research reflects that teachers of color (Billingsley, 2017; Scott, 2018), teachers of emotional and behavior disturbances (Cancio et al., 2013) and autism (Berry et al., 2017), and teachers with provisional licensing (Miller, 2018) leave at much higher rates, particularly in the first 3 years. Understanding the barriers teachers of color often face should allow administrative teams to provide structures that provide the support needed to retain teachers. Even if early career SETs are underestimating the support they need, this knowledge still provides a base level for understanding their support needs and allows administrators to be prepared. In the present study, teachers indicated they received more support than administrators provided, which could also point to their inabilities to articulate what they need, particularly if they are lacking support or are getting support from people besides their

principals. The individuals that teachers receive support from may not be familiar with the support needs of early career special education teachers.

Research Question 5: Relationship of Support on Retention

The final research question addresses the relationship between administrative support received by early career special education teachers and their choice to remain a special education teacher. The results from this study indicate that teachers who feel supported are more likely to remain in their same position. The findings from this study further support previous research that identified administrative support as a factor in retaining early career SETs. (Billingsley, 2003; Billingsley et al., 2004; Boe, 2006; Cancio et al., 2014; Conley & You, 2017; Gertsen et al., 2001; Prather-Jones, 2011). In the present study, a positive relationship was found between support and retention, particularly when examining emotional support. This not only supports previous research but underscores that when early career teachers feel supported by their principals, they are also more likely to intend on remaining in their current positions (Grissom, 2015). This present study finding, that early career teachers who positively experience administrative support have higher retention rates, emphasizes the need for all administrative personnel to be knowledgeable about support needs of teachers. Not only do administrators have to know what kind of support is most valued, they need to know what support is most needed, even when the early career SET does not explicitly ask for it.

Limitations

The findings in this study suggest administrative support can positively impact retention rates of early career SETs. This research, however, is subject to several limitations.

This study focused on one school district in a suburban location. Research shows teachers in urban schools with higher rates of student poverty leave the profession at much higher rates

(Grissom, 2016). The majority of respondents were White, which limited the analysis by race and ethnicity. This could be reflective of the population of the district or national data (McFarland et al., 2018). Also, even though analysis indicated enough power for review (Faul et al., 2009), the rate of return, 29% for administrative respondents and 18% for teacher respondents, did not yield enough respondents to generalize the results.

The study was done with a school district that employed a coordinator of special education specifically to provide support in each school building. The job description reflects that this role offers most of what would be considered technical and environmental support (e.g., compliance, scheduling, resources). The inclusion of the coordinator position could have skewed the results as this position also serves in an administrative capacity even though it still has limited evaluative responsibilities. Further replication of this study in districts with an urban or rural population and with and without personnel like coordinators of special education would allow for further generalization of the results.

Another limitation was the self-report structure of the survey. Self-report methods are often subject to over and underrepresentation of attitudes and skills that may not reflect respondents' real opinions. This can occur due to misinterpretation of the survey questions or social desirability, despite the anonymity of the survey for both teacher and administrator participants (Rosenman, Tennekoon, & Hill, 2011). Teacher participants were also asked to respond to their perceptions of administrative behaviors which can be skewed based on the contexts of individual schools and, therefore, impact results. Participants might not have reported their true satisfaction. Findings are highly contextualized to the specific structures of support provided by one school division. With the inclusion of the coordinator of special education, fewer principals may have responded because they assign all duties related to special education

to other personnel in the building, including coordinators of special education. While valuable information was gained, caution must be taken when interpreting and generalizing the results.

Implications

Results from the study provide information that can impact policy, practice, and research on a federal, state, and local level. Overall, most teachers in the present study reported receiving support from their administrators and intended on remaining in their position for the next school year. However, analysis revealed that certain variables indicate a need for more research. Based on the findings in the current study, implications are described in the next section.

Implications for Policy

The field of special education is plagued with critical shortages of teachers partly as a result of the decrease in retention rates of early career teachers. The findings in this study imply that retention rates of special education teachers are increased by effective support. Administrators, including principals, must effectively support teachers in order to retain a well trained workforce able to support students with disabilities. With the critical shortage of special education teachers, the capacity to deliver on the promises of IDEA is threatened and the most vulnerable students are left behind. Policies at the federal and state level however, provide an opportunity to address some of the retention issues and provide principals with additional support in this area.

Federal Policy

On a federal level, one of the key pieces of legislation to address the retention of early career special education teachers is IDEA. Educational agencies should carefully review IDEA regulations to ensure they are maximizing the opportunities and flexibility provided by this legislation. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs has

offered programs specifically for special education in the area of personnel development to improve services and results for children with disabilities. Part of this programming includes a requirement to support beginning special educators. A portion of the grant funding must be awarded to programs that support partnerships that provide mentoring and induction for early career SETs and continuing professional development. State personnel development grants are also offered from the same office. However, 90% of the funds must be used for professional development activities, specifically recruiting and retaining SETs. Federal legislators should continue to pass legislation that supports SETs and principals responsible for providing support to them.

Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act are federal funds disbursed to State educational agencies for local educational agencies specifically to support effective instruction. The funds allow flexibility for programs that prepare, train, and recruit both teachers and administrators. States and localities are encouraged to use their Title II funds in a way that builds principals capacity to support early career special education teachers while continuing to develop strategies to meet the demand for special education teachers.

Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965 also provides funding for Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) programs that provided funding to improve the quality of teacher preparation programs. There is also a provision in the legislation that calls for accountability to track program graduates. This funding provides an opportunity to collect data that will assist in understanding the patterns around retention of early career teachers. While this funding is not specific to special education teachers, it provides an opportunity for school districts to increase the overall supply of teachers while also studying the data around retention.

State Policy

State educational agencies should ramp up support specifically in the area of SET support to local education agencies. The sample from the survey was collected from a school district in Virginia, a state that has listed special education as a teacher shortage area for the past 18 years (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2018). However, Virginia has few policies that reflect the pervasiveness of the need for SETs nor are data and statistics relating to the retention of SETs readily available. Some local universities are authorized through the VDOE to offer alternative licensure programs to aid in providing the coursework necessary for licensure in Virginia under special education. Additionally, VDOE has facilitated a special education leadership academy predominantly for special education professionals at the district level. Virginia has also held several summits relating to teacher shortages. However, at these summits, there was little focus on SETs (Advisory Committee on Teacher Shortages, 2017; Secretary of Virginia, 2017, 2018). Also, the statistics analyzing the data around shortages, retention of SETs, and the specific reasons why they leave have considerable gaps, including the collection of critical demographics, such as race (Miller, 2018).

The collection of precise demographic data, such as race and disability taught, is pivotal in developing policy around SET retention. The needs of early career SETs appear to be masked within data that details the attrition of general education teachers. With the increased demand for SETs due to increases in student numbers, policymakers need to take a closer look at reasons impacting the retention of early career SETs, possibly even convening a workgroup. The VDOE can also look at the methods in which data is collected, and the availability and capacity to analyze and use the data for further investigating these complex issues.

Implications for Practice

Results from this study reinforce the importance of support for early career SETs. For school districts, this study makes the case that adding structures that directly provide support to early career teachers daily may impact retention decisions of early career SETs. While the reported data reveals the majority of teachers plan on returning to their same position in the next school year, 16% reported they were not returning. The exit rate is 18% for all Virginia teachers.

School districts should provide continuing professional development for principals around support and create structures to check in with early career SETs who may not necessarily know what they need. Schools may also want to examine qualifications additional leaders have and ensure they have formal training in supporting teachers, as many of them reported having less than 3 years of experience in their roles. School districts should also be prepared to provide instructional programming to ensure that administrators at all levels are skilled in instructional strategies that promote positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Additionally, school leaders are encouraged to track and monitor retention data to capture trends and to use the data to shape professional development for principals and induction and support for early career teachers.

Implications for Research

For research, this study stresses the importance of examining how administrative support impacts the retention of early career SETs. The next step to consider would be to solicit information about support directly from principals and early career SETs. An additional layer would be to analyze district data to see if national trends for teacher retention rates (Billingsley, 2003) do indeed apply to the district.

Most research indicates that the principal is the driver of support; however, as demonstrated in the present study, teacher responses suggested the inclusion of a school-based coordinator could provide technical and environmental support to early career SETs. With more school districts exploring different models of support, further research is needed to compare results in districts located in urban and rural areas as they grapple with the retention of early career SETs. More rigorous analysis is needed that includes paired samples and surveying the same set of teachers over a more extended period to see if they remain in the profession after the 3 years. A longitudinal study could capture retention decisions over time and analyze how support differs from building to building within a school district. Qualitative analyses, too, could support these findings by gaining a better understanding of the lived experiences of early career SETs who remained and those who exited after the first 3 years.

Conclusion

SETs are leaving the field at alarming rates. When there are shortages in SETs, students requiring the most support are often left without the assistance and services they need. Early career SETs have expressed lack of administrative support impacts their decisions to stay in the field. The present study reflects the need for administrators who provide support to early career teachers to be knowledgeable about teachers' needs, despite the novice teachers' inabilities to express the needs specifically. In this study, additional supports were implemented that provided technical and environmental support to teachers. Overall, most teachers reported that they intended on returning to their position in the next school year. However, results revealed early career teachers do not perceive that they received the amount of instructional and emotional support they needed from administrators, even when multiple persons were assigned to provide that support. Additionally, the teachers who indicated they were not returning to their positions

all reported they received most of their support from someone other than the principal. No matter the administrative structure of the school, early career SETs need support, and it is imperative that school districts address the issue using data and research to make decisions that provide positive outcomes for students.

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Appendix A

PRISMA Flowchart

IDENTIFICATION	Records identified through database searching (n = 165)	Additional records identified through other sources (n =960)

| SCREENING | Records after duplicates removed (n = 830) | |
| | Records screened (n = 830) | Records excluded (n = 746) |

| ELIGIBILITY | Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 84) | Full-text articles excluded, with reasons (n = 613) |

| INCLUDED | Studies included in systematic review (n =12) | |

Appendix B

Letter of Support

VCU   Cassandra Boyd Willis <boydcf@mymail.vcu.edu>

Permission to Administrative Support Survey

Yvonne Balfour <cybalfour@gmail.com>   Mon, Oct 1, 2018 at 8:31 AM
To: Cassandra Boyd Willis <boydcf@mymail.vcu.edu>

Greetings Cassandra -

You have my permission to use my Administrative Support Survey for your dissertation.

Good luck with your research.

C. Yvonne Balfour, Ph. D.
Adjunct Professor
Shenandoah University

On Sun, Sep 30, 2018, 12:27 PM Cassandra Boyd Willis <boydcf@mymail.vcu.edu> wrote:
Dr. Balfour,
Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today. As I stated in my voicemail, my name is Cassandra Willis
and I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation around the impact of administrator support of early career
teachers. I am working to see perceptions around support as well as what support these novice teachers find most
impactful. I have identified a school division to work with and your survey would provide results that could influence
retention policies for years to come.

I am writing to request permission to use your Administrative Support Survey and to modify it slightly to administer to
both early carer special education teachers and principals to determine their perceptions around support.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to receiving your permission.

Thanks again,

Cassandra B. Willis

--
Cassandra B. Willis
Virginia Commonwealth University
Graduate Assistant and Doctoral Student
Department of Counseling and Special Education

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Appendix C

Adapted Administrative Support Survey: Teachers

The information in this study can help us learn how to better retain early career special educators, particularly those with 0-3 years of experience. In this survey, an administrator can be defined as personnel who provide direct support to early career special education teachers. We anticipate that the survey should take 10 – 15 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual and shared with school officials. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu. Thank you for your participation.

Section 1: Please make two judgments about each Administrative Behavior. First, rate the level of support you EXPECT from the administrator relative to each Administrative Behavior. Next, rate the level of support you ACTUALLY RECEIVE from the administrator relative to each Administrative Behavior. Use the following rating scales: 5 -Very true, 4-True, 3- Undecided, 2- Not really true, 1- Not true at all.

Expect from Administrator [Very True, Not True at All]

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Makes me feel that I am making a difference.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. Is interested in what I do in my classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. Provide me information about modifying instruction.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. Gives me information about instructional techniques that will help improve my teaching.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. Provides me with reliable feedback about my IEPs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6. Ensures that I have enough planning time.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
7. Takes an interest in my professional development and gives me opportunities to grow.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8. Gives me genuine and specific feedback about my work.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
9. Tells me when I am on the right track with my work.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
10. Helps me interpret state curriculum standards and apply them to teaching my students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11. Shows confidence in my actions and decisions.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

12. Observes frequently in my classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
13. Helps me select or create curriculum for students with disabilities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14. Is available to discuss my personal problems or concerns.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
15. Helps me decide when and how to teach certain subjects.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
16. Helps me select or create a way to record lesson plans effectively.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17. Suggests alternative instructional methods for students who are struggling.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
18. Helps me select or create appropriate instructional materials.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
19. Provides me with reliable input about the progress I write on my students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
20. Keeps me informed of school and district events.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
21. Listens and gives me undivided attention while I am talking.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
22. Helps me follow the federal and state special education regulations.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
23. Seeks my input on important issues in the school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
24. Makes sure that I do not have to switch between too many grade levels and subjects.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
25. Provides me with reliable feedback about the assessments I conduct on my students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
26. Helps me ensure that I meet confidentiality requirements.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
27. Helps me get information from the central office special education department in my school system.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
28. Gives me reliable information about due dates.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
29. Gives me recognition for a job well done.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
30. Participates in special projects or programs in my classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
31. Arranges my schedule in a way to reduce the time I spend on paperwork and in meetings.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
32. Provides me with funds I need to get supplies.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
33. Assigns me to work with students for whom I am trained and certified to teach.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
34. Makes sure that I have the space I need to teach and plan.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
35. Ensures that I have the equipment I need for my classroom (i.e., computers, TVs, etc.)	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
36. Helps me coordinate related services for my students (i.e., Speech/Language and other therapies.)	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
37. Helps me implement co-teaching strategies	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

38. Is available to discuss my professional problems or concerns.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
39. Provides me with clerical assistance to schedule meetings and complete paperwork.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
40. Helps me write lesson plans.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
41. Gives me information on ways to make my instructional meaningful.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
42. Helps me develop schedules to ensure that my students are receiving the required hours of service per their IEPs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
43. Provides me with strategies for working with paraprofessionals.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
44. Communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
45. Helps me get assistive technology devices for my students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
46. Permits me to use my own judgement to solve problems.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
47. Supports my decisions in front of other teachers.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Actually Receive from Administrator [Very True, Not True at All]

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Makes me feel that I am making a difference.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. Is interested in what I do in my classroom.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. Provide me information about modifying instruction.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. Gives me information about instructional techniques that will help improve my teaching.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. Provides me with reliable feedback about my IEPs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. Ensures that I have enough planning time.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. Takes an interest in my professional development and gives me opportunities to grow.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. Gives me genuine and specific feedback about my work.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. Tells me when I am on the right track with my work.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. Helps me interpret state curriculum standards and apply them to teaching my students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
11. Shows confidence in my actions and decisions.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
12. Observes frequently in my classroom.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
13. Helps me select or create curriculum for students with disabilities.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

14. Is available to discuss my personal problems or concerns.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
15. Helps me decide when and how to teach certain subjects.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
16. Helps me select or create a way to record lesson plans effectively.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
17. Suggests alternative instructional methods for students who are struggling.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
18. Helps me select or create appropriate instructional materials.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
19. Provides me with reliable input about the progress I write on my students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
20. Keeps me informed of school and district events.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
21. Listens and gives me undivided attention while I am talking.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
22. Helps me follow the federal and state special education regulations.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
23. Seeks my input on important issues in the school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
24. Makes sure that I do not have to switch between too many grade levels and subjects.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
25. Provides me with reliable feedback about the assessments I conduct on my students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
26. Helps me ensure that I meet confidentiality requirements.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
27. Helps me get information from the central office special education department in my school system.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
28. Gives me reliable information about due dates.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
29. Gives me recognition for a job well done.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
30. Participates in special projects or programs in my classroom.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
31. Arranges my schedule in a way to reduce the time I spend on paperwork and in meetings.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
32. Provides me with funds I need to get supplies.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
33. Assigns me to work with students for whom I am trained and certified to teach.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
34. Makes sure that I have the space I need to teach and plan.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
35. Ensures that I have the equipment I need for my classroom (i.e., computers, TVs, etc.)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
36. Helps me coordinate related services for my students (i.e., Speech/Language and other therapies.)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
37. Helps me implement co-teaching strategies	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
38. Is available to discuss my professional problems or concerns.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
39. Provides me with clerical assistance to schedule meetings and complete paperwork.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

40. Helps me write lesson plans.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
41. Gives me information on ways to make my instructional meaningful.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
42. Helps me develop schedules to ensure that my students are receiving the required hours of service per their IEPs.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
43. Provides me with strategies for working with paraprofessionals.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
44. Communicates to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
45. Helps me get assistive technology devices for my students.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
46. Permits me to use my own judgement to solve problems.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
47. Supports my decisions in front of other teachers.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Section 2: Please answer the following demographic questions.

Prior to the 18-19 school year, how many years have you taught?
1. 0
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9
11. 10
12. 11
13. 12
14. 13
15. 14
16. 15
17. 16
18. 17
19. 18
20. 19
21. 20+

Which category best describes your race?
1. Hispanic or Latino
2. American Indian or Alaska Native
3. Asian
4. Black or African American
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
6. Caucasian or White
7. Multiracial
8. Other
9. Prefer not to say

Which category best describes your gender?
1. Male
2. Female

Which best describes the disability category that you teach? Check all that apply.
1. Autism
2. Deaf-blindness
3. Deafness
4. Emotional Disturbance
5. Hearing Impairment
6. Intellectual Disability
7. Multiple Disabilities
8. Orthopedic impairment
9. Other health impairments
10. Specific learning disability
11. Speech or language impairment
12. Traumatic brain injury
13. Visual impairment including blindness

Which best describes your teaching license as it relates to your current teaching assignment?
1. I have a regular license to teach students in my main teaching assignment.
2. I have a provisional license to teach students in my main teaching assignment.
3. Other

Which best describes the delivery model for your main teaching assignment? (Where you spend 50% or more of your time.)
1. Resource
2. Self-Contained
3. General Education
4. Co-teaching in a general education class
5. Other

What grade do you teach? Check all that apply.
1. K
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9
11. 10
12. 11
13. 12
14. Other _____

Based on your responses, what percentage of support have you received as an early career special education teacher from the personnel listed below? Responses must total 100%.
- Principal _____
- Assistant/Associate Principal _____
- Coordinator of Special Education _____
- Dean of Students _____
- Central Office Staff _____

- Other _____

Do you plan on being in your current teaching assignment next school year?
1. Yes, I will be at the same school, same position.
2. No, I will be at a different school, same position.
3. No, I will be teaching general education.
4. No, I will be taking a different position.
5. No, I will be leaving the field entirely.

If you would like to be entered into a survey for one of six $25 Amazon gift cards as a thank you for participating, please enter an email address. Emails are kept separate from the survey data and will only be viewed by the researcher.

Adapted Administrative Support Survey: Administrators

Administrative Support Survey - Administrators
The information in this study can help us learn how to better retain early career special educators, particularly those with 0-3 years of experience. In this survey, an administrator can be defined as personnel who provide direct support to early career special education teachers. We anticipate that the survey should take 10 – 15 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual and shared with school officials. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu. Thank you for your participation.

Section 1: Please make two judgments about each Administrative Behavior. First, rate the level of support you THINK IS APPROPRIATE TO PROVIDE to teachers. Next, rate the level of support you ACTUALLY PROVIDE teachers. Use the following rating scales: 5 -Very true, 4-True, 3- Undecided, 2- Not really true, 1- Not true at all.

THINK IS APPROPRIATE [Very True, Not True at All]

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Make teachers feel that they are making a difference.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. Show interest in what teachers do in their classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. Provide teachers information about modifying instruction.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. Give teachers information about instructional techniques that will help improve teaching.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. Provide teachers with reliable feedback about IEPs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6. Ensure that teachers have enough planning time.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
7. Take an interest in teachers professional development and gives opportunities to grow.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8. Give genuine and specific feedback about their work.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
9. Tell teachers when they are on the right track with their work.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
10. Help teachers interpret state curriculum standards and apply them to teaching students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11. Show confidence in teachers actions and decisions.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12. Observe teachers frequently in classrooms.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

13. Help select or create curriculum for students with disabilities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14. Am available to discuss teachers personal problems or concerns.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
15. Help teachers decide when and how to teach certain subjects.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
16. Help teachers select or create a way to record lesson plans effectively.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17. Suggest alternative instructional methods for students who are struggling.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
18. Help teachers select or create appropriate instructional materials.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
19. Provide teachers with reliable input about the progress they write on students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
20. Keep teachers informed of school and district events.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
21. Listen and give teachers undivided attention while they are talking.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
22. Help teachers follow the federal and state special education regulations.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
23. Seek their input on important issues in the school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
24. Make sure that they do not have to switch between too many grade levels and subjects.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
25. Provide teachers with reliable feedback about the assessments they conduct on students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
26. Help teachers ensure that they meet confidentiality requirements.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
27. Help teachers get information from the central office special education department in the school system.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
28. Give teachers reliable information about due dates.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
29. Give teachers recognition for a job well done.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
30. Participate in special projects or programs in their classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
31. Arrange teachers schedule in a way to reduce the time they spend on paperwork and in meetings.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
32. Provide teachers with funds they need to get supplies.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
33. Assign teachers to work with students for whom they are trained and certified to teach.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
34. Make sure teachers have the space they need to teach and plan.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
35. Ensure teachers have the equipment needed for their classroom (i.e., computers, TVs, etc.)	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
36. Help teachers coordinate related services for their students (i.e., Speech/Language and other therapies.)	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
37. Help teachers implement co-teaching strategies	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
38. Am available to discuss their professional problems or concerns.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

	5	4	3	2	1
39. Provide teachers with clerical assistance to schedule meetings and complete paperwork.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
40. Help teachers write lesson plans.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
41. Give teachers information on ways to make instructional meaningful.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
42. Help teachers develop schedules to ensure that students are receiving the required hours of service per their IEPs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
43. Provide teachers with strategies for working with paraprofessionals.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
44. Communicate to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
45. Help teachers get assistive technology devices for my students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
46. Permit teachers to use their own judgement to solve problems.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
47. Support teachers decisions in front of other teachers.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

ACTUALLY PROVIDE [Very True, Not True at All]

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Make teachers feel that they are making a difference.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. Show interest in what teachers do in their classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. Provide teachers information about modifying instruction.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. Give teachers information about instructional techniques that will help improve teaching.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. Provide teachers with reliable feedback about IEPs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6. Ensure that teachers have enough planning time.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
7. Take an interest in teachers professional development and gives opportunities to grow.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8. Give genuine and specific feedback about their work.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
9. Tell teachers when they are on the right track with their work.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
10. Help teachers interpret state curriculum standards and apply them to teaching students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11. Show confidence in teachers actions and decisions.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12. Observe teachers frequently in classrooms.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
13. Help select or create curriculum for students with disabilities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14. Am available to discuss teachers personal problems or concerns.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

15. Help teachers decide when and how to teach certain subjects.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
16. Help teachers select or create a way to record lesson plans effectively.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17. Suggest alternative instructional methods for students who are struggling.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
18. Help teachers select or create appropriate instructional materials.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
19. Provide teachers with reliable input about the progress they write on students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
20. Keep teachers informed of school and district events.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
21. Listen and give teachers undivided attention while they are talking.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
22. Help teachers follow the federal and state special education regulations.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
23. Seek their input on important issues in the school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
24. Make sure that they do not have to switch between too many grade levels and subjects.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
25. Provide teachers with reliable feedback about the assessments they conduct on students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
26. Help teachers ensure that they meet confidentiality requirements.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
27. Help teachers get information from the central office special education department in the school system.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
28. Give teachers reliable information about due dates.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
29. Give teachers recognition for a job well done.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
30. Participate in special projects or programs in their classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
31. Arrange teachers schedule in a way to reduce the time they spend on paperwork and in meetings.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
32. Provide teachers with funds they need to get supplies.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
33. Assign teachers to work with students for whom they are trained and certified to teach.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
34. Make sure teachers have the space they need to teach and plan.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
35. Ensure teachers have the equipment needed for their classroom (i.e., computers, TVs, etc.)	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
36. Help teachers coordinate related services for their students (i.e., Speech/Language and other therapies.)	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
37. Help teachers implement co-teaching strategies	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
38. Am available to discuss their professional problems or concerns.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
39. Provide teachers with clerical assistance to schedule meetings and complete paperwork.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
40. Help teachers write lesson plans.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

41. Give teachers information on ways to make instructional meaningful.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
42. Help teachers develop schedules to ensure that students are receiving the required hours of service per their IEPs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
43. Provide teachers with strategies for working with paraprofessionals.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
44. Communicate to the school staff that special education students and teachers are an important part of the school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
45. Help teachers get assistive technology devices for my students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
46. Permit teachers to use their own judgement to solve problems.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
47. Support teachers decisions in front of other teachers.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Section 2: Please answer the following demographic questions.

Select the position that best describes you as an administrator.
1. Principal
2. Assistant/Associate Principal
3. Coordinator of Special Education
4. Dean of Students
5. Department Chair
6. Central Office Staff
7. Other

Prior to the 18-19 school year, how many years have you worked in your current position?
1. 0
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9
11. 10
12. 11
13. 12
14. 13
15. 14
16. 15
17. 16
18. 17
19. 18
20. 19
21. 20+

Which category best describes your race?
1. Hispanic or Latino
2. American Indian or Alaska Native
3. Asian

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4. Black or African American
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
6. Caucasian or White
7. Multiracial
8. Other
9.

Which category best describes your gender?
1. Male
2. Female
3. Other
4.

Which best describes your interaction with the special education field prior to your current position?
1. Special education teacher
2. Special Education administrator
3. Personal connection
4. None
5. Other _____

What category best describes the school setting in which you are currently working?
1. Preschool
2. Elementary
3. Middle
4. High School
5. Other _____

Approximately how many professional development hours do you spend per month devoted specifically to special education?
1. 0-1 hour
2. 2-4 hours
3. 5-7 hours
4. 8-10 hours
5. 12-14 hours
6. 15 or more hours

What other personnel provides support to early career special education teachers in your building?
1. Principal
2. Assistant/Associate Principal
3. Coordinator of Special Education
4. Department Chair
5. Dean of Students
6. Central Office Staff
7. Other

Thank you for completing this survey. If you would like to be entered into a raffle for a chance to win one of several Amazon gift cards, please enter your email address below. This data will be kept separate from survey data and will only be viewable to the researcher.

Appendix E

Email: Administrators

Email Invitation Details	Email List : CCPS AdministratorsEmail-List-1
Survey	Administrative Support Survey - Administrators (6350284)
From	boydcf@vcu.edu
Subject	Support of early career special education teachers Survey Invitation

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently an administrator with Chesterfield County Public Schools. The purpose of this study is to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. The information we learn from participants in this study may help us learn how to better recruit and retain early career special educators.

I anticipate that the survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. You can also enter your email at the end to be in a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift card. Email is kept separate from the responses. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

Your participation is appreciated.

Cassandra Willis
Doctoral Student
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
boydcf@vcu.edu

Supervised by Dr. LaRon Scott
Assistant Professor
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
scottla2@vcu.edu

Appendix F

Email: Teachers

Email Invitation Details Email List : Teacher List
Survey Administrative Support Survey-Teachers   (6318304)
From boydcf@vcu.edu
Subject Support of early career special education teachers survey Invitation

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently a special education teacher with Chesterfield County Public Schools. The purpose of this study is to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. The information we learn from participants in this study may help us learn how to better recruit and retain early career special educators.

I anticipate that the survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. You can also enter your email at the end to be in a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift cards. Email is kept separate from the responses. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

Your participation is appreciated.

Cassandra Willis
Doctoral Student
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
boydcf@vcu.edu

Supervised by Dr. LaRon Scott
Assistant Professor
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
scottla2@vcu.edu

Appendix G

Second Email Request for Participation

Email Invitation Details   Email List : Teacher List
Survey   Administrative Support Survey-Teachers   (6318304)
From   boydcf@vcu.edu
Subject   Reminder: Support of early career special education teachers survey Invitation

Just as a reminder, you were asked to participate in this survey because you are currently a special education teacher with Chesterfield County Public Schools. We are seeking to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. If you have already responded, please disregard this message.

If you would like to participate, please click the link to enter the survey.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

As a reminder, you are able to enter a raffle for a $25 Amazon gift card. One was already awarded to a participant.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me, Cassandra Willis at boydcf@vcu.edu or Dr. LaRon Scott, scottla2@vcu.edu.

The original email is provided below.

Thank you,
Cassandra B. Willis
Doctoral Candidate
VCU, Department of Counseling and Special Education

****

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently a special education teacher with Chesterfield County Public Schools. The purpose of this study is to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. The information we learn from participants in this study may help us learn how to better recruit and retain early career special educators.
I anticipate that the survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. You can also enter your email at the end to be in a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift cards. Email is kept separate from the responses. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

Your participation is appreciated.

Cassandra Willis
Doctoral Student
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
boydcf@vcu.edu

Supervised by Dr. LaRon Scott
Assistant Professor
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
scottla2@vcu.edu

Email Invitation Details   Email List : CCPS AdministratorsEmail-List-1
Survey   Administrative Support Survey - Administrators   (6350284)
From   boydcf@vcu.edu
Subject   Reminder: Support of early career special education teachers Survey Invitation

Just as a reminder, you were asked to participate in this survey because you are currently an administrator with Chesterfield County Public Schools. We are seeking to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. If you have already responded, please disregard this message.

If you would like to participate, please click the link to enter the survey.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

As a reminder, you are able to enter a raffle for a $25 Amazon gift card. One was already awarded to a participant.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me, Cassandra Willis at boydcf@vcu.edu or Dr. LaRon Scott, scottla2@vcu.edu.
The original email is provided below.

Thank you,
Cassandra B. Willis
Doctoral Candidate
VCU, Department of Counseling and Special Education

****

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently an administrator with Chesterfield County Public Schools. The purpose of this study is to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. The information we learn from participants in this study may help us learn how to better recruit and retain early career special educators.
I anticipate that the survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. You can also enter your email at the end to be in a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift card. Email is kept separate from the responses. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

Your participation is appreciated.

Cassandra Willis
Doctoral Student

Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
boydcf@vcu.edu

Supervised by Dr. LaRon Scott
Assistant Professor
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
scottla2@vcu.edu

Appendix H

Last Follow-up Email Request for Participation

Email Invitation Details Email List : Teacher List
Survey   Administrative Support Survey-Teachers   (6318304)
From   boydcf@vcu.edu
Subject   Final Reminder: Support of early career special education teachers survey Invitation

Just as a reminder, you were asked to participate in this survey because you are currently a special education teacher with Chesterfield County Public Schools. We are seeking to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. If you have already responded, please disregard this message.

If you would like to participate, please click the link to enter the survey.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

As a reminder, you are able to enter a raffle for a $25 Amazon gift card. Three have already been awarded.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me, Cassandra Willis at boydcf@vcu.edu or Dr. LaRon Scott, scottla2@vcu.edu.

The original email is provided below.

Thank you,
Cassandra B. Willis
Doctoral Candidate
VCU, Department of Counseling and Special Education

****
You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently a special education teacher with Chesterfield County Public Schools. The purpose of this study is to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. The information we learn from participants in this study may help us learn how to better recruit and retain early career special educators.

I anticipate that the survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. You can also enter your email at the end to be in a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift cards. Email is kept separate from the responses. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

Your participation is appreciated.

Cassandra Willis
Doctoral Student
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
boydcf@vcu.edu

Supervised by Dr. LaRon Scott
Assistant Professor
Department of Counseling & Special Education, VCU
scottla2@vcu.edu

Just as a reminder, you were asked to participate in this survey because you are currently an administrator with Chesterfield County Public Schools. We are seeking to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. If you have already responded, please disregard this message.

If you would like to participate, please click the link to enter the survey.
<ANONYMOUS_SURVEY_LINK>

As a reminder, you are able to enter a raffle for a $25 Amazon gift card. Three have already been awarded.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me, Cassandra Willis at boydcf@vcu.edu or Dr. LaRon Scott, scottla2@vcu.edu.
The original email is provided below.

Thank you,
Cassandra B. Willis
Doctoral Candidate
VCU, Department of Counseling and Special Education

****
****

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently an administrator with Chesterfield County Public Schools. The purpose of this study is to examine the support administrators provide to early career special education teachers. Administrators can be defined as personnel that provides direct support to these teachers. The information we learn from participants in this study may help us learn how to better recruit and retain early career special educators.

I anticipate that the survey should take 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. You can also enter your email at the end to be in a drawing for a $25 Amazon gift card. Email is kept separate from the responses. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcf@vcu.edu.

Your participation is appreciated.

Cassandra Willis

Doctoral Student
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boydcf@vcu.edu

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Assistant Professor
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scottla2@vcu.edu

Appendix I

Curriculum Vita

Cassandra Boyd Willis was born in Richmond, VA. She completed her undergraduate work at the University of Virginia and went to work as a special education teacher in Richmond Public Schools. Cassandra worked in Richmond for many years before she began her work in mathematics curriculum. She received her masters of interdisciplinary studies from Virginia Commonwealth University in math and science leadership and from there served as a school-based coach and math supervisor in two different divisions. In 2014, Cassandra received her post-graduate certificate in educational leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). At that time, she went to work as an associate principal, a position in which she remained until 2016 when she began her doctoral work full-time. Cassandra has won several awards over the course of her career including the Benjamin Banneker Award for her work in advancing mathematics knowledge for all students, and the Jane West Spark Award for her advocacy on behalf of teacher preparation. She has also received scholarships from her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, and the VCU Alumni Association. She is proud to have had all of her degrees funded in part by the government: Bachelors through federal and state Department of Veterans Affairs, Masters through National Science Foundation and Doctorate through Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education. The opportunity to obtain a quality education changed the trajectory of her life and

she uses that as a basis for her advocacy around funding. As her sorority sister Shirley Chisholm said, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." Upon completion of the doctoral program, Cassandra looks forward to working to advance opportunities for students with disabilities.